



REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS (RFQ)

Strategic Marketing Plan for the Central Arkansas Library System (CALS)

February 1, 2019

Goal

The Central Arkansas Library System (CALS) seeks a marketing partner to enhance and implement marketing and communications strategies. The marketing partner will be offered a year-long consulting contract with the option of renewal.

Overview and Background: Central Arkansas Library System

In 1910, the library system that would eventually become CALS began as the Little Rock Public Library. For over a hundred years, the library has been a well-loved community partner offering educational opportunity and resources free of charge to all in the community. In 2019, the Central Arkansas Library System includes 14 branch libraries located in Little Rock, Perryville, Maumelle, Sherwood, Jacksonville, and Wrightsville. CALS has the largest research collection in central Arkansas, with more than one million items in its physical collections. The library system also offers access to a vast number of electronic resources including ebooks, audiobooks, streaming music, and online learning such as the thousands of courses available through Lynda.com. The Butler Center for Arkansas Studies maintains local archives and a research room, as well as online resources such as the Encyclopedia of Arkansas History & Culture. The Butler Center also conducts educational outreach to educators with lesson plans and other historical and cultural resources.

The system also offers a variety of free programs and classes for workforce development, basic literacy, and digital literacy including skills from beginning keyboarding to graphic design and film editing.

The library system offers multiple meeting spaces free of charge for use by the public and businesses. Other high-quality CALS facilities such as the 315-seat Ron Robinson Theater host free public library events including films, panels, and concerts.

In 2018, CALS unveiled a new logo and redesigned website. CALS also rebranded the downtown Little Rock campus as **Library Square**, including the renaming of several of the CALS buildings located at Library Square.

Library Square consists of Main Library, Bobby L. Roberts Library of Arkansas History & Art (containing the Butler Center for Arkansas Studies and the Galleries at Library Square), Ron Robinson Theater, and the Bookstore at Library Square (the library's used book store featuring meeting rooms and art exhibitions). The Galleries at Library Square (formerly the Butler Center Galleries) are located on the first floor of the Roberts Library and

include four galleries with rotating art exhibitions as well as a retail gallery filled with original artworks and crafts by Arkansas artists.

The Library Square campus also includes gourmet sandwiches and catering from Jimmy's Serious Sandwiches, and the Nexus Nook coffee shop, serving espresso drinks and snacks on the first floor of Main Library.

More information about CALS is available at www.cals.org.

Organizational Goals

CALS seeks to expand and further diversify its patron base, specifically targeting the 18 – 45 age group. The library system also seeks to extend the base of financial support for library events and initiatives.

Some of the library system's major projects that would benefit from sponsorship include the following:

The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History & Culture is an online resource that includes over 5500 entries and attracts 1.5 million visits per year.

Arkansas Sounds, a concert series, brings a wide variety of free and low-cost musical offerings to the Ron Robinson Theater and to branch libraries across Central Arkansas. The artists are frequently Arkansas musicians and many are virtuosos in classical music, blues, jazz, roots music, classic rock or folk.

Summer Reading Club reaches thousands of people with free educational and recreational programming, as well as support for reading and literacy.

The Arkansas Literary Festival, now in its 16th year, offers a mix of sessions, panels, workshops, book signings, and opportunities to meet authors. The 2019 Festival will be held April 25-28 at Library Square and other downtown and midtown venues. Most events for children are held at Hillary Clinton Children's Library and Learning Center. See www.arkansasliteraryfestival.org for more information.

Current Digital Ecosystem

The newly-redesigned CALS website contains up-to-date information on the library's programs, events, and resources. Two other websites (for the Butler Center for Arkansas Studies and the Encyclopedia of Arkansas History & Culture) are currently in a redesign process.

The library system maintains a visible presence on social media including a number of dedicated library Facebook pages as well as CALS retail outlet pages for the Ron Robinson Theater and the Bookstore and Galleries at Library Square. Several Twitter and Instagram feeds showcase major library programs.

Partner Qualifications & Scope of Work

CALS is interested in a partner with a proven record of success including, but not limited to, the following:

- Niche Marketing
- Social Media Strategy
- Earned and Paid Media Strategy
- Video Production

Scope of work will be determined during the selection process according to analyzed strategic priorities and budget.

Submission Deadlines and Guidelines

Submissions will be accepted digitally until 5:00 p.m. on Friday, March 1, 2019, and should be sent to:

Nate Coulter
Executive Director
CALS Main Library
100 Rock Street
Little Rock, AR 72201
ncoulter@cals.org

Applications should include the following:

1. Business background and current team structure
2. Team member resumés, including educational background and certifications
3. Description of marketing services available and list of any outsourcing partners
4. Business experience and recent projects, particularly with marketing strategy and implementation not driven primarily by traditional direct sales, e.g. nonprofits
5. Technology products: current technology tools and preferred systems, primary methods of communication and collaboration
6. SEO experience and content strategy
7. Projected consulting fees by the hour, retainer fees, price lists by task, or a combination of these pricing structures.