RICHLAND ONE ENGAGE • EDUCATE • EMPOWER	**Richland County School District One** **Request for Proposal** **Amendment No. 1**	**Solicitation Number** **Date Issued** **Procurement Officer** **Phone** **E-mail Address**	**RFP 2026-011** **October 22, 2025** **Carolyn Hodges** **803-231-7040** Carolyn.hodges@richlandone.org

DESCRIPTION: **"Provide Strategic Communications Services"**

The Term "Offer" Means Your "Bid" or "Proposal"

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS	DATE AND TIME
QUESTIONS MUST BE RECEIVED BY: **ALL QUESTIONS MUST BE SUBMITTED VIA EMAIL TO:** carolyn.hodges@richlandone.org **The solicitation number must appear in the subject line of the email.**	**November 4, 2025 @ 10:00 am EST**
POST RESPONSE TO BID QUESTIONS	**November 4, 2025**
DEADLINE FOR BID:	**November 18, 2025 @ 2 PM EST**

Offer must be submitted in a sealed package. The Solicitation Number, Company Name, and Opening Date must appear on the package.

Offeror shall provide One (1) Original, one (1) Copy, and one (1) USB copy.

SUBMIT YOUR SEALED OFFER TO THE FOLLOWING ADDRESS:

Attn: Carolyn Hodges
Procurement Services
201 Park Street, Room 209
Columbia, S.C. 29201

AWARD& AMENDMENTS This solicitation, any amendments and award, will be posted at the following web address: https://www.richlandone.org/Page/306\

You must submit a signed copy of this form with Your Offer. By submitting a bid or proposal, You agree to be bound by the terms of the Solicitation. You agree to hold Your Offer open for a minimum of thirty (30) calendar days after the Opening Date

NAME OF OFFEROR **(Full legal name of business submitting the offer)**

AUTHORIZED SIGNATURE

(Person signing must be authorized to submit binding offer to enter contract on behalf of offeror named above)

TITLE **(Business Title of person signing above)**

PRINTED NAME **(Printed name of person signing above)**

OFFEROR'S TYPE OF ENTITY:
(Check one)

☐ Small
☐ Women
☐ Minority
☐ Other _____

(See provision entitled "Signing Your Offer")

Instructions regarding Offeror's Name: Any award issued will be issued to, and the contract will be formed with, the entity identified as the offeror above. An offer may be submitted by only one legal entity. The entity named as the offeror must be a single and distinct legal entity. Do not use the name of a branch office or a division of a larger entity if the branch or a division of a larger entity if the branch or division is not a separate legal entity, *i.e.,* a separate corporation, partnership, sole proprietorship, etc.

STATE OF INCORPORATION **(If Offeror is a corporation, identify the state of Incorporation.)**

TAXPAYER IDENTIFICATION NO. **(See "Taxpayer Identification Number" provision)**

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(Return Page Two with your Offer)

HOME OFFICE ADDRESS (Address for offeror's home office / principal place of business)	NOTICE ADDRESS (Address to which all procurement and contract related notices should be sent.) (See "Notice" clause)			
	Area Code	Number	Extension	Facsimile
	E-mail Address			

PAYMENT ADDRESS (Address to which payments will be sent.) (See "Payment" clause)	ORDER ADDRESS (Address to which purchase orders will be sent) (See "Purchase Orders" and "Contract Documents" clauses)
☐ Payment Address same as Home Office Address ☐ Payment Address same as Notice Address (check only one)	☐ Order Address same as Home Office Address ☐ Order Address same as Notice Address (check only one)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF AMENDMENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF AMENDMENTS	Amendment No.	Amendment Issue Date	Amendment No.	Amendment Issue Date	Amendment No.	Amendment Issue Date	Amendment No.	Amendment Issue Date
Offeror acknowledges receipt of amendment(s) by number and its date of issue. See "Amendments to Solicitation" Provision								

DISCOUNT FOR PROMPT PAYMENT See "Discount for Prompt Payment" clause	10 Calendar Days (%)	20 Calendar Days (%)	30 Calendar Days (%)	_____Calendar Days (%)

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NOTICE

Solicitation No. 2026-011
Provide Strategic Communications Services
Amendment No. 1

THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION SHALL BE INCORPORATED AS PART OF THE SOLICITATION MENTIONED ABOVE; ALL OTHER TERMS AND CONDITIONS SHALL REMAIN THE SAME.

Q1: Could you please confirm whether there is an incumbent agency currently providing your marketing services? If so, are they eligible to participate in this RFP?
A1: There is no incumbent agency currently.

Q2: Is there an established or estimated budget range for this project that respondents should be aware of when developing their proposals?
A2: The District will conduct negotiations with the highest rated firm to bring the best value to the District.

Q3: We recognize the submission deadline of November 18. Considering the complexity and breadth of the work outlined, would there be any flexibility in this timeline? An extension would help ensure proposals reflect the most thoughtful and detailed recommendations.
A3: Due to our aggressive timeline for work to be performed during 2026 the November 18 timeline is firm.

Q4: The scope of work outlined appears significant, with several key deliverables due by February 26. Would the client be open to recommendations or alternative timelines that ensure the highest quality and most effective outcomes?
A4: Due dates (i.e. February 26) are connected to dates that have already been communicated to the public.

Q5: Can you provide examples of the types of crisis communications you are requesting?
A5: Crisis communications would include providing guidance and counsel, suggested responses, district statements, news releases and talking points to use in responding to media inquiries and in sharing information with stakeholders regarding sensitive matters that could potentially cast the district in a negative light.

Q6: Do you have any concerns about using an agency in another state?
A6: No, but a firm that has experience working with clients in SC may be able to demonstrate a better understanding of context.

Q7: We're a small business with no official financial report or annual report available. How would you prefer us to submit financial info since official documents aren't available?
A7: The committee will consider letters from your accountant or bank confirming good standing.

Q8: Are you wanting the advisory sessions with district leadership to be in-person or will virtual meetings suffice?
A8: In person or virtual will suffice.

Q9: The scoring criteria include points for crisis management experience. The deliverables look like mostly district marketing and communication. What role do crisis management activities play in the scope of work? And how might that work budget-wise when/if a PR incident occurs?
A9: Crisis communications assistance would be on an as-needed basis depending upon when/if such incidents occur.

Q10: Will the contractor be responsible for the visual design of the "Vision 2030" strategic plan document in addition to the campaign materials?
A10: Yes.

Q11: The proposal mentions “rebuilding trust.” Is there additional background on Richland School District that we need for awareness while creating this proposal? What issues are we trying to solve?
A11: Qualitative and quantitative data suggest that the district has lost its connection with key community stakeholders (i.e. some parents, community leaders, business leaders, faith-based leaders, and elected officials) due to decisions that were made by the district that were perceived as shortsighted, insufficiently researched and/or partisan.

Q12: Can you say more about what success would look like for the goal of “Building excitement internally and externally for the campaign”?
A12: Generally, survey data would indicate that internal and external stakeholders understand the purpose of the vision and are committed to the changes necessary to achieve the vision.

Q13: Who are the most important audiences for the campaign? Are there specific groups we should consider along with students, families, teachers. admins and the larger community?
A13: All of the above are important. Our perspective is that vision is a comprehensive and detailed picture of the future that includes everyone. So, every stakeholder should be able to see themselves in the vision.

Q14: With what community partners do we need to work to ensure alignment of the campaign?
A14: You will be working with the Superintendent's office and Communications team. The vision will be informed by diagnostic finding which will be publicly available December 8th.

Q15: The clause titled Information Security – Definitions is referenced in the solicitation on pages 14 (Qualifications), 18 (Bankruptcy) and 21 (Indemnification), but the full text of the clauses is not provided. Is this clause applicable, and if so, can the full text be provided to the Offerors?
A15: INFORMATION SECURITY - DEFINITIONS The following definitions are used in those clauses that cross reference this clause. Compromise means disclosure of information to unauthorized persons, or a violation of the security policy of a system in which unauthorized intentional or unintentional disclosure, modification, destruction, or loss of an object may have occurred. Without limitation, the term “compromise” includes copying the data through covert network channels, or copying the data to unauthorized media, or disclosure of information in violation of any obligation imposed by this contract. Data means a subset of information in an electronic format that allows it to be retrieved or transmitted. District information means information (i) provided to Contractor by, or generated by Contractor for, the District, or (ii) acquired or accessed by Contractor as a result of performing the Work. Without limiting the foregoing, District information includes any information that Contractor acquires or accesses by software or web-based services, which includes, without limitation, any metadata or location data. District information excludes unrestricted information. Information means any communication or representation of knowledge such as facts, statistics, or opinions, in any medium or form, including textual, numerical, graphic, cartographic, narrative, or audiovisual. Information system means a discrete set of information resources organized for the collection, processing, maintenance, use, sharing, dissemination, or disposition of information. Public information means any specific information, regardless of form or format, that the State has actively and intentionally disclosed, disseminated, or made available to the public. Information is not public information solely because it may be subject to inspection pursuant to an unfulfilled public records request. Software means any computer program accessed or used by the District pursuant to or as a result of this contract. Third party means any person or entity other than the District, the Contractor, or any subcontractors at any tier. Unrestricted information means (1) public information

acquired other than through performance of the work, (2) information acquired by Contractor prior to contract formation, (3) information incidental to your contract administration, such as financial, administrative, cost or pricing, or management information, and (4) any ideas, concepts, know-how, methodologies, processes, technologies, techniques which Contractor develops or learns in connection with Contractor's performance of the work. Web-based service means a service accessed over the Internet and acquired, accessed, or used by the District or a third party pursuant to or as a result of this contract, including without limitation, cloud services, software-as-a-service, and hosted computer services.

Q16: As part of the social media and broadcast strategies, will there be a separate paid media budget, or is the expectation to focus primarily on earned media?
A16: The expectation is to focus primarily on earned media; however, the Communications Office has funds budgeted that are used for paid media.

Q17: For the broadcast strategy, is the focus solely on the Columbia, SC DMA, or will it extend to surrounding markets?
A17: The focus is Richland County, specifically the footprint of Richland School District One which includes Columbia and surrounding localities.

Q18: How does the district plan to involve students, staff, and families in message development and storytelling? Should the consultant lead these sessions, or will the district manage them?
A18: Message development and storytelling will be led jointly through collaboration between the consultant and the Office of Communications team.

Q19: Is there a particular reason for the launch date of February 26, 2026, for Vision 2030?
A19: No. Pre-established timeline that was communicated to the community.

Q20: The RFP references core values —such as inclusion, abundance, and oneness —and, under deliverables on the same page (p. 11), the RFP references the core messaging framework as Legacy, Abundance, and Oneness. Should these be the same?
A20: These are essentially the same. The Vision 2030 draft, publicly available January 5th, will provide additional detail on specificity and integration of these and other concepts.

Q21: You reference community partners? Can you share who those are? Individuals? Organizations?
A21: A list of community partners will be made available to the selected firm.

Q22: Can you elaborate on how the Rising Together campaign is expected to integrate with the district's Vision 2030 strategic plan? Should communications directly support specific pillars of the 2024-2029 Strategic Plan, or focus primarily on public awareness and trust-building?
A22: The Vision 2030 draft, publicly available January 5th, will provide additional detail on integration of Rising Together concept within the vision. Essentially, Rising Together is part of how the vision will be actualized. The current strategic plan will be revised, so the primary focus will be on public awareness of the vision and trust building process, pending the release of the new/revised strategic plan.

Q23: Does Richland One have existing brand and style guidelines the Rising Together identity must follow, or should the consultant propose a distinct sub-brand?
A23: We have a district brand toolkit with style guidelines, official district colors and the official district logo.

Q24: Are there any fixed milestones (e.g., board meetings, leadership events) that deliverables must align with beyond the February launch?

A24: No aligned fixed milestones have been identified at this point.

Q25: Will the district provide access to existing brand assets, photography, video libraries, and analytics to inform campaign development?
A25: Yes

Q26: Will firms without an existing physical presence or office in South Carolina be considered for this opportunity, provided they can demonstrate the capacity to meet all project requirements and timelines?
A26: Yes.

Q27: Will the review committee consider references that fall outside of the past three years if the experience is highly relevant to the scope of work outlined in this RFP, specifically work completed during the COVID-19 period that involved crisis communications with school districts?
A27: Yes, but emphasis will be placed on references that address the entire scope of work in a holistic way.

Q28: Can you describe the current structure and capacity of the Communications Office (staff size, roles, digital capabilities) to clarify how the consultant will integrate with internal operations?
A28: The seven full-time staff members in the Office of Communications are: Executive Director of Communications (supervises all internal and external communications activities), Executive Assistant (provides administrative and clerical support to the team), Marketing Coordinator (handles all marketing, advertising and branding for the district), Public Information Manager (handles media relations, news releases, media advisories; also writes feature stories on students/staff/programs and acts as the X/Twitter administrator)

********** **END OF AMENDMENT NO. 1**********

OFFEROR MUST ACKNOWLEDGE RECEIPT OF THIS AMENDMENT BEFORE THE DATE AND TIME SPECIFIED IN THE SOLICITATION, OR AS AMENDED, BY ONE OF THE FOLLOWING METHODS: (A) BY SIGNING AND RETURNING ONE COPY OF THIS AMENDMENT WITH YUR BID; (B) BY ACKNOWLEDGING RECEIPT OF THIS AMENDMENT ON EACH COPY OF THE OFFER SUBMITTED; OR (C) BY SEPARATE LETTER OR TELEGRAM WHICH INCLUDES A REFERENCE TO THE SOLICITATION AND AMENDMENT NUMBER(S). FAILURE OF YOUR ACKNOWLEDGEMENT TO BE RECEIVED AT THE ISSUING OFFICE BEFORE THE DATE AND TIME SPECIFIED MAY RESULT IN THE REJECTION OF YOUR OFFER. IF BY THIS AMENDMENT YOU DESIRE TO CHANGE AN OFFER ALREADY SUBMITTED, SUCH CHANGE MAY BE MADE BY LETTER OR TELEGRAM, PROVIDED SUCH LETTER OR TELEGRAM MAKES REFERENCE TO THE SOLICITATION AND THIS AMENDMENT AND IS RECEIVED BEFORE THE DATE AND TIME SPECIFIED.

ALL OTHER TERMS AND CONDITIONS REMAIN UNCHANGED