



North York  
Women's Shelter

## Request for Proposal for Strategic Communications Plan

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### Organization Mission

North York Women's Shelter actively supports the rights of women and children to build lives free of violence by providing non-judgmental safe shelter, advocacy, and a range of programs & services, including 24-hour crisis support.

### Description & History

"The history of North York Women's Shelter is a history of people who care, a history of individuals with drive and determination, of people fighting for a cause they know is right, a cause well worth fighting for." These were the words of Reta Duenish, the shelter's first president, who was a survivor of abuse and a life-long activist who faced up to her pain so others could live without violence.

The project to get a women's shelter in North York began in 1980 when the women's services committee of North York Inter Agency Council started proceedings to incorporate an organization to start a shelter. Reports from two North York hospitals which said they treat four or five cases of battered women a week was the catalyst for the creation of the project.

Since September of 1984 NYWS was in operation 24-hours a day, 365 days a year and was able to accommodate 30 women and children at any given time. As our understanding of violence against women continues to evolve, we recognize that the needs of our residents have shifted and grown; demanding a more complex, evidence-based and holistic response from us as an organization and as a society. From this day forward, we work to renew our efforts to serve women and children in a productive, supportive and impactful way.

The years took an extreme toll on the shelter building itself and the service needs of women fleeing abuse have shifted. Non-residential services are in short supply in the North York area, meaning that women living at the shelter have to travel long distances for services. We also badly needed more community-based research into violence against women and the development of public policy options.

With the NYWS building in poor repair and overcrowding being an issue, we began working on a proposal to obtain funds to renovate the shelter. On April 19, 2017 the federal and provincial governments announced \$8.84 million in funding for a total rebuild of North York Women's Shelter.

The new North York Women's organization will address all three service gaps by:

- Building a modern, accessible and trauma-informed new shelter from the ground up
- Creating associated wrap-around community services alongside the shelter
- Pioneering the development of an advocacy and research department that will contribute to evidence-based change in the issue of violence against for women.

Construction began in the Spring of 2017 and will be completed by the end of 2019.

## **Project Description and Objectives**

In 2018, NYWS entered into a contract with the agency Loop to help rebrand the agency and redesign the shelter's website. This work will be completed prior to the opening of the new building.

With the shelter reopening this year (35<sup>th</sup> year of operation), NYWS is looking for a consultant or agency to develop a strategic communications plan to raise awareness about the reopening and the rebranding.

**The key objective is to sharpen and simplify internal and external messaging, identify the appropriate and effective channels of communicating our message, and engage stakeholders.**

Proposals should include a review of NYWS's existing communications and online presence, with recommendations and a timeline for the best approach for the opening of the new building.

Companies must demonstrate a proven history of strategic and effective strategic communications plans and will be expected to work with NYWS's internal team.

The current communication tools currently used at North York Women's Shelter are:

- Website
- Mailchimp
- Print Newsletter
- Social Media (Facebook, Instagram, twitter, LinkedIn)

## Scope of Work

The scope of work to be performed may include, but is not limited to:

- Professional review of our current communications
- Develop a strategic plan to communicate the reopening of the shelter and the launch of the new brand/identity of the shelter
  - Include strategies around communicating the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the shelter
  - Should increase awareness on programs and services the new building will offer
  - Include tactics and platforms that support the core messaging
- Prepare and hold workshops with staff and key stakeholders
- Make recommendations for ongoing communication strategies
- Development of a strategic plan for creating and organizing content

## Tentative Schedule

The following is a proposed timeline, however, we would like to start this projects as soon as possible.

July 23, 2019	RFP Posting
August 9, 2019	Questions and Notice of Intent to Bid due
August 13, 2019	Questions and Answers Sent
August 16, 2019	Proposals Due
August 19, 2019	Finalists Chosen
Week of August 19, 2019	Presentations by Finalists
August 26, 2019	Selected Proposer Announced & Contract Negotiations Begin
August 28, 2019	Start Date

## Selection Criteria

NYWS is committed to selecting the most competitive offer. We will be looking for the best combination of expertise and value. We will also consider the following criteria:

- Understanding of all items requested in the RFP
- Demonstrated prior experience developing and implementing strategic communication plans for non-profit organizations.
- Quality, creativity and relevance of samples provided

- Suitability for project – current work load, staff size, references and a demonstrated effectiveness with similar projects
- Budget

## Process and Requirements

The offeror will provide NYWS with a Statement of Work (SOW) with the proposal as an engagement letter between both parties setting forth the following:

- A complete and detailed description of the type(s) of services rendered
- The applicable billing rates for the services to be rendered
- Any additional terms and conditions to which the parties may agree

NYWS will not provide any reimbursement for any cost associated with the development or presentation of a proposal.

The proposal should include:

- A response to all core needs outlined in the Scope of Work
- Examples and sample work
- References that reflect expertise and experience
- A fee schedule for work proposed
- Company Details, including:
  - Company name and parent company name
  - Ownership structure
  - Years in operation
  - Mailing address (headquarters)
  - Other office locations
  - Primary phone number
  - Website and blog URL
  - Primary point of contact (name, title, phone and email)
  - Bios of primary team members who would be engaged in this project
  - Total number of employees
- Overview of key resources applicable to the project
- What percentage of business is non-profit related
- Approach to project
  - What is your approach to understanding a new client's business and beginning work on a new account?
  - Explain methodology and planning process for plan development
  - Outline what content will be needed
  - Detail any technical requirements
  - Detail project management
  - Timeline to complete project

- Detailed Budget

## **RFP Logistics**

### **Intent to Bid**

If your company plans to submit a bid, please send an email by 4 p.m. on August 9, 2019 to [michelle@nyws.ca](mailto:michelle@nyws.ca).

### **Questions and Answers**

Questions, interpretations, or clarifications concerning this RFP should be directly emailed to [michelle@nyws.ca](mailto:michelle@nyws.ca) no later than 4 p.m. on August 9, 2019. Responses to questions, interpretations, or clarifications concerning this RFP will be sent to all bidders on August 13, 2019 to ensure equal awareness of important facts and details.

### **Proposal Submission**

Bids shall be emailed to [michelle@nyws.ca](mailto:michelle@nyws.ca) as “Attn: Strategic Communications RFP”.

Bids can also be delivered to NYWS head office no later than 3 p.m. on August 16, 2019.

North York Women’s Shelter  
20 De Boers Drive, Suite 333  
Toronto ON M3J 0H1