



## REQUEST FOR BIDS STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS CONSULTANT

December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2020

### I. BACKGROUND

Sprockets, Saint Paul's out-of-school time network, is designed as a citywide platform to ensure coordination of out-of-school learning opportunities and connections between in-school and out of school time (OST) learning. Sprockets is a public-private collaborative that includes the City of Saint Paul (Parks and Recreation, Libraries and Mayor's Office), Saint Paul Public Schools (SPPS), and over 50 community partners. The 3.5 staff are housed in 3 different organizations: The City of Saint Paul, Ignite Afterschool, and the YWCA of Saint Paul. Sprockets is a multi-layered, multi-sector initiative that is approaching its tenth anniversary.

*Its vision: All of Saint Paul's youth will develop their abilities as learners, contributors, and navigators so they can recognize and achieve their greatest potential.*

Sprockets, officially launched in March 2011, offers a platform or infrastructure for OST learning in Saint Paul – reliable information on OST programming achieved by a shared database, coordinated networks of neighborhood learning opportunities, and professional development initiatives aimed at improving youth program quality – to enlist and coordinate Saint Paul's many learning resources. Sprockets aims to improve access to quality learning opportunities for children and youth by sharing information with the public on the importance and availability of programs in Saint Paul, and through addressing barriers to access.

Sprockets employs the following five key strategies to achieve the impacts above:

- 1) Smart Planning
  - Secure funding • Ensure clear roles & responsibilities • Set priorities through multi-year plan
- 2) Vibrant Network
  - Align resources • Contribute to OST field • Increase collaboration • Advance racial equity • Lead strategic communication and advocacy • Influence supportive policies
- 3) Reliable Information
  - Identify opportunity gaps (e.g. service shortages) • Track participation & analyze program results • Show evidence of benefits
- 4) Equitable Access
  - Remove barriers to OST, particularly for disadvantaged youth (e.g. transportation, cost) • Communicate with youth and families
- 5) Strong Programs
  - Strengthen OST capacity • Adopt assessment tools • Provide access to resources and professional development for program improvement

Sprockets was founded with a steadfast commitment to reducing racial and other disparities for Saint Paul's youth. In all decisions both large and small, we consider the implications those decisions will have on equity in our community, and we work with our partners to advance equity and justice in all we do.

### II. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Sprockets seeks to create, using consultants, a ten-year anniversary effort using an iterative process of stakeholder engagement that will:

- Identify, document, and celebrate Sprockets accomplishments over its first ten years existence.
- Identify future strategic priorities for Sprockets.
- Create written reports and other mixed media to articulate the value of Sprockets and communicate how our past informs our future.

### **III. PROJECT SCOPE**

- 1) Create communication pieces and media that celebrates Sprockets accomplishments and articulates the potential of future activities and strategic priorities.
- 2) Engage stakeholders in facilitated conversations around Sprockets' impact and future strategic priorities.
- 3) Partner with Wilder Research to conduct an analysis of the activities and impact of Sprockets over its ten-year history.

#### Qualifications

- Experience creating compelling communications pieces.
- Strong written, digital, and verbal communications skills.
- Knowledge and expertise around utilizing technology to facilitate meetings and disseminate information in multiple ways.
- Developed strategic plans and/or evaluation reports for networks or intermediaries.
- Knowledge of Sprockets and the context for system building in St. Paul.
- Experience working with and providing technical assistance to city leaders and agencies; non-profit organizations and school districts.
- Flexibility and responsiveness in style.
- Ability to articulate insights out of complexity.

### **IV. BIDS**

Bids should address the following aspects:

#### Management:

The bid should identify a key individual or team who will carry out the tasks.

#### Budget:

The bid should include a project budget which identifies costs for staff/consultants, materials, and other expenses associated with performing the project, coaching, preparing written, and other mixed media materials, and regular conversations with Sprockets staff. Sprockets anticipates a project budget between \$20,000 and \$30,000.

#### Qualifications:

The proposal should include the applicant's qualifications for this work. Please note any specific experience relating to working with community-based and nonprofit development organizations.

#### Timeline

January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2021 Deadline for bid submission

**Please submit bids and direct questions to:**

Erik Skold, Director, Sprockets

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