

BRIDGEPORT DOWNTOWN SPECIAL SERVICES DISTRICT REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Marketing and Communications Consultant Contract

I. INTRODUCTION

Downtown Bridgeport is a commercial area that represents and serves a diverse tapestry of the wider Bridgeport community. The independently owned restaurants and shops that populate the street-level spaces in our neighborhood create connection points that foster the sense of community so special to the Downtown and the city. The Bridgeport Downtown Special Services District [hereafter “BptDSSD” or “the District”] serves as the business improvement district for the Park City’s central business corridor. The BptDSSD is tasked with promoting the preservation and development of the downtown business district; making the area more attractive and accessible; and enhancing the public perception of Downtown Bridgeport. The BptDSSD exists to support economic development and equitable growth in Bridgeport’s downtown commercial corridor.

To accomplish this charge, the BptDSSD bolsters the sense of culture and community in the heart of Downtown through environmental maintenance, open space beautification, and security services. Furthermore, the BptDSSD – in collaboration with the City of Bridgeport and local/regional cultural organizations – implements special events and also markets downtown businesses, institutions, and cultural events.

The BptDSSD is one type of special taxing district Connecticut law authorizes whereby property owners in a geographical area oversee and fund the maintenance, improvement, and promotion of their commercial district. DSSDs deliver services above and beyond those provided by the City of Bridgeport, all funded by a special assessment paid by property owners within the district. Property owners within the BptDSSD contribute an additional three mills on top of their property tax assessment to pay for programming and services. The BptDSSD’s district includes 171 taxable properties within 30 blocks in the heart-shaped downtown of Bridgeport, Connecticut. There are 130+ culture, dining, shopping, and service businesses enlivening the ground floor spaces within the district. See Attachment A: District Map for the complete district boundaries.

The BptDSSD is operated under the direction of a thirteen-member Board of Commissioners, nine of whom are property owners and four of whom are leaseholders, in addition to an ex-officio member who is the Mayor of Bridgeport. The DSSD’s fiscal year (FY) is July 1 to June 30. The budget for the most recent and current fiscal years were as follows:

REVENUES	FY 2026	FY 2027
Property Tax Assessment	\$699,088	\$918,000
Grants and Event Sponsorships	\$110,647	\$234,364
Other Revenue	\$1,401	\$1,322
TOTAL REVENUE	\$811,137	\$1,153,686
EXPENSES		
General + Administrative	\$219,497	\$322,796

Streetscape Maintenance	\$450,794	\$599,869
Marketing + Events	\$70,735	\$150,440
Creative Placemaking	\$68,147	\$73,771
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$809,173	\$1,146,876
Net Revenue (Expense)	\$1,964	\$6,810

The BptDSSD seeks to contract with a firm or individual to develop and implement our external communications strategy across multiple platforms in alignment with the DSSD's mission and goals stated above. Because BptDSSD is a State-authorized agency that receives funding from District property owners and investment from the City of Bridgeport and the local business community, the District may give preference to those companies that are headquartered in or maintain offices in the municipality of Bridgeport.

II. SCOPE OF SERVICES

BptDSSD seeks to improve ownership values by making Downtown Bridgeport a regionally competitive urban environment in which to live, work, create, and play. To achieve its mission, the District has created a multi-channel marketing campaign, Colorful Bridgeport, with the goal of establishing Downtown Bridgeport as a desirable commercial and residential destination based on its distinct identity and in alignment with the BptDSSD's vision for the District: A friendly, eclectic business and residential community flourishing at the intersection of commerce, community, and culture(s).

BptDSSD seeks to retain a Marketing and Communications Contractor [hereafter "Contractor"] to build upon and enhance our Colorful Bridgeport external communications strategy across multiple platforms (web, social, print) in alignment with the BptDSSD's goals and vision. This scope of work is contract-based (IRS Form 1099) and will consist of a minimum of 40 hours per month both onsite and remote office hours. The BptDSSD has budgeted \$90,000 per fiscal year for this scope of activity. The BptDSSD reserves the right to adjust the billable hours, and staffing levels, of any contractor on a regular basis.

The Consultant will manage the BptDSSD's image in a cohesive way to achieve our marketing goals and express our views creatively. Below are high-level responsibilities, as well as examples of specific tasks the DSSD is expecting the selected Consultant to take on.

A. Strategy Development

The Contractor will assist the DSSD to craft an external communications and marketing strategy that builds upon and enhances the Colorful Bridgeport campaign platform, including, but not limited to:

- Strategize and manage the continued rollout of a cohesive campaign across all Colorful Bridgeport channels, including the website, newsletter, print materials, and social media; as well as relevant print, radio, and other media outlets.
- Develop messaging and visual communication tactics that engage existing audiences while building brand equity and attracting new audience members through calls to action and improved experience.
- Coordinate and advise on regular content (photography, videography, newsletter, and press release copy).
- Collaborate with other organization partners to ensure brand consistency.

B. Communications Materials and Channels

The Contractor will design print, web-based, street banner, and other communication materials that achieves high levels of web traffic and constituent engagement as follows:

- Generate, edit, publish, and share engaging content (e.g. original text, photos, videos, and news) on social media channels that promote Downtown Bridgeport businesses, events, and programming produced by BptDSSD and partner organizations.
- Communicate with followers, respond to queries in a timely manner, and monitor reviews.
- Illustrate communication material concepts by designing rough layout of art and copy regarding arrangement, size, type size, and related aesthetic concepts.
- Obtain approval of concept by submitting rough layout for review.
- Complete projects by coordinating with outside agencies, art services, printers, etc.

C. Media Budget Planning and Management

The Contractor will strategically plan, manage, and implement an annual media budget designed to maximize visibility, community engagement, and campaign impact as follows:

- Develop the direction, creative, content, and copywriting required for ongoing monthly social media advertising and boosting, targeted transit advertising program, billboard and digital outdoor placements, radio advertising, and a small allocation for experimental or guerilla-style initiatives that create unexpected, high-impact moments.
- Ensure that messaging is compelling and cohesive across all channels.
- Oversee vendor coordination, placement scheduling, and creative alignment.
- Monitor all media efforts on an ongoing basis to ensure the budget is being deployed strategically and effectively, with particular attention to campaign placements performance related to estimated reach, engagement, follower growth, and top-performing content across all channels.

D. Events and Placemaking

- Strategize event concepts that engage existing audiences while building brand equity and attracting new audience members through improved event experience.
- Develop messaging and visual communications in connection to planned events that complement the Colorful Bridgeport campaign across communication channels, including the website, newsletter, print materials, and social media; as well as relevant print, radio, and other media outlets.
- Strategize and plan public artworks projects that complement the Colorful Bridgeport campaign goals, and that can be implemented within the Downtown Bridgeport district.

E. Campaign Reporting

The Contractor will provide monthly reports to inform on campaign success, as well as any needed adjustments, including:

- Website analytics: traffic, clicks, etc
- Social media: engagement and growth, etc
- Print: advertising placements, engagement
- Radio/TV: advertising placements, engagement
- Online advertising: placements, engagement
- Content creation: what content was created for this period
- Hours: how many hours were billed for each activity in this period

The Contractor will participate in meetings with the DSSD Board of Commissioners and Special Events and Marketing Committee, as requested.

III. TERMS OF THE CONTRACT

The selected Contractor will be bound by the contract with the BptDSSD to comply with the following provisions:

- A. The initial contract term shall be thirty six (36) months. The contract will commence on July 1, 2027 and terminate on June 30, 2030 with three (3) twelve-month extensions at BptDSSD's sole option.
- B. BptDSSD must notify the Contractor of its intention to renew no later than 30 days prior to the end of the initial term (June 30, 2030).
- C. This scope of work is contract-based (IRS Form 1099) and will consist of a minimum of 40 hours per month both onsite and remote office hours. The BptDSSD reserves the right to adjust the billable hours, and staffing levels, of any contractor on a regular basis.
- D. Unless specifically provided, the price agreed upon by the Contractor and BptDSSD for the stated services shall be the confirmed price delivered in writing and will not be subject to change for the term and the renewal year, if appropriate. The price includes all sales, franchise, or other taxes with regard to the work, which shall be paid by the Contractor. The Contractor assumes exclusive liability for and shall pay all contributions or taxes imposed or required by the unemployment insurance laws of the State of Connecticut, The Federal Social Security Act, or any other act, now or hereafter in effect, upon or in respect to wages, salaries, or other compensation paid to employees engaged upon or in connection with the work to be performed.
- E. SUBCONTRACTING: The Contractor shall not subcontract or assign all or any portion of the performance to be rendered hereunder without the express prior written approval of the District at its sole discretion. The Contractor shall not be relieved of any obligations hereunder by reason of any such approved subcontracting. The Contractor shall verify and provide a copy of insurance certificates for any and all subcontractors. The coverage shall be as per Section III.S.
- F. INDEMNIFICATION: The Contractor will assume liability for, and agree to indemnify, defend, keep, and hold the BptDSSD, their members, agents, and employees harmless from any and all obligations, claims, damages, loss, penalties, actions, suits, judgments, or liabilities including costs, expenses and disbursements, legal or otherwise, to which they may be subject because of any act or omission of the Contractor, its agents, employees, subcontractors, contractors, or permittees in connection with this Contract. The Contractor shall be solely responsible for the safety and protection of all its employees and shall assume all liability for injuries, including death that may occur to said employees due to the negligence, fault, or default of the Contractor. The Contractor shall also require such indemnification from its contractors, subcontractors, and permittees.
- G. WARRANTIES: The Contractor warrants that services of any nature furnished hereunder shall be rendered competently by qualified personnel in accordance with the best-accepted practice. The Contractor further warrants that such services comply with all requirements of federal, state, and local laws and regulations, including, without limitation, The Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970.
- H. INDEPENDENT CONTRACTOR AND LICENSEE: Notwithstanding anything contained herein to the contrary, it is specifically understood and agreed that in the performance of the terms, covenants, and conditions of the contract, neither the Contractor nor any of its employees, agents, independent contractors, subcontractors, or permittees shall be deemed to be acting as agents, servants, or

employees of BptDSSD by virtue of this Contract or by virtue of any approval, permit, license, grant, right, or other authorization given by the District or any of its officers, agents, or employees pursuant to this contract, but shall be deemed to be independent contractors performing services for BptDSSD or the Contractor, as the case may be, without power or authority to bind the District, and shall be deemed solely responsible for all acts taken or omitted by them in the performance of or otherwise pursuant to this Contract.

- I. ASSIGNMENT: The Contractor shall not assign, transfer, convey, or otherwise dispose of this Contract or any part thereof, or of its interest herein or assign, by power of attorney or otherwise, any of the moneys due or to become due under this contract, without the consent of BptDSSD, at its sole discretion.
- J. CLAIMS OR ACTIONS:
 - 1. The Contractor shall look solely to the funds appropriated by BptDSSD for this Contract for the satisfaction of any claim or cause of action the Contractor may have against the District in connection with this Contract or the failures of the District to perform any of its obligations hereunder. No member officer, employee, agent or other person authorized to act on behalf of BptDSSD or the Contractor shall have any personal liability in connection with this Contract or any failure of the District or the Contractor to perform its obligations hereunder. The Contractor agrees that no action against BptDSSD in connection with this Contract shall be initiated unless such action is commenced within six (6) months after (i) the termination of this Contract, or (ii) the cause for said action takes place, whichever is earliest.
 - 2. The Contractor further agrees that they shall bring or maintain no legal action other than in the Superior Court of the State of Connecticut, Judicial District of Bridgeport at Bridgeport, Connecticut.
- K. TERMINATION AND CANCELLATION: The Contract is subject to cancellation by either party for cause, i.e. material failure to perform, upon ten (10) days written notice, and BptDSSD may cancel without cause with sixty (60) days written notice. In the event of such cancellation, payment to the Contractor shall be adjusted on a pro-rata basis or refunded to the District on a pro-rata basis. If applicable, this includes the amount of a prorated portion of the monthly fees due; and the DSSD shall pay all expenses that fall under Additional Costs (Section III.O.3) incurred through and up to the date of cancellation.
- L. FORCE MAJEURE: The Contractor shall not be deemed in breach of the contract if Contractor is unable to complete the services or any portion thereof by reason of fire, earthquake, labor dispute, act of God or public enemy, death, illness or incapacity of Contractor or any local, state, federal, national or international law, governmental order or regulation or any other event beyond Contractor's control (collectively, "Force Majeure Event"). Upon occurrence of any Force Majeure Event, Contractor shall give notice to the DSSD of its inability to perform or of delay in completing the services and shall propose revisions to the schedule for completion of the services.
- M. NO WAIVER
 - 1. The failure of either party to enforce or otherwise require strict performance of any of the terms or conditions of the Contract or of the party's right in any one or more instances shall not

constitute a waiver by the party of such performance, terms, conditions, or rights either then or for the future.

2. Any waiver shall be effective only if in writing and signed by the party's authorized representative, and only with respect to the particular case expressly covered therein.

N. COMPLIANCE WITH LAWS: The Contractor shall comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, executive orders, regulations and rules. The Contractor shall defend, hold harmless, and indemnify BptDSSD from any fines, penalties, and expenses that the District may suffer by reason of the breach or non-observance by the Contractor of its obligations under this agreement. The Contractor shall provide EEO certificate of compliance.

O. PAYMENT SCHEDULE

1. Payments shall be made on a monthly basis. Invoices received by the tenth (10th) of the month will be made within 30 days after receiving an appropriate invoice.
2. The certified invoice with necessary backup material shall include a written summary of the previous month's deliverables and outcomes. The Contractor and DSSD President + CEO will determine the final format of this report.
3. Any additional monthly fees will be negotiated and agreed upon before signing the Contract. Any and all outside costs will be billed to the DSSD as a separate line item with the monthly invoice. Receipt of purchases under additional costs will accompany the monthly invoice by the Contractor. No item or expense outside of the normal scope of this contract shall be invoiced without prior approval of the expenditure by BptDSSD.

P. ACCREDITATION: All displays or publications of the deliverables produced in accordance with the contract shall bear accreditation and/or copyright notice in the Contractor's name in the form, size, and location as incorporated by the Contractor in the deliverables, or as otherwise directed by the Contractor. The Contractor retains the right to reproduce, publish and display the deliverables in the Contractor's portfolios and websites, and in galleries, design periodicals, and other media or exhibits for the purposes of recognition of creative excellence or professional advancement, and to be credited with authorship of the deliverables in connection with such uses. Either party, subject to the other's reasonable approval, may describe its role in relation to the deliverables produced in accordance with this contract and, if applicable, the services provided to the other party on its website and in other promotional materials, and, if not expressly objected to, include a link to the other party's website. The BptDSSD will retain ownership of all artwork or work product created in accordance with the contract.

Q. BOOKS, RECORDS, AUDITS, AND INSPECTIONS

1. The Contractor shall keep accurate records and books in accordance with Accrual Based Accounting for a six-year period.
2. Such books and records shall include, but not be limited to, employee time and payment; accounts receivable and payable; purchase orders and sales receipts; liabilities and payments rendered for the purposes of the Contract.
3. All books and records of the Contractor shall be available upon three business days' notice for the purpose of verifying compliance with the terms of the Contract and applicable law.

R. PERMITS

1. The Contractor shall be responsible for obtaining permits and licenses if required by the City or State of Connecticut for any work to be performed.
2. BptDSSD shall be provided with a copy of any aforementioned permits or licenses.

S. INSURANCE

1. The Contractor shall, throughout the duration of the Contract, at its expense, carry and from time to time renew, the following insurance:
 - i. Worker's Compensation Insurance in statutory amounts;
 - ii. Employer's Liability Insurance in the minimum amount of \$500,000;
 - iii. Comprehensive General Liability Insurance including broad form contractual liability coverage for Contractor's indemnification as provided for in this Contract;
 - iv. Non-occupational and Disability Insurance, if required by the State.
2. All of such policies shall be on an "occurrence basis" and BptDSSD shall be named as additional insureds under Contractor's General Liability insurance policy. Within thirty (30) days prior to expiration of such insurance similar updated certificates shall be delivered by Contractor to BptDSSD evidencing the renewal of such insurance. All certificates of insurance must contain a definite provision that if the policies of insurance evidenced by such certificates are canceled or changed during the periods of coverage as stated therein, in such a manner as to effect the coverage afforded by such policies, written notice will be mailed to BptDSSD by certified mail and return receipt requested at least thirty (30) days prior to such cancellation or change.
3. Contractor's Comprehensive General Liability Insurance shall be primary, and any such insurance maintained by BptDSSD shall be secondary and non-contributory and excess over the Comprehensive General Liability Insurance to be maintained by Contractor.

IV. HOW TO APPLY

Applicants should submit a proposal, which includes the below information, no later than 5:00 p.m. on Friday, October 16, 2026, to:

Bridgeport Downtown Special Services District
Attn: Lauren Coakley Vincent
938 Broad Street
Bridgeport, CT 06604
Email: lauren.dssd@colorfulbridgeport.com

A. Company/business information

- Name, address, telephone number, and email addresses
- History (years in business, how the company started, etc.)
- Legal structure (privately or publicly held, incorporation information)
- Business unit and individuals to be responsible for providing/managing contracted services, including detailed resumes of primary project representatives. Describe role of individual(s) in managing contract and percentage of time expected to be devoted to contract.
- Reference names and contact information for similar contracts with other organizations.
- Reference name and contact information from an account recently transferred away from proposer's firm.
- Contractor shall be fully licensed as may be required under Connecticut State Law. The Contractor must submit updated copies of such license to the DSSD.

- Explain how BptDSSD would realize a specific advantage from the use of the Contractor's organization. Describe the quality programs your organization has adopted which directly impact your ability to meet the BptDSSD's objectives.

B. Proposal for providing marketing and communications services

- *Portfolio* – Provide examples of past work with similar types of organizations. In particular, be sure to highlight experience in coordinated, multi-platform campaigns; graphic design for print and digital; social media strategies with respective results; website design, content management, and analytics; and relevant examples of public relations work.
- *Scope of services* – Describe how you will deliver the services outlined in Section I. Scope of Services above.
- *Local connections* – Demonstrate familiarity with Downtown Bridgeport, leadership, and ability to work collaboratively with a diverse range of stakeholders. Include a description of why your firm is passionate about building the local community and economy by developing vibrant district marketing campaigns and communication tools.
- *Timeline* – Show sequence of steps from award notification to deployment of staff and programming, anticipated July 1, 2027.
- *Pricing / Budget* – Include a detailed breakdown of fees at the company's standard billing rates for not-for-profit agencies based on the amount of time required at various levels of responsibility, inclusive of out-of-pocket expenses, for the three years covered in the contract: Fiscal years 2027, 2028, and 2029 ending on June 30th of each year.
- *Accountability for performance* – Explain how your performance will be demonstrated and measured with examples of how you have delivered on performance to clients in the past.

C. Selection Process

BptDSSD reserves the right to reject any or all of the proposers, to waive any informalities in the proposals received and to accept the proposals deemed in the best interest of BptDSSD. BptDSSD also reserves the right to interview and negotiate with selected respondents after all proposals have been reviewed and award a contract as it deems is in its best interest.

Proposals will first be examined to eliminate those that do not respond to the stated requirements and to identify the most qualified responses. Any and all costs and expenses associated with the preparation of any report, statement, or proposal in response to the RFP shall be borne by the proposer.

The most qualified responses will be evaluated in detail. Additional information may be sought from proposers. Proposers may be asked to present and explain their proposals as well as attend an interview.

Criteria by which all proposals will be evaluated include:

1. Ability of the proposer to satisfy all requirements for successful completion of the assignment, including the contractor's experience and demonstrated ability to successfully manage a district marketing campaign for an organization like BptDSSD or similar environment;
2. Best total cost solution while meeting the objective of the BptDSSD;
3. Demonstrated responsiveness to client concerns; demonstrated ability to resolve problems quickly and appropriately;
4. Potential review of existing service contracts;

5. Ability to successfully negotiate a written agreement for services; and
6. Interview evaluation process, if interviews are conducted.

The RFP and Selection timeframe is as follows:

- Monday, September 14, 2026 – Issue date of Request for Proposals
- Monday, September 28, 2026 – Pre-bid Conference: BptDSSD will hold an optional pre-bid informational meeting at 10:00 a.m. via Zoom. RSVP to lauren.dssd@colorfulbridgeport.com for login details.
- Friday, October 2, 2026 – Questions are due from bidders by 2:00 p.m.
- Monday, October 5, 2026 – Questions will be answered by BptDSSD via email.
- Friday, October 16, 2026 – Proposals are due by 5:00 p.m.
- Selection no later than Monday, November 30, 2026.

Attachment A: District Map

