



# REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

## **Strategic Communications Planning**

**Lac La Biche County RFP  
Number: COM-12-2021-01**

**Proposal Closing Date  
and Time:**

Proposals must be received by Friday,  
December 17, 2021 at 16:00 (MST),  
emailed to:

[COM-12-2021-01@laclabichecounty.com](mailto:COM-12-2021-01@laclabichecounty.com)



*Lac La Biche County*  
welcoming by nature.

## 1. Introduction

Lac La Biche County invites proposals from qualified consulting firms to facilitate and draft a 3 to 5-year strategic communications plan. The plan will define high-level communications goals for the organization and recommend tactics on how to meet these priorities.

## 2. County Background

Lac La Biche County is a specialized municipality in northeastern Alberta that serves around 8,500 urban and rural permanent residents and covers more than 12,000 square kilometres. There are two urban centres in the County's borders (the hamlets of Lac La Biche and Plamondon), which contain about one-third of the municipality's population and provides services to a trade area estimated at just under 27,000 people.

Lac La Biche County is a historic and diverse community, and the beautiful Lakeland region has a long and colourful backstory. Home to Indigenous peoples for thousands of years, the area has a wealth of ethnic and cultural groups, all bringing their unique traditions and influences to contribute to this distinctive community.

While the oil and gas, agriculture and forestry industries are important economic drivers in the area, the region's 152 lakes and numerous green spaces are a draw for thousands of visitors and seasonal residents during the summer months. Furthermore, the County is also home to the main campus of Portage College, which is a draw for students, faculty and college personnel.

The County's mission, vision and administrative guiding principles are reflective of our desire to provide top-quality services and facilities, while striving for excellence in all we do. We have prioritized engagement, communication and collaboration in the provision of services.

Lac La Biche County is governed by a nine-member Council, with a Mayor elected at large and eight Councillors representing seven wards (the hamlet of Lac La Biche is represented by two members). Council appoints a full-time Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) who is the head of the organization and serves as the professional administrator of the organization.

As a specialized municipality, the County provides services to urban and rural areas, as defined by Council's policies. The provision of these services delivered through the following organizational areas:

<b>Chief Administrative Officer</b>	<b>Corporate Services</b>	<b>Finance &amp; Planning</b>	<b>Recreation &amp; Community Services</b>	<b>Infrastructure Services</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tourism</li> <li>• Economic Development</li> <li>• Health &amp; Safety Human Resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legislative Services</li> <li>• Information Technology</li> <li>• Graphical Information Systems</li> <li>• Communications</li> <li>• Records Management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finance</li> <li>• Planning &amp; Development</li> <li>• Community Group Support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family &amp; Community Support Services</li> <li>• Recreation Programming &amp; Facilities</li> <li>• Enforcement Services</li> <li>• Fire Services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transportation</li> <li>• Utilities (water, sewer, natural gas)</li> <li>• Environmental, Agricultural &amp; Waste Services</li> <li>• Engineering</li> <li>• Equipment Services</li> <li>• Airport Operations</li> </ul>

### 3. Current Communications Program

The County's Communication Program is guided by the Corporate Communications Planning Policy, with the Communications department leading the implementation. The Communications department is comprised of three-full time positions (a Manager and two Coordinators) along with casual and summer employees. In addition to professional writing expertise, the Communications department manages the County's brands and in-house graphic design services.

The communications program is delivered by a mix of centralized and decentralized actions; certain aspects of the communications program are managed directly by or through the Communications department, however other aspects are carried out by the initiating department. Further, the County occasionally contracts some services.

The County uses a variety of communications tools, some of which include:

- websites and social media
- livestreamed Council meetings
- recreation and community guides
- newsprint and radio ads, as well as paid radio/on-line interviews
- intranet, email and other tools for internal audiences
- newsletters and media releases
- budget and year-in-review documents
- open houses and surveys
- citizen reporting & emergency reporting apps
- legislated notices and advertising

### 4. Objective

The County is seeking a consultant to prepare a communication plan that:

- defines the County's communication goals for the next 3 to 5-years;
- sets out an implementation strategy and tactics to meet these goals;
- recommends administrative operating models, providing options for departmental roles in delivering on the goals; and
- estimates costs and resources for implementing the plan.

### 5. Scope of Work

The work of the consultant includes, but is not limited to, the following deliverables:

- Facilitate discussions with elected officials to define high-level communications goals for the County.
- Facilitate a stakeholder engagement process relating to the project objectives.
- Interview staff regarding goals and current practices.
- Evaluate current service levels and delivery models.
- Assess organizational coordination and capacity for maintaining and/or enhancing communications efforts.
- Coordinate with Communications staff on development of tactics to meet the priorities.
- Prepare the a written communications report/strategy which includes:
  - An assessment of current processes and recommendations for changes based on the established goals, best or promising practices and organizational needs.

- A recommended implementation plan including short, medium, and longer term actions and estimated costs and resource requirements.

In addition to preparing the draft and final reports, the consultant will be required to present to the Senior Leadership Team and County Council.

## 6. Collaboration

The selected proponent will work closely with the County's Project Manager and other project team members as required.

## 7. RFP Questions and Communications

Any questions regarding the submission process or technical aspects of the project may be made via email to the Project Manager at [COM-12-2021-01@laclabichcounty.com](mailto:COM-12-2021-01@laclabichcounty.com). All RFP-related questions must be submitted by December 1, 2021 at 16:00 (MST).

Only email communication will be accepted. All responses will be provided via addenda posted on Alberta Purchasing Connection.

## 8. Schedule

The following is an outline of the selection procedure and a time schedule:

<b>Event</b>	<b>Date</b>
RFP Open	November 17, 2021
Clarification/Question Cut Off	December 1, 2021
Proposal Submission / RFP Close	December 17, 2021

The tentative timeline for awarding this contract is by January 31, 2022.

The project is expected to be complete, with the final report/strategy submitted to the County no later than July 31, 2022.

## 9. Proposal Format and Requirements

The proposal should include the qualifications requested below. Information should be complete and demonstrate that the proponent can perform the work requested.

### 9.1 Introduction

Prepare a brief introduction showcasing an understanding of the scope and complexity of the required work.

### 9.2 Project Plan and Timeline

Outline the proposed work plan, including a description of deliverables, activities, key performance indicators and time estimates for completing each element.

### 9.3 Personnel

Identify individuals and list qualifications of key personnel who would be assigned to the project. Detail experience in work related to the proposed assignment. Identify the project manager who will serve as the main contact.

### 9.4 Experience and Client References

Provide company contact information, how long you have been in business, and what services you provide. Identify and briefly describe related work completed in the last three years. Describe only work related to this RFP.

Provide at least three examples of other municipalities or organizations where you have successfully completed similar work.

Three client references with contact names and phone numbers are required.

### **9.5 Pricing and Budget**

Based on the preliminary scope of work, provide a breakdown of the estimated cost of this project, including expenditures for services, materials, travel, communication with client and any other costs. Contract costs and fees will be negotiated with the selected proponent.

## **10. Evaluation Criteria**

Proposals will be ranked based upon the merits of the written proposal and the qualifications and experience of the consultant team. Each reviewer will award a score based on a 100-point total as follows:

<b>Evaluation Criteria</b>	<b>Weight</b>
Understanding of project goals	25%
Approach and methodology	30%
Qualifications of project team and the proponent's relevant experience	25%
Total Cost	20%

The County reaffirms its right to make any selection it deems prudent and responding firms or individual participants acknowledge through their participation that such selection is not subject to protest or contest.

The successful proponent selected will perform a variety of duties as agreed upon in the final negotiated scope of work. The selected proponent and the County will finalize the contract terms and conditions. If the County and the selected proponent are unable to agree on terms and conditions at this point, the County may exercise its right to negotiate with other vendors.

## **11. Submission**

Interested proponents will provide one PDF version of the proposal, referencing RFP number COM-12-2021-01 and sent via email to: [COM-12-2021-01@laclabichedcounty.com](mailto:COM-12-2021-01@laclabichedcounty.com).

Proposals will not be accepted if received after 16:00 (MST) on Friday, December 17, 2021.

The County reserves the right to amend or revise this Request for Proposal.

## **12. Mandatory Proposal Rejections**

Proposals which omit any of the following may be rejected by Lac La Biche County at its sole discretion:

- Pricing and costs;
- Corporate profile and personnel qualifications; and

- Minimum three references.

### **13. Shortlisted Proponents**

A short-list of up to three of the highest evaluated proponents will be determined. The evaluation team may schedule interviews/presentations with one or more proponent in order to seek clarification and to provide a further opportunity to assess the short-listed proponents' understanding of the project requirements. Evaluations may be modified after interviews.

### **14. Award**

Subject to the right to negotiate with other proponents as described in sections 10 and 16.9, the evaluation team may seek to negotiate a contract with the proponent that provided the proposal with the highest evaluated total score.

### **15. Procurement Method**

Request for Proposal posted competitively on Alberta Purchasing Connection.

### **16. General Terms and Conditions**

#### **16.1 Notice of nonbinding solicitation**

Lac La Biche County reserves the right to reject any and all proposals received in response to this solicitation and is in no way bound to accept any proposal or to enter into a contract in relation to the Request for Proposal.

#### **16.2 Confidentiality**

All information provided by Lac La Biche County as part of this solicitation must be treated as confidential. In the event that any information is inappropriately released, the County will seek appropriate remedies allowed. Proposals, discussions, and all information received in response to this solicitation will be held as strictly confidential, except as otherwise noted.

#### **16.3 Communication**

All communications regarding this solicitation shall be directed to the appropriate parties at Lac La Biche County.

#### **16.4 Acceptance**

Acceptance of a proposal does not constitute an agreement. Lac La Biche County reserves the option to negotiate on the final terms and conditions. We additionally reserve the right to negotiate the substance of the finalists' proposals, as well as the option of accepting partial components of a proposal, if appropriate.

#### **16.5 Right to final negotiations**

Lac La Biche County reserves the option to negotiate the final costs, scope of work and modified terms and conditions as well as the option to limit or include third parties at Lac La Biche County's sole and full discretion in such negotiations.

#### **16.6 Rights to data**

Lac La Biche County will have ownership rights to all data generated by the project. Lac La Biche County will collaborate with the contractor on publications of findings.

This RFP should not be considered as an agreement to purchase goods or services. Lac La Biche County is not bound to negotiate a contract with any proponent. Proposals will be assessed in light of the evaluation criteria. The County will be under no obligation to receive further information, whether written or oral, from any proponent.

Neither acceptance of a proposal nor execution of a contract will constitute approval of any activity or development contemplated in any proposal that requires any approval, permit or license pursuant to any federal, provincial, regional district or municipal statute, regulation or bylaw.

**16.7 Definition of contract**

Only the full execution of a written contract will constitute a contract for the services, and no proponent will acquire any legal or equitable rights or privileges relative to the services until this occurs.

**16.8 Right to accept or reject proposals**

Lac La Biche County reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals in whole or in part, whether irregular, non-conforming or non-compliant.

**16.9 Delay in negotiating a contract**

If a written contract cannot be negotiated with the successful proponent, Lac La Biche County may, at its sole discretion at any time thereafter, terminate negotiations with the proponent and either negotiate a contract with the next qualified proponent or choose to terminate the solicitation process and not enter into a contract with any of the proponents.

**16.10 Limitation of liability**

By submitting a proposal, each proponent agrees that any claim that the proponent may have against Lac La Biche County (and its consultants, employees, agents, and elected officials) for damages, losses, or expenses or for any other legal relief whatsoever, arising, directly or indirectly, in relation to this procurement process (whether in contract, tort, or other legal theory) is limited to payment of the reasonable third-party costs in preparing the proposal to a maximum of \$500.

Further, each proponent specifically waives as against Lac La Biche County (and its consultants, employees, agents, and elected officials) any claim for consequential or indirect damages, loss of profit, loss of business opportunity, judicial review or injunctive relief.

**17. Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy**

This Request for Proposal is subject to all applicable legislation including the *Municipal Government Act*, the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, the bylaws and policies of Lac La Biche County, and all other relevant governing legislation.