2027 Outsourced Communications Management & Capacity-Building Partnership

RFP Issue Date:	November 19, 2026
Questions Due:	**December 4, 2026**
Proposals Due	**December 18, 2026**
Anticipated Start Date:	January 4, 2027
Proposal Contact:	Ashley Andyshak Hayes, Chief Development Officer, aandyshakhayes@cactricounty.org
Anticipated Contract Term:	January 4, 2027 – December 31, 2027, with any extension subject to mutual written request

About Tri County Community Action

Tri County Community Action (TCCA) is a community action agency serving Cumberland, Dauphin, and Perry Counties in central Pennsylvania. Our mission is to build on the strengths of individuals and families, provide solutions, and empower people to move out of poverty. Our work spans early childhood and family development; employment, education, and financial empowerment; housing security; and community development. We work with families, residents, partners, donors, volunteers, policymakers, and the broader public.

Our communications must make complex issues understandable, respect the dignity of the people we serve, reflect our values, and help audiences understand both the realities of poverty and the opportunities for lasting change.

Purpose and Intended Outcomes

TCCA seeks a qualified external firm to serve as its day-to-day communications partner for at least calendar year 2027 while developing a durable marketing and communications foundation for a future internal Communications Manager. Any extension would be negotiated separately.

- Maintain timely, accurate, compelling communications while internal communications staffing is outsourced.
- Produce and implement an integrated marketing and communications plan aligned with TCCA's strategic priorities, programs, fundraising, community engagement, and thought leadership.
- Create effective, reusable collateral and a consistent, recognizable organizational voice.

- Establish systems, metrics, workflows, and a complete handoff that position a future Communications Manager for success.

Scope of Services

A. Discovery, assessment, and strategy

- Interview designated leadership and program staff; review existing channels, collateral, audiences, workflows, and brand materials.
- Audit website, social media, newsletters, media presence, campaign performance, analytics, and accessibility.
- Develop a written 2027 integrated communications and marketing plan with priority audiences, goals, key messages, channel strategies, campaign calendar, measurable indicators, responsibilities, and budget recommendations.
- Deliver a prioritized first-90-day action plan and revisit priorities quarterly.

B. Ongoing communications management and production

- Serve as the primary production and coordination resource for routine external communications, including drafting, editing, design, scheduling, publishing, and quality control.
- Manage agreed social media channels and maintain an editorial calendar; propose an achievable publishing cadence.
- Develop and distribute a monthly agency newsletter and additional e-bulletins/e-blasts as agreed.
- Maintain current website copy, program information, announcements, and other routine updates; identify improvements requiring separate technical work.
- Create and refresh brochures, flyers, program one-pagers, infographics, presentations, signage, digital graphics, and other priority collateral.
- Develop stories and impact narratives with appropriate permissions and trauma-informed, strengths-based framing.
- Support internal organizational communications as assigned, with a clear division of responsibilities and approval process.

C. Campaigns, fundraising, events, and public relations

- Provide comprehensive communications and promotional coverage for the 2027 Mothers & Families Brunch as a required component of the base proposal, including campaign planning, event promotion, sponsorship and donor-facing collateral, email/social/web content, coordination with event staff, and pre- and post-event communications. Identify on-site event-day coverage, photography/video, and other event-specific production as individually priced components, stating clearly what is included in the base fee. Support for other events, including Great Harrisburg Litter Cleanup and Taste of the Hill, will be requested as needed and must be separately priced as optional services.
- Support donor communications, annual appeals, sponsorship materials, and other fundraising campaigns in coordination with fund development staff.
- Develop and produce the annual impact report and related summary materials.

- Support press releases, local media outreach, interview preparation, and timely responses to routine media opportunities.
- Support executive visibility, public education, anti-poverty messaging, and thought leadership, with TCCA retaining final approval of policy positions and public statements.
- Provide communications support for urgent or sensitive matters under an agreed escalation protocol; crisis leadership and final decisions remain with TCCA.

D. Digital presence, measurement, and improvement

- Review website usability, accessibility, search visibility, and pathways to services, donations, volunteer opportunities, and event participation.
- Implement approved content and routine digital improvements within the base scope; separately identify substantial development or redesign needs.
- Support implementation of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) and requirements from the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Justice.
- Establish baseline metrics and a concise monthly dashboard covering reach, engagement, meaningful actions, and campaign outcomes.
- Provide monthly activity/performance updates and quarterly recommendations about what to continue, change, or stop.

E. Systems, materials, and future-staff transition

- Build an organized, TCCA-owned library of editable creative files, templates, photography permissions, stories, campaign materials, and approved messaging.
- Document intake, prioritization, editorial review, approvals, publishing, media requests, account management, analytics, and file naming/storage processes.
- Create a practical communications playbook and 12-month rolling editorial calendar.
- By Month 9, recommend the scope, competencies, tools, and onboarding priorities for the future Communications Manager.
- During the final 60 days, deliver a full handoff, including access inventory, vendor contacts, source files, metrics, outstanding work, and orientation sessions for TCCA and any incoming staff member.

Deliverables and Timing

Timing	Minimum deliverable
First 30 days	Kickoff, discovery, channel/account inventory, interim production plan
By day 60	Communications audit, baseline metrics, draft integrated plan
By day 90	Approved marketing/communications plan, editorial calendar, workflows, initial templates
Monthly	Agreed production output, monthly newsletter, calendar updates, dashboard and progress report
Quarterly	Campaign planning and strategy/performance review

By month 6	Core collateral and template library, documented operating processes
By month 9	Future Communications Manager role and onboarding recommendations
Final 60 days	Communications playbook, complete files/access handoff, transition meetings
Final month	Year-end outcomes review and prioritized 2028 communications roadmap

Respondents must propose realistic monthly production quantities and identify what is included in the base fee. The Mothers & Families Brunch is a required event within the core scope. Other event coverage must be offered as individually priced options. TCCA may refine deliverable counts and select or omit optional services during contracting without changing the agreed core outcomes.

Working Relationship and Expectations

- Assign a named senior strategic lead and a dependable day-to-day account contact; identify the individuals performing writing, design, digital, and media work.
- Participate in regular coordination meetings, initially at least biweekly, and maintain a shared task/calendar system.
- Provide standard turnaround times, revision allowances, emergency response procedures, and coverage during staff absences.
- Work collaboratively with executive leadership, fund development, and program staff while minimizing unnecessary demands on internal capacity.
- TCCA will designate a primary contact, provide subject matter expertise and timely feedback, and retain final approval of all external-facing materials.
- Follow confidentiality, data privacy, accessibility, consent, and ethical storytelling practices.

Proposal Content

Please organize your response using the headings below. Proposals should be no more than 15 pages, excluding samples, references, and standard terms.

- Understanding of TCCA, our mission, and the temporary outsourcing objective.
- Relevant nonprofit/community-based experience and at least three examples of comparable work.
- First 30/60/90-day plan and 12-month approach, including how strategy and routine production will be balanced.
- Deliverables matrix with frequency, quantities, responsible staff, and TCCA inputs required.
- Named team, roles, anticipated level of effort, and subcontractors.
- Examples of inclusive, accessible, strengths-based communications and community storytelling.
- Approach to measurement, reporting, quality assurance, and adjusting priorities.
- Capacity-building plan and specific handoff materials for the future Communications Manager.

- Three client references, preferably including nonprofit organizations.
- Itemized pricing by required core services and separately selectable optional services, including unit rates, quantities, exclusions, annual base total, and contract terms and ownership/access practices.

Pricing Requirements

TCCA is not disclosing a budget range.

Provide a detailed, itemized cost proposal that allows TCCA to evaluate and select service components. Separate (1) required core day-to-day communications management, (2) one-time discovery, audit and communications plan, (3) required Mothers & Families Brunch campaign support, (4) capacity-building and transition, and (5) optional or enhanced services. For each service, state the monthly or project fee, included hours/quantities, deliverables, unit or hourly rates for additional work, and any dependencies or bundled discounts. Identify any minimum viable package and explain how optional items can be removed without undermining required services. Do not assume TCCA will purchase all proposed services.

Provide separate line-item prices for additional event coverage (including GHLC and Taste of the Hill), on-site attendance, event-day photography/video, print production, paid media, website redevelopment, software/licensing, travel, and other pass-through expenses. Show one-time fees, monthly fees, annual totals, and a not-to-exceed total for the required base scope, with optional services excluded from that total. Clearly identify which costs are estimates and require prior written authorization.

Required pricing schedule (complete in proposal): Core account management; social media; monthly newsletter and email; website updates; writing and collateral design; media relations; discovery/audit; marketing plan; Mothers & Families Brunch campaign; documentation and handoff. Price separately: GHLC, Taste of the Hill, other events, on-site event coverage, photography/video, annual report enhancements, major web development, paid advertising, printing, and other add-ons. For every line, identify fee, frequency, included volume, and additional-work rate.

Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Qualifications and Experience: Demonstrated expertise in communications, marketing, and public relations, including relevant nonprofit or Community Action experience.
- Mission Alignment: Understanding of and commitment to the principles of Community Action, including strengths-based, inclusive, and respectful communications.
- Proposed Approach and Capacity: Quality and feasibility of the proposed services, staffing, timelines, deliverables, and ability to meet TCCA's ongoing communications needs.
- Past Performance and References: Demonstrated results from comparable projects and feedback from professional references.
- Cost and Value: Reasonableness of proposed fees, transparency of pricing, and flexibility to adjust services based on organizational priorities and available resources.
- Sustainability and Transition: Ability to develop lasting communications systems, materials, and processes that support a successful transition to a future internal Communications Manager.

- Business Diversity: Consideration of small businesses, minority-owned firms, and women-owned business enterprises.

TCCA will consider the relative importance of these criteria in selecting the proposal that provides the best overall value. Cost will be considered but will not be the sole determining factor. TCCA encourages participation by qualified small businesses, minority-owned firms, and women-owned business enterprises.

TCCA reserves the right to request additional information, conduct interviews, negotiate services and fees, and select or reject proposals in accordance with applicable procurement requirements.

Procurement Process

Submit one electronic PDF proposal to communications@cactricounty.org with the subject "TCCA 2027 Communications RFP." Material clarifications will be shared consistently with prospective respondents. Proposal preparation expenses are the respondent's responsibility. TCCA may reject any or all proposals and is not obligated to award a contract. Disclose actual or potential conflicts of interest.

Ownership, Safeguards, and Contract Expectations

- TCCA retains administrative control of its website, domain, social, email, analytics, and other organizational accounts.
- Contract terms must provide TCCA ownership or perpetual usable rights, as appropriate, to paid-for final work products and editable source files; third-party licensing restrictions must be disclosed.
- No use of identifiable client stories, images, or sensitive information without approved consent and review.
- Identify data security practices, confidentiality commitments, record retention, subcontractors, termination notice, transition obligations, and any exit charges.
- Work must comply with applicable TCCA procurement, funding, and contract requirements as incorporated in the final agreement.

Questions for Respondents

1. How will you prevent day-to-day production from consuming the time reserved for strategic planning and capacity-building?
2. What exactly is included in your monthly fee, what does Brunch coverage include, and which additional services or events can TCCA select individually without increasing the core fee?
3. How would you communicate the impact of a community action agency without relying on stereotypes or deficit-based narratives?
4. How will you manage urgent needs, staff absences, and competing event deadlines?
5. What tangible systems and assets will remain with TCCA when the engagement ends?
6. How will you determine when TCCA is ready to hire and onboard a future Communications Manager?