

# Request for Proposals: APLU Board on Agriculture Assembly Strategic Planning Support

January 22, 2020

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## Background

The Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU) Board on Agriculture Assembly (BAA,) presents this request for proposals (RFP) for a Strategic Planning Consultant to develop a national communications, marketing and advocacy strategy. The selected consultant will provide the services outlined by the Scope of Work provided in Appendix A, with a primary focus on supporting the BAA's goal of promoting awareness of the impact, importance, and brand value of the Land-grant University (LGU) System.

The BAA anticipates engaging the selected consultant beginning in mid-February with the expectation of reviewing preliminary findings in July 2020 and completing this work before the end of October 2020 so actions can be taken during the APLU annual meeting in November 2020.

For contractual and logistical purposes, the consultant will report to Douglas L. Steele, Vice President for Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources. For purposes related to performing the scope of work, the consultant will report to the Communications and Marketing Committee Chair (Dr. Steve Loring) and Executive Director (Dr. Rick Rhodes)

## Requested Services

The consultant engaged for this work will focus primarily on building the BAA's capacity to develop, monitor, and implement a new communications and marketing strategic plan. Emphasis will be on providing BAA staff and system leaders with the tools and resources to advance awareness of the impact of Land-grant university efforts, which include Cooperative Extension services and agricultural experiment stations. A key indicator of success will be the BAA's adoption of the strategic plan and the increased capacities that follow the end of the consultant's engagement. Primary consultant activities will include:

- Performing a landscape scan/assessment of the environment in which BAA operates;
- Hosting at least one facilitated strategic planning session for the broader BAA national leadership structure;
- Providing periodic consultative advice to the BAA's Communications Marketing Committee as requested, including potential review of strategic plan drafts and related documents;
- Developing strategic planning tools and resources for use by the BAA CMC, including an overall framework, timeline, and roadmap; and
- Sharing lessons learned from the strategic planning process to assist future capacity building endeavors.

The estimated cost of this work is between \$75,000 and \$100,000 (negotiable).

## Skill Set

**Experience** – Minimum of five years of public affairs, public relations, strategic planning, marketing and/or communication experience with demonstrated success in the portfolio of accomplishments. Experience in executive coaching, higher education or agriculture/natural resources preferred.

**Knowledge, Skills and Abilities** – Excellent research, data analytics, verbal and written communication skills required. Ability to efficiently manage multiple projects and work effectively in complex systems. Proficiency with word processing, analytic and database programs. Ability to work cooperatively with others.

## Submission Guidelines

Applicants should submit a brief proposal of no more than three pages providing a summary of:

- Capacity and track record providing services similar to those requested;
- Personnel who will provide the requested services;
- Applicant's approach to providing the requested services;
- Proposed budget (anticipating cost to be between \$75,000-100,000; and
- Three references familiar with the applicant's work in this area.

Applicant should also provide work samples illustrative of similar work or projects undertaken for other clients. These do not count towards the three-page limit.

Proposals are due by **5 pm Eastern on Wednesday, February 21st**. Please email all materials to Douglas L. Steele ([dsteele@aplu.org](mailto:dsteele@aplu.org)), with a copy to Suzette Robinson ([srobinson@aplu.edu](mailto:srobinson@aplu.edu)), with the subject title "APLU/BAA RFP."

## About APLU

The Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU) is a research, policy, and advocacy organization dedicated to strengthening and advancing the work of public universities in the U.S., Canada, and Mexico. The association's membership consists of 239 public research universities, land-grant institutions, state university systems, and affiliated organizations.

APLU's mission is to: expand access and improve student success to deliver the innovative workforce of tomorrow; advance and promote research and discovery to improve society, foster economic growth, and address global challenges; and build healthy, prosperous, equitable, and vibrant communities locally and globally.

The association's work is furthered by an active and effective advocacy arm that works with Congress and the administration to advance federal policies that strengthen public universities and benefit the students and communities they serve. For more information: [www.aplu.org](http://www.aplu.org)

## Board on Agriculture Assembly

The Board on Agriculture Assembly (BAA) is a unit of the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU) Commission on Food, Environment, and Renewable Resources (CFERR). The purpose of the BAA is the promotion of agriculture in all of its phases (food, environment, agriculture, natural resources, and international) in the state universities and land-

grant colleges of the states, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the territories of the Pacific, and the U. S. Virgin Islands. Please visit:

<https://www.aplu.org/members/commissions/food-environment-and-renewable-resources/board-on-agriculture-assembly/>

## Further Information

Please contact Douglas L. Steele ([dsteale@aplu.org](mailto:dsteale@aplu.org)) with questions about this RFP.

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# Appendix A: Scope of Work

## Key Objectives

### **Create a strategic marketing and communication plan to promote awareness of the impact, importance, and brand value of the Land-grant University (LGU) System.**

Support a strategic planning process for the BAA that builds upon past and current work. The work will entail undertaking an environmental scan, facilitating a strategic planning session with staff, and providing the framework and tools for APLU to adopt a strategic plan. These efforts will be directed towards ultimately developing a clear vision and mission and multi-year strategy that advances and drives the organization forward to the benefit of its member organizations and public higher education at-large. The strategy framework will provide coherence and priorities to advance APLU's vision while maintaining flexibility to respond to relevant new challenges and opportunities.

Activities	Deliverable(s)
<p>Engage members of the Board on Agricultural Assembly (BAA) members to gather necessary information to inform a strategic marketing and communications plan designed to convey priorities and impacts of the LGUs to appropriate audiences to increase visibility and support for the LGU System.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify strategies to effectively influence target audiences.</li> <li>• Identify strategies that ensure consistency in messaging and promotion of brand value.</li> <li>• Collaborate with LGU communications units, APLU's Office of Public Affairs, and Council on Government Relations to identify opportunities for consistent external messaging.</li> <li>• Identify opportunities and propose strategies for improved messaging that will engage agricultural allies, strengthen relationships and expand partnerships.</li> </ul>	<p>Review past efforts in social media (website content and social media presence) and make recommendations on development of social media campaigns within the strategic plan.</p> <p>Identify key elements necessary for the effective development of a short and long-term communications and marketing advocacy strategy.</p> <p>Environmental landscape map</p>
<p>Prepare, facilitate, and follow-up one strategic planning meeting.</p>	<p>Meeting agenda and materials</p>
<p>Develop BAA's strategic plan roadmap: timeline and milestones for implementation of a communications and marketing strategic plan development.</p>	<p>Strategic Plan Roadmap</p>
<p>Provide tools, templates and resources for BAA to use in developing and advancing its own strategic plan.</p>	<p>Tailored tools, templates &amp; resources</p>
<p>Provide additional review and support services for strategic plan development as requested, including additional support services for strategic planning group as needed.</p>	<p>TBD</p>