

Equality Virginia Request for Proposal for Public Education Campaign

Equality Virginia (EV) is seeking a Virginia-based strategic communications firm to lead in-state communications efforts to leverage existing EV programs and assets in order to: 1) increase broad education on nondiscrimination protections for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people, 2) inoculate the general public from transphobic talking points, and 3) increase individual support of nondiscrimination protections for LGBT people. While over time support has grown for gay and lesbian issues, many people are still learning about the lives and experiences of transgender people; therefore, a multi-channel communications plan is required to enhance visibility and familiarity with the transgender community.

Many people do not realize that there are currently no laws protecting Virginians on the basis of gender identity or sexual orientation. A major area of focus of the VA-based public relations firm will be to help build grassroots support for statewide nondiscrimination protections in housing, employment, and public accommodations, ultimately resulting in the passage of legislation at the 2020 General Assembly session.

The VA-based public relations firm will create and execute a sustained multi-channel communications plan highlighting the stories and experiences of the LGBT community with an emphasis on transgender community members, families, and allies. While the goals are to highlight existing EV programs and assets, the work of the public relations firm could expand to include the voices of support from key decision makers, including: legislators, state executive administrators, and locally elected officials.

The VA-based public relations firm will successfully:

- Create a strategic communications plan that elevates key EV public education events: Transgender Town Hall, Virginia Competes Luncheon, Transgender Information and Empowerment Summit (TIES), Regional Trans Panels, and the General Assembly Kick-Off
- Create a drumbeat of coverage from Virginia media, engage directly with reporters, and set up interviews for spokespersons related but not limited to regional trans programming
- Work with EV to spotlight transgender advocates who have already shared their story through existing channels
- Draft and place opinion pieces for transgender individuals, families, and allies
- Amplify the stories of non-traditional LGBT supporters (e.g. business owners, faith leaders, police officers, etc.)
- Create an overall narrative to promote the myth vs. fact campaign
- Draft press collateral – including but not limited to press releases, media pitches, blog postings, talking points for spokespersons, and social media content
- Ensure that public education messaging aligns with general EV communications

The VA-based public relations firm will be required to:

- Attend an in-person kick-off strategy session
- Attend standing weekly team meetings and check-in calls, as needed, with Equality Virginia staff

Timeline for VA-based public relations firm contract:

August 26, 2019 through February 29, 2020

Proposal Guidelines:

Proposals should include the following information:

- An overview of the firm
- Relevant capabilities
- Brief case studies that highlight agency expertise
- Proposed approach
- Estimated budget

Proposals should be submitted by 4:00 p.m. Friday, August 2, 2019 to Vee Lamneck at VLamneck@EqualityVirginia.org with the subject line "Public Education Proposal."