

RFP: Spaceworks Tacoma's Brand Development, Communications and Community Engagement Project

Response deadline: 5pm, Wednesday, March 15, 2017

Response/questions submissions: Heather Joy at heatherj@tacomachamber.org

RFP awarded on *Friday, March 31st, 2017*



A GROWING OPPORTUNITY

In addition to being awarded the contract, you have an opportunity to:

1. Expand your exposure throughout the Tacoma-Pierce County business community through the Chamber's member network.
2. Broaden your company's reputation as a valued contributor to a city-wide improvement program.
3. Be a part of defining the personality of a rapidly growing and thriving program with strong support from organizations like the City of Tacoma, US Department of Housing and Urban Development, JP Morgan Chase Foundation, and South Sound Together.
4. Potential to extend the partnership as an ongoing, long-term contributor to the Spaceworks communication program.
5. Help Spaceworks grow Tacoma's creative economy and reinforce Tacoma's identity as a "maker city"

SCOPE: Partner With Spaceworks To

- Evaluate and establish Spaceworks brand
- Create a comprehensive Communications & Community Engagement Strategy
- Increase program clarity, visibility, and engagement
- Customize communications for various audiences such as program participants, community participants, funders, etc. which will include content for the website, social media channels, and other identified engagement platforms.
- Design a new, brand relevant, responsive/mobile-friendly, website that accounts for a variety of existing and new content and also allows Spaceworks staff to manage site in an ongoing basis.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Spaceworks Tacoma launched in 2010 as a way of addressing downtown Tacoma's commercial vacancies by offering local artists and creative entrepreneurs spaces for artwork display and pop-up businesses. As a joint initiative of the City of Tacoma and the Tacoma-Pierce County Chamber, Spaceworks sought to address the challenges common to both artists and entrepreneurs and developed a business training program for its participants to help them navigate permits, licenses, business plans, and marketing.

Now, Spaceworks graduates 24 well-trained and road-tested, independent business owners every year. Recent graduates are partnered with property owners in need of tenants. Through property partnerships, national and community funding, training and support the program incubates successful creative businesses nurtured by a strong support ecosystem

Our mission is to make Tacoma culturally vibrant and economically strong through training and support for artists and creative entrepreneurs.

We do this by:

- Facilitating training and professional development that is geared to the creative class
- Presenting community events that highlight our participants and encourage community interaction.
- Providing temporary space and visibility to creative entrepreneurs, organizations, community groups and artists.

We celebrate Tacoma culture by providing opportunities to artists and entrepreneurs through **five projects**:

1. **ARTSCAPES** temporarily places 2D, 3D, mural, or multi-media art installations in storefront windows, outdoor spaces, and an outdoor video gallery.
2. **CREATIVE ENTERPRISE** provides relevant and meaningful small business training and peer-to-peer support to the participants to systematically grow Tacoma's creative class and generate destination-quality activity that will engage and transform our community.

3. **SPECIAL PROJECTS** provides short-term space (one day up to six months) to individuals or groups who want to pursue or present art of any discipline, a creative special project, or a pop-up store/event.
4. **1120 CREATIVE HOUSE** is a multi-artist studio space in downtown Tacoma. It contains 12 affordable studios, and a 1300 sq/ft open shared space for hosting events and activities. The space is operated by Spaceworks Tacoma.
5. **SPACEWORKS GALLERY** is a space for contemporary artists and curators working in the Pacific Northwest to host feature exhibitions. Activating a longstanding vacant space, the gallery is operated by Spaceworks Tacoma. Always free and open to the public, the space also holds an information desk for people to learn more about Spaceworks programs and participants, opportunities to get involved, and events.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Spaceworks Tacoma requests proposals from various creative design firms to select the most qualified candidate who best represents the mission and vision of Spaceworks. The selected creative company will be asked to work in close collaboration with, and in support of, Spaceworks' brand management staff in redefining the Spaceworks brand with options for updating the look (including web and print collateral), community engagement strategy and phased implementation assistance.

The proposed re-brand should be implemented by **September 30, 2017**. Spaceworks has 5 full and part-time staff with 2 staff proficient in graphic and web design implementation and 1 staff dedicated to project fulfillment. We are seeking proposals that address three areas of focus: Communications & Community Engagement Strategy, Brand Development, and Website Update.

Communications & Community Engagement Strategy

Spaceworks seeks a creative company to develop a communications strategy that staff can implement to advance its 5 strategic goals. The strategy may involve social media marketing plan, blog schedule, email and "snail" mail communications, enewsletter redesign, or other ways of engaging our key audiences.

Spaceworks staff identified **three key audiences**:

1. Funders



EMBELLISH
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Bamford
Foundation



- Corporate sponsors, multi-organizational collaborations focused on Economic Development and Tourism, individual donors and grantors
- Property owners that provide low-rent spaces as a means to support this effort

2. Clients

- Spaceworks coordinates regular application calls to attract and serve creative entrepreneurs and artists as potential clients
- Spaceworks has a growing list of clients who receive ongoing marketing and technical support



3. Customers of our clients / visitors to public art sites and events

- Our clients have a diverse range of creative businesses including non-profit, retail, and business to business services. We would like their customers to **understand the relationship between Spaceworks Tacoma and the entrepreneurs it serves.**
- Spaceworks believes that **public art provides a big value to the Tacoma community.** The outcome of these creative efforts is to create a more dynamic, inclusive and livable community. This type of creative placemaking is vital to our city's success.
- They need to know that their support of Spaceworks is critical to deliver these unique, exciting experiences. **Seeking out and supporting these ventures** is vital to the vibrancy of the city.

The communication strategy must incorporate ways of reaching and engaging potential financial supporters, enthusiastic customers, and a diverse pool of artists and creative entrepreneurs. Those audiences need to know that Spaceworks businesses represent well-trained, community-supported opportunities that make Tacoma culturally vibrant and economically strong.

The strategy may include:

- Brand Book and Style Guide and documented Marketing Strategy
- Media relations policy
- Profiles of receivers/consumers of services/products of Creative Enterprises
- Clarified communication about our programs: Creative Enterprises, Artscapes, and Gallery Exhibitions
- 1120 Creative House and Spaceworks Gallery marketing plans
- Negating false perception that we are funded solely by “government handouts”

- Website redesign to offer a wealth of resources connecting entrepreneurs and artists with economic opportunities
- Reaching and engaging Tacoma and surrounding communities

Brand Development

Spaceworks has set the stage for a thriving, local, creative economy. Now Spaceworks needs to increase the clarity and visibility of its brand so that its target audiences - funders, customers, and creative entrepreneurs - see the program as a rewarding opportunity for Tacoma to come together with the goal of fostering a more culturally vibrant and economically strong community.

VISION

Spaceworks seeks to update its brand to communicate the **Spaceworks vision** of *providing high-quality programs and services, and its strong track record of incubating successful creative businesses*. Impressive small business growth and jobs stem from smart, diverse, and passionate business owners whose creativity is nurtured by a strong support ecosystem. The brand needs to communicate that Spaceworks is an integral part of this dynamic ecosystem.

MISSION

In addition, the brand needs to communicate the **Spaceworks mission** of *making Tacoma culturally vibrant and economically strong through training and support for artists and creative entrepreneurs*.

VALUES

The new brand should communicate **Spaceworks Values**:

- **Entrepreneurial Spirit:** Spaceworks supports creative risk-takers in growing their businesses in Tacoma.
- **Innovation and Creativity:** Spaceworks builds a vibrant, creative and innovative community.
- **Diversity and Equity:** Spaceworks represents diverse people, voices, and perspectives, and provides fair access to creative economic opportunities.
- **Collaboration:** Spaceworks partners with organizations and individuals to achieve a collective vision.

Spaceworks seeks brand development proposal that addresses the following **objectives**:

- Evaluation of existing brand and development of new brand
- Maintain Spaceworks image while promoting individual Creative Enterprises

- Send the message that devoting resources to the arts and creatives is a viable and proven strategy for economic, business, and community development. Draw in donors, property owners, participants and consumers

Deliverables: *Focused on efficiently achieving desired outcomes*

- Print and Digital Collateral Designs appropriate to help achieve desired outcomes within budget.
- Marketing Fact Sheet and history (via strategic report)
- Website
 - Website structure audit
 - Updated website and enhanced online presence with an eye toward mobile friendly executions
 - Design website framework with sample pages appropriate to content types, allowing Spaceworks staff to manage and populate site with existing and new content going forward

Web Site Update

Spaceworks seeks to update the look and content of its web site to offer an experience that is user friendly, intuitive, simple to use, provides detailed information about our services and programs, and allows staff to easily add or modify content. Current website is hosted on WordPress.com and will need to be transitioned to another host to take full advantage of WordPress features, plugins, content management, and newest web technology.

The finished web site must allow Spaceworks' communications staff to easily create and edit content, manipulate the layout in order to allow for program updates, and be scalable for expanding client and funder communications.

The web site design and layout should clarify and reflect Spaceworks' mission and vision, reflect the new brand, provide descriptions of all Spaceworks services, team biographies, and contact information. The site must also be completely secure.

Site functions must:

- Provide description of Spaceworks programs and services
- Offer galleries of photos and videos
- Have a blog for posting updates and events
- Serve as portal for client applications integrated through Submittable and Salesforce
- Represent program participants in a professional way
- Showcase a growing portfolio of projects
- Offer communication channels including contact form and newsletter subscription
- Showcase Spaceworks property partners, sponsors, and funders

- Display a list of press clippings and press releases
- Display embedded interactive map of participant businesses and Artscapes
- Communicate a calendar of Spaceworks-hosted and community events
- Have clear hierarchy, structure and styles that give Spaceworks staff the ability to maintain and migrate current and new web content to the upgraded web site

Foundational Brand Imperatives

Since Spaceworks launched in 2010 the program relied on the multitasking abilities of small staff to communicate their programs, services, and successes to respective audiences.

The brand is currently represented by a consistent use of logo, minimal graphic elements, reliance on photo-collages of its clients and projects, dominating monochromatic color scheme, and highlighting the successes of our clients above our work. The use of logo is the most consistent brand element appearing in web and print publications, balloons, on supported storefronts, murals, and Artscapes, as well as monthly enewsletter to mention a few.

In October 2015 Spaceworks hired LUMA consulting firm to facilitate the development of a 5-year strategic plan. Using surveys and interviews of Spaceworks' stakeholders the research phase identified the **need to increase both clarity and visibility of our brand and its impact on the Tacoma community**. Spaceworks' Strategic Planning process identified five key Organizational Goals:

1. Build a culturally vibrant and economically stronger community.
2. Advance economic opportunities for artists and creative entrepreneurs.
3. Build programs and services that reflect the diversity of Tacoma.
4. Increase the clarity and visibility of our brand.
5. Establish long-term sustainability for Spaceworks.

Implementing Goal 4 by hiring a creative firm to develop Spaceworks' Communications and Community Engagement Strategy will significantly improve the effectiveness of Spaceworks' ability to achieve the other four stated goals.

Schedule

All proposals in response to this RFP are due no later than 5pm PST March 15th, 2017. The contract will be awarded by March 31st, 2017. Spaceworks seeks a creative company who can work within our **aggressive timeline** to execute the project within 6 months, April-September 2017. Spaceworks Marketing Coordinator will provide content and help with implementing communication strategies and website transfer throughout and after the term of contract.

Evaluation of proposals will be conducted by March 31, 2017. If additional information or discussions are needed with any bidders during this two-week window, the bidder(s) will be notified.

Budget \$30,000

All proposals must include proposed costs to complete the tasks described in the project scope. All costs and fees must be clearly described in each proposal.

Bidder Qualifications

- Provide a brief description of your firm's structure and capabilities, including basic information and history.
- List all services provided in-house and services provided by any outside consultants. If any services are to be provided by outside consultants, please provide a brief description of the firm, its role, and capabilities.
- Describe in detail your approach and process for brand development.
- Introduce your proposed project team, including consultants. Provide background information for all personnel assigned to the project including specific experience that each team member would contribute to the project. Identify and define their individual roles.
- Provide three case studies of your firm providing similar services to organizations our size within the past 5 years. These case studies must include a brief description of the brand identity services provided and a discussion of the outcome.
- Submit a detailed schedule with your proposal for the project, which includes critical milestones, assuming a start date of April 15th, 2017.
- Provide a detailed fee proposal, which outlines the specific activities that will be performed during the brand process, and is in alignment with the project schedule.
- References: Supply at least three (3) references that have used your professional services for a similar project. Include a contact name, address, and a contact phone number, as well as a project summary.

Proposal Evaluation Criteria

Spaceworks will evaluate all proposals based on the following criteria. To ensure consideration for this Request for Proposal, your proposal should be complete and include all of the following criteria:

- **Overall proposal suitability:** proposed solutions must represent and support Spaceworks' 5-year goals, mission and vision
- **Organizational experience:** Bidders will be evaluated on their experience as it pertains to the scope of this project
- **Previous work:** Bidders will be evaluated on examples of their work as well as client testimonials and references
- **Technical expertise and experience:** Bidders must provide descriptions and documentation of staff technical expertise and experience

Each bidder must email their proposal to heatherj@tacomachamber.org by March 15th, 2017, 5PM PST.

Spaceworks Tacoma

c/o Tacoma-Pierce County Chamber
950 Pacific Ave, Ste 300
Tacoma WA 98402

Spaceworks' Story

Spaceworks came to life as a way of addressing downtown Tacoma's commercial vacancies by offering local artists and creative entrepreneurs a space for artwork display and pop-up businesses. The year was 2010 and the national economic recession threatened to undo all the improvement made through decades of intensive investment in Tacoma's downtown revitalization.

Empty storefronts along Pacific Avenue advertised the economic downturn. The more businesses closed up, the harder it was to sell Tacoma as a viable investment. Without shopping opportunities, fewer customers had any reason to go downtown.

In contrast to the retail market, Tacoma's art and creative entrepreneur community was thriving. Years of civic support, promotion, and development of the city's creative class meant that there was an abundance of quality art work and enthusiastic business pioneers.

In its early days, Spaceworks offered an immediate solution to the empty storefronts. Original, local art filled vacant window fronts. Experimental pop-up businesses brought stores back to life for a short time. The idea back then was that the interim creative occupants would draw attention and potential long-term business tenants.

While those initial efforts did bring attention, they did not bring the hoped-for economic rebirth. Long-term businesses did not replace the temporary Spaceworks installations. Property owners who took a chance on Spaceworks regretted that they did not see any rewards for the risk. Fewer owners wanted to participate in the program.

Simply filling empty storefronts with creative ideas wasn't enough to address the underlying challenges to Tacoma's economic success. Spaceworks needed to address the challenges businesses faced.

In response, Spaceworks developed a business training program for its participants. By helping creative entrepreneurs navigate permits, licenses, business plans, and marketing, Spaceworks addressed the nuts and bolts obstacles to success for fledgling local businesses.

Further, Spaceworks reached into communities that have been historically underrepresented in business. Expanding beyond the downtown corridor and recruiting otherwise untapped individuals, Spaceworks embraced a model that blended creative ideas and business basics. This provided valuable education and opportunities to a diverse group of entrepreneurs, expanding the range and vision of Tacoma's local businesses.

Now, Spaceworks graduates 24 well-trained and road-tested independent business owners every year. Recent graduates are partnered with property owners in need of tenants. The original businesses that develop through Spaceworks provide viable business anchors in a few strategic neighborhoods. At the same time, the art installation program provides atmosphere and improved aesthetics to areas that have potential, but need a higher profile.

Six years after its birth Spaceworks has nearly everything in place for a successful local art and business initiative. However, there is one critical piece that still needs placement: the public.

Despite internal changes to the Spaceworks program, the majority of people still think of Spaceworks as "art in windows" and "free rent for creative small businesses". Those who know about the business training Spaceworks offers often believe the city provides all the financial support.

In order to keep Spaceworks strong in its mission to make Tacoma culturally vibrant and economically strong through training and support for artists and creative entrepreneurs, the program needs the financial support of the public. That support must come both through direct donations to Spaceworks and customer support of Spaceworks businesses. In addition, potential artists and creative entrepreneurs need to see the Spaceworks program as a successful way to achieve their business goals.

Spaceworks needs a communication plan to reach potential financial supporters, enthusiastic customers, and diverse artists and creative entrepreneurs. Those audiences need to know that Spaceworks businesses represent well-trained, community-supported opportunities for funders, customers, and entrepreneurs. They need to know that there are unique, exciting experiences available to them by supporting Spaceworks and seeking out its businesses.