

Request for Proposals:

The Science Coalition (TSC) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, nonpartisan organization of more than 50 leading American public and private research universities. Our mission is to strengthen the federal government's investment in basic scientific research as a means to stimulate the economy, spur innovation, and drive American global competitiveness. Our efforts are focused nearly exclusively on public affairs and communications and not on traditional lobbying, although we expect TSC-developed materials and campaigns to enhance our members' individual lobbying efforts. TSC seeks proposals from Washington, DC-based public affairs and/or consulting firms to assist in developing and implementing strategic public affairs initiatives and campaigns to support advocacy for federally funded, university-based scientific research with member institutions' government relations professionals.

Many TSC member institutions are also members of other scientific and higher education associations and coalitions. TSC is an independent entity serving all of its members equally and its members operate within the context of the broader scientific and higher education ecosystem.

Proposals must be submitted by **5:00 pm ET on September 1, 2017** for consideration. Proposals are to be submitted electronically (only) to The Science Coalition at TheScienceCoalition@gmail.com. Proposals are to be limited to 25 pages.

Primary contacts: Glynda Becker (glynda.becker@wsu.edu), TSC President
Anna Quider (aquider@niu.edu), TSC Vice President

Background:

Established in 1994, TSC was formed in response to concerns about declining investments in federally funded university-based research and a lack of recognition of its value to the nation. TSC supports increased funding for key federal research agencies, including the National Science Foundation, Department of Energy's Office of Science, the National Institutes of Health, basic research accounts within the Department of Defense, research within the Department of Agriculture, NASA, the National Institute of Standards and Technology, and other federal agencies. This funding provides the backbone to American innovation and economic growth.

TSC is concerned about funding cuts to science agencies and related programs. Much of the work that individual TSC member institutions do supports America's research enterprise and our nation's leading role in global scientific discovery. Scientific research, conducted at universities across the country, is the smallest slice of the nation's R&D pie, yet a critical spark to ignite discovery and innovation.

Now more than ever TSC must be strategically supporting its members' federal advocacy work with integrated, public affairs initiatives and campaigns. TSC activities are a combination of

signature initiatives and short-term, strategic campaigns. TSC signature activities have included the congressional Champion of Science Award and the related biennial Breakfast of Champions, regular congressional Headliner Breakfast speakers, the Sparking Economic Growth report, and the annual Senior Research Officers Media Roundtable. TSC also helps support community-wide science initiatives such as the Golden Goose Award.

The Science Coalition is governed by an all-volunteer Board of Directors (“Board”): a president, three officers, and six board members. The remaining fifty-plus institutions are represented on the Coalition’s Steering Committee, all government relations professionals at their TSC member institutions.

The day-to-day management of TSC is handled by the consultant. The consultant handles all legal, taxation, financial, and other matters related to the administration and management of a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. The consultant maintains consistent communication with the TSC President, and with Board Members and Steering Committee members as needed. The consultant facilitates all regularly scheduled meetings of the Board and the Steering Committee, which meets twice a month (once in person and once via conference call). The consultant also plans and executes a half-day annual meeting for TSC members. These meetings ensure that all TSC institutional members have open and complete access to its activities and leadership.

Proposal

TSC seeks proposals from full service public affairs and consultant firms with experience in the public and federal government sectors to implement and manage the logistics and goals of the Coalition. The primary goal of this contract is to support and amplify the efforts of university government relations professionals through strategic public affairs initiatives and campaigns supporting the importance of federally funded, university-based research. Value added activities include the strategic use of grassroots and grassroots activities, relationship building with appropriate influencers, social media management, web site management, digital marketing, financial and administrative management, event planning, writing services, media relations and media production.

TSC will require the successful candidate to provide the Board with a strategic work plan within 30 days of contractual agreement and the names of the account executives who will execute the plan. The firm must be nimble, innovative, willing to collaborate with trade association government relations professionals, and be comfortable engaging with TSC membership while being supervised by the Board. TSC seeks one firm to engage all activities, with one point of contact, who leads a diverse team of experts as well as those who implement key tasks, initiatives and campaigns.

Questions:

In order to accomplish the goals of TSC, the Steering Committee requires that applicants answer the following questions incorporating the proposal requirements noted above into their responses:

1. Does your firm have experience working with clients in higher education, science advocacy, science and technology institutions/associations, and/or technology business? If so, provide background on the work you have done. If not, please elaborate on why you would like to work with higher education and in the science/technology area.
2. Has your firm managed a large coalition of diverse interests before? If so, please elaborate.
3. What message would you bring to Congress to support the importance of the investment in federal research?
4. Please provide background and bios of the team leader and members of the team that would be working with TSC.
5. Please discuss the capabilities of your firm to accomplish the goals of TSC, especially your firm's use of/interest in social media.
6. What resources would you need in order to accomplish the goals of TSC? Would you have to contract to outside sources or are you capable of handling in-house?
7. How would you push the importance of federal research funding above the noise in this political environment? What tools would you use to achieve TSC's goals?
8. How have you worked with partner organizations in a collaborative environment? If so, please elaborate.
9. What milestones would you set for success to manage the Coalition?
10. Please provide contact information for three client references who are available to be contacted.

Audience:

TSC's audience includes but is not limited to:

- The broader public
- Elected Members of Congress

- Staff of Members of Congress in personal offices
- Senate and House of Representative committee staff on key committees
- Administration officials and staff
- White House staff
- Members of the press/media (national and local markets)
- Opinion/thought leaders (e.g. think tanks, opinion columnists, media personalities)

Timeline:

RFP document distributed:	August 1
Proposal due:	September 1 by 5:00 pm ET
Interviews:	September and October
Applicants notified of final selection:	October 31
Present 2018 plan to Steering Committee:	Early December (Annual Meeting)
Start date for implementation:	January 1, 2018

The Science Coalition is funded through dues paid by public and private institutions of higher education. For that reason, the firm selected by TSC will have clear milestones and goals which must be accomplished. This contract will be a one-year, renewable contract, with a provision for thirty-day termination by either party. The contract will be reviewed annually to ensure that both parties are meeting their agreed upon goals.