



Board Letter

Agenda Date: March 17, 2026

Agenda #: 6

Authorization to approve award of contract for professional services to provide strategic marketing & communications consulting services.

Presenter: Karen Vaughan, Deputy Chief Communications and Marketing

Recommendation

The Operating Chairman (“OC”) of the Chicago Housing Authority (“CHA”) recommends that the CHA Board of Commissioners (“Board”) approves the award of a contract for Strategic Media Relations & Communications Consulting Services utilizing a hybrid fixed-rate and blended-rate structure to the below-listed contractor in an aggregate amount not to exceed of \$1,195,200 for a maximum term up to five (5) years, comprised of a 3-year base term from April 2026 through March 2029 plus two (2) one-year options reserved to CHA to exercise in its discretion. The total requested contract value is inclusive of a 20% contingency amount for the use of ad hoc services billed at fixed hourly rates, as outlined in the RFP and response.

The Board further authorizes the Operating Chairman to approve each request to exercise the options awarded under the contract.

Recommended Awardee	Base Contract Value	Base Term	Option Terms	Total Contract Value
Rise Strategy Group	\$712,800 (\$594,000.00 plus 20% contingency for ad hoc services)	3 Years	1 st Option Year: \$241,200 (\$201,000 plus 20% contingency for ad hoc services) 2 nd Option Year: \$241,200.00 (\$201,000.00 plus 20% contingency for ad hoc services)	\$1,195,200 (\$996,000 plus 20% contingency for ad hoc services)
Aggregate Total:	\$712,800		\$ 482,400	\$1,195,200

The requested action complies in all material respects with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, and CHA policies. CHA staff has completed all necessary due diligence to support the submission of this initiative.

Funding

MTW Funds

Background

The Chicago Housing Authority's (CHA's) Communications and Marketing Department positively promotes CHA and its programs and services to residents and the public. To augment the capacity of CHA's internal communications team and increase the strategic public awareness and understanding of CHA programs, activities, services, and initiatives, CHA sought a qualified and experienced firm to provide full range of communications and public relations support services. The intent of this contract is to ensure that CHA's strategic goals and accomplishments are effectively communicated to the broadest possible audience. Deliverables include weekly reports, press releases, media scheduling of agency interviews, media follow-up discussions, public relations outreach, media list, branded content and messaging for placement, and others.

Procurement Activities

Specifications prepared by the CHA staff were publicly advertised as RFP Event 3308 for Strategic Media Relations & Communication Consulting Services on October 16, 2025. A Pre-Proposal Conference was held on October 16, 2025 and thirteen (13) firms attended. Nine (9) proposals were received on November 5, 2025. The responses to the RFP are depicted in the table below:

Responsive Proposal(s)
APS & Associates, LLC
Bigmouth Creative
Flowers Communications Group
Gary McMillan Masterpiece Productions, LLC
Gud Marketing, Inc.
One 9 Consulting LLC
Public Communications Inc.
Purpose Brand LLC
Rise Strategy Group LLC

The recommended vendor(s) were selected through a competitive procurement process in accordance with HUD regulation CFR 200.318 that evaluated responses in the following areas:

1. Specialized Experience and Past Performance -- 30 points
2. Approach and Work Plan -- 40 points
3. Organization Structure and Key Personnel -- 10 points
4. Proposed Fees -- 10 points
5. MBE/WBE compliance -- 10 points

Final scores received from the evaluation committee were used to determine the competitive range. Oral presentations were held on December 11, 2025 and best and final offers were completed. Based on the overall scoring, CHA staff recommends Rise Strategy Group LLC for a contract award to provide Strategic Media Relations & Communications Consulting and related services as needed by CHA.

Diversity Contracting Requirements

The CHA Staff has reviewed the proposed vendors and has determined the vendors' utilization plans meet with the CHA's stated goals.

Rise Strategy Group LLC will satisfy the CHA 20% compliance goal through self-performing 91.63% as a MBE certified through the City of Chicago. They will satisfy their Section 3 subcontracting goal through subcontracting 8.37% to Content Maven Media LLC. Content Maven Media LLC is certified as a 75% tier Section 3 business. Rise Strategy Group LLC does not have a history of work with the CHA.

Vendor Background Information

Tarrah Cooper Wright, Chief Executive Officer; 400 N May St #306, Chicago, IL 60642. The firm has been in business since March 2018. Rise Strategy Group helps companies, causes, and campaigns elevate their messages to reach and build relationships with audiences around the world. With a team of diverse, experienced communications professionals that have over 10 years in the industry developing and executing creative strategies, Rise helps their clientele build bridges with the customers and communities they serve. Rise Strategy offers range of expertise to clients across the private, public and nonprofit sectors, leveraging our expertise in media relations, community engagement, crisis management and digital services to help each client achieve their communications goals.

Based on the foregoing, it is in the best interest of the CHA for the Board to authorize the Operating Chairman or his designee, to enter into a contract for Strategic Media Relations & Communications Consulting Services with Rise Strategy Group in the amount of \$1,195,200.00.

Respectfully Submitted:



Matthew Brewer
Operating Chairman



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RESOLUTION NO. 2026-CHA-16

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners of the Chicago Housing Authority has reviewed the Board Letter dated March 17, 2026 entitled "Authorization to approve award of contract for professional services to provide strategic marketing & communications consulting services".

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE CHICAGO HOUSING AUTHORITY:

THAT, the Board of Commissioners authorizes the Operating Chairman, or his designee, to enter into professional services contract with Rise Strategy Group LLC, to provide strategic marketing & communications consulting services under a hybrid fixed-rate and blended-rate structure, for a 3-year base term, with 2 additional one-year option terms, for an aggregate amount not-to-exceed \$1,195,200.

This award is subject to the Contractor's compliance with CHA's Diversity Contract Compliance and insurance requirements.





James Matanky
Vice Chairman
Chicago Housing Authority