Purpose

The purpose of this Request for Qualifications (RFQ) is to invite submissions from individuals and firms with expertise in communications and media relations to assist the California Emerging Technology Fund (CETF) in developing and implementing a coherent communications program to inform the public, policymakers and media about the work of CETF. In addition, this RFQ invites submissions from firms with expertise in developing public awareness and education programs based on consumer research. It is anticipated there may be individuals or firms that specialize in one or the other and some that are experienced in doing both. Further, there will need to be consistency in themes and messaging between the CETF communications program and a major public awareness and education program projected to roll out in 2009—hence the rationale for the combined RFQ. It is anticipated that CETF will engage one or more individuals and/or firms as contractors to perform needed services. However, it also is possible that some communications capacity also will be hired as CETF staff.

NEW DEADLINE: Responses to this RFQ are due by 5:00 PM on Friday May 15, 2008.

A CONFERENCE CALL FOR QUALIFIED ENTITIES Tuesday May, 6 2008, at 2:00 PM. Participants should register for the conference call by contacting Alana O’Brien at 415-744-2383 and receiving the number for the call and pass code for the conference.

Overview of the California Emerging Technology Fund

The California Emerging Technology Fund is a non-profit charitable corporation established pursuant to requirements by the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) in approving the mergers of SBC-AT&T and Verizon-MCI. As a result, those merged companies will contribute a total of $60 million to CETF over 5 years. CETF is governed by a 12-member Board of Directors.

The mission of the California Emerging Technology Fund is to provide leadership statewide to minimize the “digital divide” by accelerating the deployment and adoption of broadband and other advanced communications services to underserved communities and populations. CETF also is dedicated to making California a global leader in the deployment and adoption of broadband technology. The goal is to make a substantial and measurable impact on bridging the digital divide in California across all population demographic groups in the next 5 years, which requires both the availability of broadband technology as well as the ability to access and use it. CETF will make investments in programs and projects to improve access, applications, affordability, accessibility and assistance (the “5 As”) for adoption of broadband. High-speed communications technology is referred to generically as broadband and defined by the FCC in terms of speed of data transfer and communications—200 kilobits per second in at least one direction. CETF is technology-neutral.
For California to be a global leader in broadband, there must be a broader and deeper understanding among California policymakers, civic leaders, and consumers of how broadband technology can improve quality of life, enhance economic prosperity, and help reduce impacts on the environment. A higher level of understanding about the importance of broadband by policymakers and civic leaders will lead to policies that better accommodate the acceleration of broadband deployment. A deeper understanding about the value of broadband technology to daily lives among consumers will lead to increased demand for high-speed Internet access that, in turn, will further drive public policy. This mutually reinforcing dynamic is a key strategy for CETF to accomplish the mission of making California a broadband global leader.

Scopes of Anticipated Responsibilities and Tasks

The following are general descriptions of the anticipated responsibilities and tasks to be performed by contractors:

Communications and Media Relations

- Develop an overall strategy and work plan for CETF communications in 2008 that will brand the organization as a major policy leader on broadband technology in California. Incorporate opportunities for involvement of both staff and Directors to interact with the media.
- Manage implementation of the communications strategy and work plan, including outreach to multi-cultural, multi-lingual media and media that will reach people with disabilities.
- Prepare and distribute media releases about CETF grants and events, including print and broadcast mediums. Follow up with the media and secure coverage of CETF activities.
- Prepare informational collateral materials about CETF for policymakers and civic leaders, including arranging for printing of primary materials in Spanish.
- Develop communication materials for grantees and funding partners.
- Draft, finalize and manage placement of guest opinion editorials and feature articles for staff and Directors.
- Develop informational and communication materials for the CETF website.
- Organize and manage meetings with editorial boards and interviews with media hosts.
- Identify and develop opportunities for CETF involvement in key events to reinforce the branding of CETF as a prominent policy leader in California.
- Track trends in the media about broadband coverage and summarize implications for the CETF communications work plan going forward.

Public Awareness and Education

- Survey existing research and literature to discern possible themes and messages for a public awareness and education program to be launched in 2009.
- Design and implement a plan to determine the most effective themes and messages, including possible use of focus groups and surveys; analyze and summarize results.
- Recommend major theme(s) and message(s) based on above research.
- Develop an overall strategy and work plan for a major public awareness and education program based on the results from the above activity.
- Manage implementation of the public awareness and education program, possibly including coordinating multiple contractors or sub-contractors.
- Prepare as needed requests for qualifications or proposals for specific components of the work plan for the public awareness and education program.
- Identify and recruit media partners for the public awareness and education program.
- Assist CETF and partners as needed in organizing and publicizing component activities of the public awareness and education program.
Requested Content for Statement of Qualifications

Statements of Qualifications should include the following information:

- Letter stating scope(s) of responsibilities and tasks of interest. Include official name of responding organization with all pertinent contact information for principal(s).
- Summary of qualifications and relevant experience, including description of similar services provided for other clients. You are welcome to submit product examples and/or digital portfolios.
- Brief overview description (1-2 pages) of:
  - Proposed scope of engagement or specific services to be provided to CETF.
  - General approach to engagement or services, including an outline of a work plan.
- List of at least 3 clients to serve as references.
- Identification of proposed personnel (with resumes) to assign to CETF engagement.
- Description of fee structure and “order of magnitude” cost for proposed engagement contract.

Information Conference Call for Qualified Entities

A conference call for qualified entities will be held on Tuesday, May 6, 2008, at 2:00 PM. Participants should register for the conference call by contacting Alana O’Brien at 415-744-2383 and receiving the number for the call and pass code for the conference.

Submission of Statements of Qualifications

Submit Statements of Qualifications by 5:00 PM on Wednesday, May 16, 2008 by email to: alana.obrien@cetfund.org

Also please submit 3 hard copies to be received by Monday, May 19, 2008, to:
California Emerging Technology Fund
The Hearst Building
5 Third Street, Suite 520
San Francisco, California 94103

CETF welcomes Statements of Qualifications from small and disadvantaged businesses.