



**Request for Proposal**  
**Race Equity Assessment**

August 13, 2020

City of Vergennes  
120 Main Street  
PO Box 35  
Vergennes, VT 05491

August 13, 2020

Dear Vendor:

The City of Vergennes invites you to submit a proposal to provide an assessment of Race Equity in the City of Vergennes community and government.

The attached Request for Proposal (RFP) describes the anticipated services required.

The RFP also outlines the information that should be included in your proposal. The proposal must be submitted by 4:30 P.M. on Tuesday, October 13, 2020 to:

Daniel Hofman  
City Manager  
PO Box 35  
Vergennes, VT 05491

Direct all questions to the City Manager at [dhofman@vergenes.org](mailto:dhofman@vergenes.org) or by phone at 802-877-3637.

We appreciate the effort you are making to provide a complete proposal and look forward to receiving your response.

Very truly yours,

Daniel Hofman  
City Manager

## Introduction

This section of the Request for Proposal (RFP) outlines the proposal submission requirements and provides information on the desired format for proposals. It contains the instructions governing the proposal to be submitted and the material to be included therein, including mandatory requirements (which must be met to be eligible for consideration) and other requirements to be met in each proposal.

### Purpose

The City of Vergennes is emphasizing with urgency the need for assistance in departmental efforts in response to the George Floyd killing. The City of Vergennes is responding to statewide/community requests for transformation within its municipal organization and community.

The City of Vergennes created a Citizen Review Board Exploratory Committee that worked for two months to research the idea of a police oversight board. The committee recommended a professional survey take place and answered questions related to the charge of the committee.

This RFP is intended to build on the committee's work by soliciting proposals for an expert assessment of racial equity in the City of Vergennes government and overall community. The assessment shall diagnose specific issues and make recommendations for the next steps for the City to take.

### Invitation to Propose

The City of Vergennes is hereby advertising to prospective proposers who have professional experience in applying expert racial/diversity in similar organizations and communities. The RFP will be available at the City's web site at: [www.vergennes.org](http://www.vergennes.org).

Proposers are encouraged to inform the City of their intent to respond via email to the City Manager and to initiate preparation of proposals immediately upon receipt so that adequate time is available to prepare a comprehensive and complete response.

### Incurring Costs

The City of Vergennes is not liable for any costs incurred by proposers prior to issuance of an agreement, contract or purchase order. Costs of developing the proposals, oral presentations or any other such expenses incurred by the proposer in responding to the RFP are entirely the responsibility of the proposer, and shall not be reimbursed in any manner by the City.

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## Format of Proposal

Please minimize the bulk of original writing and make maximum use of your standard brochures and materials. Your proposals must follow the format prescribed below. Failure to complete and furnish all information requested in the form and format specified may result in disqualification.

<b>SECTION</b>	<b>TITLE</b>
I.	Name, contact, address, telephone and fax number, and e-mail of your firm.
II.	Information about you company and project team
III.	Vendor Qualifications and Experience
V.	Client References
VI.	Provide all licenses and certifications relating to workforce diversity, leadership, race equity, and fair and impartial best practices
VII.	Familiarity with Vergennes
VIII.	Locating addition funding
IX.	Completed and signed Appendix A and B attached to this RFP

Feel free to include any material that will add to the persuasiveness of your recommended approach. However, if the materials do not directly address the stated requirements, please include them in an appendix or separate volume. We will review and consider all material submitted but want to concentrate our efforts on the material that directly addresses the City's stated needs. Clarification for sections are provided below.

### Understanding of Services Requested

Proposals should indicate the Proposer's understanding of project goals and expectations and must respond to all requirements of this RFP.

### Information About Your Company

Please provide information that will enable us to evaluate your company's financial stability, track record, and support capabilities. We require that you include the following:

- 1) Ownership of your company (Form of Business with Principals);
- 2) Number of years in business;
- 3) Ability to serve a government and community with a similar makeup to that of Vergennes;
- 4) List of municipal clients, services provided to municipal clients, and outcomes from the services your firm provided.

### Information About Your Proposed Project Team

Please provide information that will enable us to evaluate your proposed support team and staff resources. We require that you include the following: (1) general information for your proposed key personnel that will be involved with the City (i.e., Principal, Associate, Support Staff, etc.), and (2) availability and dedication of your team to Vergennes (i.e. how many projects your project team be working on in conjunction with the Vergennes project).

**Client References**

Please provide a list of clients who have retained your services with your company (preferably other municipal entities). The list should provide a customer name, number of residents served, and number of full-time employees in the municipal government, number departments in the municipal government, nonprofits that assisted in the project, etc.

**Familiarity with Vergennes**

Please provide basic information regarding your firm’s understanding of the City of Vergennes and the Vergennes community. Related items can include, but are not limited to, social/demographical/political constructs of Vergennes, current events related to Vergennes, the firm’s prior encounters with Vergennes.

**Locating additional funding**

Please provide your firm’s ability and willingness to locate and manage grants and other funds related to this project. Related items can include, but are not limited to, details on your firm’s potential grant application process, grant administration process, and the probability/availability of potential funds. Increased consideration will be given to firms that can find and administer funding opportunities for the city.

## Proposal Details

### Insurance

All bidders must provide a certificate of insurance covering Workman's Compensation, Occupational Disease, Employer's Liability, and General Liability with the submitted packet.

### City Clarifications

The City reserves the right to obtain clarification of any point in a proposer's proposal or to obtain additional information necessary to properly evaluate a particular proposal. Failure of a proposer to respond to such a request for additional information or clarification may result in rejection of the proposer's proposal.

Due to time constraints in awarding a bid, more information about the contract may be forthcoming.

### Proposal Submission

The proposal package shall be delivered by mail to:

Daniel Hofman  
City Manager  
PO Box 35  
Vergennes, VT 05491

Or, the proposal package may be hand delivered to:

Daniel Hofman  
City Manager  
120 Main Street  
Vergennes, VT 05491

The proposal should be sealed in a package showing, in addition to the address shown above, the following information on the outside:

1. Proposer's Name, Contact;
2. Proposal – City of Vergennes, RFP – Race Equity Assessment; and
3. Proposal due: October 13, 2020.

Late proposals will not be accepted or considered.

### Evaluation

The City Council will evaluate all proposals submitted as a result of this RFP. In order to receive consideration, responses must address all aspects of the requirements specified in the Proposal Response Forms.

### **Acceptance of Proposal**

Failure to furnish all information requested in the form and format specified may disqualify a proposal. Subsequent the City Council awarding the project to a proposer, the contents of the successful proposer will be entered directly into the terms of a contract between the proposer and the City of Vergennes. Failure of the successful proposer to accept these obligations in a purchase agreement, contract, or similar acquisition instrument may result in cancellation of the award and such proposer may be removed from future solicitations.

Throughout the Race Equity Assessment Process, the City may advertise an RFP but for training and other consultation services. The firm who is awarded this bid may also bid on other RFPs from the City of Vergennes that may be forthcoming.

### **False or Misleading Statements**

If, in the opinion of the City, a proposal contains false or misleading statements or references, it may be rejected.

### **Other Reservations**

The City reserves the right to accept or reject any and all proposals. Further, in the event that funds are not available or are terminated, no contract resulting from this RFP will be executed.

### **Rejection of Proposals**

Issuance of this RFP in no way constitutes a commitment by the City of Vergennes to award a contract. If it is deemed in the best interest of the City to do so, the City of Vergennes reserves the right to reject any or all proposals and to waive any informalities and minor irregularities in proposals received or to accept any portion of a proposal or all items proposed, or to reject any and all proposals received in response to this RFP, or to cancel the RFP.

### **Award of Proposal**

The proposal will be awarded by the City of Vergennes Council, at a Regular Meeting on October 13, 2020 at 4:30 P.M. It is recommended that all firms who bid on this RFP attend this meeting to answer any additional questions from City officials.

The bid will be awarded to that proposer whose proposal and client references present a product that will be the most advantageous to the City of Vergennes. The City reserves the right to negotiate with the proposer selected in the evaluation process for this RFP to acquire the combination of services that best meets its needs within any limitations of available funding.

### **No Discrimination in Employment**

In connection with the performance of work for this project, the Contractor agrees not to refuse to hire, discharge, promote or demote, or to discriminate in matters of compensation against any person otherwise qualified, solely because of race, creed, color, religion, sex, age, national origin or ancestry; and further agrees to insert the foregoing provision in all subcontracts hereunder.

## Background Information

Vergennes is located in the northwest quadrant of Addison County bordered by the towns of Ferrisburgh, Panton, and Waltham. It is Vermont's oldest city and the third-oldest incorporated city in New England, being succeeded by Hartford and New Haven, Connecticut. The City of Vergennes was created in 1788 for many reasons, but none more important than the vision that this vital incorporation would pave the way for a great industrial center.

Although not on the scale of the Victorian era, Vergennes maintained its claim as a regional industrial and commercial center into the 20th century. The Havilland Shade Roller Company survived the shakeout of the 1890s and was joined by a fledgling hydroelectric plant and the L.F. Benton Company spark-plug factory on the falls. The city still had a vibrant "downtown" and was buoyed by an expansion of the State of Vermont Reform School for Troubled Youth. In 1907, the school began a major building program that added nearly a dozen new structures over the next fourteen years. By mid-century, Vergennes had lost much of its diversification and as the years passed, it became more and more dependent on one company, Simmonds Precision Products, and its successors. Although the business was for a long time a loyal and valued corporate citizen, its downsizing of the 1990s revealed the danger of relying too much on one employer. Vergennes has since been proactive in luring other companies. Ushio America, Inc (formerly Nathaniel Group) and Plymouth Toy and Book, operating as WowToys, also moved into industrial space constructed in the 1990s on Panton Road.

A revitalization of Vergennes began in the early 1990s, principally through the volunteer efforts of Friends of Vergennes Opera House. Restoration of the Opera House provided a beautiful space for music, theater, and community gatherings; many view it as the heart of our city. The restored Opera House brought community members to our downtown, and local entrepreneurs responded with new restaurants and shops.

In 2001, our downtown was recognized as one of the first Downtown Development Districts by the State of Vermont. To support this designation, the non-profit Vergennes Partnership was formed to support investment and focus on the revitalization of our downtown. Ultimately, the revitalization of our community is the result of committed, energetic, and caring volunteers working in partnership with businesses and City leaders. Vergennes citizens are grateful for their efforts.

Throughout our history, the City of Vergennes has been a municipality based on industry coupled with an important retail and service sector for our region, including high-speed internet access to allow viable remote working opportunities. Today our thriving downtown offers an eclectic mix of dining, shopping, historic sites, a library, art galleries, a City Green with bandstand, and theater. A walk down Main Street takes one past buildings and houses that portray our city's rich history, attracting residents and visitors alike. Vergennes strives to be a friendly, welcoming place, and we wish this legacy to continue.



Since its establishment in 1788, Vergennes' population has been on a relatively steady incline, with some dips along the way. More recently, the City has seen an increase from 2,588 in 2010 to 2,606 as of 2017. Historically, population in Vergennes rises in good economic times and levels out or dips in times of economic distress.

The Vergennes Police Department is a municipal law enforcement agency providing services for the City of Vergennes. Currently, the department is comprised of eight full-time officers, one part-time officer, a part-time administrative assistant, and a part-time dog warden. Operating hours range from nineteen to twenty-three hours a day, every day of the year, with officers on call for the period of time that there is not an officer on duty.

The Department enforces Vermont motor vehicle law, criminal law and juvenile law, as well as city ordinances. The department provides complete police services and works in collaboration with the community to address and solve any civil issues. Staff participate on various state committees who help develop new legislation aimed to protect our communities and highways. The department staff also works closely with the city and area schools, providing mentoring and education to students, and serves as truant officers.

The full-service police department has proactively pursued individual as well as collective training, and includes specialty officers such as a state drug task force and DEA trained narcotics investigation officer, a "use of force and firearms" instructor, a NTOA (National Tactical Officer) certified instructor, a police K9 officer, a certified evidence officer, a DUI instructor, Drug Recognition Expert officers, a Core Values and Leadership/ Community Policing Instructor, and a county traffic safety officer. Many officers are also death investigation certified.

In March of 2014, the Vergennes Police Department moved into its new station at 8 Main Street. This state-of-the-art facility provides an optimal space for police officers to investigate crimes, process persons in custody, and train its staff. The facility was designed and constructed with a future target capacity for ten full-time officers, as well as a full-time administrative assistant and a school resource officer for the Addison Northwest Supervisory District.

The department continues to make effective use of available federal and state grant monies to upgrade its communications and information systems in order to make officers safer and more effective in the performance of their duties. A heavy emphasis is placed on response, follow-up, availability, and approachability by our police officers.

**Appendix A**

Please provide your firm’s per rate for each of the following activities:

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Price Per Activity</b>
1. Community Survey	Gather and theme input from the community about preferred format and venue for community listening sessions and action planning.	\$ _____
2. Preliminary equity assessment	Field survey to gather input from Vergennes Police, municipal employees and community members about equity knowledge, goals and topics they want to learn about.	\$ _____
3. Learning Sessions	Facilitate two series of learning experiences (one series for Vergennes Police Department, and the other for municipal leaders/staff) to build shared understanding about equity issues (for example, learn how implicit bias, the legacy of racism, and dominant white culture impact current systems).	\$ _____
4. Listening Sessions	Gather feedback about experiences and concerns related to Vergennes Police Department practices, policies and culture.	\$ _____
5. Recommendation	Create a recommendation for next steps for the City Manager, City Council, and Community	\$ _____

**Authorization:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name

**Appendix B**

Please provide your firm’s proposed timeline to complete each of the following activities:

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Timeline Per Activity</b>
1. Community Survey	Gather and theme input from the community about preferred format and venue for community listening sessions and action planning.	_____
2. Preliminary equity assessment	Field survey to gather input from Vergennes Police, municipal employees and community members about equity knowledge, goals and topics they want to learn about.	_____
3. Learning Sessions	Facilitate two series of learning experiences (one series for Vergennes Police Department, and the other for municipal leaders/staff) to build shared understanding about equity issues (for example, learn how implicit bias, the legacy of racism, and dominant white culture impact current systems).	_____
4. Listening Sessions	Gather feedback about experiences and concerns related to Vergennes Police Department practices, policies and culture.	_____
5. Recommendation	Create a recommendation for next steps for the City Manager, City Council, and Community	_____

**Authorization:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name