

Public Service

Projects that effectively use advertising techniques to support local, regional and/or national programs on behalf of public interests and/or for community betterment.

1. For each public service project, explain how you achieved these public service goals by describing the:
 - Goals of the project
 - Target audience
 - Strategy
 - Execution/tactics
 - Media/materials used (documentation of use required)
 - Results attained (may include club publicity)

AAF of the Midlands Public Service Campaign 2019-2020

Each year, AAF of the Midlands completes a careful application process to select one local non-profit organization to serve as the public service client. Our approach is to focus on one organization for the entire year, utilizing the talents and professional skills of our board and committee members by promoting the mission of this one organization we believe will have a lasting and positive impact on the community. Our membership is fully engaged with our client and professionals from all aspects of advertising to deliver services and expertise.

Candidate Criteria

Organization must:

1. Be located in or have offices in the Midlands region of South Carolina.
2. Clearly state tangible advertising, media and public relations goals that are attainable through pro bono or in-kind services within a one year period.
3. Show present positive impact on the community and illustrate how increased advertising, media and public relations goals will increase that impact.

Call for Applications and Selection Process

Vital Connections of the Midlands was one of twelve non-profit organizations that responded to a call for applications announced by a press release and by social media channels in May 2019 (Exhibits 1 & 2). After an initial deliberation round with the AAF of the Midlands board, only three organizations were invited to present and answer questions about their organization for the final selection process. Elizabeth Bower, Executive Director for Vital Connections of the Midlands, and her colleague, John Browne, Behavioral Health Manager, passionately spoke about the organization and its mission to provide comprehensive, high-quality early childcare and education for children and families in Columbia, South Carolina. They expounded on the organization's wish to seek professional assistance in establishing consistency for their brand, giving them the ability to span across multiple platforms, such as their deliverables, like brochures and newsletters; their social media platforms, like Facebook; and any other

communications and messaging pieces to the public, like business cards and letterheads. Furthermore, they expressed their desire to register their organization to participate in the annual online giving event, Midlands Gives, held virtually by Central Carolina Community Foundation which supports local non-profits in South Carolina. In order to register to this online giving event, organizations must have a functioning website which demonstrates their mission to the community along with their financial aspirations to encourage potential donors to support their cause.

AAF of the Midlands confidently felt it could provide the means to attain the website creation and branding goals of Vital Connections of the Midlands, and it was selected as the 2019-2020 client (Exhibits 3 & 4).

Background

Vital Connections of the Midlands (VCM) is a non-profit early care and education program whose main focus is providing family-centered services for at-risk families and young children who are struggling with poverty, sometimes substance abuse, and are at-risk for child abuse and neglect. Priority is given to families who are experiencing homelessness. Programs are offered to Midlands communities by three school locations in Columbia, S.C.: Children's Garden, Tender Years and Arthurtown. The vision of VCM is to break the cycle of generational poverty in at-risk communities by providing comprehensive, high-quality early childhood education, for pregnant moms and children aged six weeks to three years old, that is affordable and has a strong parental engagement component. All of this is achieved while upholding the standards of the National Association for the Education of Young Children, a professional membership organization that works to promote high-quality early learning for all young children, birth through age 8, by connecting early childhood practice, policy and research. VCM is also an agency partner with the United Way, a national organization which fights for the health, education and financial stability of every person in every community.

Marketing Analysis

In July 2019, we had a discovery meeting with Elizabeth Bower, Executive Director of VCM, and John Browne, Behavioral Health Manager. In this meeting, we outlined goals and discussed two

important components of a rebranding campaign which would result in better understanding of the organization: a new website and recreating the VCM logo. As an agency partner of the United Way of the Midlands (UW), VCM previously occupied a website landing page on the UW website which discussed key points of the VCM mission; however, it did not detail its full services provided to the community. United Way was amid their own website refresh, so it was imperative VCM take the opportunity to build their own website, not only as a means to reflect its mission and services, but to create a credible resource which would help VCM obtain federal grants plus build a sturdy donor base. Additionally, creating a new website would be critical in their involvement with the widely growing annual online giving event, Midlands Gives, powered by Central Carolina Community Foundation in Columbia, S.C.

For background, Midlands Gives brings regions of South Carolina together as one community, raising funds and awareness for local non-profits in 11 counties. In addition to being a year-round resource for donors, the initiative heightens donations during an 18-hour online giving challenge held annually in the spring. Since its inception six years ago, this online giving event has raised \$9.3 million for local non-profits.

While the focus was building a new website, it was found the VCM logo needed to be modernized and usage guidelines be established. VCM officials were using a makeshift approach with their current logo—rough shapes, loss of resolution when placing on numerous documents, in addition to using multiple variations of the logo which caused confusion about locations of the schools and their affiliations (Exhibits 5 & 6). We were informed the members of the VCM board would be involved with ideas surrounding the creation of the new logo, but the final version would be ultimately decided by the executive director.

The last topic discussed in this discovery meeting was the announcement of retirement by Executive Director, Elizabeth Bower, and that John Browne, Behavioral Health Manager would fill the new executive director role after October 2019.

Finally it was concluded that VCM has few resources, which limits them in marketing their programs and services, and are highly dependent upon federal funding, and in-kind donations. Securing funding and in-kind donations helps the organization offset numerous operational expenses that can be better directed to financing its core programs and services. With a multitude of concepts, and eagerness to offer strategic

insights, expertise and solutions, we were able to help formulate goals that AAF of the Midlands could assist Vital Connections of the Midlands in achieving.

Goals

1. Create a new logo and brand style guidelines for deliverables and collateral
2. Develop a new website separate from partner agency, United Way
3. Register new VCM website for the online giving campaign, Midlands Gives, powered by Central Carolina Community Foundation held May 5, 2020
4. Expand awareness of organization and the Midlands Gives online giving event through social media

Target Audience

The target audience for this campaign comprises multiple segments: parents, pregnant moms and/or guardians in underserved communities of Columbia, S.C. who are in need of high-quality early childhood education of children ages six weeks to three years of age and who meet the Federal Income guidelines. The second sector of our target includes people living in Columbia, S.C. and the surrounding areas who are willing to donate to a worthy partnership organization or non-profit in general, and a non-profit that provides a safe, educational environment to children in particular.

Strategy

Building a new website was established as top priority in this campaign; however, the VCM logo was in need of a fresh, new look. The logo is the most visual symbol for the organization to convey directly and indirectly about whom they are and what they represent. It is also important to set a style guide to equip organization officials with the tools needed to maintain the new brand image going forward. After the new logo and style guide are created, the art direction is easily laid out for the development of a website. A website itself can be used to accomplish a multitude of marketing strategies to help businesses grow, in addition to giving businesses the opportunity to tell consumers and donors why they should trust said business.

Site location images plus secondary captures of typical childcare and educational materials along with supporting content would help strengthen the authenticity of the organization and its personnel. Lastly, we plan to utilize social media as an effective medium to achieve awareness of the new website, in addition to their entry to the annual online giving campaign, Midlands Gives, powered by Central Carolina Community Foundation, which will be held May 5, 2020. Social media is an effective medium in this regard due to its economical nature, and its ability to spread awareness in a “word of mouth” capacity to reach a large population.

Execution/Tactics

We worked together creating goals and timelines leading up to the launch date of the new website for VCM and its refreshed logo, preceding the annual online giving event, Midlands Gives in May 2020. In August 2019, we invited Elizabeth Bower and John Browne to the annual AAF of the Midlands Kickoff & Art Auction. We set up a table and provided some collateral pieces which were instrumental in introducing their organization to the AAF membership in hopes to widen the reach of their mission to the community (Exhibit 7).

Several meetings were held onsite at the VCM flagship location, Children’s Garden, which is best known of the three locations in the community. Attendance at these meetings varied with VCM officials and personnel, including newly appointed Executive Director, John Browne; Herbie Hollar, Creative Director for Softdocs, a content manager provider; Doug Adam, Account Executive for Indesign Firm, a web design and app development firm.

Conducting these meetings at the VCM locations helped give insight to the culture of VCM. We explored the satellite locations, Tender Years and Arthurtown, and we spoke to teachers, staff and volunteers to gain personal testimonials, along with taking photographs of classroom settings and materials.

Additionally, we enlisted help from the VCM board members by providing a questionnaire which would help explain the overall nature of the organization (Exhibit 8). Site visits to the locations were vital in our ability to “tell their story” and to showcase the organization’s commitment to providing educational and family-centered programs for children which would be demonstrated on their new website.

Meanwhile, with the realization of brand inconsistencies along with haphazard logo usage, designer and creative director, Herbie Hollar with Softdocs, wielded these cultural findings and applied them to create a new logo which better reflects the VCM mission.

Media/Material Used

Given the lack of financial resources, all labor was provided pro bono. No out of pocket expenses were incurred by Vital Connections for the entire campaign.

Midlands Biz Digital Subscription - (Exhibit 4)

Social Media - Facebook - (See referenced documentation.)

Wordpress for website development - The Indesign Firm

Results Attained

The final logo and style guide was passed before the VCM board of directors with final approval by the executive director. The goal was to bring the logo up-to-date and present VCM as a stable, professional non-profit organization that has the growth of children at its heart. The child silhouettes were kept from the previous logo but updated to a modern look. The typeface is also contemporary but not trendy to maintain longevity. The curves of the letter forms are soft, offering a welcoming look. The color combinations were chosen to avoid gender stereotypes and show growth and sustainability. The butterfly is set in a bright, contrasting color gradient and symbolizes achieving goals (Exhibit 9). Secondary identifiers for each location were created and set in a child-like font, while the descriptive type is set in the same font as the main logo. The descriptive font also reinforces that each location is part of the overall organization. The same child silhouettes were used to make a visual connection to the main logo. Each location has its own primary color pulled from a specific color palette designed for the new brand (Exhibit 10). Lastly, examples of usage were presented on collateral pieces, such as business cards and thank-you notes (Exhibits 11 & 12).

The new VCM website is currently under construction by web developer and account executive, Doug Adam with The Indesign Firm, with the proposed launch date of April 15, 2020. The website will demonstrate all components of the organization, from their mission and educational curriculums, to the

introduction of personnel and staff who dedicate themselves to the growth and education of young children.

It is tough to determine whether the online Midlands Gives event slated for May 5, 2020 will occur due to the current Coronavirus, COVID-19 pandemic which has gripped the economy and world at large. Despite the current global crisis, the new campaign and all of the additional resources that were provided through this partnership will support Vital Connections of the Midlands in effectively communicating their mission to the community and beyond. More importantly, it will increase their ability to obtain donations and recruit more volunteers to help offset expenses and fund their core educational and family-centered programs and services.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 2, 2019

AAF of the Midlands Announces Call for Public Service Applications

Local Advertising Organization Seeks Nonprofit Client for 2019-2020 Public Service Campaign

COLUMBIA, S.C. – The American Advertising Federation (AAF) of the Midlands recently announced they are accepting applications from nonprofit organizations to become the club's public service client for 2019-2020. Each year, AAF of the Midlands selects one nonprofit in the community to assist them with their marketing and advertising needs.

To qualify to become AAF of the Midlands' next public service client, applicants are required to be a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization in Richland or Lexington County. Applications must be submitted no later than Friday, May 17, 2019. Please visit www.AAFMidlands.com/PublicService to apply.

AAF of the Midlands selected Palmetto Place Children & Youth Services to serve as their public service candidate for 2018-2019. Palmetto Place's mission is to provide a safe and supportive environment for children and teens who have faced abuse, abandonment neglect and/or homelessness.

About AAF of the Midlands

The Columbia Ad Club was founded in 1955 and is affiliated with the American Advertising Federation (AAF) which is the oldest national advertising trade association, representing 50,000 professionals in the advertising industry worldwide. The affiliate's name was changed in 2007 to AAF of the Midlands in order to enhance branding at the local, regional and national level. AAF of the Midlands is a member of Third District of the AAF, which represents South Carolina, North Carolina and Virginia. The AAF is dedicated to serving members by protecting and advancing advertising interests. AAF fulfills this mission through effective government relations, professional development, public education, advertising education, advertising standards, public service and recognition of excellence.

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Exhibit 2 – Social Channels Non-profit Call for Applications

Facebook post:



The image shows a Facebook post from the page 'AAF of the Midlands'. The post is dated May 2, 2019. The text of the post reads: 'We invite your nonprofit organization to submit an application to be our 2019 – 2020 non-profit partner! Submit your application at www.aafmidlands.com/publicservice today!'. Below the text is a large graphic with a pink and orange striped border. The graphic contains the AAF logo (American Advertising Federation of the Midlands, Columbia, MO) at the top, followed by the text 'Call for Applications Now Open' in large, bold, black font, and the URL 'AAFMidlands.com/PublicService' at the bottom. At the bottom left of the post, there is a thumbs-up icon and the number '5'. At the bottom right, there is a share icon and the text '5 Shares'.

<https://www.facebook.com/aafmidlands/photos/a.10152447949639377/10158383978619377/?type=3&theater>

Instagram post:



The image shows an Instagram post from the account 'aafmidlands'. The post features a graphic with a pink and orange striped border. The graphic contains the AAF logo (American Advertising Federation of the Midlands, Columbia, MO) at the top, followed by the text 'Call for Applications Now Open' in large, bold, black font, and the URL 'AAFMidlands.com/PublicService' at the bottom. The Instagram interface shows the post was made 46 weeks ago, has 9 likes, and includes icons for likes, comments, shares, and a bookmark. The text 'Add a comment...' and 'Post' are visible at the bottom of the post area.

<https://www.instagram.com/p/Bw-Krl3lUxe/>



For Immediate Release
July 24, 2019

Media Contact: Stephanie Hooker
stephanie.hooker@ucimedinc.com

AAF of the Midlands Announces Vital Connections of the Midlands as 2019-2020 Public Service Client

(COLUMBIA, S.C.) – The American Advertising Federation (AAF) of The Midlands has announced local nonprofit Vital Connections of the Midlands as the club’s public service client for 2019-2020. AAF selects one nonprofit organization in the Midlands each year and assists them with their marketing and advertising needs.

The mission of Vital Connections is to provide comprehensive, high quality early care and education to children and families living in poverty throughout the Midlands. They are able to achieve this through their management of three nationally-accredited child care centers in Richland County, where highly qualified teachers and staff provide comprehensive services for both children and families including mental health screenings, health care and parenting support. AAF will begin work with Vital Connections this summer.

“We are so excited to have the support of AAF of the Midlands to help us promote our programs and to inform the public of our mission to provide high quality care for the children and families within the communities that we serve,” says Elizabeth Bower, executive director of Vital Connections of the Midlands. “We are greatly appreciative of the opportunity to benefit from the support and talents of the AAF board and membership.”

Our collaboration will work towards re-branding Vital Connections in an effort to further reach those in need of these valuable services. For more information on AAF’s public service initiatives, visit aafmidlands.com.

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Exhibit 4 – P.R. Web Announcement: AAF 2019-20 Public Service Client Announcement

Screenshot of web link:

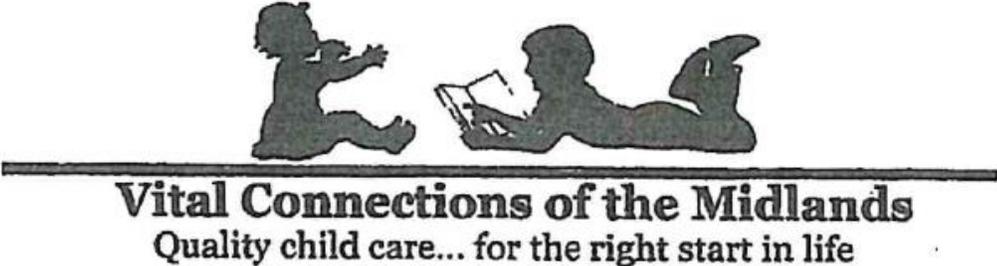


AAF of the Midlands announces Vital Connections of the Midlands as 2019-2020 public service client

July 25, 2019 | Comments Off

The American Advertising Federation (AAF) of The Midlands has announced local

Link: <https://whosonthemove.com/aaf-of-the-midlands-announces-vital-connections-of-the-midlands-as-2019-2020-public-service-client/>



Vital Connections of the Midlands
Quality child care... for the right start in life

Exhibit 6 – Vital Connections of the Midlands original logo variations



A Community Service of Volunteers of America

4801 Colonial Drive
Columbia, SC 29203

VITAL CONNECTIONS OF THE MIDLANDS
Quality Child Care For The Right Start In Life

Elizabeth A. Bower, BS
Executive Director
4801 Colonial Dr, Columbia SC 29203
803.708.1510 office
ebower@vcmchs.org
VitalConnectionsOfTheMidlands.org



Thank You

Vital Connections of the Midlands
Quality child care... for the right start in life



Vital Connections of the Midlands
Quality child care... for the right start in life

Vital Connections of the Midlands
Phone: (803) 664-8685
www.vitalconnectionsofthemidlands.org

Exhibit 7 – VCM collateral presented at AAF of the Midlands annual Kickoff & Art Auction, August 2019



Exhibit 8 – Branding questionnaire submitted to VCM board members, September 2019

VCM Survey Responses

1. How would you describe the 'personality' of the Vital Connections brand?
 - a. Personable, friendly, down to Earth, small town atmosphere
 - b. Comforting and caring for children
 - c. Dynamic and creative in all aspects
 - d. Cheerful
 - e. Compassionate
 - f. Currently- confusing!

2. What do you feel is VCM's biggest differentiating quality amongst other like organizations in the community?
 - a. Commitment to excellence, dedication of staff, loyalty of staff
 - b. 3 great locations in the community, teachers and aids that have a connection with children.
 - c. dedicated staff and devoted volunteers
 - d. Quality care
 - e. Loyalty
 - f. 3 centers, serves all children who are at the poverty level and the homeless population, United Way partner agency, strong accreditations

3. How do you think VCM makes their customers feel?
 - a. valued, respected, cared for and about...no one is just "doing their job"
 - b. wonderful, they are always engaging parents in activities
 - c. engaged and involved in decision making
 - d. Loved
 - e. VCM makes them feel like they matter. We want the best for all our families we serve.
 - f. Helped - cared and provided for

4. What do you think is the biggest benefit our customers get from the brand, VCM?
 - a. High quality early education and child care. Professional and dedicated staff members who willingly invest their time and energy into preparing their children for school with a strong emphasis and focus on family engagement activities.
 - b. connections! They provide opportunities to allow their children to grow with their families. Connections in the community, etc.
 - c. dedication and involvement
 - d. Self Sufficiency and Education
 - e. Great ending results
 - f. High quality early education, school readiness, social services for the family, food

5. What five words best describe, for you, VCM?
 - a. Compassionate (2)
 - b. Caring
 - c. Dedicated staff
 - d. Resourceful
 - e. School readiness

Exhibit 8 – Branding questionnaire submitted to VCM board members, September 2019

- f. Competent (2)
- g. Connections
- h. Creative opportunities
- i. Quality
- j. Purpose driven
- k. Poverty level
- l. Nurturing
- m. Community
- n. Engaged
- o. Dependable
- p. Confident
- q. NAEYC Accreditation
- r. Excellence
- s. Supportive
- t. Childcare
- u. Beneficial
- v. Reliable source
- w. United Way Partner Agency
- x. Visionary
- y. Responsible
- z. Caring
- aa. Impressive
- bb. Direct
- cc. Caring environment





Exhibit 11 - New VCM logo Usage and Style Examples_Business Cards



Vital Connections
of the Midlands

John A. Browne, MA
Behavioral Health and Quality Assurance Manager
JBrowne@vcmehs.org 📞 803-553-8657



Vital Connections
of the Midlands

John A. Browne, MA
Behavioral Health and Quality Assurance Manager
JBrowne@VitalConnectionsSC.org 📞 803-553-8657



Quality Child Care for the
Right Start in Life.



Quality Child Care for the
Right Start in Life.

Thank You :)



Vital Connections
of the Midlands
4801 Colonial Dr
Columbia SC 29203

Vital Connections
of the Midlands
4801 Colonial Dr
Columbia SC 29203



Addendum- Example of New logo on VCM Facebook account

The image shows a screenshot of the Facebook profile for Vital Connections of the Midlands. The page features a new logo consisting of two stylized figures in shades of green and blue, with a small flower above them. The text "Vital Connections of the Midlands" is displayed in a clean, sans-serif font, with the tagline "Quality Child Care for the Right Start in Life." below it. The page layout includes a left-hand navigation menu with options like Home, About, Photos, Events, Reviews, Videos, Posts, and Community. The main content area shows a post-writing section with options for Photo/Video, Tag Friends, and Check in. Below this is a "Photos" section featuring a photo of four women standing in front of a white car with its trunk open, which is filled with boxes. To the right, there is a 5.0 star rating based on 6 opinions, a video thumbnail titled "ABOUT VITAL CONNECTIONS OF THE MIDLANDS", and a "Community" section with a "See All" link.

Vital Connections of the Midlands
@VCMEarlyHeadStart

Home
About
Photos
Events
Reviews
Videos
Posts
Community

Create a Page

Write a post...

Photo/Video Tag Friends Check in

Photos

ABOUT VITAL CONNECTIONS OF THE MIDLANDS

Our Story
Vital Connections of the Midlands (VCM) is a non-profit organization that developed from United Way'...
See More

Community See All
Invite your friends to like this Page



**AMERICAN ADVERTISING FEDERATION
OF THE MIDLANDS
COLUMBIA, SC**

Public Service Campaign Application 2019

AAF of the Midlands invites your organization to submit an application to be our 2019-2020 nonprofit partner. If you believe that with our help your organization can better achieve its goals, please complete the following application. The application deadline is Friday, May 17, 2019.

Full Name of Organization

Vital Connections of the Midlands. Inc.

Address

4801 Colonial Drive

Address Line 1

Address Line 2

Columbia

City

South Carolina

State

29203

Zip Code

Contact Name

Elizabeth

First

Bower

Last

Phone

(803) 238-0773

Email

ebower@vcmehs.org

What is your organization's mission?

To provide comprehensive, high quality early care and education for children and families living in poverty.

What services does your organization offer? Who receives these services?

We provide NAEYC (National Association of Education for Young Children) Accredited care for children of families who are at or below the poverty line. Enrollment priority is given to families experiencing homelessness and to children in foster care. We serve pregnant women and children from 6 weeks of age to 3 years of age in three child development centers located in low income communities in Richland County. We provide year-round care; 7.5 hours each day, 5 days each week. We provide a nutritious breakfast, lunch, and afternoon snack daily for each child. We provide all formula, diapers and wipes for infants and toddlers. We provide vision, hearing, and dental screening for each child and we connect parents with an ongoing source of continuous, accessible health care for their child. Classroom teachers conduct daily assessments of each child in all areas of development. Classroom teachers conduct home visits twice each year for each child in their care. Each of our centers have achieved and maintained an A+ rating with the SC ABC Child Care Quality Center. We provide services and resources to our families that will allow them to be gainfully employed, educated, and contributing members of society. Our 3 focus areas are: 1- health and safety, 2- school readiness, 3- parent engagement.

Does your organization currently have a marketing and/or advertising strategy? If so, please briefly describe it.

We have a recruitment process which involves distribution of enrollment flyers to local businesses: grocery stores, laundromats, hair salons, churches, counseling offices, the foster parent division of SC Department of Social Services, financial aid offices, and family shelters. We also utilize social media during the open enrollment period.

What is the nature of the problem that you believe can be alleviated with the help of this advertising campaign?

We are interested in building a new website for our organization. We also need assistance with the design of new digital logos. Our website needs to clearly communicate what we do and why we do it. We hope to portray the warm and caring environments that we provide for our children and parents. We would like the content for the new website to also be utilized on social media, and with print advertising and direct mailers.

What is the overall goal that this advertising campaign needs to support?

The overall goal is to design a website that will: 1-provide information to our partner agencies and organizations, 2- provide our organization's annual report and pertinent financial data to prospective partners or grantors, 3- educate and update our parents on current events, 4-allow the public to make donations.

In what medium/media would you like to see your advertising appear?

Print Digital Social

When does your organization hope to launch this campaign?

September 3, 2019

Have funds been allocated/budgeted for your advertising campaign?

Yes No

If so, how what amount has been budgeted/allocated?

N/A

Have you made any arrangements for creation, production, reproduction or distribution to the media?

Yes No

Have you approached any other group or advertising agency to create advertising or related activities?

Yes No

If yes, please provide the name of the group or agency.

How would your organization benefit from the support and talents of the AAF of the Midlands Board and membership?

Vital Connections of the Midlands would greatly benefit from the expertise of AAF members who can educate our staff on the most recent methods of technology required to adequately and professionally inform the public of our mission and our progress within the communities that we serve.

Please provide any additional notes.