



# **American Land Title Association (ALTA)**

*Request for Proposal: Public Affairs/Advertising Firm*

**SUBJECT MATTER**

1201 New York Avenue NW, Suite 900, Washington, DC 20005 | 202-544-8400 | [TeamSubjectMatter.com](http://TeamSubjectMatter.com)



**SUBJECT MATTER**  
A CREATIVE ADVOCACY FIRM

Dear Diane and Jeremy:

I am very happy to submit Subject Matter's response to the American Land Title Association's RFP sent to agencies you would like to assist in your 2020 communications campaign. As we hope you'll see, based on our skills and experience, as well as our substantive knowledge of the complex real estate and housing finance world, Subject Matter is ideally suited to assist you.

Subject Matter is a full-service creative agency with a deep understanding of how to move public opinion. We call what we do Creative Advocacy because we deploy all of the tools of modern communication to help persuade key audiences on desirable policy outcomes. To that end, we develop efficient, targeted public affairs programs that integrate advertising, content, interactive tools, social and earned media.

We have significant experience in helping trade associations, issue coalitions, companies and advocacy organizations hone their message and build their brands, while educating and informing target audiences about important issues. Helping ALTA increase the understanding of the value of title insurance while you simultaneously lead the industry through the upcoming, likely multi-year debate over how the mortgage finance and real estate ecosystem should be shaped is a challenge we are excited to help you address.

Subject Matter will engage our colleague David Jeffers, the principal behind First Story, as a senior strategist in our proposed campaign, continuing a collaboration with me that goes back nearly 30 years. David currently works on such Subject Matter clients as Ginnie Mae, the Structured Finance Association, and Redwood Trust. Other relevant clients Subject Matter currently or previously has worked with include the National Association of Home Builders, the National Multifamily Housing Council, the Federal Housing Finance Agency, and the MacArthur Foundation's How Housing Matters program.

As we see it, ALTA has both significant assets and a challenge in navigating the upcoming highly fluid policy environment. One focus in the broad discussion of how to recalibrate the government's role in housing finance will be on the costs borne by consumers when they purchase or refinance a home, and with disruptors targeting both the mortgage finance system and real estate transactions per se, it is inevitable that issues related to both title search and insurance will be scrutinized.

Establishing your industry's value proposition and the benefits derived by consumers will be essential for reasons related both to offense — in this fluid environment, what policy changes would the industry like to affect? — and defense — what vulnerabilities must be guarded against disintermediation by other industry segments?



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Our approach to your campaign maps closely to what you propose in your RFP.

We like to start with qualitative research to get a better understanding of the message environment in which the campaign will work. From there, we create a Message Framework and a Creative Brief that informs our development of the creative campaign. Everything is filtered through the prism of a multifaceted Communications Strategy, which is our blueprint for building the program.

No advertising effort begins in a vacuum or should be limited only to paid channels. We create content that can be distributed through social media channels, residing on an existing or new website, and map out media relations programs, including such tools as op-eds, to help build the case.

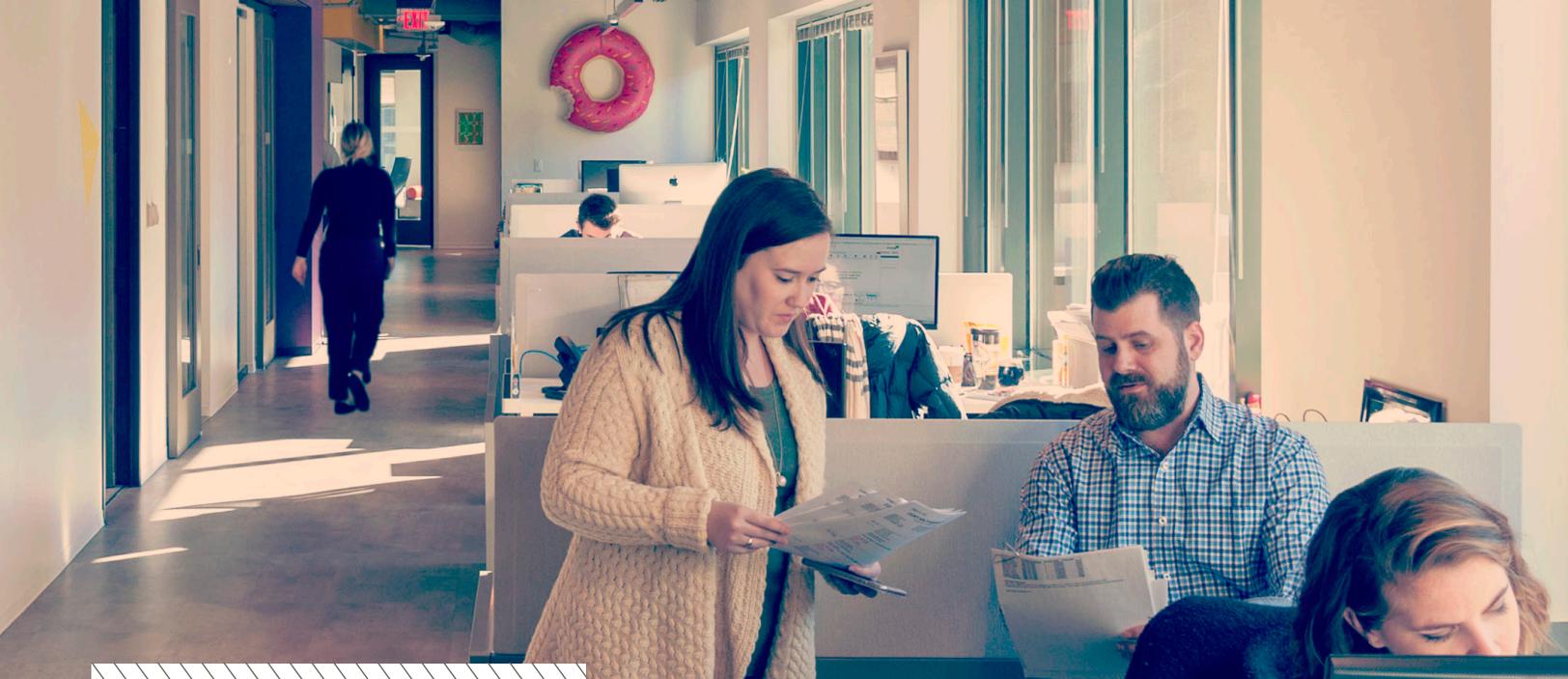
We understand that trade associations have constituencies to manage, which benefit from careful tracking of campaign results and an ability to communicate with Board Members or others who take a keen interest in what progress is being made. And with us just a few blocks away your Washington headquarters, we're available on short notice to respond to developments in real time.

We'd really like to work with ALTA and make your effort a success. We have the key personnel, steeped both in communications and the substance in which you work, ready to get going. On a personal note, Diane, it would be fun to work with you once again, and yes, at Subject Matter, all of us roll up our sleeves and work on client matters — even the CEO!

Thank you once again for the opportunity to respond to your RFP.

Sincerely,

John Buckley



# Subject Matter Is Your Force Multiplier

Subject Matter offers a full suite of services from creative content and advertising to strategic communications and government relations.

The communications arm was established in 1998 as Home Front Communications and in 2015 merged with the storied government relations firm Elmendorf | Ryan to create Subject Matter. The 80-member firm is based in Washington, D.C., and has the equivalent of seven agencies under one roof. Our capabilities include creative and advertising, website development, digital engagement, media relations, video production, strategic communications and government relations.

## **POSITIONING. MESSAGING. EXECUTION.**

We have led multiple major rebranding, repositioning and campaign efforts from inception to final success, measurement and reporting. We believe in “looking before leaping” and using research to discover critical insights to determine the right strategy for every part of our execution. This includes: design, messaging and tactics, creative advertising, earned media, social and digital advertising, third party cultivation and events and speaking opportunities.

## **FULL-SERVICE SUPPORT**

We’ve got it all under one roof: Creative, strategic communications, media, digital, website development and government relations. We work cooperatively to advance your goals and develop strategies on one platform that can be used across others. In today’s fast-moving communications ecosystem, collaboration is required because influencers and decision-makers get simultaneous input from multiple sources at breakneck speed.

## **BROADCAST AND MEDIA**

Over 20 years, Subject Matter has built an unparalleled capacity to deliver media relations wins on every level and at every scale. We’ve managed earned media efforts around the release of new studies, polls and advocacy campaigns. We have the expertise to reach targeted audiences no matter where they are or what they are interested in — from urban to rural, hyper-local to national, business to health, as well as English -and Spanish-speaking audiences.

# OUR CAPABILITIES

## DIGITAL TOOLS AND WEBSITES

Technology is a creative medium, and the most meaningful websites and digital experiences are rooted in a well-crafted communications strategy and tailored to the unique behavior of the audience. Our technologists work closely with our creative content specialists to ensure impact both online and offline.

### Services

- Website Design and Development
- User-Centric Design
- Interactive Experiences
- Applications and Tools
- API Development
- Mobile Strategy and Execution
- Strategic Guidance and Consulting
- Metrics and Analytics

## CONTENT & THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

Even the most compelling stories won't resonate if they aren't tailored to the audience. Our mix of veteran journalists and policy experts can make complex narratives easy to understand and highly shareable. We then make sure the right messages are delivered to the right people at the right time, at work and at home.

### Services

- Strategic Guidance and Consulting
- Message Development
- Editorial Planning
- Writing and Editing
- Op-ed Development and Pitching
- Live Event Coverage
- Digital Strategy
- Infographics
- Email Newsletters
- Social Media Engagement
- Blogging
- Content Distribution

## MEDIA OUTREACH

Our skilled media specialists have the political and newsroom experience to position your subject for success. With an in-house broadcast studio connected to the world via satellite, our team shapes and pitches stories to broadcasters — including Spanish-language outlets — across the nation.

### Services

- Strategic Guidance and Consulting
- Message Development
- Media Training
- Satellite Media Tours
- Radio Media Tours
- Bites and B-roll Production and Distribution
- National, Statewide and Local Pitching
- PSA Distribution
- In-studio and On-location Interviews
- Production Support for Events
- Spanish-language Outreach
- Webinars and Webcasts
- Audio News Releases
- Targeted Digital Media Outreach
- Coverage Monitoring and Analytics

## VIDEO PRODUCTION

Our offices have a fully equipped broadcast studio and staff who can deliver everything from long-form content to quick viral hits. We can also deploy to nearly anywhere in the world, coordinating our vast network of local contacts to create videos on budget and on time.

### Services

- Production
- Post-Production
- Studio
- Green Screening
- Editing
- Event Videos
- Online Video Content
- Still Photography
- Color Grading
- 2D/3D Animation
- Audio
- Music

## ADVERTISING

A successful ad concept grabs attention, then provokes thought and emotion. Our team expertly conceives and executes ideas big enough to span all media while compelling your audience to think, feel, act or change behavior.

### Services

- 360° Campaigns
- Branding
- Design
- TV
- Radio
- Print
- Out-of-Home
- Online
- Mobile
- Non-traditional
- Media Strategy and Buying
- Viral Videos
- Guerrilla Tactics
- Experiential
- Conference and Event Marketing

## GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

Our talented Government Relations team has the experience and the political savvy to help position your subject with those who can make or break your path to success: policy influencers. We make sure the timing and messaging are just right to move the needle on both sides of the aisle.

### Services

- Federal Communications
- Legislative Strategy
- Lobbying
- Coalition Building
- Litigation Communications
- Policy Papers and Reports
- Research
- Political Participation Strategy
- Communications Training
- Long-Term Planning

# The Cliff's Notes on our approach and style.

We believe ...



Everyone is creative.

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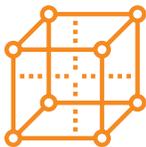
Each of us holds an important piece of the knowledge puzzle, so collaboration is key.

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Hearing from your target audience(s) is just as critical as hearing from your board members.

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There is no “one-size-fits-all” option. Your challenge is unique to you. The solution — applying all of our expertise and experience — will be customized.

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We should talk often along the way to ensure we are on the same page (and remain that way). We'll assign a team whose job it is to do so.

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We offer more value, packing the power of seven agencies into one company.



# Our Approach

## Foundational Recommendations

We will use the strategic planning process to chart our path and specific recommendations, however a few foundational recommendations have already percolated based on the information shared so far.

### 1. Articulate the value

There is a striking differentiator between title insurance and other well known forms of insurance — title insurance includes a significant upfront service to research and resolve any possible title issues, not simply protection against future possibilities.

We must understand if this is unknown or misunderstood by the target audience and then endeavor to clearly articulate this value and bring it to life. It is also important to understand if title insurance is incorrectly lumped together with other closing fees and costs, ballooning the perceived cost. Our hunch is that the current cost for title insurance is more palatable with a better appreciation of what it in fact does (and does not) entail.

Without yet having the benefit of qualitative research which would guide our message and strategy, we presume a positioning for the campaign could revolve around these insights:

The title insurance industry is threatened. The threat is obsolescence. But it's not as if the risks embedded in the purchase of homes and property are going away. The risks may mutate. The legalities may change. Technologies will emerge. The ways of mitigating the risks will evolve. But the need to identify, acknowledge and address title risk lives on. So, in this era of roiling change, who better to create solutions that best serve the real estate industry, and property owners everywhere, than the type of professionals who've been doing it for more than 100 years? And yet, to make this point, the industry must activate its ability to innovate and adapt to change.



**“Title insurance protects the single largest financial investment most people make. One out of every three residential real estate transactions has an issue with the title, which is usually resolved by title professionals before the buyer closes.”**

## 2. Apply the appropriate focus on “campaign” versus “brand.”

Your RFP mentions “brand development” a few times. Our sense is that we must position ALTA as the thought leader and resource for policy influencers, which should be achieved through earned outreach and ongoing content. Our campaign should also be attributed to ALTA, but the campaign focus should be representing the value title insurance provides and the people of the industry making it happen every day. At the end of the effort, we expect that our success will not be measured by recall of the organization so much as change in the awareness of and perceptions toward title insurance.

## 3. Laser target policy influencers.

Our strategic plan will outline the appropriate opportunities to go wider (i.e. consumer) versus narrower. However, to leverage your budget to its greatest effect we recommend concentrating your paid media spend targeting policy influencers. This smaller audience group has an outsized impact on your industry and it is important that they hear from you directly and often.

This is also Subject Matter’s sweet spot. We know how to test, target and communicate with this audience. We field our own proprietary influencer research, delve into their media consumption habits, and ensure our efforts are as laser-targeted and efficient as possible.

## 4. Build a system for consistent amplification of new messaging.

This effort will require discipline and commitment to a regular rhythm of engagement — using all the tools available in today’s communications ecosystem. This kind of sustained, content-oriented engagement through thought leadership, advertising, social media, and earned media will have impact. Subject Matter’s effective and proven “Always On” platform applies an editorial planning approach with our senior communications practitioners and GR and advocacy experts working to effectively and efficiently shape the landscape on your behalf.

### Our Always ON platform requires three foundational components:

1. A content microsite — possibly repackaging ALTA’s Home Closing 101 site — that can serve as the home base of the campaign.
2. An editorial calendar of key moments, public events and news opportunities, and a list of stakeholders and partnerships.
3. A commitment to ongoing development and promotion of owned, earned and third-party content that keeps a consistent pulse.

## How Influencers Get Information

We know Washington influencers. In fact, we research them (a lot). Our findings provide exclusive insight into how policy influencers get and process information, and we use that information to plan our clients’ media strategies. We know the platforms, programs, newsletters and time slots that matter most to those who matter most to you.

### A few key findings:

- Twitter is the No. 1 source for breaking news and the source of news before bed.
- Morning inbox emails are must reads, and Politico newsletters matter most.
- In Washington, papers of record still matter. When it matters most, the New York Times, the Washington Post and Politico are still top go-to news sources. More than half of policy influencers watch cable news daily.





# Our Process

Our envisioned scope of work spans three phases: the creative and strategic development process, website development and execution of the strategic plan.

## Phase 1: Strategic Planning & Creative Development

This foundational phase determines the path ahead — both strategically and visually. It is an intensive beginning that unfolds in several steps:

### 1. Strategic Assessment

Think speed dating to the extreme. Our goal during this process is to learn as much about your desired goals and strategic objectives, assets, competitive landscape as possible. We will carefully cull and synthesize this information so it can inform the development of a tailored brand and communications strategy.

This process includes:

- A kick-off meeting to clarify objectives and goals, identify and prioritize target audiences, and define success.
- A review of existing materials and research, strategic plans, existing marketing materials and content, website analytics and more.
- A competitive landscape analysis, beginning with traditional and digital media, a review of key competitors and a better understanding of your strengths and weaknesses in comparison.
- Stakeholder interviews to collect a mix of diverse viewpoints from staff and key stakeholders.

**Output:** Findings memo

### 2. Research

We believe the best strategies begin with and are tested through research. Given your fairly niche market segment, we would look to design a strategy that will offer the best forum to test messages, brand ideas, and the path forward for us to craft the right messaging to define and describe Redwood Trust. In-depth interviews, over the

phone, with targeted respondents, may be the best avenue. Similar to focus groups, IDIs offer the opportunity to tap the thinking of key influencers in a more intimate conversation. And because they are generally handled over the phone, they tend to capture information from a wider array of sources than can be recruited to appear in a single focus-group facility over a single evening. We envision this effort to include a set number of interviews with industry figures and possibly even some Washington financial regulation influencers — all vetted in coordination with Redwood Trust.

**Output:** Report and presentation of research findings

### 3. Message Platform

Your message is your most vital competitive currency — it's informed by input from stakeholders, insight from research and collaborative discussion between our team and yours. A message can be represented in a tagline or a tweet, in an ad or in a booth at a trade show. Its power comes from being consistently articulated in every medium over time. And we'll know we've been successful when it has become a second nature response within Redwood Trust and with your most important audience groups.

**Output:** Messaging document/deck

### 4. Creative Brief & Brand Development

The one-to-two-page creative brief is the synthesis of all of the audits, assessment, research and messaging into a single sheet of paper to inspire our creative thinkers to conceive the most effective brand identity. We develop this brief collaboratively with you so that the thinking of all parties is aligned, then turn our team loose to come up with interesting and unique solutions.

**Output:** Two-page (max) creative brief  
Brand conceptual directions



## 5. Strategic & Tactical Recommendations

This culminating document is the plan. After all of the interviews, input, research and discussion, we will write and share a strategy that will be our guide for the duration of the project. This will include goals, approaches, messages, audiences and specific direction for a full-year earned media and thought leadership content program.

To ensure a collaborative strategy, we'll conduct a workshop with your team to explore potential tactics and avenues for engagement before we finalize the plan. And a grasp on the calendar is important, so we will sketch a year long look at opportunities and the cadence of communication that can drive success.

**Output:** Strategic Plan

### Phase 2: Execution

This is when plans become reality. We'll prepare for the campaign launch by:

- Turning concepts into creative assets — videos, print and digital ad files, social copy, and so on.
- Producing robust launch content that populates a new, dynamic campaign microsite optimized for search, mobile and social.
- Developing our first months' worth of organic social recommendations for ALTA to execute and paid social content for Subject Matter to plan and place.
- Penning a marquee thought leadership piece.
- Prepping and pitching an initial swath of earned feature stories particularly targeted to trade and consumer outlets that may already have an understanding of the importance of the title search and insurance.
- Establishing key performance indicators (KPIs) and ongoing reporting metrics.

### Paid Media Planning

Determining the right paid touchpoints will take place as part of our strategic planning process. However, we often recommend a digital and social media focus to provide strong value for limited budgets and highly specific target audiences — like policy influencers. There is incredible targeting specificity online. You don't just have to buy a specific website; you can target demographics that reach the right people across sites and platforms. The digital environment also provides metrics on engagement, clicks, visits to your campaign site and many other data points that can make future campaign efforts sharper and smarter.

We plan and place much of our paid digital inhouse using our social media ad manager accounts and Google Display and AdWords. We monitor our digital campaigns through a mix of the same platforms, with additional insight provided by Google Analytics on the campaign landing site. For any placements that go beyond our in-house capabilities we work with our preferred partner, Buying Time.

### Managing the Day-to-Day

Following launch, and based on the strategic plan, we will fall into the "Always On" rhythm of proactive pitching, content development, social media recommendations and paid campaign optimization. Because execution will vary based on our planning calendar and the news of the day, twice monthly status calls or meetings will ensure our teams regularly discuss progress of initiatives and act on gathered feedback as appropriate.

We will also share monthly campaign metrics reports recapping success against our KPIs and look for opportunities for enhancement.



# 2020 Calendar

All timing subject to ALTA approval

	January	February	March	April	May	June	Jul --> Dec
<b>Phase 1</b>							
Strategic Assessment	█						
Research							
Message Platform							
Creative Brief		█					
Creative Concepting		█	█				
Strategic Plan		█	█				
<b>Phase 2</b>							
Campaign Production			█	█	█		
Launch Content Prep			█	█	█		
Launch					█		
Ongoing Support						→	→ → → →

## Recommended Budget Allocation

### Phase 1:

Strategic assessment, messaging & plan .....	.\$60,000
Research (dependant on recruit and # of interviews) .....	.\$30,000
Creative Concepting .....	.\$35,000

### Phase 2:

Agency retainer (beginning April 2020) .....	.\$25,000/month
Content microsite .....	.\$100,000-125,000
Ad production .....	.\$100,000
High-impact content reserve (videos, interactives) .....	.\$200,000
Paid media budget* .....	.\$500,000

\*Includes 15% agency fee to cover administration and management of the paid media buy.



# RFP Requirements

In order, to make sure we have completed all requests in the RFP, we have outlined the areas in which you can find each RFP request below:

## 1. COMPANY BACKGROUND AND QUALIFICATIONS

- **Description of the proposer's services and activities.** See page 5.
- **Year in which your company was formed.** Subject Matter has been in business since 1998 (prior to 2015 it operated under the name Home Front Communications).
- **Company's history and expertise in insurance advertising.** Subject Matter has worked with two insurance companies as communications strategists: Allstate and Primerica. For Allstate, our engagement spanned three years and was focused on helping them increase their profile with small businesses. We developed a signature tool for measuring small business economic mood and developed a promotion strategy that included earned and placed media, website development and content creation. For Primerica, we have developed a communications strategy to raise their profile with policymakers and the media as a company geared toward the middle income. Our work has included website development, research, and content development as well as paid social and native content.
- **Describe three recent and relevant projects in detail that the agency is/was engaged in and specify the agency's role. Provide samples of work.** See "Case Studies" section starting on page 20.
- **List the address from which the primary work on the contract would be performed and the size of agency by headcount.** Subject Matter is located at 1201 New York Ave. NW, Suite 900, Washington, D.C. 20005 and has 80 employees.
- **List the number of full and part-time employees. Do not list any sub-contractors in this section.** Subject Matter has 80 full-time employees.
- **List any insurance-related clients for whom you have acted in the United States during the past 12 months. If there may be any conflicts of interests, please include a statement on how you will resolve any potential conflict.** In the past 12 months, our insurance-related communications work was with Primerica, which won't be a conflict. We are also registered to lobby for the following companies:
  - eHealth Insurance
  - Guardian
  - Hartford
  - MetLife
  - New York Life
  - United Health

While we aren't aware of any conflicts based on our understanding of the scope of work for ALTA, we will be happy to review the scope of work for these companies with ATLA to ensure your comfort (within the limits of any confidentiality requirements).

- **Provide three references.** See page 26.

## 2. Personnel/Management

- **Identify those individuals on the proposer's account team who will manage the contract work. Identify specific individuals who will be conducting the day-to-day activities. Identify all personnel assigned to this account by position title. Include a description of the duties of each position title.** See "Your Team" section starting on page 15.
- **Note who will be the contract manager and primary contact.** The contract manager and primary contact will be Steve Jost.
- **For all individuals, please document overall experience on insurance accounts and include current resumes and/or biographies. Provide education, experience and expertise with pertinent information demonstrating qualifications for this RFP. Include length of time with agency and length of time in any previous related positions.** See "Your Team" section starting on page 15.
- **Subcontractors: Identify all proposed subcontractors and document which portions of service will be performed by subcontractors and their ability to perform the work. Include current resumes and/or biographies.** See the "Subcontractors" section on page 14. See the "Our Team" section starting on page 15 for current biographies.

## 3. Scope of Work

Proposer should prove the agency's capability; describing strategies to be used and quality controls. The scope of work should demonstrate knowledge and understanding of branding and the shifting dynamics of how consumers receive and use information today.

- **Strategic planning: Provide an inside look at how the scope of work will be executed.** See pages 9 and 10.
- **Advertising campaign and development: Discuss how your agency develops a holistic approach to advertising, integrating interactive and social, into the overall strategy. Discuss how your media planning has evolved based on how consumers use information today.** See pages 9 and 10.
- **Production/creative: Describe how your agency manages the creative process and production.** See pages 9 and 10.
- **Media planning and buying: Provide us with your process in deciding where, when and how to purchase media. What analytics do you use? What is your philosophy as it relates to planning and buying media? Are there any strategies and promotional partnerships you can suggest extending a client's budget and exposure?** See page 10.
- **Social media: ALTA currently manages its social presence in-house. The winning proposer is expected to provide the overarching social strategy and guidance on implementation.** Subject Matter agrees to this assumption, see page 10 for more detail.
- **Research and analytics: Provide an overview of how you determine success. What are the analytical tools or services that you use and what type of information you plan to report back to ALTA? How does your analytics influence future decision making?** See page 9.

## 4. Work Plan/Schedule

- **Please submit a preliminary work plan or schedule for the completion of the project. The work plan should include a schedule for completion of the following project tasks:**
  - **Strategic planning**
  - **Advertising campaign development**
  - **Production/creative services**
  - **Media planning and buying**
  - **Promotional and strategic partnerships**
  - **Research and Analytics**

See page 11 for more detail.



# Subcontractors



## Buying Time

### **Buying Time and Subject Matter:**

Subject Matter includes more than 70 creative, communication, journalism and policy professionals with decades of experience combining creative and strategic approaches to provide communications and strategy advice for ad buys and integrated communications programs that persuade audiences, transform perceptions and spur action. We've been on the GSA schedule since 2005 helping many federal agencies such as Ginnie Mae, the U.S. Postal Service, United States Census Bureau, National Science Board of the National Science Foundation, and others.

Further, our long-time media buying partner, Buying Time, has more than 15 years of experience in paid media, research, strategy and implementation. Buying Time has placed hundreds of millions of dollars of ads on behalf of government, corporate, and issue/advocacy advertisers in national, regional, states and rural geographies, and its experience will translate into significant savings and provide a strategic winning edge for ALTA's advertising campaign. Buying Time has a proven track record of success working on diverse campaigns — from brand awareness (Susan G Komen, Ford, AT&T and many others) and recruitment (National Geo-Spatial Agency and Pharmaceutical Clinical Trials) campaigns.

## FIRST STORY

### **First Story and Subject Matter:**

First Story is led by founder David Jeffers. For 40 years, David served as a public relations strategist and practitioner at the highest levels of financial services and housing finance. His work has been in housing, commercial and mortgage banking, real estate and home building, and government-sponsored enterprises. His work has also spanned the full scope of the profession including media relations, consumer outreach, crisis and rapid response communications, social and digital media, executive training, public policy management, industry relations, product marketing, and all phases of corporate communications. Past and current clients include: Freddie Mac, the Council of FHLBanks, MERS, NewDay USA, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, and the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency. David has a close relationship with the Subject Matter team and is already working with Subject Matter on two clients.

# YOUR TEAM



# Strategy/Thought Leadership



**PAUL FRICK**  
Partner & Co-Founder

As a Subject Matter founder and partner, Paul has been with Subject Matter since its inception in 1998. He has more than 30 years' experience designing and executing communications strategy in both the public and private sectors. At Subject Matter, he directs work for a wide range of association, corporate, government and non-profit clients, and helped lead legacy firm Home Front Communications' expansion into content and digital development and engagement. Through his time at Subject Matter, he's worked closely with insurance clients such as Primerica and Allstate. Paul learned the value of integrated strategic communications from working on political campaigns and for members of the U.S. House of Representatives. He was chief of staff to Rep. Rosa DeLauro and Senior Communications Strategist for House Democratic Leader Richard Gephardt. During the 1998 election cycle, he was political director of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee.



**JOHN BUCKLEY**  
Chief Executive Officer

John Buckley is Chief Executive Officer of Subject Matter, having spent more than 30 years in Washington managing large teams and integrated communications programs within corporations, agencies, and political campaigns. His corporate experience includes 10 years running communications and advertising at Fannie Mae (1991-2001), and five years as EVP of communications at AOL (2002-2007.) His decade of agency experience most recently includes being managing director of The Harbour Group (2008-2016), after which he joined Subject Matter in 2016. John has held senior positions in three presidential campaigns, including deputy press secretary to Reagan-Bush '84, press secretary to Jack Kemp's '88 campaign, and communications director to Dole-Kemp '96.



**DAVID JEFFERS**  
Founder, First Story LLC

David Jeffers is Founder of First Story, LLC, a full-service communications firm. Previously, he served as EVP of Policy and Public Affairs for the Council of Federal Home Loan Banks. Prior to joining the Council, Jeffers was President and CEO of Collingwood Communications, a Washington-based communications company. He was Fannie Mae's Vice President for Corporate Relations where he served as chief corporate spokesperson and the strategic advisor to three CEOs. Jeffers has provided pro bono services to a variety of national nonprofit organizations, including the National Housing Conference, the Bipartisan Policy Center's Housing Commission, the National Archives Foundation and the Home Builders Institute.

# Day-To-Day Team



**JOHN SINIFF**  
Executive Vice President

John is a veteran journalist who has brought a newsroom's approach and perspective to Subject Matter's diverse campaigns and content since 2014. He works with clients like Allstate and Primerica to develop effective content strategy matched by high-level execution. John specializes in crafting authentic stories — whether op-eds, blog posts or strategy documents — that inform and persuade. In his 20-year career at USA Today, he served as Page One Editor and Cover Story Editor, shaping the daily enterprise content across USA Today's print and digital platforms. John also directed the Op-Ed Page for eight years while serving on the newspaper's Editorial Board, thus helping to guide and inform wide-ranging discussions on the issues of the day.



**DIANNE MIKESKA**  
Senior Vice President, Strategic Planning

Since 2013, Dianne has lead Subject Matter's strategic planning efforts to design, analyze and optimize communications campaigns across clients, including Allstate and Primerica. Working in collaboration with our campaign leads, she helps uncover key insights, facilitates creative briefs, and helps guide the development of strategic plans, as well as managing research and media partners. She has extensive experience in full-service advertising work and with B2B and government clients. Before joining the firm, she was an Account Supervisor at Peter Mayer and a Brand Strategist at Trumpet, both in New Orleans. Dianne holds a B.S. in Public Relations from the University of Texas at Austin.



**KEVIN RICHARDS**  
Chief Creative Officer

Since 2012, Kevin leads the total creative function of the agency. His job is to inspire cross-disciplinary ideas that are on-strategy and well crafted — everything from traditional advertising and design to guerilla tactics and digital experiences. His true talent lies in building campaigns on a simple and memorable idea. Kevin's work engages audiences, generating results for clients like Primerica, and Allstate, as well as hardware for the agency. Ask what he's proudest of and he'll answer, "working with great people." Before joining Subject Matter in 2016, Kevin honed his creative chops and leadership style as an Associate Creative Director at SmithGifford.



**STEVE JOST**  
Senior Vice President, Content Strategy

Steve works to identify new strategies to develop and deliver content for our clients, including the U.S. Census Bureau, Primerica and Allstate. Before joining the firm in 2014, he spent more than seven years as a top official at the U.S. Census Bureau, overseeing the two largest outreach and promotion campaigns ever undertaken by the federal government for the 2000 and 2010 Census. Steve's campaigns were recognized for groundbreaking market research to shape successful multicultural outreach efforts. His 2010 campaign alone earned more than 150 awards and honors from the advertising, public relations and media industries. He has twice received the Department of Commerce's highest recognition for distinguished public service, the Secretary's Gold Medal, as well as a Silver and a Bronze Medal. Steve leads the Federal Practice at Subject Matter.



**PATRICK KERLEY**  
Senior Vice President, Digital

With years of experience on Capitol Hill, the campaign trail and global communications firms, Patrick brings a wealth of knowledge of all matters digital to Subject Matter. For the last nine months, Patrick has crafted digital strategy and campaigns for several Subject Matter clients, including Primerica. Subject Matter clients or Patrick began his career as digital communications director for Sen. Ted Stevens, directing online strategy and communications for both the senator's Washington office as well as his re-election campaign. He transitioned to Levick Strategic Communications, a reputation management and strategic public affairs firm in Washington, D.C., where he led digital and social programs. Most recently, Patrick served as executive vice president and managing director at BCW, which focused on integrating communications campaigns, crisis response and digital strategy for multiple Fortune 500 and international clients, such as Progressive and Ullico.

# Day-To-Day Team



**MIKE NELSON**  
Account Director

With a decade's worth of experience leading cross-functional teams branding and integrated marketing campaigns, Mike brings an upbeat, hands-on style to the account director role at Subject Matter, leading campaigns for companies like Primerica. Prior to joining the team in 2017, Mike served as an account supervisor at public relations agency Padilla where he oversaw integrated marketing, public relations, content and crisis communications campaigns for digital, financial services, energy and consulting clients.



**CONOR GILLIGAN**  
Account Associate

Conor crafts campaigns and helps in the development of everything from websites to press releases for some of our top clients. Prior to joining the Subject Matter team in 2018, he worked at GTB in Dearborn, Michigan, where he promoted Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math (STEAM) initiative efforts for Ford Motor Company. Before that, he served as a communications and public relations intern for Los Angeles social impact agency Propper Daley, where he conducted research for senior management and clients, including Ad Council, the Clinton Foundation, Service Nation, John Legend and Tobey Maguire.



**SURIN BRIDGE**  
Senior Copywriter

Surin thrives collaborating with clients to conceptualize fully integrated, digital and print campaigns. Before joining Subject Matter, she was a copywriter for Digitas Health in Philadelphia where she helped launch a new treatment for Shire Plc. Surin grew up in Germany and has lived and worked in New York, Philadelphia and Washington, D.C.



**LAUREN BURTON**  
Senior Director of Technology

Lauren oversees Subject Matter's work to create customized websites and digital tools for clients like Primerica. Before joining Subject Matter in 2016, she directed interactive strategies at Case Foundation, where she led technical strategy, data aggregation and visualization and oversaw the redesign of the company and affiliate websites.



**EMAN QUOTAH**  
Senior Director, Content

Eman is on a mission to make our clients' content shine. She writes and edits for a variety of projects, with a particular focus on public health and social issues. Clients include the full range of Subject Matter's partnerships, including Primerica. Prior to joining Subject Matter in 2015, for 11 years, Eman covered youth homelessness, teen pregnancy and family violence for the National Clearinghouse on Families and Youth, a federal information service managed by JBS International, Inc. She's also written for The Washington Post, USA Today, The Chronicle of Philanthropy, the Harvard Public Health Review and other print and online publications.



**BRYANT PRINCE**  
Art Director

Bryant develops rich and graphically detailed visuals that tell both strategic and compelling stories for clients big and small. Prior to working at Subject Matter, Bryant oversaw print and digital layouts and developed digital marketing campaigns at Bussolati Associates.

# Day-To-Day Team



**DANIELA NADAL**  
Digital Coordinator

Since 2018, Daniela has provided digital and social media support to Subject Matter clients. She began her tenure at Subject Matter on the Media Team, where she coordinated media outreach and reporting for clients and helped with our Spanish media coverage and reporting. Before that, Daniela worked at GMMB as a data analyst and media assistant, tracking media spending for the Senate.



**LIZ DOHERTY**  
Senior Project Manager

Liz keeps client projects up-to-date, on task and on budget for some of our top clients. Before joining Subject Matter in early 2018, Liz served as senior associate to the U.S. Headquarters chief executive officer for Burson-Marsteller, a global public relations and communications firm. Prior to that, she was operations director for Gov. Martin O'Malley's PAC and a congressional intern for Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi in 2013.



**NATHANIEL KRONISCH**  
Media Director, Buying Time

Nathaniel joined Buying Time, our media buying partner based in Washington, D.C., in 2003 and became Media Director in 2006. He is a seasoned strategist with experience in all media platforms including, but not limited to: TV, digital, radio, print, and out-of-home at the international, national and spot-market levels. He is a veteran of over 100 national and local political campaigns, and countless issue/advocacy, corporate, direct response and recruitment campaigns. As an advocate of data-driven, research-based solutions, before committing media dollars to a certain platform, he uses every research tool available to ensure those dollars will be spent as wisely as possible. During a campaign, he constantly optimizes platforms and media vehicles, ensuring that each campaign is achieving maximum impact, impressions and/or conversions.

# CASE STUDIES



# AN INDUSTRY THAT MOVES INDUSTRY.



# JUST WHAT THE ECONOMY NEEDS IN ITS CORNER. A 200-TON HEAVYWEIGHT.



For more information visit: [FreightRailWorks.org](http://FreightRailWorks.org)

**FREIGHT RAIL WORKS**

Designed to Move a Nation



## Association of American Railroads

### Freight Rail Works

Positioning industry with policymakers on the Hill, freight rail is a vital — yet often invisible — network helping the U.S. economy stay strong and competitive. For the past six years, we've helped the Association of American Railroads (AAR) produce its comprehensive Freight Rail Works brand initiative, which helps ensure this critical industry remains top-of-mind for D.C. policymakers and influencers.

#### WHAT WE DID

"Designed to Move a Nation" is a fully integrated campaign that includes digital, social and native content — all supported by a mobile-friendly web experience. And thanks to strong, research-based insights, our campaign messaging has evolved. Today we've pivoted to illuminate the surprising, leading-edge technology freight rail uses to accelerate our economy. This year, to enhance understanding among policymakers and influencers, we delivered a virtual reality experience that members of Congress, their staffs and regulators could interact with the Rayburn House Office Building.



#### RESULTS

- **82,886,250 Paid Media Impressions**
- **2,160+ Hours Spent** with our Content
- **30% Increase** in Users to [FreightRailWorks.org](http://FreightRailWorks.org)
- **250,000+ Digital Impressions**
- **93 Custom Graphics** Created for Metro Takeover



# Airlines for America

Everyone has endured flight delays, lost luggage, smaller seats and luggage fees. Airlines for America (A4A), the industry's association, charged us with leading policymakers and influencers to reassess the value of airlines. Our 360° advertising campaign highlighted the industry's vital role connecting business and leisure travelers to what matters most, while significantly contributing to our national economy. The "We Connect the World" campaign successfully conveyed this message through television and radio commercials, online digital banners, print advertisements, sponsored content placed in top-tier publications, an [interactive webpage](#) and in-placements throughout the Washington, D.C. area, targeted at transportation policy elites.

## RESULTS

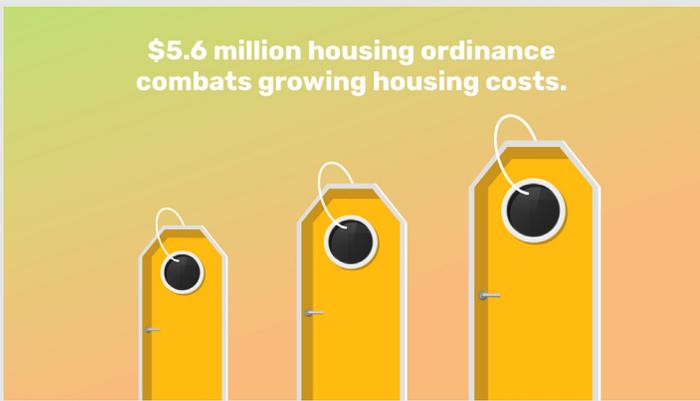
**180,526,162** Digital Ad Impressions

**10.2 MILLION** Ad Views on Youtube

**72,549** Native Advertising Clicks

**2.6 MILLION** People Reached Via LED Banners at Nationals Park



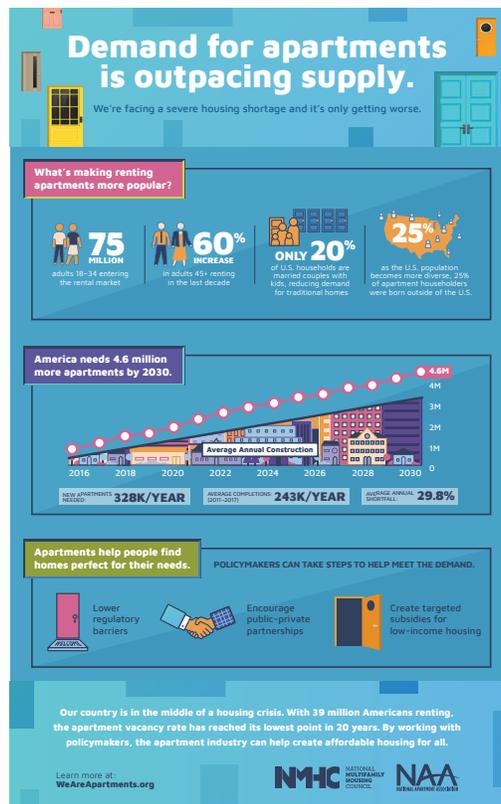


# National Multifamily Housing Council and the National Apartment Association

## Social Strategy and Always On Content

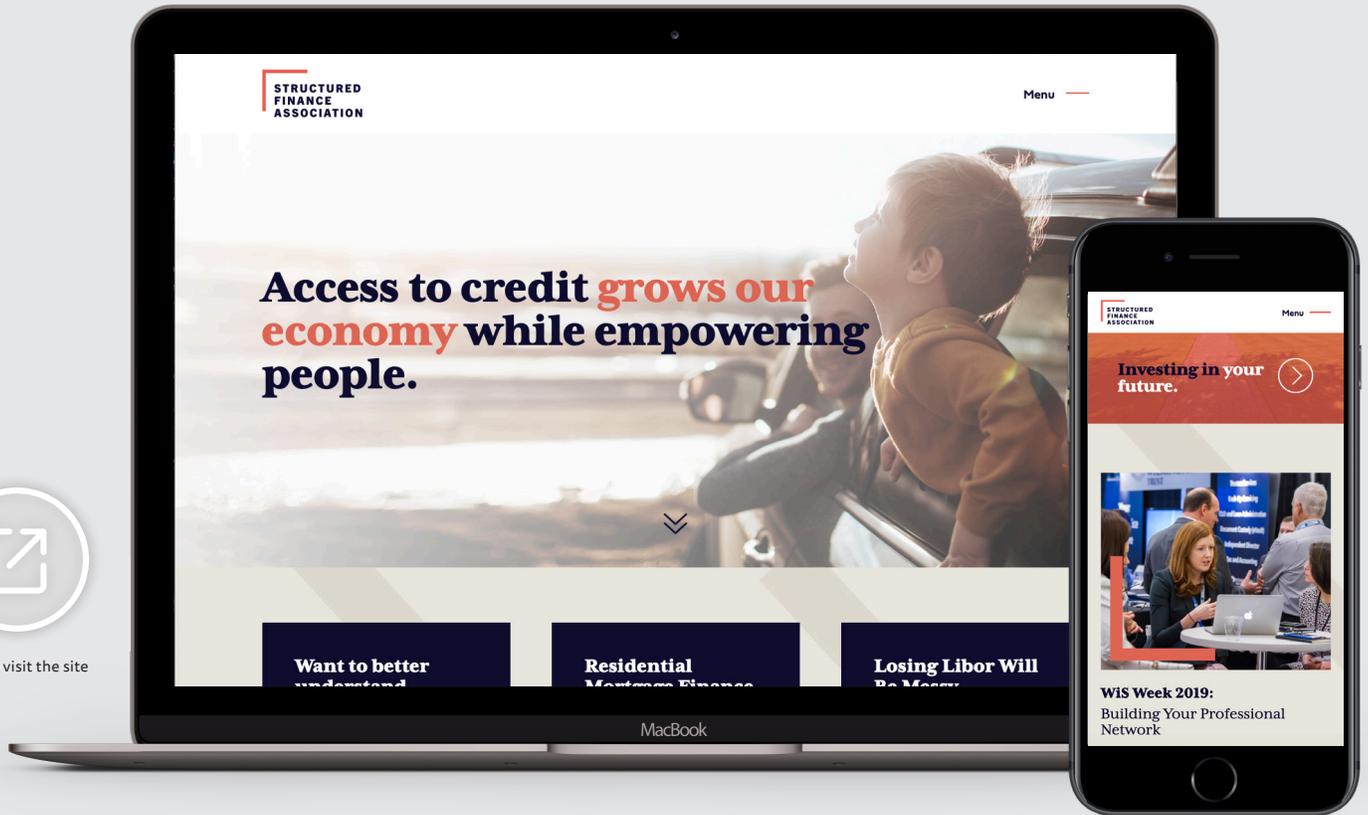
A looming shortage of apartment homes is driving up the cost of housing, creating an image crisis for apartment owners, managers and developers. The industry stands ready to bring more housing online but faces obstructions in the form of red tape on the municipal and state level, and federal regulatory hurdles that prevent the industry from meeting the growing demand.

To build awareness about the obstacles confronting the industry, we developed an "Always On" content and social strategy for the National Multifamily Housing Council and the National Apartment Association targeting policy influencers. The program highlights real examples of positive local, regional and public-private partnerships that are helping breakdown policy barriers and meet the housing demand. The effort kicked off with a seminal research project that analyzed housing trends, identified the scale of the looming shortage and provided a prescription for policy fixes that would help address the crisis.





Click to visit the site



# Structured Finance Association

## Thoughtful redesign of a legacy website

The Structured Finance Association is a member-based, trade industry advocacy group with the mission of educating policymakers and advocating on behalf of the securitization industry. Prior to working with Subject Matter, the Structured Finance Association struggled to engage key Washington audiences. In order to help them achieve their goals, we led a rebranding effort that culminated in a new name, logo and a modern dynamic website and have populated it with strong content that tells important stories about the industries' many benefits.

With our help, this large but little-known trade association is now able to communicate with policy influencers, media and finance audiences in a way they have always wished to, but never before have. The new Structured Finance Association represents 360 companies at the center of securitizing loans that make possible buying a home or a car — or even just using your credit cards.



Old Website and Brand



New Website and Brand



# References



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