



Q & A: REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS: PUBLIC RELATIONS & COMMUNICATIONS SERVICES

Q1: How are you currently measuring public relations and marketing success?

Measurement methods for public relations and marketing success will be determined by the tools available to the selected bidder. Some resources that are currently used by WIN/SEMCA include: Google Analytics, analytics and insights tools for social media (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn), and measurement tools available to contractors that WIN/SEMCA currently works with/has worked with in the past to determine reach, engagement, and other numerical measurements.

Q2: Do you have any existing communications-related software tools or subscriptions you use to manage outreach, such as media monitoring or social media management services?

WIN/SEMCA does not currently have any subscriptions to media monitoring services. WIN/SEMCA uses Facebook Insights, Twitter Ads, and other free resources to monitor social media analytics when relevant and uses HootSuite for managing social media.

Q3: Do you have an existing budget or budget range for the contract?

A budget/budget range for the contract will be determined and negotiated with the selected bidder.

Q4: You clearly outline earned media and digital expectations. In addition to these services, do you anticipate the integrated media outreach plan incorporating a significant amount of paid media (newspaper, radio and television ads; outdoor; paid social media)? If so, do you have a predetermined budget for paid advertising?

WIN/SEMCA will work with the selected bidder to determine the best approach for utilizing paid services for newspaper, radio/TV ads, etc. A budget will be discussed with the selected bidder. Part of the goal is to identify a desired marketing/media strategy and then to work with partners willing to co-invest in that strategy.

Q5: Page 9, Total Cost Reimbursement Budget - Line Item: Can you clarify how you would like private-for-profit entities to differentiate between administration costs and staff costs, particularly as it relates to administrative individuals for companies in which all staff are billable?

The difference between administrative and staff on the RFP is that administrative would include staff members in administrative departments such as (not limited to) human resources, finance, IT, etc. The staff costs are for program related staff costs. Administrative and overhead costs that are not staff costs (e.g., phones, services, etc.) should be identified separately as indirect costs.

Q6: Is WIN/SEMCA open to negotiating with private-for-profit companies regarding the percent profit allowed and/or categorizing services as developmental and research work?

WIN/SEMCA is not open to (nor do federal guidelines allow) being charged for development or research work that is not directly related to the outcomes of this project.

According to Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR):

Profit/Fee Ceiling ([FAR 15.404-4\(a\)\(3\)](#) and [15.404-4\(c\)\(4\)](#)). Profit/fee calculations must consider the unique circumstances of the immediate negotiation. However, contract fee cannot exceed statutory limits that apply to cost-plus-fixed-fee contracts as identified as follows:

- Experimental, developmental, or research work performed under a cost-plus fixed-fee contract 15% of estimated contract cost
- All other cost-plus fixed-fee contracts 10% of estimated contract cost

WIN/SEMCA does not consider this work as research and development.

Q7: Is WIN/SEMCA open to negotiating with private-for-profit companies regarding project fee pricing structure, flat rate pricing or other non-cost-plus-fixed-fee pricing?

The project is a cost reimbursement project and therefore the pricing structures described above do not align.

Q8: Who is building the apprenticeship website, scheduled for launch in “mid-July?” Do you have a specific launch date?

WIN/SEMCA has hired Deep Canvas to build the apprenticeship website. The launch date for the website is mid-August; the exact date is being negotiated.

Q9: Is the communications goal to create awareness of all apprenticeships or the specific apprenticeships mentioned: DOL Registered Apprenticeships, and those in information technology, robotics and automation and similar occupations?

The communication goal is to create awareness of resources and partners providing the specific apprenticeships mentioned (including those around the framing of intelligent transportation systems); however, the goal is to grow participation in all registered apprenticeships.

Q10: Does this contract cover all WIN report releases – including the regular quarterly workforce reports for several states? Or is this proposal only for releases related to AMCAI and Advance Michigan Catalyst?

This proposal will include report releases related to AMCAI and Advance Michigan Catalyst and the occupations that relate to these grants. As such, there may be times when sharing data from and information about the labor market and other reports is relevant.

Q11: Do you expect the selected agency to find or create social media content that in-house staff will then post? Or should we expect to manage all aspects of social media channels on a day-to-day basis? Or do you see some combination of using external and internal resources, and if so, can you more clearly define the scope of what you expect from the selected agency?

WIN/SEMCA likely will continue to manage social media, continuing to utilize a combination of internal and external resources for social media content. WIN/SEMCA will rely on internal content creation but will welcome input from the selected contractor for content creation and contribution. A formal scope will be discussed with the selected bidder.

Q12: Is there a separate budget for purchased media (including digital “boosts” or other digital placements), and if so, what is the amount or range you anticipate? Would design and

production of advertising creative content be considered part of this contract? Or paid as part of a separate advertising/paid media budget?

Part of the goal is for the selected firm to develop a proposal for purchased media that WIN/SEMCA can present to Michigan Works! and other partners as part of a collaborative media buy. This strategy has been deployed successfully in the past. The proposal should not assume large media purchases at this stage, however, budget/funding for smaller ticket items like boosts and digital ad placements should be included as a negotiable line item in a “menu of options” budget. All spending, except for large media purchases, will be part of the contract.

Q13: Do you have research on the target demographics for apprenticeships that you can share with us?

WIN/SEMCA has some research on the target demographics that will be shared with the winning bidder upon contract award.

Q14: Do you have other research identifying the primary barriers preventing employers from implementing apprenticeships and the primary barriers preventing individuals from applying for them?

Yes, though most is anecdotal based on experience. This will be discussed with the selected vendor.

Q15: Is the greater need to secure more employers offering registered apprenticeships or to have more eligible workers filling them? How would you describe the percentage of overall effort you expect to direct toward each need?

Both are high priorities in the grant, although, grant partners have greater access to apprenticeship candidates than employers, so the effort may be more focused on the latter (employers). Both the employer audience and job seekers audience are integral parts of these grant initiatives that will be discussed in the timeline of services with the selected bidder.

Q16: What are the 24 counties included in the scope of this project?

The geographic area for Advance Michigan Catalyst encompasses the following counties: Genesee, Hillsdale, Huron, Jackson, Lapeer, Lenawee, Livingston, Macomb, Monroe, Oakland, Saint Clair, Sanilac, Shiawassee, Tuscola, Washtenaw, and Wayne.

The geographic area for AMCAI includes 30 counties in Michigan including: Roscommon, Clare, Gladwin, Arenac, Isabella, Midland, Bay, Gratiot, Saginaw, Tuscola, Huron, Sanilac, St. Clair, Lapeer, Genesee, Shiawassee, Clinton, Ionia, Eaton, Ingham, Livingston, Oakland, Macomb, Calhoun, Jackson, Washtenaw, Wayne, Hillsdale, Lenawee, Monroe.

Purchased media efforts may be most efficiently targeted in the core southeast Michigan/Detroit metro area and will depend on fundraising from partners. We will look for strategies that can easily be brought to scale throughout the region and replicated by partners as needed.

Q17: Under “Proposal Content and Evaluation” (page 6), Methodology, is the question: “Are a number of milestones identified in the proposal in order to assess progress and spread out payment for services?” Can you elaborate on this? Is this referring to payment for the agency’s services and, if so, what kind of spread-out payment schedule are you anticipating?

Payments will be made upon work that has been completed by the selected bidder. Milestones and requested payment timeframes should be identified in the proposal but ultimately will be decided at the time of contract negotiation.

Q18: What is the expected timeline for the project?

There is a need for the development and implementation of strategic long- and short-term marketing campaigns and ongoing communications-related services over a 1-year period ending on July 31, 2018 with the ability to renew annually through December 31, 2020.

Q19: Can companies from Outside USA can apply for this? (like, from India or Canada)

No. Grant funds cannot be used to provide services or pay for vendors domiciled outside the United States.

Q20: Do we need to come to the U.S. for meetings?

Yes. The selected bidder will need be available to meet with WIN/SEMCA staff and partners in person as needed on a regular basis.

Q21: Can we perform the tasks (related to RFP) outside USA? (like, from India or Canada)

No. Grant funds cannot be used to provide services or pay for vendors domiciled outside the United States.

Q22: Can we submit the proposals via email?

Proposals must be submitted via email, as described in the RFP.

Q23: Page 4: Integrated short-term media outreach plan(s). How many short-term media outreach campaigns would you recommend including in the budget?

WIN/SEMCA will discuss the number of short-term media outreach campaigns with the selected bidder. We recommend providing suggestions in the proposal and a budget that allows us to scale the services according our need and available funds.

Q24: Page 4/5: What do you consider the “region” for which outreach efforts will focus?

Please refer to Q16 for the response.

Q25: Page 5: Apprenticeship Website:

a. Who is building the apprenticeship website?

The website is being built by Deep Canvas. Content and design management/direction is provided by WIN/SEMCA and grant partners.

b. Is there already a plan for integrating the communication materials into the website?

Yes, however, adding materials and creating content for the website is ongoing.

Q26: Page 8: Can you provide the Cover Page as a separate 1-page document?

Respondents can use the information in the RFP to make an approximation of the cover page or use a .pdf tool to pull it out of the RFP.

Q27: Page 10: ... grant period (ending July 31, 2017) ... Please confirm this should state July 31, 2018

Confirmed: the date should be July 31, 2018.

Questions From the Statement of Purpose (page 2 of the RFP):

Q28: #1 says the outreach plan “should explore how to expend funds (and/or how to raise/augment them).”

a. Can you explain your expectations for raising/augmenting funds?

WIN/SEMCA would like to partner with other regional grant recipients, Michigan Works! Agencies, and others that have similar goals in promoting apprenticeships and recruiting employers whenever possible in order to leverage existing efforts and reach a larger audience. Such collaborative efforts, including pooling of funds, have been successful in the past.

b. How will that money be raised? Does this refer to helping to get funding extended?

WIN/SEMCA will interface with MWAs and others to solicit additional funds based on an agreed-concept developed with the selected vendor. We will pitch the ideas to partners to generate additional resources. This approach has been successful in the past, although, we cannot guarantee success in the future. As such, would-be vendors are encouraged to provide strong proposals around efforts that do not require purchased media and be prepared for the possibility that purchased media will play a minor role in the strategy.

c. What role would the selected agency play in these expectations?

The selected bidder will help develop a plan and budget for purchased media to present to possible investing partners. WIN/SEMCA will lead the discussion with those partners beforehand to help establish a possible budget. Implementation of the plan will be contingent on fundraising success.

Q29: #2 describes media placement activities. Questions:

a. “Developing media lists”: Are these general news media or trade media?

Media lists will include general news media and relevant trade media.

b. What is the desired geographic area of the general news media – statewide or southeast Michigan only? (Both are mentioned in the RFP.)

See answer to Q16.

c. “The estimated cadence of press releases is twice a month.” What is this based on? Will you be generating this much news each month, or are you including feature stories as well? Will we have a specific contact person who will generate ideas/content?

Press release cadence is based on anticipated announcements and accomplishments of grant activities and related news/information about occupations related to targeted grant activities. This is separate from featured stories, which we anticipate will also be two per month.

Story ideas, news releases, and other opportunities to promote news will be identified by WIN/SEMCA and grant partners with guidance (as needed) from the selected bidder. WIN also hosts regular, monthly editorial committee meetings that also may provide content ideas.

Q30: #3 mentions “consultation on media outreach, with the goal of achieving earned media, and identifying partners and opportunities for outreach outside of conventional media outlets.”

a. Can you clarify the expectations here, as well as what would be considered “outside of conventional media outlets”?

WIN/SEMCA will seek guidance from the selected bidder to identify non-conventional media outlets to engage in efforts. Bidders should explore creative ideas that WIN/SEMCA may not consider, as this is not our specific expertise.

Q31: #5 states, “Awareness campaign specifically promoting National Apprenticeship Week (late November – exact dates TBA).”

- a. Would this include advertising as well as news media outreach? If so, can you provide specifics on the elements/deliverables/scope of the advertising campaign you would be seeking, to allow us to bid/price properly?**

Yes, this includes all outreach/promo efforts related to National Apprenticeship Week. Elements, deliverables, scope, etc. will be determined with guidance from the selected bidder.

Q32: #6 says, “Assistance with writing well-researched blog posts and newsletter articles for the WIN website and partner websites, which will include interviewing regional and statewide WIN partners with an interest in apprenticeship as well as the latest research and data trends in apprenticeship from WIN’s data team and other national resources (up to 2 per month, between 800-1,500 words).”

- a. How, where will these articles be used?**

Articles will be used in various capacities including the apprenticeship website and WIN newsletter. Other locations for publishing/sharing articles will be determined with the selected bidder.

- b. Who is the target audience?**

A target audience for each article will be discussed with the selected bidder.

- c. Will WIN coordinate scheduling the interviews with regional/statewide partners?**

WIN/SEMCA will assist with scheduling interviews by contact information and rely on a select bidder to conduct interviews and set interview schedules independently.

Q33: In the Background section, the RFP says that AMCAI has received \$4 million to expand local apprenticeships, and later mentions it will serve 853 individuals.

- a. Is that number a recruiting target, or have those individuals already been identified?**

This is recruiting target. About 150 have already been identified.

- b. Over what period of time does the grant cover?**

This grant ends 09/30/2020.

- c. Other than outreach and administration, how are the program funds being spent? What are the specific ways funds are being used to support apprenticeships? Student scholarships? Employer reimbursements? Purchases of equipment or materials needed by apprentices? What other ways?**

Program funds are used to support the following capacity building efforts:

- Agile content: flexible, accelerated curriculum in ITS-relevant occupational areas
- Responsiveness to supply and demand: up-skill current and future workers to meet demand
- Demonstrable value and clear return on investment for employers
- Improved capacity for flexible programming that incentivizes employers and apprentices to undertake apprenticeship
- Elimination of cost barriers to improve access for under-represented populations and engagement of smaller employers

- Readiness: pre-apprenticeship and other supports, and contextualized pre-skills to help nontraditional and other populations succeed
- Comprehensive wrap-around services: under-represented populations are supported in apprenticeship from entry through completion
- Career pathways, including credentialed training and articulation, to promote apprentice advancement and program completion
- Dissemination and adoption of exemplary practices, including creative learning communities and resource repositories
- Support of partners: technical assistance and administrative coordination

Q34: In the Background section, the RFP says that Advance Michigan Catalyst has received \$6 million over four years to train 900 individuals.

a. Is that number a recruiting target, or have those individuals already been identified?
This number is a recruiting target.

b. Other than outreach and administration, how are the program funds being spent? What are the specific ways funds are being used to support apprenticeships? Student scholarships? Employer reimbursements? Purchases of equipment or materials needed by apprentices? What other ways?

A majority of the funds are budgeted to support training unemployed and underemployed individuals in robotics and animation related advanced manufacturing training. This training does not need to be tied to an apprenticeship but can be.

c. Since you have two different funding sources with overlapping but separate goals, what do you expect the primary call to action will be? Will you be sending people to a single website? Or do you expect different communications will have many different calls to action?

To raise awareness among employers and would-be apprentices/trainees for the grant; encourage them to go to the website and reach out to partners for information and engage in these efforts.

Questions From Deliverables (page 3+)

Q35: “Write, edit, and distribute press releases, related articles, commercials and PSAs (will vary depending on media partners that are brought into campaign)”. Please clarify what is meant by “media partners that are brought into campaign”: how many partners, what kind of partners, their role and how those partners would be managed.

Media partners that are “brought into the campaign” implies those that are targeted that WIN/SEMCA decides to utilize for outreach efforts. Partners will be determined in discussion with the selected bidder. The selected bidder will manage most communication with media partners with support from WIN’s communications manager.

Q36: “Two research-based articles each month beginning July 2017 (16 stories total)”

a. Will you provide the national/statewide research or should the selected agency plan to locate the research that should be used in these articles?

WIN/SEMCA will provide relevant research and provide guidance on research that can be used from other credible sources to augment the stories. We also expect the vendor to do some of their own research.

b. Where/how will these articles be used?

Refer to Q32 part a) for answer.

c. How do you anticipate distributing the articles to reach your target audiences? Should the selected agency expect to have a role in this?

The selected bidder will be responsible for distributing articles to media. WIN/SEMCA will work with selected bidder to identify what audiences/outlets should be targeted. WIN also will distribute information in its newsletter and other internal and external outlets, including its social media.

Q37: Ongoing: media outreach for events, public meetings, report findings, etc. What is the expected geographic area? Statewide or southeast Michigan?

Please refer to Q16 for the response.

Q38: Related to: "Write, edit, and distribute press releases, related articles, commercials and PSAs (will vary depending on media partners that are brought into campaign)"

a. Does referencing developing commercials mean that there is advertising involved with this project? If so, how many ad campaigns do you anticipate needing over a 12 month period? And is there an outside budget for placing these ads? Should ad placement costs be included in our proposal?

Ads may be included in this projects. Details of ad placement costs, the number of ads, etc. will be discussed and determined with help from the selected bidder.

Q39: Related to: "Provide ongoing campaign analytics report throughout the outreach period." How often does WIN want reports? Monthly? Quarterly?

This may vary and will be determined with guidance from the selected bidder. Monthly is preferred.

Q40: Related to: "Press-release management including press release distribution and story placement, as well as developing media lists, providing edits to press releases and story pitches, writing press releases, ensuring placement of stories in relevant publications and media outlets, and other identified/recommended activities. (Estimated cadence of press releases is twice a month.)"

a. [The bidder] makes every possible effort to achieve story placement for clients, but ultimately the media outlets are free to decide yes or no. Does WIN understand that placement cannot be ensured, even with the very best relationships?

Yes.

Q41: Related to: "Ongoing: Social media campaign development, assistance, and management." How many social media campaigns does WIN envision needing per month? Weekly? One per month? Please specify.

WIN/SEMCA will work with the selected bidder to determine how many social media campaigns should be implemented per month.

Q42: Is there interest in including public-policy-related awareness activities in the proposal, for example, educating policymakers and other officials about apprenticeship and creating other general awareness?

Yes. WIN/SEMCA welcomes new additions and ideas included in the proposals. The suggested format is a menu of options that may explore concepts that we may not have considered already. This would allow the reviewers to pick and choose options that fit within the budget scope and ensure the most custom fit for the project.