State of Minnesota

Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED)



REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

Branding, Marketing, Video and Website Development

Date Posted: January 6, 2025

* Responses must be received not later than 4:30 p.m., Central Time, January 27, 2025.
* Late responses will not be considered.
* Contact the Solicitation Administrator, Sam Fettig, if RFP documentation is needed in an alternative format.

**Minnesota’s Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion**

The State of Minnesota is committed to diversity and inclusion in its public procurement process. The goal is to ensure that those providing goods and services to the State are representative of our Minnesota communities and include businesses owned by minorities, women, veterans, and those with substantial physical disabilities. Creating broader opportunities for historically under-represented groups provides for additional options and greater competition in the marketplace, creates stronger relationships and engagement within our communities, and fosters economic development and equality.

To further this commitment, the Department of Administration operates a program for Minnesota-based small businesses owned by minorities, women, veterans, and those with substantial physical disabilities. For additional information on this program, or to determine eligibility, please call 651-296-2600 or go to the Office of Equity in Procurement home page, at [www.mn.gov/admin/oep](file:///\\ADM-MMD-SRV-1.admin.state.mn.us\SHARE\OSP%20Assets\APPROVED%20Forms,%20Policies,%20Templates\PT\Templates\www.mn.gov\admin\oep).

SPECIAL NOTICE: This is a request for proposal. It does not obligate the State of Minnesota to award a contract or complete the proposed program, and the State reserves the right to cancel this solicitation if it is considered in its best interest.

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**Solicitation Attachments**

* Attachment A: Responder Declarations
* Attachment B: Exceptions to State's Terms and Conditions
* Attachment C: Cost Detail
* Attachment D: Responder Forms
  + Veteran-Owned Preference Form
  + Workforce and Equal Pay Declaration Page

**Sample Contract**

* Exhibit A: Contract Terms
* Exhibit B: Insurance Requirements
* Exhibit C: Specifications, Duties, and Scope of Work
* Exhibit D: Pricing

SECTION 1 – INSTRUCTIONS TO RESPONDERS

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| --- | --- |
| Steps for Completing Your Response | Follow the steps below to complete your response to this Solicitation:  Step 1: Read the solicitation documents and ask questions, if any Step 2: Write your response Step 3: Submit your response |
| Incomplete Submittals | A response must be submitted along with any required additional documents. Incomplete responses that materially deviate from the required format and content may be rejected. |
| STEP 1 – READ THE SOLICITATION DOCUMENT & ASK QUESTIONS, IF ANY | |
| How to Ask Questions | The contact person for questions is:  Sam Fettig, Manager of External Communications (“Solicitation Administrator”) Minnesota Paid Leave  Sam.Fettig@state.mn.us  Questions should be emailed to the contact by Jan. 15, 2025 at 4:30 p.m., Central Time and include in the subject line of the email “*RFP Question re: PFML Branding, Marketing, Video and Website Development*.”  Other personnel are not authorized to answer questions regarding this Solicitation. |
| STEP 2 – WRITE YOUR RESPONSE | |
|  | The Response Content section is in this link to [Section 4](#Section4ProposalContent). Prepare a written response and supply all requested content. Responses should address the requested information and documents detailed in Section 4. DO NOT INCLUDE Non-Public/Trade Secret data (as defined in this link to [Minn. Stat. § 13.37](https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/13.37)).  **Review, sign, and include the Responder Declarations with your response**. |
| STEP 3 –SUBMIT YOUR RESPONSE | |
| Where to Send Your Response | Submit your response to:  Sam Fettig, Solicitation Administrator Minnesota Paid Leave  Sam.Fettig@state.mn.us  Proposals must be received not later than 4:30 p.m., Central Time,  January 27, 2025. **Late responses will not be considered.**  The Cost Proposal must be submitted as a separate attachment from the Technical Proposal. It is important no costs are contained in any portion of a Responder’s Technical Proposal.  By submitting a response, responder is making a binding legal offer for the period of time set forth below in Section 6, Conditions of Offer. The technical proposal must be submitted separately from the cost proposal. |

SECTION 2 – SUMMARY OF SCOPE

# Procurement Overview and Goals.

The Paid Family and Medical Leave Division (Paid Leave) at the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED or State) is seeking a qualified vendor to provide comprehensive branding, marketing, video, and website development services. The selected vendor will be responsible for designing, developing, and implementing branding for Paid Leave, for marketing strategies and a new website that aligns with DEED’s organizational goals and objectives.

# Sample Tasks and Deliverables.

The main objectives of this project to be performed by the successful Responder under the resulting contract includes but is not limited to:

## User Research (February 2025 – June 2025)

* Develop and execute a plan for user research to inform Paid Leave brand and messaging, and to measure awareness of and sentiment towards the program over time.
* Plan should include a combination of surveys, focus groups, or other established methods to assess awareness and sentiment towards Paid Leave. Plan should include testing sample messages or slogans, and must be designed to reach a broad representative sample of Minnesotans and specific target audiences.
* Work with Paid Leave team to define this list of target audiences, which may include: Large/Small Employers; Healthcare Providers; Hmong, Asian American or Pacific Islander (AAPI); Latine/Spanish-speaking; Somali/East African; New immigrant/Undocumented; American Indian; Rural; Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning, Intersex, and Asexual (LGBTQIA); People with disabilities; Older Minnesotans.
* Plan should include a proposed structure and cadence for tracking surveys to measure awareness and sentiment over time.

## Brand and Style Guide Development (March 2025 – June 2025)

* Develop a comprehensive messaging style guide and visual brand guide for Minnesota Paid Leave.
* Informed by user research, the messaging style guide should include an overall messaging framework, slogans or taglines, and a style guide for communicating about Minnesota Paid Leave.
* The brand guide should identify wordmarks, color and font use, and other elements of a visual style guide, in conformity with the Minnesota State Brand.

## Website Design and Development (March 2025 – December 2025)

* + Website Design:
    - Design a modern, responsive, and user-friendly website.
    - Website is anticipated to require six (6) top-level sections, and between three (3) and eight (8) pages per section.
    - Ensure the website is accessible and compliant with relevant Accessibility Standards as outlined in this RFP and attached sample contract.
  + Website Development:
    - Develop the website using industry standard best practices in web development.
    - Ensure the website is optimized for speed and performance.
  + Content Management System (CMS):
    - Propose a CMS for DEED approval, such as Wordpress or similar, that allows for easy content updates and management. Proposal should detail ongoing costs.
    - Implement the agreed upon CMS.
    - Provide virtual training to up to ten (10) DEED staff on the use of the CMS.
  + Integration:
    - Integrate the website with existing systems, such as CRM and analytics tools including Google Analytics.
    - Develop the website to support integration with anticipated new systems and tools, such as interactive calculator and quiz tools.
  + Testing and Quality Assurance:
    - Conduct thorough testing to ensure the website functions correctly across all devices and browsers.
    - Fix any bugs or issues identified during testing.
    - Layout plan to notify DEED of potential or real issues and workable resolutions.
  + Launch and Post-Launch Support:
    - Assist with the launch of the new website.
    - Provide post-launch support and maintenance for a twelve-week period, up to eight (8) hours per week between the hours of 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. CST weekdays.

## Video Production (June 2025 – December 2025)

* Develop a plan and produce video content to support Paid Leave.
* Videos should include filmed video content and may also include 2D animated videos.
* Filmed videos should include six (6) documentary-style or testimonial-style storytelling videos up to three (3) minutes in length, with workers, families and employers about the impact of Paid Leave. Shorter versions of these videos will be produced as needed for marketing.

## Marketing Campaign (June 2025 – December 2026)

* Develop and execute marketing strategies that increase brand awareness, engagement, and conversion rates. Initial plan should cover at minimum the six (6) months prior to launch (January 1, 2026) and the first six (6) months post-launch.
* The plan should include strategies to reach target populations identified in user research and may include any combination of proposed marketing channels underResponder’s professional recommendation. Examples may include social media advertising, display advertising, over the top (OTT) advertising (such as internet video streaming services), out of home (OOH) advertising (such as billboards or other signage, transit shelter or vehicle advertising, etc.), print media advertising, and broadcast advertising.
* To execute the marketing campaign, the selected vendor will be responsible for purchasing the advertising space in the channels identified in the approved plan. The department has budgeted $250,000 to purchase this advertising space.

## Toolkit Content (March 2025 – December 2025)

* Develop a plan and produce print/digital content to support Paid Leave.
* This plan should identify pieces of print/digital content needed for at least three (3) broad audiences: individuals and families, healthcare providers and certifiers, and employers.
* Plan should include a detailed handbook and summary brochure for each audience and may also include other content such as one-page explainer documents, infographics, posters, or sample social media posts.

Preferred Qualifications:

Responders should include a detailed description of three (3) website design projects.

Responders should include in the detailed description the following preferred qualifications, if applicable:

* Familiarity with web systems and standards including Tridion and Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0.
* Experience working with the Minnesota State Brand.
* Familiarity with DEED programs and services.
* Experience developing messages and marketing strategies to reach target populations.
* Experience developing research and user engagement methods for target populations.

The selected vendor will work closely with the Paid Leave division and other department personnel.

Responders are encouraged to propose additional tasks or activities if they will improve the results of the project. These items should be separated from the required items on *Attachment C: Cost Detail.*

The State reserves the right to ask Responders to collaborate if the State anticipates such proposals would complement one another.

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SECTION 3 – PROPOSAL INSTRUCTIONS AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

# Anticipated Contract Term.

The term of this contract is anticipated to be from February 2025 to December 2026, with the option to extend up to an additional three (3) years in increments determined by the State.

# Question and Answer Instructions.

All questions should be submitted no later than the date and time listed in Section 1, Instructions to Responders. The State is not obligated to answer questions submitted after the question due date and time.

Only personnel listed above are authorized to discuss this solicitation with responders. Contact regarding this solicitation with any personnel not listed above could result in disqualification. This provision is not intended to prevent responders from seeking guidance from state procurement assistance programs regarding general procurement questions.

If a Responder discovers any significant ambiguity, error, conflict, discrepancy, omission, or other deficiency in the solicitation, please immediately notify the contact person detailed above in writing of such error and request modification or clarification of the document.

# Additional Tasks or Activities.

Responders are encouraged to propose additional tasks, activities, or goods above and beyond the scope of what is requested in this solicitation if they will substantially improve the results of this procurement. Any costs associated with these additional tasks, activities, or goods should be clearly marked and separated from costs associated with the tasks, activities, or goods specifically requested under this solicitation. Because cost is a factor in the evaluation of responses to this solicitation, failure to separate costs for additional tasks, activities, or goods may result in those costs being included in a responder's cost proposal and result in a lower cost score for that proposal.

SECTION 4 – PROPOSAL CONTENT

Please submit the following information:

1. Work Plan. Responder should provide a description of the deliverables to be provided by the Responder along with a detailed work plan that identifies the major tasks to be accomplished as outlined in *Section 2 – Sample Tasks and Deliverables* and be used as a scheduling and managing tool, as well as the basis for invoicing. This document should NOT list cost detail. If cost detail is included in this document, the State may disqualify the proposal as non-responsive. Responder should provide a statement of the objectives, goals, and tasks to show or demonstrate the Responder's view and understanding of the nature of the contract, and what makes the Responder uniquely suited for this work.
2. Qualifications and Experience. Responder should provide an outline of background and experience with examples of similar work done by the Responder and a list of personnel who will conduct the project, detailing their training, and work experience, including *Preferred Qualifications* as outlined in *Section 2 – Summary of Scope* Resumes or other information about project personnel should not, if possible, contain personal telephone numbers, home addresses, or home email addresses. If it is necessary to include personal contact information, please clearly indicate in the response that personal contact information is being provided.
3. Work Samples. Responder should provide Work Samples that reflect the quality of the deliverables they will provide to the State. Work Samples are ideally very similar to the services being requested in this RFP.

Work samples should include:

Sample of branding or marketing work, including visible visual brand elements (fonts, colors, logos, iconography, etc.) as well as taglines, slogans, or other messaging.

Sample of web development work done, demonstrating chiefly User Interface/User Experience (UI/UX) design.

Sample of video produced for a public audience.

Sample of written content such as a fact sheet, brochure, flyer, or other material produced for a public audience.

1. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

* Describe how responder’s policies and practices engage Minnesotans with respect to diversity, equity, and inclusion in areas such as:
  + research user engagement,
  + brand and message development, and
  + marketing and content execution
* Describe the responder’s approach to cultural competency with target audiences such as those defined in *Section 2 – Sample Tasks and Deliverables, User Research*, including ability to reach those who speak languages other than English.
* Detail the responder’s hiring, subcontracting, or other practices pertinent to efforts in this area.

1. Accessibility of Services or Products. The responder should complete, in an accessible format, a VPAT® 2.5 INT (November 2023) for all software, hardware, and websites (as applicable) as proposed in response to the solicitation. Vendors can use the VPAT form from the [ITIC VPAT site](https://gcc01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.itic.org%2Fpolicy%2Faccessibility%2Fvpat&data=02%7C01%7Cjay.wyant%40state.mn.us%7C73956bd300d64f1e225508d8027f2988%7Ceb14b04624c445198f26b89c2159828c%7C0%7C0%7C637262092459148011&sdata=TRG1W1u4WaX27gn2qiiiuQqx%2FtAhl6VL19foRYlli5E%3D&reserved=0). Vendors should complete the Section 508 and WCAG 2.1A and AA sections. The EN 301 549 section can be left blank or deleted. For systems with multiple interfaces (such as an admin and user interface), report on each interface whether in the same or separate VPATs. These documents may be scored according to the solicitation evaluation.

Responders are encouraged to reference the “[Vendor VPAT Guidance](http://mn.gov/mnit/programs/accessibility/it-procurement.jsp)” in the “Products” tab on the [Accessible IT Procurement page](file:///C:\Users\akocina\Desktop\Accessible%20IT%20Procurement%20page) (<http://mn.gov/mnit/programs/accessibility/it-procurement.jsp>) for information and instructions on completing the VPATs. Respondents should also review the related guidance documents on the same site for solicitation reviewers to understand expectations. The responder is strongly encouraged to provide remarks and explanation that both support compliance and detail any deficiencies, as even if you claim “supports” unless there are remarks and explanations, you may score low.

1. Cost Detail. Complete and submit Attachment C, “Cost Detail,” attached to this solicitation.
2. License Agreements, Maintenance Agreements, or Other Terms and Conditions.

The State may require Responder to provide any license agreements, maintenance agreements or any other terms and conditions relevant to the work under a resulting contract. Review and approval by the State will be required prior to contract execution. In the event Responder fails to comply with a request under this provision, Responder agrees that it will not seek to enforce terms and conditions of any such agreement against the State. Further, failure to provide any of the pertinent documents upon request may result in the State not agreeing to sign any additional documents, rejecting your response, or cancelling the award.

Submit all requested documentation, including, but not limited to, the following documents:

1. Attachment A: Responder Declarations
2. Attachment B: Exceptions to State's Standard Terms and Conditions
3. Attachment C: Cost Proposal
4. Attachment D: Responder Forms

Veteran-Owned Preference Form

Workforce and Equal Pay Declaration Page

**DO NOT INCLUDE Non-Public/Trade Secret data (as defined by Minn. Stat. § 13.37).**

SECTION 5 – EVALUATION PROCEDURE AND CRITERIA

The State will conduct an evaluation of responses to this Solicitation. The evaluations will be conducted in three phases:

Phase 1 - Review responses for responsiveness and pass/fail requirements

Phase 2 - Evaluate responses

Phase 3 - Select finalist(s)

# Phase 1 – Responsiveness and Pass/Fail Requirements

The purpose of this phase is to determine if each response complies with mandatory requirements. The State will first review each proposal for responsiveness to determine if the Responder satisfies all mandatory requirements. The State will evaluate these requirements on a pass/fail basis.

Mandatory Requirements. The following will be considered on a pass/fail basis:

* Responses must be received by the due date and time specified in this RFP.
* Responses must meet Full Accessibility for website development under the Minnesota IT Accessibility Standards.

# Phase 2 - Evaluate Responses

Only those responses found to have met Phase 1 criteria will be considered in Phase 2.

The factors and weighting on which responses will be evaluated are:

1. Work Plan 200 points
2. Qualifications and Experience 100 points
3. Work Samples 200 points
4. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion 100 points
5. Accessibility of Services or Products 100 points
6. Cost Detail 300 points

1000 points

1. Preference Points 120 points (in addition to 1,000 available)

Preference points are described under Solicitation Terms and will be applied to the total score after points have been awarded.

# Phase 3 - Select Finalist(s)

Only those responses that have been evaluated under Phase 2 shall be eligible for Phase 3.

The State will make its selection based on best value, as determined by this evaluation process. The State reserves the right to pursue negotiations on any exception taken to the State’s standard terms and conditions. In the event that negotiated terms cannot be reached, the State reserves the right to terminate negotiations and begin negotiating with the next highest scoring responder or take other actions as the State deems appropriate. If the State anticipates multiple awards, the State reserves the right to negotiate with more than one Responder.

It is anticipated that the evaluation and selection will be completed by Feb. 17, 2025.

SECTION 6 – SOLICITATION TERMS

# Competition in Responding

The State desires open and fair competition. Questions from responders regarding any of the requirements of the Solicitation must be submitted in writing to the Solicitation Administrator listed in the Solicitation before the due date and time. If changes are made the State will issue an addendum.

Any evidence of collusion among responders in any form designed to defeat competitive responses will be reported to the Minnesota Attorney General for investigation and appropriate action.

# Addenda to the Solicitation

Changes to the Solicitation will be made by addendum with notification and posted in the same manner as the original Solicitation. Any addenda issued will become part of the Solicitation.

# Joint Ventures

The State allows joint ventures among groups of responders when responding to the solicitation. However, one responder must submit a response on behalf of all the others in the group. The responder that submits the response will be considered legally responsible for the response (and the contract, if awarded).

# Withdrawing Response

A responder may withdraw its response prior to the due date and time of the Solicitation. For solicitations in the SWIFT Supplier Portal, a responder may withdraw its response from the SWIFT Supplier Portal. For solicitations done any other way, a responder may withdraw its response by notifying the Solicitation Administrator in writing of the desire to withdraw.

After the due date and time of this Solicitation, a responder may withdraw a response only upon showing that an obvious error exists in the response. The showing and request for withdrawal must be made in writing to Solicitation Administrator within a reasonable time and prior to the State’s detrimental reliance on the response.

# Rights Reserved

The State reserves the right to:

* Reject any and all responses received;
* Waive or modify any informalities, irregularities, or inconsistencies in the responses received;
* Negotiate with the highest scoring Responder[s];
* Terminate negotiations and select the next response providing the best value for the State;
* Consider documented past performance resulting from a State contract may be considered in the evaluation process;
* Short list the highest scoring Responders;
* Require Responders to conduct presentations, demonstrations, or submit samples;
* Interview key personnel or references;
* Request a best and final offer from one or more Responders;
* The State reserves the right to request additional information ; and
* The State reserves the right to use estimated usage or scenarios for the purpose of conducting pricing evaluations. The State reserves the right to modify scenarios, and to request or add additional scenarios for the evaluation.

# Samples and Demonstrations

Upon request, Responders are to provide samples to the State at no charge. Except for those destroyed or mutilated in testing, the State will return samples if requested and at the Responder’s expense. All costs to conduct and associated with a demonstration will be the sole responsibility of the Responder.

# Responses are Nonpublic during Evaluation Process

All materials submitted in response to this Solicitation will become property of the State. During the evaluation process, all information concerning the responses submitted will remain private or nonpublic and will not be disclosed to anyone whose official duties do not require such knowledge. Responses are private or nonpublic data until the completion of the evaluation process as defined by Minn. Stat. § 13.591. The completion of the evaluation process is defined as the State having completed negotiating a contract with the selected responder. The State will notify all responders in writing of the evaluation results.

# Trade Secret Information

## Responders must not submit as part of their response trade secret material, as defined by Minn**. Stat.** § **13.37.**

## **In the event** trade secret data are submitted, Responder must **defend any action seeking release of data it believes to be trade secret, and indemnify and hold harmless the State, its agents and employees, from any judgments awarded against the State in favor of the party requesting the data, and any and all costs connected with that defense.**

## **The State does not consider cost or prices to be trade secret material, as defined by** Minn**. Stat.** § **13.37.**

## **A responder may present and discuss trade secret information during an interview or demonstration with the State, if applicable.**

# Conditions of Offer

Unless otherwise approved in writing by the State, Responder’s cost proposal and all terms offered in its response that pertain to the completion of professional and technical services and general services will remain firm for 180 days, until they are accepted or rejected by the State, or they are changed by further negotiations with the State prior to contract execution.

# Award

Any award that may result from this solicitation will be based upon the total accumulated points as established in the solicitation. The State reserves the right to award this solicitation to a single Responder, or to multiple Responders, whichever is in the best interest of the State, providing each Responder is in compliance with all terms and conditions of the solicitation. The State reserves the right to accept all or part of an offer, to reject all offers, to cancel the solicitation, or to re-issue the solicitation, whichever is in the best interest of the State.

# Requirements Prior to Contract Execution

Prior to contract execution, a responder receiving a contract award must comply with any submittal requests. A submittal request may include, but is not limited to, a Certificate of Insurance.

# Targeted Group, Economically Disadvantaged Business, Veteran-Owned and Individual Preference

Unless a greater preference is applicable and allowed by law, in accordance with Minn. Stat. § 16C.16, businesses that are eligible and certified by the State as targeted group (TG) businesses, economically disadvantaged (ED) businesses, and veteran-owned businesses will receive points equal to 12% percent of the total points available as preference.

For TG/ED/VO certification and eligibility information visit the Office of Equity in Procurement website at [https://mn.gov/admin/business/vendor-info/oep/](https://mn.gov/admin/business/vendor-info/oep/%20) or call the Division’s Helpline at 651.296.2600.