



**STATE OF
ARKANSAS**
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
1 Commerce Way, Suite 601
Little Rock, Arkansas 72202

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (MAP)
SOLICITATION DOCUMENT

SOLICITATION INFORMATION			
Solicitation Number:	ACOM-24-0001	Solicitation Issued:	October 24, 2023
Description:	Advertising, Marketing, Media Buying and Public Relation Services		
Department:	AR Department of Commerce/Marketing & Communications		
SUBMISSION DEADLINE AND DELIVERY OF RESPONSE DOCUMENTS			
Proposal Opening Date:	November 7, 2023	Proposal Opening Time:	2:00 PM, Central Time
Bids shall not be accepted after the designated bid submission date and time. In accordance with Arkansas Procurement Law and Rules, it is the responsibility of vendors to submit proposals at the designated location on or before the bid submission date and time. Bids received after the designated bid submission date and time shall be considered late and shall be returned to the vendor without further review. It is not necessary to return "no bids" to the AR Department of Commerce Procurement Office.			
DELIVERY OF RESPONSE DOCUMENTS			
Delivery Address and RFP Opening Location:	AR Department of Commerce Attn: Teresa Funderburg, Procurement Administrator 1 Commerce Way, Suite 601 Little Rock, Arkansas 72201-1023 Delivery providers, USPS, UPS, and FedEx deliver mail to AEDC's street address on a schedule determined by each individual provider. These providers will deliver to AEDC based solely on the street address. Prospective Contractors assume all risk for timely, properly submitted deliveries.		
Proposal's Outer Packaging:	Seal outer packaging and properly mark with the following information. If outer packaging of proposal submission is not properly marked, the package may be opened for proposal identification purposes. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Solicitation number• Date and time of proposal opening• Prospective Contractor's name and return address		
ACOM CONTACT INFORMATION			
Commerce Buyer:	Teresa Funderburg	Buyer's Direct Phone Number:	501-534-3624
Email Address:	ACOM.Bids@arkansas.gov	ACOM's Main Number:	501-682-1121
ACOM Website:	https://commerce.arkansas.gov/		
OSP Website:	http://www.arkansas.gov/dfa/procurement/bids/index.php		

SECTION 1 – GENERAL INFORMATION AND INSTRUCTIONS

- **Do not** provide responses to items in this section unless specifically and expressly required.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This Request for Proposal (RFP) is issued by the Arkansas Department of Commerce (ACOM) Procurement Office for the Marketing & Communications Department to obtain pricing and a contract(s) for comprehensive marketing, advertising, media buying and public relations services. In collaboration with the ACOM Marketing and Communications Director and the ACOM's administrative and marketing team, the Contractor shall develop and implement impactful and innovative communications effective in assisting the ACOM in achieving its marketing and advertising mission.

The successful Contractor shall be a strategic business partner with the ACOM in a way that will enhance ACOM's goals. Therefore, it is critical the successful Contractor be highly skilled in utilizing video, print, digital and social media, and other content strategies and tactics for creating messages with a distinct brand of advertising that promotes awareness and drive engagement that meets ACOM's goals.

Contract(s) awarded will be made to the Prospective Contractor determined to have submitted the proposal that is the most advantageous to the State. Direct all questions, comments, or concerns you may have regarding this solicitation to the Arkansas Department of Commerce Buyer.

1.2 PROPOSAL OPENING LOCATION

Proposals will be opened at the address listed on the cover page.

1.3 TYPE OF CONTRACT

- As a result of this RFP, ACOM PROCUREMENT is seeking a contract with a single partner company to provide these comprehensive marketing services, however, we reserve the right to award to two companies with the highest overall scores.
- The anticipated starting date for any resulting contract is January 1, 2024, except that the actual contract start date may be adjusted unilaterally by the State for up to three (3) calendar months. By submitting a signed proposal in response to the RFP, the Prospective Contractor represents and warrants that it will honor its proposal as being held open as irrevocable for this period.
- The initial term of a resulting contract will be for one (1) year. Upon mutual agreement by the Contractor and Department, the contract may be renewed for up to six (6) additional one-year terms or portions thereof, not to exceed a total aggregate contract term of seven (7) consecutive years.

1.4 SOLICITATION SCHEDULE

For informational purposes, ACOM Procurement is providing a Solicitation Schedule; however, dates listed and noted with an asterisk (*) are anticipated dates only and are subject to change at the discretion of the State. All times are listed in Central Time.

TABLE A: TENTATIVE SOLICITATION SCHEDULE DATES ARE PROVIDE FOR REFERENCE

ACTIVITY	DATE
RFP Release to Prospective Contractors	Oct 24, 2023
Bidders Conference	Oct 26, 2023 @ 1 pm
Deadline for Prospective Contractor Questions	Oct 27, 2023 @ 5 pm
Answers to Questions Posted to OSP Bid Website*	Oct 31, 2023
Proposal Due Date	Nov 7, 2023 @ 2 pm
Evaluation – Discussion Phases*	Nov 8 - 20, 2023
Post Anticipation to Award*	Nov 20, 2023
Award Contract*	Jan 1, 2024

1.5 BIDDERS CONFERENCE

- A. ACOM Procurement will host a bidders conference to provide additional information and clarification regarding the RFP.
1. The conference will take place on the date and time listed in Section 1.4 Table A.
 2. The conference is important for Prospective Contractors to understand the tasks a Prospective Contractor **shall** complete when submitting a proposal (“Submission Requirements”).
 3. Prospective Contractors may attend the conference via:

Zoom Meeting Link:
<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/78746164430?pwd=KCrHMFRTuXTfF6h2mQrbPZCacD04Rd.1>
Meeting ID: 787 4616 4430
Passcode: 8Uv8H3
 4. The bidders conference presentation will be posted to the Solicitation posting at <http://www.arkansas.gov/dfa/procurement/bids/index.php>.

1.6 CLARIFICATION OF SOLICITATION

- A. Submit any questions requesting clarification of information contained in this Solicitation via the Solicitation posting in OSP Bid Website by the date and time listed in Section 1.4 Table A.
1. For each question submitted, Prospective Contractor should reference the specific Solicitation item number to which the question refers.
 2. Prospective Contractors’ written questions will be consolidated and responded to by the State as deemed appropriate. The State’s consolidated written response is anticipated to be posted to the Solicitation posting at <http://www.arkansas.gov/dfa/procurement/bids/index.php> by the close of business on the date provided in Section 1.4, Table A. If Prospective Contractor questions are unclear or non-substantive in nature, the State may request clarification of a question(s) or decline to answer.
- B. The Prospective Contractor should notify the ACOM PROCUREMENT buyer of any term, condition, etc., that precludes the Prospective Contractor from submitting a compliant, Responsive Proposal. Prospective Contractors should note that it is the responsibility of the Prospective Contractor to seek resolution of all such issues, including those relating to the terms and conditions of the contract, prior to the submission of a proposal.
- C. Prospective Contractors may contact the ACOM PROCUREMENT buyer with non-substantive questions at any time prior to the proposal opening.
- D. An oral statement by ACOM PROCUREMENT will not be part of any contract resulting from this Solicitation and may not reasonably be relied on by any Prospective Contractor as an aid to interpretation unless it is reduced to writing and expressly adopted by ACOM PROCUREMENT.

1.7 DEFINITION OF TERMS

- A. Unless otherwise defined herein, all terms defined in Arkansas Procurement Law have the same meaning herein.
- B. “Prospective Contractor” means a responsible offeror who submits a proposal in response to this solicitation.
- C. The terms “Request for Proposal,” “RFP,” and “Solicitation” are used synonymously in this document.
- D. “Requirement” means something required.

- E. "Responsive Proposal" means a proposal submitted in response to this solicitation that conforms in all material respects to this RFP.
- F. "Shall" and "Must" mean the imperative and are used to identify requirements.
- G. "Specification" means any technical or purchase description or other description of the physical or functional characteristics, or of the nature, of a commodity or service. "Specification" may include a description of any requirement for inspecting, testing, or preparing a commodity or service for delivery.
- H. "State" means the State of Arkansas. When the term "State" is used herein to reference any obligation of the State under a contract that results from this solicitation, that obligation is limited to the Department using such a contract.

1.8 RESPONSE DOCUMENTS

- A. All proposal responses **must** be submitted at the address listed on the cover page.
- B. *Technical Proposal Packet*
 - 1. Responses within the *Information for Evaluation* and *Exceptions* sections **must not** contain the Prospective Contractor's name or any other identifiers, including without limitation names of staff members, projects, products, and addresses.
 - 2. Prospective Contractors **shall** utilize the *Technical Proposal Packet* to submit their responses.
 - 3. The following items are proposal Submission Requirements and **must** be submitted as part of a Prospective Contractor's proposal response.
 - a. Original signed *Proposal Signature Page*. Signature **must** be ink. (See *Technical Proposal Packet*.)
 - b. *One (1) original hard copy of the proposal response which includes"*
 - i. Technical Proposal response to the *Information for Evaluation* section included in the *Technical Proposal Packet*. Proposal response **must** be in the English language.
 - ii. Response to the Official Solicitation Price Sheet. Pricing **must** be proposed in U.S. dollars and cents.
 - The Official Solicitation Price Sheet, including hard copy and electronic copy, must be separately sealed from the Technical Proposal Packet and should be clearly marked as 'Pricing'. A Prospective Contractor shall not include any pricing in the hard copies or electronic copies of their Technical Proposal Packet.
 - c. *Recommended Options Form*. The *Recommended Options* form included in the *Technical Proposal Packet* allows Prospective Contractors to identify any recommended options or optional service ideas that may benefit the State that were not included in the Requirements and the proposed solution.
 - d. *Proposed Subcontractors Form*. The utilization of any proposed subcontractor is subject to approval by the Department.
 - e. *Exceptions Form*.
 - 4. The following items, which **must** be submitted prior to a contract award to the Prospective Contractor, may also be included with the Prospective Contractor's proposal:
 - a. *EO 98-04: Contract and Grant Disclosure Form*.
 - b. Copy of Prospective Contractor's *Equal Opportunity Policy*.
 - c. *Voluntary Product Accessibility Template (VPAT)*, if applicable.

5. **DO NOT** include any other documents or ancillary information, such as a cover letter or promotional/marketing information.

C. Redacted Copy of the *Technical Proposal Packet and Completed Pricing Response*

1. One (1) redacted (marked "REDACTED") copy of the Prospective Contractor's proposal response (see Section 6 of the *Solicitation Terms and Conditions* referenced in Section 1.10.)

D. Additional Copies and Redacted Copy of the Technical Proposal packet and Official Solicitation Price Sheet

1. Additional Copies of the Technical Proposal Packet

- a. Five (5) complete hard copies (marked 'COPY') of the Technical Proposal Packet.
- b. Five (5) electronic copies of the Technical Proposal Packet, preferably on flash drives and in PDF format. CDs will also be acceptable. Do not send electronic copies via email or fax.
- c. All additional hard copies and electronic copies must be identical to the original hard copy. In case of a discrepancy, the original hard copy governs.

2. Additional Copies of the Official Solicitation Price Sheet

- a. Prospective Contractor should also submit one (1) electronic copy of the Official Solicitation Price Sheet, preferably on a flash drive and in PDF format. A CD will also be acceptable. Do not send electronic copies via email or fax.
 - i. The Official Solicitation Price Sheet, including the hard copy and electronic copy, must be separately sealed from the Technical Proposal Packet and should be clearly marked as 'Pricing'. Prospective Contractor shall not include any pricing in the hard copies or electronic copies of their Technical Proposal Packet.

3. One (1) redacted (marked 'REDACTED') copy of the original Technical Proposal Packet, preferably on a flash drive and in PDF format. A CD will also be acceptable. Do not send electronic copies via email or fax.

1.9 ACCEPTANCE OF REQUIREMENTS

- A. Unless a Prospective Contractor expressly and conspicuously identifies any exception or exceptions to any of the Requirements in the Requirements Section(s) of this RFP by listing them on the *Exceptions Form* (see *Technical Proposal Packet*), Prospective Contractor understands and agrees its submission of a proposal to represent that its proposal meets all such Requirements.
- B. A Prospective Contractor's proposal may be rejected if a Prospective Contractor takes exception to any Requirements in the Requirements Section(s) of this RFP.

1.10 ADDITIONAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS

- A. This RFP incorporates all of the *Solicitation Terms and Conditions* located on the ACOM PROCUREMENT website found at transform.ar.gov.
 1. Any special terms and conditions included in this solicitation **shall** override the *Solicitation Terms and Conditions*.
- B. Unless a Prospective Contractor expressly and conspicuously identifies any exception or exceptions to any of the terms in the *Services Contract (SRV-1) Fillable Form* (found [here](#)) by listing them on the *Exceptions Form* (see *Technical Proposal Packet*), Prospective Contractor agrees and **shall** adhere to all terms if selected as the successful Contractor.
 1. Items identified as non-negotiable may only be modified if the legal requirement is satisfied and approved by the State.
- C. A Prospective Contractor's proposal may be rejected if a Prospective Contractor takes exception to any terms or conditions in the documents listed in Sections 1.10.A and 1.10.B.

SECTION 2 – REQUIREMENTS

- *Do not provide responses to items in this section unless specifically and expressly required.*

2.1 OBJECTIVE AND GOALS

- A. The marketing and advertising objectives of ACOM are as follows:
- a. Create economic opportunity by attracting higher paying jobs, expanding and diversifying our state and local economies, increasing incomes and investment, and generating positive growth throughout Arkansas.
 - b. Create awareness of Arkansas as a desirable location for relocating, growing, or starting a business.
 - c. Recruit talent to Arkansas to help fill a growing number of diverse jobs in a growing economy.
 - d. Facilitate business lead generation throughout the various divisions within the Department of Commerce relevant to their goals.
 - e. Make Arkansans and other stakeholders aware of the services of the Department of Commerce. Examples include support for businesses, support for unemployed citizens, training for employees and students, etc.

2.2 CURRENT ENVIRONMENT

The Arkansas Department of Commerce is the umbrella department for workforce and economic development drivers. Its divisions and regulatory boards include Division of Aeronautics, Waterways Commission, Wine Producers Council, Division of Workforce Services, Office of Skills Development, State Bank Department, Insurance Department, Securities Department, Economic Development Commission and Development Finance Authority. It was established July 2019 as part of Governor Asa Hutchinson's wide-sweeping efficiency and transformation efforts to reduce 42 cabinet agencies to 15 while maintaining services for all Arkansans.

The mission of the Arkansas Department of Commerce is to champion economic opportunities through strategic initiatives and an equitable regulatory environment that attracts and grows businesses, safeguards consumers, enhances workforce quality, and energizes our infrastructure, creating a better quality of life for all Arkansans.

Due to a recent organizational change, the Marketing and Communication teams for each division were united into one unified Marketing and Communications team dedicated to serving the entire Department of Commerce. The team is led by Clark Cogbill, Director of Marketing and Communications for the Arkansas Department of Commerce. This contract will serve all divisions of the Arkansas Department of Commerce in its marketing and advertising efforts.

2.3 GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

- A. General Tasks and Activities Expected
- a. Digital marketing (strategy, SEO, targeted media, email marketing, Web design/development, analytics, etc.)
 - b. Content creation
 - c. Media planning, buying, placement, and measurement (digital, connected TV, print)
 - d. Events support (planning, strategy, sponsorship payments, vendor management)
 - e. Video production and editing
 - f. Promotional and branded items
 - g. Public relations
 - h. Media relations
 - i. Direct Mail
 - j. Marketing strategy and planning
 - k. Print production
 - l. Account Management
 - m. Brand Marketing
 - n. Creative production and Copywriting
- B. Major/Special Projects

- a. Major/special projects such as special video or event projects may be requested. In the event that major/special projects are requested, a formal quote/statement of work outlining the specific scope, timeline and cost for that project will be required.
- C. The Contractor shall provide monthly invoices to include supporting documentation. Rates of service including total billable hours and commission rates (if applicable) must be clearly identified on the invoice for each billed item.
- D. The Contractor shall meet all specified marketing plan and project deadlines and shall keep within established budget guidelines.
- E. The Contractor shall identify and advise as to how ACOM can maximize emerging, innovative, and creative technology and trends in digital marketing, design, and development and shall implement identified technology and trends as directed by ACOM.
- F. The Contractor shall regularly provide recommendations based on one or more relevant factors, including data, research, analytics, results and experience, for strategies, creative, content, tactics, etc. for the purpose of meeting objectives and goals.
- G. The Contractor shall use images and messages that are commensurate with the dignity of the State of Arkansas.
- H. The Contractor shall prepare advertisements, presentation materials, and collateral materials to include, but not be limited to, copy and layouts, finished artwork, photographs, testimonials, story boards, scripts, music rights, filming, recording, video dubbing, editing, slide and video production, equipment rentals, scenery properties, costumes, display materials, merchandising materials, brochures, copy writing, graphs, design, power point, electronic design, etc., as required to meet all contract requirements.
 - a. The Contractor will have access to ACOM's pool of digital and traditional photographs, slides, and B-roll for use in marketing materials.
- I. The Contractor shall measure, track and evaluate all social analytics to ensure maximum reach to target audiences.
- J. The Contractor shall adhere to all applicable State and federal laws, regulations, policies, and industry standards, including but not limited to accessibility compliance.
- K. The Contractor shall measure results through established processes for establishing key benchmarks (e.g. – website traffic, digital media engagement, conversions, etc.), goals, and measurable results.
- L. The Contractor shall analyze KPI's (e.g. – website traffic/activity, engagement, conversion rate, CTR, etc.) and report results.
- M. The Contractor shall optimize marketing campaigns and initiative based on analytics and make informed and rapid changes as needed to the media buy, landing pages, creative, calls-to-action, headlines, etc.
- N. The Contractor shall clearly communicate how effective or ineffective various marketing initiatives are performing (according to pre-determined goals) and make adjustments as needed in order to maximize results.
- O. The Contractor shall work with ACOM to establish measurable results for projects and campaigns and achieve objectives by predetermined deadlines.
- P. The Contractor shall provide proof of publication, proof of display, and proof of impressions for all forms of advertising (digital, connected TV, print, etc.).
- Q. The Contractor shall create detailed campaign summary reports that provide valuable and relevant insights that lead to action.
- R. The Contractor shall always be a good steward of time and money in all activities and make fiscal responsibility a top priority.
- S. At the conclusion of each contract term, the Contractor shall assess the overall impact of the contract requirements and shall submit its findings to ACOM, along with a detailed cost analysis in a written report.
- T. The Arkansas Department of Commerce, as the client, will be the ultimate decision maker on all aspects of the contract relationship, including, but not limited to, strategy, media investment, creative, purchasing, etc.

2.4 OVERALL VENDOR QUALITIES

Overall qualities we are looking for in a marketing agency partner:

- A. Strategic planners: A culture of collaborative planning ahead of execution of marketing campaigns and initiatives.

- B. Results-driven: A focus on goal achievement and transparent results. A culture of driving constant improvement.
- C. Economic development experience (preferred): A history of working with clients in the Economic Development sector and a broad understanding of the primary issues, challenges, opportunities, and trends.
- D. Collaborative culture: A “can do”, team-oriented mentality, ready to partner with the Department of Commerce and/or other marketing firms and/or advisors.
- E. Service oriented: A culture of striving to earn our business every day, being responsive, focusing on high quality work and results.
- F. Research-based: Recommendations based on valid research from reputable sources on industries, demographics, marketing trends, economic development, etc.
- G. Creative thinkers: Out-of-the-box ideas that push the envelope for the purpose of driving results and exceeding goals.
- H. Technical expertise: Strong bench of in-house digital professionals who can solve problems, advise, and deliver digital solutions that follow best practices in web development, SEO, email marketing, digital design, custom interactive functionality, mobile app development, etc.
- I. Project management: A culture of planning and organization that comes through in all aspects of service, from creative work to billing.
- J. Discretion: We work on many confidential projects that require marketing materials that are produced prior to a company announcement.

2.5 CORE CAPABILITIES

- A. Digital Media: Planning, buying, managing and optimizing paid media buys in the digital space, including social media platforms, display, paid search and other digital platforms. Generating reports that communicate how effective creative and platforms are performing. Ability to utilize geo-fence locations, target by industry, job title, education level and other specific targeting criteria. Extensive experience utilizing the evolving paid advertising features available through LinkedIn, Facebook, X (Twitter), Instagram, YouTube, and other social platforms. A strong understanding of digital media best practices. Proven experience with media buying for a business audience. Experience setting up digital ad tracking using pixels and other tactics that follow best practices. Ability to measure and report on key performance indicators, including CTR, time on page, and conversion rate.
- B. Digital Ad Creative & Graphic Design: Experienced design team with experience designing for a business audience. Timely iterations of multiple design options for digital media optimization.
- C. Email Marketing: Experience planning, executing and reporting on email drip campaigns. Experience using the Pardot marketing automation platform or a similar platform. Experience optimizing for mobile.
- D. Social Media: Strategic thinking to assist us in optimizing its social media presence using best practices for post timing, content, cadence, graphics, copy, etc.
- E. Web Design and Development: Resources and skilled staff to design and develop web pages and websites. Experience working with a variety of content management systems and platforms. AEDC’s current website was built on the Sitefinity platform and is managed through the Sitefinity content management system which will need to be supported. Other Commerce divisions have sites built on WordPress and other platforms. Some websites will need to be redesigned and rebuilt. Experience supporting, designing and developing websites using the Sitefinity and WordPress platforms. Rapid, 24/7/365 technical support and communication with website outages and issues. Knowledge, experience and resources to purchase and set up URLs as needed with experience setting up URL redirects that follow best practices.
- F. Landing Pages: Resources to design and build custom landing pages, using a variety of systems include content management (e.g., - Sitefinity and WordPress) and marketing automation systems, including but not limited to Pardot.

- G. Digital Analytics: Access to robust analytics software. Key functions include set up, benchmarking, measuring, and reporting. Data and reports should lead to strategic recommendations. Extensive experience utilizing multiple analytics tools to optimize campaigns and initiatives. Experience with A/B testing.
- H. Search Engine Optimization: Experience with website SEO audits and recommendations for optimizing unpaid search results based on SEO best practices.
- I. Lead Generation: Strategic planning for campaigns and tactics to generate and nurture quality business leads based on specified criteria.
- J. Brand Marketing and Strategy: Experience in brand strategy, brand marketing, brand auditing, and brand development.
- K. Non-Digital Media: Planning, buying and managing print and other non-digital advertising, including industry publications and other publications that reach business decision makers and influencers. Proven experience with media buying for a business audience.
- L. Non-Digital Ad Creative & Graphic Design: Experienced team with experience designing for a business audience. Timely iterations of design options for print, direct mail, brochures, pop-up banners, etc.
- M. Direct Mail: Experience planning, executing and measuring direct mail campaigns targeting the business community.
- N. Branded and Promotional Items & Gifts: Access to a wide network of vendors that produce high-quality branded promotional items, like caps, jackets, shirts, business cards, and a wide variety of promotional items that range from less expensive to higher end items for executives and other VIPs. Access to a wide network of specialty vendors that can reliably incorporate brand elements into physical items.
- O. Public Relations/Strategic Communications: Proactive development and execution of PR strategies that position Arkansas as a favorable state for business, Commerce executives as thought leaders, and that garners positive media coverage for Arkansas, Arkansas-based businesses and the Department of Commerce and its divisions. Experience connecting companies with influencers and content creators. Services needed include public relations strategy, influencer marketing, executive leadership communications, crisis communications, event coordination, and media relations. Experience with leading the organization of press conferences, announcements, engagements, and activations.
- P. Video/Photography: Resources to produce cost-effective video content for use in a range of digital formats. Extensive experience and capabilities in video editing utilizing the latest technology to incorporate graphics, transitions, voice over, b-roll, etc. Experience producing and editing videos for use in social media, websites, mobile, conferences and business meetings, including long and short form video content. In-house photography capabilities to help build the Department of Commerce's portfolio covering multiple industries, companies, and locations across the state.
- Q. Content: Proven capabilities and experience in the design and writing of infographics, landing pages, interactive maps, social media graphics, animated digital graphics, etc. Strong copy writing experience.
- R. Event Hosting & Sponsorship Planning/Coordination: Resources to lead and assist with conference and event sponsorships that include booth design, branding, and the coordination of sponsorship investment. Resources to lead and assist in the planning of Commerce-hosted events for site selection consultants, executives, statewide economic developers, etc.
- S. Presentations: Ability to design, create, and update presentations that meet brand style guidelines for use in group meetings that range from large audiences to small groups.
- T. Digital Asset Management and Storage: In-house resources to store and manage digital assets, including but not limited to videos, photos, graphics, and more. Ability to easily locate and transfer assets to client as needed. Ability to receive and store assets as needed.
- U. Displays: Resources to create a variety of displays, including but not limited to pop up banners, backdrops, step and repeat graphics, and more.

- V. International Translation Services: Access to resources that can accurately and appropriately translate English to other languages as needed, including but not limited to Chinese, Japanese, Korean, German, and Spanish.

2.6 EXAMPLES OF WORK AND TO SHARE IN A PRESENTATION

- A. Present a multichannel campaign concept (maintaining our existing branding):
 - a. A talent attraction initiative with the goal of efficiently reaching contacts across the country who previously lived in Arkansas and/or attended college here and effectively recruiting them back to the state.
 - b. Demonstrate a strategy for measuring success and optimizing tactics.
- B. Client business to business success stories, including measurable results.
 - a. Examples of cohesive, multichannel campaign planning and execution.
 - b. Examples of business-to-business lead generation strategies.
 - c. Examples of public relations strategies and campaigns with measurable results.
- C. Examples of creative work, including websites, direct mail, print ads, digital ads, trade show materials (pop up banners), promotional materials, video, email marketing.

2.7 PROSPECTIVE CONTRACTOR MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

- A. The qualifications in this section **shall** be met through the vendor's own experience or through the experience of the vendor's proposed subcontractors.
- B. The vendor **shall** have a minimum of five (5) years' experience with marketing, advertising, and public relations in the business-to-business category.
- C. The vendor **shall** have a full suite of digital marketing services, including proven expertise in digital strategy, digital media (media buying and campaign optimization), social media strategy, analytics, web design and development, search engine optimization, content development, content management systems, digital video, and email marketing.
- D. The vendor **shall** have a full suite of traditional marketing services, including branding, event planning/marketing/support, branded and promotional items, video production, video editing, photography, direct mail, and print advertising.
- E. The vendor **shall** have a full suite of public relations experience, including PR strategy, media relations, crisis and risk management, and influencer marketing.
- F. The vendor **shall** have experience with multi-channel campaigns, that include a combination of earned, owned, and paid media running in a combination of media platforms, including print, digital, direct mail, social media, etc.
- G. The vendor **shall** have proven processes to measure, optimize and report on campaign performance, including analytics for paid media, web, landing pages, direct mail, and traditional media.
- H. The vendor **shall** have employees of their firm in key positions, including account executives, web designers, web developers, creative director(s), copywriters, media buyers, public relations strategists, video project managers, and SEO specialists.
- I. The vendor **shall** have clear lines of communication and responsibility within its organization.

- J. The vendor **shall** have a minimum of five (5) years of marketing, advertising and public relations experience with organizations in the economic development, chamber of commerce, and/or city/state government sectors.
- K. The vendor **shall** have the ability to lead subcontractors in developing integrated marketing communications.
- L. The vendor **shall** have extensive knowledge and experience with industry's best practices in PR campaign management.
- M. The vendor **shall** have in-house media buying capability with buying experience throughout the country and experience buying internationally.
- N. The vendor **shall** be authorized to do business in the State of Arkansas prior to award.
- O. The vendor **shall** be in full Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance.

2.8 OWNERSHIP AND TRANSITION REQUIREMENTS

- A. Upon the expiration or termination of the Contract, the Contractor shall ensure a seamless transition of Contract responsibilities to the Department or any subsequent vendor as necessary to transition the services provided under the Contract. The Contractor agrees to cooperate with the Department and any subsequently awarded vendor to coordinate the transition including, but not limited to, attending meetings and furnishing necessary information. The Contractor shall assume all expenses related to its obligations to assist in the Contractor transition.
- B. Within 30 days of contract end date, Contractor will:
 - a. The Contractor shall provide at no charge to ACOM, all records, documentation, reports, data, recommendations, video assets, art files/specs (for print ads and promotional/branded items) and/or printing elements, etc. produced under a resulting contract to ACOM or ACOM's designee. The Contractor shall transfer video assets, art files/specs (for print ads and promotional/branded items) to ACOM or their designee.

2.9 PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

- A. State law requires that qualifying contracts for services include Performance Standards for measuring the overall quality of services that a Contractor **shall** provide.
- B. The State may be open to negotiations of Performance Standards prior to contract award, prior to the commencement of services, or at times throughout the contract duration.
- C. Performance Standards **shall not** be amended unless they are agreed to in writing and signed by the parties.
- D. Failure to meet the minimum Performance Standards as specified will result in the assessment of damages.
- E. In the event a Performance Standard is not met, the Contractor will have the opportunity to defend or respond to the insufficiency. The State has the right to waive damages if it determines there were extenuating factors beyond the control of the Contractor that hindered the performance of services. In these instances, the State has final determination of the performance acceptability.
- F. Should any compensation be owed to the Department due to the assessment of damages, Contractor **shall** follow the direction of the Department regarding the required compensation process.

G.

SECTION 3 – SELECTION

- **Do not** provide responses to items in this section.

3.1 SELECTION PROCESS

- A. ACOM PROCUREMENT will review each *Technical Proposal Packet* to verify Submission Requirements have been met. *Technical Proposal Packets* that do not meet Submission Requirements will be rejected and will not be evaluated.
1. The State may conduct cost checks based on the cost submitted by each Prospective Contractor on the completed *Pricing Response*.
 - a. Prospective Contractors submitting Responsive Proposals with a proposed cost that falls twenty-five percent (25%) or more from the average submitted cost may be asked to justify their submitted cost.
 - b. Should ACOM PROCUREMENT request clarification and/or additional information regarding cost, Prospective Contractors **shall** provide clarification and/or additional information as specified by the request.
- B. A Department-appointed Evaluation Committee will evaluate and score qualifying Technical Proposals. Evaluation will be based on Prospective Contractor's response to the *Information for Evaluation* section included in the *Technical Proposal Packet*.
1. Members of the Evaluation Committee (Evaluators) will individually review and evaluate proposals and complete an Individual Score Worksheet for each proposal. Individual scoring for each Evaluation Criteria will be based on the following Scoring Description.

SCORE	DESCRIPTION
10	The response provides metrics clearly establishing that the Prospective Contractor is reliable and capable of fully performing the required services.
5	The response provides metrics suggesting that the Prospective Contractor's level of performance may be acceptable, but it does not clearly establish that the Prospective Contractor is reliable and capable of fully performing the required services.
0	The response provides metrics clearly establishing that the Prospective Contractor is unreliable and incapable of fully performing the required services.

2. After initial individual evaluations are complete, the Evaluators will meet to discuss their individual ratings. At the initial consensus meeting, each Evaluator will be afforded an opportunity to discuss his or her rating for each evaluation criteria.
 3. After Evaluators have had an opportunity to discuss their individual scores with the committee, the individual Evaluators will be given the opportunity to change their initial individual scores, if they feel that is appropriate.
 4. The final individual scores of the Evaluators will be recorded on the Pre-Interview Consensus Score Sheets and averaged to determine the group or consensus score and rank for each proposal.
 5. Other agencies, consultants, and experts may also examine documents at the discretion of the Department.
- C. Prospective Contractors submitting Responsive Proposals will be contacted by ACOM PROCUREMENT to schedule an interview.

1. Prospective Contractors **shall** attend the interview as scheduled by ACOM PROCUREMENT.
 2. Evaluators will complete an Individual Score Worksheet for each interview. Evaluation will be based on Prospective Contractor's responses to questions presented during the interview. Individual scoring for each interview will be based on the Scoring Descriptions in 3.1.B.1.
 3. During a final consensus meeting, after all interviews are complete, Evaluators will have the opportunity to discuss the interviews and change their individual interview scores on the Post-Interview Consensus Score Sheet, if they feel that is appropriate.
 4. The final individual scores of the Evaluators will be recorded on the Post-Interview Consensus Score Sheets and averaged to determine the group or consensus score and rank for each proposal.
- D. During the final consensus meeting, cost information will be provided to the Evaluators to allow them to determine if moving forward with the highest-ranking Prospective Contractor is the most advantageous to the State.
- E. Should the State request clarification and/or additional information Prospective Contractors' responses, Prospective Contractors **shall** provide clarification and/or additional information as specified by the State.
- F. ACOM PROCUREMENT will submit responses and pricing received from the interviewed Prospective Contractors, along with the Evaluation Committee's recommendation to the Department for review and approval to move into Discussions.
- G. The State will move forward into Discussions with the highest-ranking Prospective Contractor based on the Grand Total Score for each proposal, unless the highest-ranking Prospective Contractor's response is determined to not be the most advantageous proposal to the State.

3.2 EXPLANATION OF THE SUB-SECTIONS OF THE TECHNICAL PROPOSAL

A. Experience

1. The Experience sub-section included in the *Technical Proposal Packet* allows Prospective Contractors to differentiate themselves based on their experience, technical capability, and understanding of the State's specific needs.
2. Prospective Contractors should identify expertise in the form of a claim and provide relevant experience to support each claim.
3. Prospective Contractors should use verifiable metrics (number of accounts, size of accounts, years of experience, customer satisfaction ratings) to support each claim.

B. Solution

1. The Solution sub-section included in the *Technical Proposal Packet* allows Prospective Contractors to differentiate themselves based on their proposed solution and/or approach to solve the State's specific needs.
2. Prospective Contractors should provide a high-level overview of the Prospective Contractor's proposed solution and/or approach to services using the Requirements outlined in the RFP.
3. Proposed solutions should be non-technical and include the Prospective Contractor's recommendations for meeting the objectives and Requirements of the RFP.
4. Additional service options and recommendations above and beyond those included in proposed solution should be included in the *Recommended Options Form*.

C. Risk

1. The Risk sub-section included in the *Technical Proposal Packet* allows Prospective Contractors to identify and prioritize major risks that they reasonably foresee could potentially prevent or impair the Prospective Contractor's delivery of the solution as offered in the proposal or to

otherwise fail to meet the State’s desired outcome, specifications, and performance standards, and how they will mitigate, manage, and/or minimize each risk listed.

- a. Prospective Contractors should include sources, causes, or actions that are both within and beyond the control of the Prospective Contractors that they reasonably foresee may cause cost increases, delays, amendments, or dissatisfaction to the State.
- b. Risks should be described in simple, clear, and non-technical terms.
- c. Prospective Contractor should explain how the Prospective Contractor will mitigate, manage, and/or minimize each risk listed.
 - i. The Documented Performance cell should include details such as how many times any identified risk was previously mitigated and the impact on the Prospective Contractor’s performance in terms of time, cost, and client satisfaction.

D. Interview

- 1. The Interview will allow Prospective Contractors to further demonstrate their experience in providing the services outlined in the RFP.
 - a. Each Prospective Contractor meeting the submission requirements will be contacted by ACOM PROCUREMENT to schedule an interview. Prospective Contractors **shall** attend the interview as scheduled by OSP.
 - b. Prospective Contractors **shall** identify one (1) Project Lead at the time of interview confirmation who **shall** attend the interview as part of the evaluation process.
 - c. The Evaluation Committee will interview the Prospective Contractor’s identified Project Lead using a pre-determined set of interview questions. Follow up questions may be asked based on responses given by the Project Lead.

3.3 TECHNICAL PROPOSAL SCORE

A. The *Information for Evaluation* section has been divided into sub-sections.

- 1. In each sub-section, items/questions have each been assigned a maximum point value of ten (10) points. The total point value for each sub-section is reflected in the table below as the Maximum Raw Points Possible.
- 2. The Department has assigned Weighted Percentages to each sub-section according to its significance.

INFORMATION FOR EVALUATION SUB-SECTIONS	MAXIMUM RAW POINTS POSSIBLE	SUB-SECTION’S WEIGHTED PERCENTAGE	* MAXIMUM WEIGHTED SCORE POSSIBLE
Experience	10	30%	210
Solution	10	30%	210
Risk	10	10%	70
Interview	10	30%	210
Total Technical Score	40	100%	700

*Sub-Section’s Percentage Weight x Total Technical Maximum Weighted Score = Maximum Weighted Score Possible for the sub-section.

B. The proposal’s weighted score for each sub-section will be determined using the following formula:

$$(A/B)*C = D$$

A = Actual Raw Points received for sub-section in evaluation
 B = Maximum Raw Points possible for sub-section
 C = Maximum Weighted Score possible for sub-section

D = Weighted Score received for sub-section

- C. The proposal's weighted scores for sub-sections will be added to determine the Total Technical Score for the proposal.
- D. Proposals that do not receive a minimum Total Technical Score of 300 will not be subject to further consideration in the solicitation process. The pricing for proposals that do not receive a minimum Total Technical Score of 300 will not be scored.

3.4 COST SCORE

- A. When pricing is opened for scoring, the maximum amount of cost points will be given to the proposal with the lowest seven year grand total as shown on the completed *Pricing Response*. (See *Grand Total Score* for maximum points possible for cost score.)
- B. The amount of cost points given to the remaining proposals will be allocated by using the following formula:

$$(A/B)*C = D$$

A = Lowest Estimated Cost
B = Second (third, fourth, etc.) Lowest Estimated Cost
C = Maximum Points for Lowest Estimated Cost
D = Total price points received

3.5 GRAND TOTAL SCORE

The Technical Score and Cost Score will be added together to determine the Grand Total Score for the proposal. The State may move forward to discussions with the Prospective Contractor determined reasonably susceptible of being selected for award.

	MAXIMUM POINTS POSSIBLE
Technical Proposal	700
Cost	300
Maximum Possible Grand Total Score	1,000

3.6 DISCUSSIONS

- A. During the Discussions Kick Off Meeting, the Prospective Contractor **shall** provide the following documents to the State:
 - 1. A detailed scope of work clearly identifying the Prospective Contractor's understanding, implementation, and performance of services required in this RFP, including all activities required by the Contractor and all activities expected by the State/Participating Entities.
 - 2. A Risk Management Plan intended to mitigate any risks, including but not necessarily limited to, the risks identified in the Risk Plan submitted in the Prospective Contractor's *Technical Proposal Packet*.
 - 3. A proposed financial summary, including:
 - a. The completed *Pricing Response* and *Recommended Options Form* submitted in the Prospective Contractor's *Technical Proposal Packet*.
 - b. A proposed payment schedule.
 - 4. Proposed project management and reporting templates.
- B. During the Discussions Kick Off Meeting, the Prospective Contractor **shall** address questions and/or concerns the State may have to the satisfaction of the State.

- C. During Discussions, the Prospective Contractor **shall** revise the discussions documents until agreement is made and the State has provided final approval.
 - 1. The Prospective Contractor **shall** attend follow up Discussions meeting as determined necessary by the State. Reasonable effort will be made to accommodate scheduling conflicts.
- D. During Discussions, the Prospective Contractor **shall** present a final draft of the Discussions documents to the State, including, at minimum:
 - 1. A summary of all plans and scope of work developed during the discussions process and mutually agreed upon by the State and the Prospective Contractor.
 - 2. A detailed scope of work clearly identifying the Prospective Contractor's implementation and performance of services required in this RFP, including all provisions negotiated and agreed upon by the State and the Prospective Contractor since the Discussions Kick Off Meeting.
 - 3. Description of deliverables in terms of simplified metrics.
 - 4. The Risk Management Plan.
 - 5. Project management and reporting templates.
 - 6. Financial summary, including:
 - a. The completed *Pricing Response* submitted in the Prospective Contractor's *Technical Proposal Packet*.
 - b. A list of agreed upon and accepted recommended options (with impact to price).
 - c. A payment schedule.
 - 7. Contact information for the Prospective Contractor's key personnel.
- E. During Discussions, the Prospective Contractor **shall** present the final drafts of the items and **shall** summarize the coordination and planning completed during the discussion process.
- F. Once approved by the State, final drafted documents will become part of the resulting contract.
- G. The Prospective Contractor may determine which key personnel will attend the Discussions meetings.

3.7 PROSPECTIVE CONTRACTOR ACCEPTANCE OF EVALUATION TECHNIQUE

The submission of a *Technical Proposal Packet* signifies the Prospective Contractor's understanding and agreement that some subjective value judgments will be made during the evaluation and scoring of the technical proposals.