



REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

for

DIVERSITY OUTREACH FOCUS GROUPS AND SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN

PROPOSALS SHOULD BE SUBMITTED TO:

Michigan Energy Workforce Development Consortium
Kristin Beltzer
kbeltzer@michamber.com
600 South Walnut Street
Lansing, MI 48933

Deadline for proposal submittals: January 19, 2022 by 5:00pm Eastern Time

This RFP will be made available in alternative format (audio tape or large print) upon request. Requests for alternative formats shall be made in writing within three (3) business days of release of the RFP, to the attention of Kristin Beltzer via email to kbeltzer@michamber.com.

Equal Employment Employer/Program
Auxiliary Aids and Services Available upon Request to Individuals with Disabilities
Michigan Relay Center Callers Use 711 or 1-(844)-578-6563

I. General Information

A. DESCRIPTION OF ENTITY

The Michigan Energy Workforce Development Consortium (MEWDC) is an industry-led partnership of more than fifty (50) representatives of industry, workforce, education, and veterans. MEWDC was established in 2009.

MEWDC's mission is to identify and act on current and future workforce issues that are crucial to building and sustaining Michigan's energy industry. Goals of the MEWDC are to:

- Attract, retrain, and retain a qualified and diverse talent pool for the energy industry.
- Identify specific workforce needs of the energy industry including specific skill sets resulting from projected growth and attrition.
- Meet the needs of employers in the energy industry.
- Align education and training resources to assist Michigan energy industry stakeholders.
- Raise awareness of career pathways in the energy industry.
- Promote the value of the consortium by communicating with and recruiting support from stakeholders and key decisions makers in Michigan.

In 2019, MEWDC identified diversity as a key priority and one of four (4) pillars in the strategic plan. Subsequently, a chairperson was on-boarded and a working group was formed that identified key strategies for diversity outreach, leading up to this Request for Proposal (RFP).

B. PURPOSE

The purpose of this RFP is to solicit proposals to establish a contract, through competitive negotiations, with a qualified Marketing/Public Relations (PR) individual/agency that can provide results-oriented, efficient, cost-effective, professional, and customized public relations while keeping in mind the objective of achieving maximum exposure in Michigan to the target audience (underrepresented populations).

The selected individual/agency must be capable of, but not limited to, providing comprehensive on-going public relations consultancy services, ranging from strategic counsel on issues, to tactical implementation support on special event or ad-hoc communications activities as further outlined in the entirety of this RFP.

C. RFP STIPULATIONS

MEWDC procure on an open, competitive basis. A proposal must clearly set forth all responses in the format required by the RFP to be considered. Any proposals may be rejected in whole or in part. MEWDC reserves the right to rescind this RFP in whole or part at any time. MEWDC shall not be responsible to any bidder or potential bidder for any costs incurred or opportunities lost in responding to this RFP or in deciding not to respond.

To ensure the integrity of this procurement, bidders shall make special efforts to prevent fraud and other abuses. Fraud includes deceitful practices and intentional misconduct such as willful misrepresentation. "Abuse" is a general term that encompasses improper conduct that may or may not be fraudulent in nature. While federal legislation is not specific, possible problem areas could include the following: conflict of interest, kickbacks, bribes, nepotism, political patronage, political activities, and sectarian activities. Bidders that are found to violate the abuse standards will be disqualified. Bidders are required to report immediately any violations in these areas or in problem areas that may later be defined.

Information provided by a proposer that is willingly, knowingly, and purposely false, inaccurate, or misleading, will be grounds for not considering a proposal for funding, for not awarding a contract, or for canceling a contract if awarded.

Any bidder that attempts to exchange information with any other potential bidder for gaining competitive advantage shall be subject to disqualification. In addition, any bidder who attempts to discuss the proposal with, or offer anything of value to any MEWDC officer, director, staff person, agent or representative during this procurement process shall be subject to disqualification.

MEWDC operates an equal opportunity procurement process. Upon request, MEWDC can make this RFP available in large print or alternative format. Auxiliary aids and services are also available upon request to individuals with disabilities. TDD Service available through the Michigan Relay Center at 1-844-578-6563 or 7-1-1.

Neither the proposer nor anyone, with whom the proposer shall contract, shall discriminate against any person employed or applying for employment concerning the performance of the proposers' responsibilities under this agreement.

The successful bidder shall be required to comply with all applicable federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, childbirth and related medical conditions, sex stereotyping, transgender status, and gender identity), national origin (including limited English proficiency), age, disability, genetics, familial status, veteran status, height, weight, arrest without

conviction political affiliation or belief, or any characteristic or activity protected by Federal or State laws and regulations.

1. Disclaimer/Right to Reject/Cancel/Terminate

This RFP does not commit MEWDC to award a contract, to pay any cost incurred in the preparation of a proposal to this request, or to procure or contract for services. MEWDC reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals received as a result of this request. MEWDC can cancel this RFP, in part or in its entirety, if it is in its best interest to do so at any time.

MEWDC may require selected bidders to participate in negotiations, and to submit such costs or other revisions to their proposals as a result of negotiations. MEWDC is not liable for costs incurred by the offerors prior to the signing of a contract and/or written authorization from MEWDC to proceed with the services.

a) Termination Prior to Completion:

MEWDC reserves the right to terminate its commitment if the successful bidder fails to make sufficient progress toward completion of the project or if MEWDC receives funding reductions which make the proposed project unfeasible. The determination of the sufficiency of grounds for termination under this clause shall be within the sole discretion of MEWDC.

2. Small and Minority Owned Businesses, Women's Business Enterprises,

MEWDC will make efforts to utilize small and minority owned businesses and area firms when possible.

An offeror qualifies as a small business firm if it meets the definition of "small business" as established by the Small Business Administration (13 CFR 121.201), by having average annual receipts for the last three fiscal years of less than six million dollars.

An offeror qualifies as a minority owned business if the firm self-identifies and/or meets the definition of a "minority owned business" as established by the National Minority Supplier Development Council (NMSDC); which requires a business to be at least 51% owned, operated on a daily basis, and controlled by racial or ethnic minorities who are U.S. Citizens.

3. Award

Upon conclusion of final negotiations with the successful bidder, MEWDC may award a contract, based on offers received, without discussion of such offers. Accordingly, each offer should be submitted on the most favorable terms from a

price, quality, and technical standpoint. MEWDC reserves the right to request additional data or to request an oral presentation in support of written proposals.

Please do not contact MEWDC to check the status of proposals.

4. RFP Appeal Process

Due to the time-sensitive nature of the proposal, all decisions by the MEWDC are final.

D. OBJECTIVES

1. The information provided hereto should be used to assist bidders in developing costs to provide services to MEWDC, with the following goals:
 - a. Further advance MEWDC's presence and position to optimize opportunity in underserved communities in Michigan;
 - b. Identify barriers for entry into skilled trades in the energy industry for underrepresented populations;
 - c. Develop/implement strategies to mitigate barriers; and
 - d. Deliverables shall include:
 - i. Coordinate and support career awareness events, recruitment, promotion and outreach integrating both Careers in Energy Week, and Apprenticeship Week activities.
 - ii. Holding focus groups involving parents, students, and teachers in two (2) highly diverse communities to identify ways to increase engagement and identify barriers;
 - iii. Integrate results from the focus group discussions and through an end to end process review of outreach and recruitment and implement best practices; and
 - iv. Work with CEWD and MEWDC communications and diversity committee to create digital and grassroots outreach campaigns based on input from focus groups.
2. The objective of this RFP is to contract with an individual/agency that will provide the tasks as noted in the document referenced in #1 above. Bidders are asked to assign an estimated time (schedule) to each task/event as noted and propose a cost associated with the task/event. This should result in a monthly cost and ultimately a budget document. Budgets should be submitted for each of the deliverables.
3. Having a basic knowledge of MEWDC should be of assistance to bidders in building their proposal.
4. Bidders should have experience working with the various media outlets in the Michigan regions and must be able to provide examples and references to

validate this experience. Bidders must also provide written samples of articles that have been published in newspapers, magazines, other media outlets, and social media. Bidders must agree to work together with MEWDC and the MEWDC Diversity Committee representatives to ensure messaging associated with MEWDC is consistent. Messaging shall not be released without prior consent/approval from MEWDC representatives.

5. Emphasis on each objective should be addressed in the bidder's proposal. Please include an **execution plan, schedule, and itemized costs** for the following:
 - a. Conduct focus groups in two (2) highly diverse communities to better understand the opportunity and barriers for underrepresented populations to participating in pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs; to also gain insights into key community organizations, and which communication channels to pursue.
 - b. Increase total awareness of MEWDC across the target groups with the general public and energy business sectors.
 - c. Work in partnership with the Center for Energy Workforce Development (CEWD) on a digital marketing effort focused on underrepresented groups – capitalizing on the access all individuals have via cell phone technology and social media.
 - d. Use an overall fresh and creative approach to promote MEWDC and its services.
 - e. Include items in D.1 above.
6. MEWDC reserves the right to contact bidders to obtain additional information or clarification. Proposals submitted without the required elements may be considered non-responsive.

E. SPECIFICATIONS

Respondents should provide responses for each question or action requested below, in addition to the objectives outlined in Section D. Failure to do so may result in the application being considered non-responsive. The Specification responses should be placed directly behind the Cover Page, which will be considered the first page of your proposal document.

1. Provide general information about you/your company. State the mission and purpose of your agency. Describe your financial situation, organizational structure, management team and achievements in marketing and public relations. Also declare any conflict of interests that may result if awarded a contract with MEWDC. (5 points)

2. Describe your experience providing marketing and public relations to other companies? Provide the contact information (name, company, telephone number and email address) for 2-3 references. (10 points)
3. What does the concept of “branding” mean to you/your agency? In addition, explain #5 a-e under D. Objectives. (8 points)
4. Explain your knowledge of MEWDC (15 points)
5. Have you ever done business with MEWDC before? If yes, explain the nature of business done. (5 points)
6. State what you know about the following (7 points):
 - a. CEWD
 - b. Careers in Energy Week
 - c. Apprenticeship Week
 - d. Michigan Works!
 - e. Underrepresented populations (Michigan and beyond)
 - f. Barriers to the energy workforce
7. MEWDC, as well as the MEWDC diversity committee, meets periodically. Will you have a person available to present during meetings on an as needed basis? If yes, name the person. (5 points)
8. How many people will work on this project? Provide the name (if known) and describe the role that each will perform. Provide any marketing/public relations certifications held by staff assigned to this project. Name the person who will be the primary contact if awarded the contract. (10 points)
9. Describe any contacts/relationships you currently have with media networking outlets in Michigan. If you currently have none, how will you develop them? (10 points)
10. How will you ensure that established deadlines are met? (5 points)
11. Fee Arrangements (20 points): Describe the method used to track time associated to this contract? Is time tracked by project or another factor?

MEWDC reserves the right to exercise the option to renew the contract for up to two additional one-year periods based on contractor performance and funding availability.

MEWDC reserves the right, with no penalty, to change the budget and services may be added or deleted as necessary. Upon issuance of a contract, both parties

will have the option to terminate the contract upon thirty (30) days written notice to the other party.

Based upon information provided in this request for proposal, bidders should prepare a budget to assist you in quoting a flat monthly rate and total fee per period for each period.

To ensure that this mutual relationship starts well, the method of billing and hourly rates for additional services (if any) should be fully detailed in the bidding proposal. (Project/Time reports will need to be included in monthly billings.)

12. Based on information provided in the documents included in this Request for Proposal, what is one idea that you feel could strengthen MEWDC's presence in Michigan? (Optional)
13. What other information do you want MEWDC to know about you/your agency? (Optional)

F. INSTRUCTIONS ON PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

1. **Closing Submission Date**

Proposals must be **received** no later than **5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, January 19, 2022**, by U.S. mail or emailed.

2. **Inquiries**

All questions must be submitted, in writing, no later than **5:00 p.m. on Thursday, January 13, 2022** to kbeltzer@michamber.com.

3. **Proposals Instructions to Prospective Bidder**

Proposals are limited to ten (10) 8 1/2" x 11" pages, excluding Part I & II, and can be submitted via U.S. mail. One original and three (3) copies must be submitted by the deadline date and time. An electronic copy must also be submitted via email.

Label package with the following information:

**Diversity Outreach Focus Groups and Social Media Campaign RFP
Michigan Energy Workforce Development Consortium
C/O Michigan Chamber of Commerce
Attn: Kristin Beltzer
600 South Walnut Street
Lansing, MI 48933**

Late proposals will not be considered.

- a. Bidders must respond completely and accurately to all questions and other items calling for information. Failure to do so will subject the proposal to disqualification.
- b. Bidders must adhere strictly to the proposal instructions and format. Failure to do so will subject the proposal to disqualification.
- c. Potential bidders will be able to download the RFP from the MEWDC website (www.careersinenergymichigan.com)
- d. The following parts specifically require responses and/or signatures from the bidder:

**Part I Cover Sheet and Proposal Offeror Information
(Signature Required)**

Part II Contract Requirements (Signature Required)

Part III Proposal Narrative Instructions

4. Payment

MEWDC may negotiate a payment schedule with the contractor awarded a bid. The award will go to the responsible firm whose proposal is most advantageous to the MEWDC and programs based on price and other evaluation factors.

PART I

**PROPOSAL FOR DIVERSITY OUTREACH FOCUS GROUPS AND SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN
TO MICHIGAN ENERGY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT CONSORTIUM (MEWDC)
PROPOSAL OFFER OR COVER SHEET AND SUMMARY INFORMATION**

Organization Name: _____

Address: _____

Contact Person: _____

Phone #: _____ Fax #: _____

Email address: _____

Employer Tax ID: _____ DUNS# _____
(If applicable)

Type(s) of Organization: Private for Profit Private Non-Profit
 Public Government Other (specify)
 Minority or SBA (please specify) _____

The Certification Statement below must be signed by an official authorized to bind the Offeror in a sublease/contract.

Signature

The above signed does hereby accept all the terms and conditions of the Request for Proposal (RFP), including RFP stipulations and specifications. The bidder also certifies that the information in this proposal is correct to the best of its knowledge and belief and the filing of this proposal has been fully authorized by the organization submitting the proposal and that the submitting agency is an Equal Opportunity Employer (if applicable).

Printed Name

Title

Date

PART II

CERTIFICATIONS

On behalf of the Offeror:

The individual signing certifies that he/she is authorized to contract on behalf of the Offeror.

- A. The individual signing certifies that the Offeror is not involved in any agreement to pay money or other consideration for the execution of this agreement, other than to any employee of the Offeror.
- B. The individual signing certifies that the prices in this proposal have been arrived at independently, without consultation, communication, or agreement, for restricting competition.
- C. The individual signing certifies that the prices quoted in this proposal have not been knowingly disclosed by the Offeror prior to an award to any other Offeror or potential Offeror.
- D. The individual signing certifies that there has been no attempt by the Offeror to discourage any potential Offeror from submitting a proposal.
- E. The individual signing certifies that he/she has read and understands all of the information in this Request for Proposal.
- F. The individual signing certifies that the Offeror, and any individuals to be assigned to the organization does not have a record of substandard work and has not been debarred or suspended from doing work with any federal, state or local government.

Organization Authorized Signature

Date

CERTIFICATION REGARDING LOBBYING

Certification for Contracts, Grants, Loans and Cooperative Agreements

The undersigned certifies, to be best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

(1) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of an agency, a Member of Congress, any officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.

(2) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or any employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying, in accordance with its instructions.

(3) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly.

This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by Section 1325, Title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for such failure.

Organization Authorized Signature

Date

**Certification Regarding Debarment , Suspension, Ineligibility and Voluntary Exclusion
Lower Tier Covered Transactions**

This certification is required by the regulations implementing Executive Order 12549, Debarment and Suspension, 29 CFR Part 98, Section 98.510, participants' responsibilities. The regulations were published as Part VII of the May 26, 1988, Federal Register (pages 19160-19222).

- (1) The prospective recipient of federal assistance funds certifies, by submission of this certification, that neither it nor its principals are presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in this transaction by any federal department or agency.

- (2) Where the prospective recipient of Federal assistance funds is unable to certify to any of the statements in this certification, such prospective participant shall attach an explanation to this certification.

Organization Authorized Signature

Date

CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE WITH PUBLIC ACT 517 OF 2012

I certify that neither _____ (Company), nor any of its successors, parent companies, subsidiaries, or companies under common control, are an "Iran Linked Business" engaged in investment activities of \$20,000,000.00 or more with the energy sector of Iran, within the meaning of Michigan Public Act 517 of 2012. In the event it is awarded a Contract as a result of this Request for Proposals, Company will not become an "Iran Linked Business" during the course of performing the work under the Contract.

NOTE: IF A PERSON OR ENTITY FALSELY CERTIFIES THAT IT IS NOT AN IRAN LINKED BUSINESS AS DEFINED BY PUBLIC ACT 517 OF 2012, IT WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR CIVIL PENALTIES OF NOT MORE THAN \$250,000.00 OR TWO TIMES THE AMOUNT OF THE CONTRACT FOR WHICH THE FALSE CERTIFICATION WAS MADE, WHICHEVER IS GREATER, PLUS COSTS AND REASONABLE ATTORNEY FEES INCURRED, AS MORE FULLY SET FORTH IN SECTION 5 OF ACT NO. 517, PUBLIC ACTS OF 2012.

(Name of Company)

By: _____

Date: _____

Title: _____

Subscribed to and sworn before me,
a Notary Public, on this ____ day of _____, 20__.

_____, Notary Public

_____ County, State of Michigan Acting in _____ County,
Michigan

My Commission Expires: _____

PART III

A. SUMMARY INFORMATION

Fee Period	Monthly Fee	Total Fee Per Period

B. PROPOSAL NARRATIVE INSTRUCTIONS (SEE PAGE 7 & 8: E: SPECIFICATIONS)