



Request for Proposals: Marketing and Communications Support

Purpose

Michigan Saves, a nonprofit green bank, is seeking proposals from qualified vendors to provide ongoing, on demand marketing and communications support in three service categories: (A) Graphic Design, (B) Copy Editing and Editorial Support, and (C) Website Management.

Michigan Saves may award this request for proposals (RFP) to a single firm or to multiple firms by category. Respondents may submit for one, two, or all three categories.

Contract Term: One (1) year with the option to renew upon mutual agreement and satisfactory performance. Renewal options will be exercised at Michigan Saves' sole discretion and are contingent on budget availability and organizational needs.

RFP Contact, Submission Instructions, and Timeline

All correspondence for this RFP, including submissions, should be directed to Lateshia Parker at lparker@michigansaves.org. Email correspondence only, no phone calls.

Please submit responses via email to Lateshia Parker at lparker@michigansaves.org by 5:00 p.m. EDT, **October 2, 2025**. If applicants have any questions in advance of the proposal deadline, please email Lateshia no later than 5:00 p.m. EDT on September 16, 2025. Responses to questions will then be circulated to all interested parties in one email. If you would like to be on that distribution list, please email Lateshia.

RFP Schedule

RFP release	September 2, 2025
Deadline for submitting questions	September 16, 2025, 5:00 p.m. EDT
Deadline for Michigan Saves response to questions	September 23, 2025, 5:00 p.m. EDT
Deadline for submitting RFP response	October 2, 2025, 5:00 p.m. EDT
Interviews of finalists, if necessary	Week of October 13, 2025
Successful bidder is contacted	Week of October 20, 2025
Contract negotiation	Week of October 27, 2025
Michigan Saves Board of Directors approval of contract	November 13, 2025
Anticipated start date	January 1, 2026

Overview of Michigan Saves

Michigan Saves, the nation's first nonprofit green bank, is dedicated to accessible, equitable, and just investments in energy efficiency and clean energy to support healthy and thriving communities. In addition to financing solutions and a trusted contractor network that make energy efficiency and renewable energy improvements easy and affordable, Michigan Saves also administers programs that address critical health and safety needs, including the Lead Poisoning Prevention Fund and the Septic Replacement Loan Program. By advancing a more energy-conscious culture and safer homes across Michigan, Michigan Saves works to ensure that all communities benefit from healthier, more sustainable environments.

Scope of Work and Service Requirements

Respondents should tailor their proposal to the category or categories they are pursuing. The lists below are representative and will be customized at contract execution.

A) Graphic Design (retainer and project-based)

Representative tasks (non-exhaustive):

- Branded collateral (flyers, one-pagers, postcards, sell sheets, social graphics)
- Report layouts, infographics, presentation templates, print and digital ads
- Event signage, web graphics, email templates, iconography
- Versioning and localization of assets for specific audiences and partners
- Accessibility-conscious design (readability, alt text guidance, color contrast)

Resources provided: Michigan Saves will grant the selected vendor access to our **Canva Pro account** to ensure design consistency and streamline collaboration.

Expected outputs: Production-ready files (print and digital), editable source files, and asset packages that align with Michigan Saves brand standards.

B) Copy Editing and Editorial Support

Standards: Adhere to the **AP Stylebook** and the **Michigan Saves Style Guide** (to be provided), including preferred terminology and capitalization.

Representative tasks (non-exhaustive):

- Copy editing and proofreading for flyers, emails, web copy, op-eds, press releases, case studies, and long-form reports
- Light line edits for clarity, flow, and active voice; headline and call to action refinement
- Consistency checks for program names, key terms, and disclaimers
- Quick-turn copy reviews for time-sensitive communications

Expected outputs: Documents that incorporate track changes and editorial notes; publish-ready final products.

C) Website Management (content management system support)

Representative tasks (non-exhaustive):

- Publish and update pages and posts; build landing pages; upload and download assets
- Edit and optimize on-page copy (headings, meta descriptions, alt text); maintain internal links
- Perform comprehensive website management that goes beyond basic content updates, including monitoring site performance, ensuring plugin and theme compatibility, implementing security best practices, maintaining search engine optimization (SEO) and accessibility standards, identifying and fixing broken links, optimizing images and load times, managing redirects, and proactively recommending improvements to enhance user experience and engagement
- Implement approved design components and templates
- Coordinate with Michigan Saves on analytics tags, basic reporting, and SEO hygiene

Platform: Michigan Saves uses **WordPress** as its content management system and will grant the selected vendor appropriate access to complete tasks.

Expected outputs: Published and quality assured content updates within agreed timelines; concise changelog per release; recommendations for continuous improvement.

Service Level Agreement and Business Hours

Respondents must include a service level agreement (SLA) defining response and resolution targets for request priorities. Please complete or adapt the table below based on your company's standard response time and include it in your proposal.

Priority	Example Request Types	Acknowledgment (Response) Target	Work Start Target	Resolution/Delivery Target
P0 — Critical	Website outage; high-visibility executive communications	Within 1 business hour	Same business day	As agreed; continuous effort until resolved
P1 — High	Time-sensitive media, email, or campaign assets	Same business day	Within 1 business day	1–3 business days (per scope)
P2 — Standard	Routine edits, new assets, scheduled web updates	Within 1 business day	Within 2 business days	3–5 business days (per scope)
P3 — Low	Nonurgent updates or backlog items	Within 2 business days	Within 5 business days	As scheduled

Business hours: 8:00 a.m.– 5:00 p.m. ET, Monday–Friday. Vendors should also describe emergency/after-hours support.

Production Request and Ticketing System

Michigan Saves requires a production request and ticketing system (e.g., a web form or help desk) for submitting, tracking, and prioritizing work.

Minimum requirements:

- Request form or email-to-ticket intake for all staff use
- Auto confirmation with ticket number, requested due date, and SLA priority
- Status visibility for requesters; shared dashboard for Michigan Saves
- Ability to assign and reassign tickets; a ticket audit trail and changelog
- Centralized asset library and version control for deliverables

Note: Project requests may originate from **any Michigan Saves staff member**. There will **not** be a single dedicated liaison on our side. Vendors should describe how they will coordinate requests, manage approvals, and avoid duplication.

Submission Requirements

Interested firms and individuals are invited to submit proposals addressing the following:

1. **Cover letter (1 page):** category or categories proposed; summary of capabilities and value proposition
2. **Company profile:** size, location(s), years in business, certifications, and insurance
3. **Proposed team:** roles, resumes, bios, diversity of team, and percent allocation/availability
4. **Work approach and collaboration:** intake, triage, approvals, capacity for multiple stakeholder service requests, and quality assurance
5. **SLA:** completed table and any optional service tiers
6. **Ticketing system:** screenshots or brief demo links of request form, sample confirmation email, and dashboard
7. **Standards compliance:** AP Stylebook and Michigan Saves Style Guide adherence; accessibility approach; file naming/versioning
8. **Portfolio:** up to five relevant samples of completed projects with short context (problem/solution/impact); for websites, include URLs
9. **Pricing:** rate card and package options; any nonprofit discounts; Michigan Saves is a tax-exempt, charitable organization; documentation available upon request
 - a. Provide hourly rates by role (e.g., senior designer, production designer, senior editor, web manager, developer), any blended-rate options, and an estimated total annual cost
 - b. Provide monthly retainer options for predictable support (e.g., 10/20/40 hours) and project-based estimates for common deliverables

- c. Identify any rush fees, minimum billable increments, and pass-through costs
 - d. All proposals should include a not-to-exceed amount.
10. **References:** provide three references from current or past clients who can attest to the quality of your firm's services
 11. **Disclosures:** Vendor and Partner Diversity Form: complete and return the Michigan Saves diverse vendor form in Attachment A

Respondents may include any other information that Michigan Saves should consider. All responses will be treated as confidential. Michigan Saves is not liable for any costs incurred by applicants in responding to this RFP.

Selection Criteria

Michigan Saves will evaluate proposals based on the responsiveness to the RFP requirements, the vendor's expertise and experience in the areas described above, and the proposed pricing structure. Michigan Saves will select the best overall solution to fit its needs and is not obligated to select the lowest price bidder.

All responsive submissions will be evaluated on a 1-100 scale, based on the following criteria:

1. **Experience and qualifications (25 points).** Experience demonstrated by the prospective vendor in servicing businesses and organizations of similar size and complexity to Michigan Saves will be highly valued. Expertise with the specific systems (e.g. Canva and WordPress) used by Michigan Saves will be required. The size and sophistication of the prospective vendor's business, as well as whether the vendor has a dedicated group providing and supporting a managed support service, will be considered. This evaluation also considers the number and qualifications of management, supervisory, and other staff proposed by the vendor to complete the contract. Resumes of everyone who would be or could potentially be assigned work under a contract award resulting from this RFP should be provided.
2. **Understanding of mission, audiences, and category-specific needs (22.5 points).** Michigan Saves will evaluate the vendor's understanding of our mission and target audiences and their ability to meet the specific marketing and communications needs outlined in this RFP.
3. **Approach to collaboration with multiple internal requesters; intake and ticketing (5 points):** Vendors will be evaluated on their ability to coordinate work from multiple requesters without a single liaison, their intake and ticketing processes, and their strategies for managing approvals, deadlines, and quality control.
4. **SLA clarity and feasibility (5 points):** Michigan Saves will assess the vendor's ability to meet service-level expectations, including response and resolution times, and capacity to handle urgent and complex requests.
5. **Vendor and Partner Diversity Form (20 points).** Michigan Saves is committed to partnering with small businesses and businesses owned by members of underrepresented populations to break down barriers to growth. Michigan Saves encourages the participation of businesses owned by

minorities, females, and persons with disabilities in the implementation and execution of all projects, either on a direct basis or through subcontracting efforts.

6. **Cost (20 points).** Michigan Saves will consider the proposed pricing structure, including billable rates and any discounts to nonprofit clients. All proposals should include a not-to-exceed amount.
7. **References (2.5 points).** The company's experience with organizations conducting activities like those of Michigan Saves will be assessed (e.g., investment funds, community development financial institutions, other green banks, commercial lenders).

After reviewing the responses, Michigan Saves may interview one or more respondents and engage in negotiations regarding the scope of work and other details. Michigan Saves expects to award a contract(s) in November 2025 with work beginning January 1, 2026.

The issuance of this RFP and/or receipt of information from you or other respondents in response to it does not commit Michigan Saves to any course of action. Furthermore, this RFP does not imply that Michigan Saves is making an offer to conduct, expand, or terminate business with any respondent. Michigan Saves reserves the right to accept a complete response, or a portion thereof, to accept multiple responses, or to accept none of the responses. All costs associated with preparing the respondent's proposal in response to this RFP and for providing any additional information requested by Michigan Saves, including but not limited to interviews, are the sole responsibility of respondent and will not be reimbursed by Michigan Saves.

Attachment A: Vendor and Partner Diversity Form

Michigan Saves is committed to engaging with partners and vendors that reflect the diversity of the many communities we serve. Our Diverse Partner and Vendor Program is an intentional opportunity for Michigan Saves to support our mission and break down barriers to growth that exist for minority business owners and ensure that everyone—without exception—has access to the benefits of energy efficiency.

Partner/Vendor Name: _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Please check all that apply to your organization:

- ☐ Disability-Owned Business Enterprise
 - People with disabilities own and control at least 51 percent of the company.
- ☐ Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Business Enterprise
 - LGBTQ+ individuals own and control at least 51 percent of the company.
- ☐ Minority-Owned Business
 - Minority group members own and control at least 51 percent of the company.
- ☐ Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Business
 - Service-disabled veterans own and control at least 51 percent of the company.
- ☐ Social Enterprise Business
 - A for-profit or nonprofit organization or venture that achieves its primary social or environmental mission using business methods.
 - Surplus is principally reinvested in social activities, not driven by need to maximize profit for shareholders and owners.
- ☐ Supported Business
 - Over 50 percent of the business's workforce are disabled individuals.
- ☐ Veteran-Owned Business
 - Veterans own and control at least 51 percent of the company.
- ☐ Women's Business Enterprise
 - Women own and control at least 51 percent of the company.
- ☐ Women-Owned Small Business
 - The company must be a small business.
 - Women own and control 51 percent of the company.
- ☐ None of these

Michigan Saves understands that the complex, and at times high-cost, diverse business certification process can present inequitable barriers for small businesses and thus does not require diverse business certification from a national, state, or locally recognized third-party certification agency. Please self-certify if any of the above apply to your business.

While Michigan Saves does not guarantee business to any vendor, we are committed to providing diverse companies an opportunity to compete on a fair and equal basis for our business.

Additional Partner Questions

1. Is your organization located in or provide targeted services/programming to a specific community that could be defined as disadvantaged, such as those with a majority of low-income or minority households?¹
2. Does your organization offer programs or training to internal staff related to diversity, equity, and inclusion? If so, please describe your program.

¹ To be considered a disadvantaged community, a community must have at least 30 percent of households classified as low income. If you would like more information on additional qualifiers, see examples at <https://www.energy.gov/diversity/justice40-initiative>