# Responses to Submitted Questions

## General Questions

1. **Are there any budget parameters beyond the required not-to-exceed amount?**

*Beyond the required not-to-exceed amount, vendors should provide a detailed rate structure that includes hourly rates by role (e.g., senior designer, production designer, senior editor, web manager, developer), any available blended-rate options, and an estimated total annual cost.*

*We also request information on:*

* *Monthly retainer options for predictable levels of support (e.g., 10, 20, or 40 hours)*
* *Project-based estimates for common deliverables*
* *Any applicable rush fees, minimum billable increments, or pass-through costs*

*These elements will help Michigan Saves evaluate the value and flexibility of the proposed services, but no additional budget parameters are in place beyond what’s outlined above.*

1. **How does Michigan Saves anticipate allocating work across the three categories (Graphic Design, Copy Editing, Website Management)?**

*While exact allocation may vary month to month based on internal priorities, Michigan Saves anticipates utilizing all three categories—graphic design, copy editing, and website management—throughout the contract period. Workload in each category will be driven by campaign schedules, program launches, and organizational needs. For example:*

* ***Graphic Design*** *is often needed for campaign materials, social media assets, event collateral, and digital or print advertisements.*
* ***Copy Editing*** *is frequently required for reports, press releases, case studies, marketing emails, and web content.*
* ***Website Management*** *includes content updates, page creation, plug-in maintenance, and backend adjustments to support marketing efforts.*

*At this stage, we cannot predict an exact breakdown or percentage split across the three categories, as the need for support fluctuates based on project timing. However, we value flexibility and responsiveness, and we will communicate expectations clearly as needs arise.*

1. **Does Michigan Saves have an estimate of the typical request volume (e.g., average number of projects per month)?**

*While it's difficult to predict the exact volume of marketing and communications requests Michigan Saves will have in a given month, we can offer some insight based on past usage. We reviewed a recent year of tracked hours and found that:*

* ***Website management*** *accounted for approximately* ***190 hours combined*** *across 12+ months. This averaged* ***16 hours per month*** *though some months were busier than others due to site updates or campaign launches.*
* ***Copy editing*** *totaled over* ***250 hours****, averaging* ***20–25 hours per month*** *depending on campaign cycles, case studies, press releases, reports, and RFPs.*

*These hours are not exact predictors of future needs but do provide a helpful baseline for estimating capacity. The volume of work can vary significantly depending on program launches, campaign timelines, or urgent communications needs. Therefore, while this data gives a general sense of our workload, flexibility is essential.*

1. **Of the evaluation criteria, which factors typically carry the most weight in the decision-making process?**

*As noted under the selection criteria section listed on page five of the RFP: 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. Vender 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 though 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).*

## Graphic Design Questions

1. **Is there an incumbent for this work?**

*Yes, currently Michigan Saves has a contract with Public Sector Consultants (PSC) to handle graphic design, copy editing and website management.*

1. **To ensure our proposal aligns with your team's expectations, can you confirm if the retainer packages are intended to cover a total number of hours for the entire team, or a specific number of hours per team member?**

*The retainer packages should cover a total number of hours for the entire team.*

1. **Can you provide more detail on the expected weekly workload for the Graphic Design retainer?**

*Currently, it’s difficult to provide a consistent weekly estimate. The design workload for Michigan Saves varies significantly depending on the needs of the team and our program or campaign cycles. Some weeks, there may be no design requests at all. Other weeks, we may require support on multiple creative assets—such as a PowerPoint presentation that needs visual polish, a mock-up for an event backdrop, or a series of branded materials for a billboard campaign. In general, the work tends to ebb and flow based on factors like external partnerships, events, marketing pushes, or new product rollouts. While we can’t guarantee a set number of hours per week, we value responsiveness and collaboration. The ideal design partner will be flexible and capable of jumping in quickly when needs arise, while also being comfortable with slower periods. If helpful, we can revisit deliverable expectations quarterly to ensure alignment.*

1. **What are Michigan Saves top 5 design priorities for the contract year?**

*The top five graphic design projects for 2026 have not yet been identified. A formal marketing and communications plan will be developed closer to the end of 2025, which will outline our strategic priorities and associated design needs for the upcoming year. While we can’t confirm specific projects just yet, our design needs typically align with campaign launches, collateral development, event branding, and digital marketing initiatives. We anticipate that 2026 will include a mix of recurring and new design requests, but the exact scope will be shaped by the finalized plan.*

1. **The RFP notes that Michigan Saves will provide access to a Canva Pro account for design consistency. Given that some deliverables (e.g., multi-page reports, large-format signage, print-ready collateral) often require professional layout software beyond Canva, can you confirm whether the selected vendor may use additional design tools such as Adobe Creative Suite to produce final, production-ready files while maintaining brand consistency?**

*Yes, usage of alternative design tools is permitted and encouraged.*

1. **Does Michigan Saves have any major projects, initiatives, or events planned for the contract year that would require tailored branding or significant design work? If so, can you provide additional details on the scope of those projects?**

*Major projects or initiatives requiring significant design work for the contract year have not yet been finalized. Michigan Saves will develop its 2026 marketing and communications plan closer to the end of 2025, which will provide clearer direction regarding upcoming priorities and any tailored branding or creative needs.*

1. **The RFP mentions a ticketing system for all staff use. Will this system be used for all three project types (Graphic Design, Copy Editing, and Website Management)?**

*Ideally, yes. This will help streamline project requests.*

## Website Management Questions

1. **Budget Guidance: Is there an estimated total project budget or cost ceiling that vendors should be aware of when preparing the fee proposal?**

*No, there isn’t. However, as stated in the RFP, we’d like responses to:*

* *Provide hourly rates by role (e.g., web manager and/or developer), any blended-rate options, and an estimated total annual cost*
* *Provide monthly retainer options for predictable support (e.g., 10/20/40 hours) and project-based estimates for common deliverables Michigan Saves*
* *Identify any rush fees, minimum billable increments, and pass-through costs d. All proposals should include a not-to-exceed amount.*

1. **Hosting Responsibility: Should the vendor propose a new hosting plan, or will Michigan Saves continue with its current provider?**

*Michigan Saves plans to stay with its current provider.*

1. **Remote Execution: Is offshore or fully remote development permitted for all phases of the project?**

*Fully remote development is permitted; however, all work must be performed by individuals based within the United States. Offshore development is not permitted for this project. Remote teams must be available to collaborate during Eastern Time business hours as needed and be responsive to deadlines, meetings, and project check-ins throughout the engagement.*

1. **Virtual Collaboration: Can all project activities—including stakeholder interviews, training, and presentations—be conducted virtually?**

Yes, all project activities can be conducted virtually. Michigan Saves is fully equipped to support remote collaboration and has successfully executed similar engagements in virtual settings.

1. **Technology Stack: Are there any restrictions or preferences beyond the listed programming languages (HTML, CSS, JavaScript, Python, Ruby) that vendors should consider?**

*Michigan Saves currently uses WordPress as its content management system, so any*

*proposed solutions must be compatible with or easily integrated into the WordPress environment. We do not have additional restrictions on specific programming languages beyond those listed.*

1. **Access to Existing Assets: Will Michigan Saves provide access to current website content, analytics, and user feedback to guide redesign and migration efforts?**

*Yes, Michigan Saves will provide access to guide the redesign and migration process. We are*

*committed to ensuring the selected vendor has the context and insights needed to make*

*informed, strategic recommendations throughout the engagement.*

1. **Reference Materials: Are there any incumbent vendors, previous RFPs, or documentation available that could help inform our understanding of the current website infrastructure and performance?**

The selected vendor will not be permitted to contact the incumbent vendor directly. All transition support and knowledge transfer will be coordinated through Michigan Saves.