



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS: CREATIVE SERVICES

Posted: January 15, 2026

Proposals due February 6, 2026 by 5 p.m.

The Mid-America Regional Council (MARC), the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the bi-state Kansas City metropolitan area, is seeking proposals from qualified organizations to provide creative material to be used in the regional air quality public education campaign. Specifically, MARC is seeking agencies that will provide creative and innovative marketing strategies and services for the 2026 public education campaign. This RFP is intended to result in a contract for creative services.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

MARC has led public outreach efforts related to air quality for numerous years. MARC's annual Air Quality Awareness Survey demonstrates that past regional air quality public education campaigns have significantly increased public awareness of the region's air quality problem. Survey respondents repeatedly indicate that they are most concerned about the health consequences of poor air quality in the region.

The Kansas City region struggles to comply with the federal eight-hour ozone standard and continued air quality improvements will rely upon voluntary actions resulting from public outreach and education. In addition, the standard for very fine particulate matter (PM2.5) has been tightened. This new standard could become a challenge for the region.

The public education plan has three goals:

1. Educate the public on the relationship between public health and air quality and encourage the public to take action to reduce air pollution.
2. Educate targeted groups, including industry and local governments, about actions they can take to help the region comply with air quality standards.

3. Generate public and private sector support for new voluntary and regulatory measures to be adopted in order for the region to meet air quality standards.

It is important to note that MARC seeks to coordinate outreach and education efforts with local and regional policy initiatives to achieve maximum synergies and efficiencies.

To accomplish these goals, MARC is seeking proposals to assist MARC staff and committees in the development and production of creative material to be used in the regional air quality multimedia campaign.

BACKGROUND

MARC is appointed by the states of Kansas and Missouri under Section 174 of the Clean Air Act to coordinate the development and implementation of air quality policy in the bi-state Kansas City region. This work is led by the MARC Air Quality Forum, a policy committee composed of local elected officials; air quality and transportation agency personnel; and business, environment and community group representatives.

The MARC Air Quality Public Education Committee (AQPEC) meets as needed to direct the public education efforts of the Air Quality Forum. The AQPEC implements public education programs that promote the reduction of air pollution from transportation and area-wide sources. The public education campaign covers the nine-county MARC region with emphasis on a five-county area, which includes Wyandotte and Johnson counties in Kansas and Clay, Platte and Jackson counties in Missouri.

Public education campaigns in the recent past have included the tag lines “Take care of our air” and “We’ve got this.” The latter was in response to survey findings that showed that respondent understood what actions to take, but they were not changing behavior. The challenge now is to find new methods for motivating behavioral changes to reach the next level of concerted action and resultant emissions reductions.

EXPECTED AGENCY DUTIES

MARC seeks proposals to provide creative assistance with the development, production and delivery of multimedia services. The objective will be accomplished principally through the selected contractor’s performance of the following tasks:

The 2026 public education campaign will begin on May 15, 2026, and end on Oct. 31, 2026. Creative design work will need to be delivered to MARC to implement by May 1, 2026.

Creative Services

The selected contractor will be responsible for developing, producing and delivering creative design services. The requested products of the selected contractor will be determined through the planning process, but may include:

- Concept development (media campaign creative design concepts, tag lines, etc.)
- Billboard and bus/bus shelter advertisement design
- Radio and television script development
- Print design (text, graphics, photographs, etc.)
- Digital ad designs, including video for social media
- Versions of creative to be used on ozone action alert days issued by MARC.
(These typically include billboard and digital homepage takeover designs, and radio scripts.)

Add-on services that MARC may be interested in including in a final scope of work:

- Media campaign plan for a campaign budget of approximately \$250,000. (MARC would implement the campaign.)
- Photoshoot to provide new, locally-based imagery for the campaign.

Note: Please include these add-on items as separate line-items in the cost proposal.

The selected contractor will develop and produce selected written materials in Spanish as well as English. All creative materials and original artwork become the permanent property of MARC for perpetual use and will be conveyed to MARC upon request.

Resources: If interested, please contact Bridget Koan at bkoan@marc.org to receive the 2025 Air Quality Media Campaign Plan and examples of prior campaign ads.

Coordination

The selected contractor will work with the MARC Air Quality program team and the MARC Public Affairs representative.

REQUIREMENTS FOR RESPONSE TO THIS REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Interested firms should respond to this request for proposals by providing the following information by email (PDF format required) no later than 5 p.m. CST, on Friday, February 6, 2026, to Bridget Koan at bkoan@marc.org . Submittals should contain the following information and in the following order:

1. Name and description of firm/firms.
2. Related expertise and experience. If applicable, please provide specific experience in designing and implementing marketing or social advertising campaigns for non-profit, government or private entities.
3. Qualifications and availability of personnel that could be assigned to the project.
4. Project examples, with descriptions, from two ad campaigns conceived, written and implemented by members of your team. Please include examples of print, digital, radio design/media samples.
5. Three references for projects of a similar nature. The references should include a contact name and phone number.
6. Agency fee schedule for various types of work, including the cost of hourly professional service billing rates from specified individuals. This includes commission rates on media purchases.
7. Proposed budget for project. This includes completing the table located in Appendix A.
8. Certification Regarding Debarment and Suspension. Respondents should complete and enclose the certification located in Appendix D.

MARC, as a non-federal entity utilizing federal funds, is prohibited from contracting with or making subawards under covered transactions to parties that are suspended, debarred or otherwise excluded from, or ineligible for, participation in federal assistance programs or activities. Covered transactions include procurement contracts for goods and services equal to or in excess of \$100,000 (e.g., subawards to subrecipients).

EVALUATION AND SCHEDULE

Proposals will be evaluated by MARC staff using the following criteria:

- Demonstrated understanding of the needed products and services (30%).
- Qualifications (25%).
- Quality and relevance of design examples (15%).
- Ability to complete required tasks within timeframe (10%).
- Cost of services (20%).

At MARC's discretion, proposers may be asked to participate in an interview process, either in person or virtually. MARC will not cover any costs for firms asked to participate in the interview process. It is anticipated that the evaluation/selection process will be completed by February 20, 2026.

MARC reserves the right to reject any or all proposals that do not meet the needs outlined in this request.

Timeline

RFP Posted	January 15, 2026
Proposals Due	February 6, 2026, 5p.m. CST
Shortlisting/Interviews	February 11-17, 2026
Selection By	February 20, 2026
Contract By	February 25, 2026
Deliverables Due	May 1, 2026

Open Records Act and proprietary information

MARC is a public organization and is subject to the Missouri Open Records Act (Chapter 610, RSMo). All records obtained or retained by MARC are considered public records and are open to the public or media upon request unless those records are specifically protected from disclosure by law or exempted under the Missouri Sunshine Law. All contents of a response to a request for bids, qualifications, proposals or information issued by MARC are considered public records and subject to public release following decisions by MARC regarding the bid request.

If a proposer has information that it considers proprietary, a bidder shall identify documents or portions of documents it considers to contain descriptions of scientific and technological innovations in which it has a proprietary interest, or other information that is protected from public disclosure by law, which is contained in a proposal. After either a contract is executed pursuant to the request for bids, RFQ or RFP, or all submittals are rejected, if a request is made to inspect information submitted and if documents are identified as “proprietary information” as provided above under Missouri Sunshine Law, MARC will notify the proposer of the request for access, and it shall be the burden of the proposer to establish that those documents are exempt from disclosure under the law.

Artificial intelligence

Any product that has any kind of content produced by generative AI on behalf of MARC must be disclosed. This includes (but is not limited to) responses to RFPs, any kind of reports (including progress reports), videos, documents and artwork/images.

Digital accessibility

MARC will adhere to the forthcoming web content accessibility guidelines (WCAG) 2.2 at level AA. Any work produced for MARC must meet accessibility standards, this includes (but is not limited to) captions, adequate color contrast, transcriptions and other considerations.

Federal and state requirements

As contracts are developed for specific projects, the selected vendor may be expected to submit forms required for MARC expenditure of state and federal funding, including

but not limited to E-Verify or other affidavit of compliance with federal and state work authorization programs, if applicable; and/or certification regarding debarment from federal contracts.

Firms wishing to respond to this request for proposals should do so by February 6, 2026. Applicant interviews would be conducted between February 11-17, and MARC would anticipate entering into a contract with the selected firm by February 25, 2026. Work carried out under the scope of the agreement would begin upon notice to proceed after the contract is executed.

ABOUT THE CONTRACT

The contract period will be approximately three months in length. Compensation for the work performed will be paid as follows:

Monthly bills must be submitted with a detailed summary of activities of the hours billed by each participant or as otherwise stipulated in the contract.

Reasonable expenses may be reimbursed, but only with advanced, written approval by MARC's representative in accordance with the negotiated contract. MARC will not reimburse the selected contractor for any costs associated with administering the contract, including:

- Administrative: Billing costs, supplies, copying, printing, postage, packaging, telephone calls not directly tied to a specific product or program.
- Other: Costs of personnel associated with making travel arrangements, general clerical support, and *per-diem* expenses or "overhead" costs such as rent and utilities. Any proposal submitted to MARC containing these costs will be rejected.

PROJECT FUNDING

The total cost of this project and the type of contract will be negotiated with the selected firm based upon a final scope of work agreed to by both parties.

The anticipated total budget for this contract is \$30,000.

QUESTIONS/MORE INFORMATION

Contact Bridget Koan, Public Affairs Coordinator, bkoan@marc.org, for questions at 816-474-4240.

Email questions to bkoan@marc.org, responses will be posted within three business days until 5p February 3.

SUBMITTALS to THIS REQUEST

Contact: Bridget Koan
Email: bkoan@marc.org

AWARD OF CONTRACT

This request does not commit MARC to award a contract or pay any incurred costs in association with the preparation of a response to this Request for Proposals. MARC reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals received as a result of this request, or to cancel any or all sections of the Request for Qualifications, if it is considered in the best interest of MARC. MARC reserves the right to negotiate with the preferred consultant(s) related to project cost, or for technical or other revisions as may result from these negotiations.

MARC may use a Consultant Selection Committee composed of local and state government representatives to review proposals and interview those Consultants selected by the committee as submitting proposals that best address the needs of this project. The MARC Board of Directors, following a recommendation by the selection committee, will make the final contract award decision.

MARC reserves the right to suggest to any or all proposers to the Request for Proposals that such proposers form teams of consulting firms or organizations deemed to be advantageous to MARC in performing the Scope of Work. MARC will suggest such a formation when such relationships appear to offer combinations of expertise or abilities not otherwise available. Proposers have the right to refuse to enter into any suggested relationship.

All proposals submitted hereunder become the exclusive property of MARC.

OTHER

Any contract resulting from this procurement is subject to the availability of state and federal funds. MARC certifies that, as of the issuance of this RFP, budgeted funds are available to reasonably fulfill the requirements of this RFP.

RESOURCES

The following resources can be used to gain a more in-depth understanding of air quality issues in the Kansas City region:

<https://www.marc.org/environment/air-quality>

<https://airqkc.org/>

Appendix A.

2026 Proposed Budget

DETAILED DESCRIPTION	Estimated Hours	Estimated Rate/Hour	Total Estimated Cost
Consultant:		Name of RFP:	
1. Direct Labor			\$0.00
			\$0.00
			\$0.00
			\$0.00
		A. Total Direct Labor Cost	0
2. Burden (Overhead)			\$0.00
		Fringe Benefits (____%)	\$0.00
		Overhead (____%)	\$0.00
		B. Total of Burden	\$0.00
		C. Total Direct Costs and Burden (A+B)	\$0.00
		D. Fixed Fee (____% applied to A+B)	\$0.00
		E. Total Cost plus Fee (C+D)	\$0.00
3. Other Direct Cost (includes meeting expenses, printing, etc.)			
		F. Total Other Cost	\$0.00
4. Special Equipment			\$0.00
		G. Total Special Equipment	\$0.00
5. Travel (mileage will be reimbursed at \$0.67/mile)	0.67		\$0.00
		H. Total Travel	\$0.00
		I. Total Expenses (E+F+G+H)	\$0.00
6. Subcontractors			
		J. Total Subcontractors	\$0.00
		M. Total Estimated Cost (I+J)	\$0.00

APPENDIX B

CERTIFICATION REGARDING DEBARMENT AND SUSPENSION

The firm identified below certifies to the best of its knowledge and belief that it and its principals:

- A. Are not presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from covered transactions by any federal department or agency;
- B. Have not within a three year period preceding the initiation of the Scope of Work project been convicted of or had a civil judgment rendered against them for commission of fraud or a criminal offense in connection with obtaining, attempting to obtain, or performing a public (Federal, State or local) transaction or contract under a public transaction; violation of Federal or State antitrust statutes or commission of embezzlement, theft, forgery, bribery, falsification or destruction of records, making false statements, or receiving stolen property;
- C. Are not presently indicted for or otherwise criminally or civilly charged by a government entity (Federal, State, or local) with commission of any of the offenses enumerated in paragraph (b) of this certification; and
- D. Have not within a three-year period preceding the initiation of this project had one or more public transactions (Federal, State, or local) terminated for cause or default.

Where the respondent is unable to certify to any of the statements in this certification, he or she shall attach an explanation to this application.

Typed Name & Title of Authorized Representative

Name of Firm

Signature of Authorized Representative

Date