

**STATE OF WASHINGTON
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE
OLYMPIA, WASHINGTON**

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

RFP NO. 25-07

PROJECT TITLE: Elections Messaging Campaign – Mark the Ballot

PROPOSAL DUE DATE: July 1, 2025

EXPECTED TIME PERIOD FOR CONTRACT: August 18, 2025, to March 5, 2027, with options to extend for three (3) additional one (1) year terms, for a total of five (5) years.

CONTRACTOR ELIGIBILITY: This procurement is open to those contractors that satisfy the minimum qualifications stated herein and that are available for work in Washington State.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

The State of Washington, Office of the Secretary of State (OSOS) is seeking a qualified firm (Contractor) for the purpose of continuing and expanding the “Mark the Ballot” brand, which was initially launched in 2024. OSOS is seeking a Contractor to develop and distribute a robust suite of animated, video, and graphical content that informs Washingtonians about the security, accuracy, and integrity of elections in Washington state. Additionally, the Contractor will be responsible for creating and placing advertisements designed to extend the reach of these messages across the state — particularly to rural communities, historically marginalized populations, and voters aged 18 to 39.

Building on the original campaign’s early success, OSOS aims to deepen its investment in this trusted outreach initiative. Since its inception, the Mark the Ballot brand has demonstrated clear impact: pre- and post-campaign survey data indicates that individuals with higher exposure to the campaign reported a marked increase in their trust in Washington’s election officials and processes. These individuals expressed greater confidence in officials to act fairly, with many maintaining that trust even weeks after viewing campaign materials.

A key to the campaign’s success was its use of locally grounded imagery and community-specific placements, which helped audiences see themselves reflected in the democratic process. OSOS intends to continue leveraging this approach—using the Mark the Ballot identity as a relatable and reliable voice — to expand the library of multimedia materials and foster trust in underserved or overlooked communities.

Across the nation, election officials face persistent challenges stemming from the spread of rumors, conspiracy theories, and coordinated disinformation campaigns. These false narratives have not only undermined public confidence but have also placed election workers at risk. With the increasing volume and sophistication of threats, particularly from foreign adversaries, OSOS recognizes the critical need to proactively counter falsehoods with trusted, transparent, and locally resonant election information.

Through this RFP, OSOS seeks a strategic partner capable of enhancing the reach and impact of the Mark the Ballot brand — advancing the shared goal of safeguarding democracy by strengthening public trust in the electoral process.

1.2 OBJECTIVE

The Contractor shall develop a multi-platform, integrated outreach and advertising campaign that educates Washingtonians about the integrity of Washington’s vote-by-mail system and broader elections infrastructure. This effort will include:

- Designing and executing a statewide advertising campaign, featuring graphics, PSAs, animated videos, and media placements across various platforms;
- Expanding the existing library of creative assets — including animations, illustrations, and character-driven content that build on the established Mark the Ballot identity;
- Creating a public-facing outreach toolkit that includes ready-to-use assets and messaging guidance for use by county elections offices, civic partners, educators, and other stakeholders.

All components of this work — the advertising campaign, asset library, and toolkit — must align with the existing Mark the Ballot visual identity and tone. Creative products must provide impartial, accurate elections information specific to Washington state, using plain language and compelling, rooted-in place visuals that resonate with diverse audiences. The Contractor must secure media placements that reach both urban and rural areas, with special emphasis on historically underserved communities and voters aged 18 to 39. The campaign should unify Washingtonians and inspire sustained confidence in the electoral process through engaging, trustworthy, and inclusive content.

1.3 MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

By the time of contract execution, the Contractor must be registered to do business with the state and have a current Unified Business Identifier (UBI).

Contractor must have 8 years’ experience in creative design with an emphasis on digital content, media planning, advertising, public service announcements, market research and strategic planning. Contractor must be based in the Pacific or Mountain time zone.

It is preferred that contractors have additional qualifications in most of the following: advertising for government agencies, election-related messaging, brand partnerships, video production and animation.

1.4 PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE

The period of performance of any contract resulting from this RFP is tentatively scheduled to begin on or about August 18, 2025, and to end on March 5, 2027, with options to extend up to three (3) additional one (1) year terms. Amendments extending the period of performance, if any, shall be at the sole discretion of OSOS.

1.5 DEFINITIONS

Definitions for the purposes of this RFP include:

Apparent Successful Contractor – the Contractor identified by OSOS, after evaluation of Proposals, who is recommended for contract award.

Contractor – the individual or company submitting a Proposal in order to attain a contract with OSOS.

OSOS – The Office of the Secretary of State, the agency of the state of Washington that is issuing this RFP.

Proposal – A formal offer submitted in response to this solicitation.

RFP – This Request for Proposals.

WEBS – Washington’s Electronic Business Solution, an online vendor registration and bid notification system.

1.6 Americans with Disabilities Act Compliance

OSOS complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Contractors may contact the RFP Coordinator to receive this RFP in Braille or on tape.

1.7 Funding

OSOS anticipates spending an amount not to exceed \$1,600,000.00 for this procurement. Total available funding may increase by as much as \$600,000.00, for a potential maximum of \$2,200,000.00. These funds are contingent upon appropriations made by the Washington State Legislature during the 2026 legislative session and the Governor’s approval.

The availability and amount of any additional funding will likely be determined by May 1, 2026. Any contract awarded as a result of this procurement is subject to the availability of funds.

2. GENERAL INFORMATION FOR CONTRACTORS

2.1 RFP COORDINATOR

The RFP Coordinator is the sole point of contact in OSOS for this procurement. All communication between the Contractor and OSOS upon receipt of this RFP shall be with the RFP Coordinator, as follows:

Name: Madilyn Graversen
Address: 6880 Capitol Blvd SE
City, State, Zip Code: Tumwater, WA 98501
E-Mail Address: Madilyn.Graversen@sos.wa.gov

Any other communication will be considered unofficial and non-binding on OSOS. Contractors are to rely on written statements issued by the RFP Coordinator. Communication directed to parties other than the RFP Coordinator may result in disqualification of the Contractor.

2.2 ESTIMATED SCHEDULE OF PROCUREMENT ACTIVITIES

Issue RFP	May 15
Question and Answer Period	May 15 – June 11
Last Date for Questions regarding RFP (<i>end of Q&A period</i>)	June 11
Preproposal Conference	May 28
Publish Q&As from Preproposal Conference on WEBS and OSOS website	May 30
Publish complete list of Q&As on WEBS and OSOS website (<i>2 business days after end of Q&A period</i>)	June 13
Last Amendment to RFP (<i>7 business days before Proposals due</i>)	June 20
Last Date for Complaint (<i>5 business days before Proposals due</i>)	June 24
Proposals Due	July 1

Evaluate Proposals	July 2 – July 16
Conduct Oral Presentations with Finalists (<i>if applicable</i>)	July 17 - 23
Announce Apparent Successful Contractor and Notify Unsuccessful Contractors	July 25
Hold Debriefing Conferences (if requested)	See Section 4.10
Protest	See Section 4.10
Negotiate Contract	July 28 – August 15
Begin Contract Work	August 18

OSOS reserves the right to revise the above schedule.

2.3 PREPROPOSAL CONFERENCE

A preproposal conference is scheduled to be held on Wednesday, May 28th, 2025 from 10:00 AM – 11:00 AM. Pacific Time, via Microsoft Teams (information to join meeting is below). All prospective proposers should attend; however, attendance is not mandatory. OSOS shall be bound only to written answers to questions. Any oral responses given at the preproposal conference shall be considered unofficial.

Microsoft Teams [Need help?](#)

[Join the meeting now](#)

Meeting ID: 273 567 853 215 7

Passcode: 5Uz2VB7X

Dial in by phone

[+1 206-899-2560,,920462212#](#) United States, Bainbridge Island

[Find a local number](#)

Phone conference ID: 920 462 212#

Within five business days of the preproposal conference, a copy of the questions and answers from the preproposal conference will be posted on WEBS and on the Current Procurements webpage of the OSOS website:

<http://www.sos.wa.gov/office/procurements.aspx>.

2.4 SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

Contractors are required to submit an electronic copy of their Proposal. The Proposal must be received by OSOS no later than 5:00 p.m., Pacific Time, on Tuesday, July 1, 2025. Attachments to the e-mail shall be in Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel or Adobe PDF format.

The Proposal is to be sent to the RFP Coordinator at the e-mail address noted in Section 2.1.

Late Proposals will not be accepted and will be automatically disqualified from further consideration. All Proposals and any accompanying documentation become the property of OSOS.

The Contractor's Proposal must respond to all of the solicitation requirements. Do not respond by referencing material presented elsewhere. The e-mailed Proposal shall be considered complete and stand on its own merits. Failure to respond to any portions may result in rejection of the Proposal as non-responsive.

Include Contractor's contact information for this RFP with name, title, email, and telephone number.

The Apparent Successful Contractor will be expected to enter into a contract which is substantially the same as the Contract attached as Exhibit B. In no event is a Contractor to submit its own standard contract terms and conditions in response to this solicitation. Contractors may submit exceptions as allowed in Exhibit A-1 – Contractor's Certification. All exceptions to the contract terms and conditions must be submitted as an attachment to Exhibit A-1 – Contractor's Certification. OSOS will review requested exceptions and accept or reject the same at its sole discretion.

2.5 PROPRIETARY INFORMATION/PUBLIC DISCLOSURE

Materials submitted in response to this competitive procurement shall become the property of OSOS.

All Proposals received shall remain confidential until the contract, if any, resulting from this RFP is signed by the authorized officer of OSOS and the Apparent Successful Contractor;

thereafter, the Proposals shall be deemed public records as defined under the Public Records Act, RCW Chapter 42.56.

Any information in the Proposal that the Contractor desires to claim as proprietary and exempt from disclosure under the provisions of RCW 42.56.270 must be clearly designated. The page must be identified and the particular exception from disclosure upon which the Contractor is making the claim. Each page claimed to be exempt from disclosure must be clearly identified by the word “Confidential” printed on the lower right-hand corner of the page.

OSOS will consider a Contractor’s request for exemption from disclosure; however, OSOS will decide predicated upon RCW Chapter 42.56 and Chapter 143-06 of the Washington Administrative Code. Marking the entire Proposal exempt from disclosure will not be honored. The Contractor must be reasonable in designating information as confidential. If any information is marked as proprietary in the Proposal, such information will not be made available until the affected Contractor has been given an opportunity to seek a court injunction against the requested disclosure.

A charge will be made for copying and shipping, as outlined in RCW 42.56.120. No fee shall be charged for inspection of contract files, but twenty-four (24) hours’ notice to the RFP Coordinator is required. All requests for information should be directed to the RFP Coordinator.

2.6 REVISIONS TO THE RFP

In the event it becomes necessary to revise any part of this RFP, amendments will be published on WEBS and the OSOS website:

<http://www.sos.wa.gov/office/procurements.aspx>. For this purpose, any pertinent information, and answers to substantive questions by potential Contractors shall be considered an amendment to the RFP and also posted in WEBS and on the OSOS website. OSOS also reserves the right to cancel or reissue this RFP, in whole or in part, prior to execution of a contract.

2.7 SMALL & DIVERSE BUSINESSES

OSOS, in accordance with Washington law, encourages small and diverse businesses to compete for and participate in state procurements as contractors and as subcontractors to awarded bidders. See, e.g., RCW 39.19 (OMWBE certified businesses); RCW 43.60A.200 (WDVA certified veteran-owned businesses); and RCW 39.26.005 (Washington small businesses).

OMWBE Certification. Contractors may contact the Washington State Office of Minority and Women's Business Enterprises (OMWBE) regarding information on Minority-Owned and Women-Owned certified firms, state and federal certification programs, or to become certified. OMWBE can be reached by telephone, 866-208-1064, or through their website at OMWBE. OMWBE-Certified firms may provide their certification information on Exhibit A-2 – Contractor's Profile & References.

WDVA Certification. Contractors may contact the Washington State Department of Veterans' Affairs (WDVA) for information regarding Certified Veteran-Owned businesses or to become a Certified Veteran-Owned Business. The WDVA can be reached by telephone, (360) 725-2169, or through their website at WDVA. The qualification requirements to be a Certified Veteran-Owned Business are set forth in Exhibit A-1 – Contractor's Certification.

Washington Small Businesses. Contractors may contact OSOS about small and diverse business inclusion and qualification as a Washington Small Business. If you qualify as a Washington Small Business, identify yourself as such in WEBS. Call WEBS Customer Service at 360-902-7400. The qualification requirements to self-certify as a Washington Small Business are set forth in Exhibit A-1 – Contractor's Certification.

2.8 ACCEPTANCE PERIOD

Proposals must provide 60 days for acceptance by OSOS from the later of the due date for receipt of Proposals or receipt of best and final offers (if utilized). The contractor agrees that during the acceptance period it may not modify, withdraw, or cancel its Proposal.

2.9 RESPONSIVENESS

All Proposals will be reviewed by the RFP Coordinator to determine compliance with administrative requirements and instructions specified in this RFP. The Contractor is specifically notified that failure to comply with any part of the RFP may result in rejection of the Proposal as non-responsive. OSOS also reserves the right, however, at its sole discretion to waive minor administrative irregularities.

2.10 MOST FAVORABLE TERMS

OSOS reserves the right to make an award without further discussion of the Proposal submitted. Therefore, the Proposal should be submitted initially on the most favorable terms which the Contractor can propose. OSOS reserves the right to contact a Contractor for clarification of its Proposal. OSOS also reserves the right to enact a best and final offer (BAFO) process. If so enacted, the procedure is described in Section 4.

The Contractor should be prepared to accept this RFP, all amendments to this RFP, all clarifying responses, and a best and final offer, as applicable, for incorporation into a

contract resulting from this RFP. Contract negotiations may incorporate some or all of the Contractor's Proposal. It is understood that the Proposal will become a part of the official procurement file on this matter without obligation to OSOS.

2.11 CONTRACT

The form of the contract that may be awarded as a result of this solicitation is attached as Exhibit B, Contract. The Apparent Successful Contractor will be expected to enter into a contract which is substantially the same as the Contract attached as Exhibit B. In no event is a Contractor to submit its own standard contract terms and conditions in response to this solicitation. Contractors may submit exceptions as allowed in Exhibit A-1 – Contractor's Certification. All exceptions to the contract terms and conditions must be submitted as an attachment to Exhibit A-1 – Contractor's Certification. OSOS will review requested exceptions and accept or reject the same at its sole discretion.

2.12 COSTS TO PROPOSE

OSOS will not be liable for any costs incurred by the Contractor in preparation of a Proposal submitted in response to this RFP, in conduct of a presentation, or any other activities related to responding to this RFP.

2.13 NO OBLIGATION TO CONTRACT

This RFP does not obligate the state of Washington or OSOS to contract for services specified herein.

2.14 REJECTION OF PROPOSALS

OSOS reserves the right at its sole discretion to reject any and all Proposals received without penalty and not to issue a contract as a result of this RFP.

2.15 COMMITMENT OF FUNDS

The Secretary of State or their delegate are the only individuals who may legally commit OSOS to the expenditure of funds for a contract resulting from this RFP. No cost chargeable to the proposed contract may be incurred before receipt of a fully executed contract.

2.16 ELECTRONIC PAYMENT

The state of Washington prefers to utilize electronic payment in its transactions. The Apparent Successful Contractor will be provided a form to complete with the contract to authorize such payment method.

2.17 INSURANCE COVERAGE

Should a contract be awarded pursuant to this RFP, the Contractor will be required to provide insurance coverage as described in Exhibit B, Contract.

Contractor will at all times comply with all applicable workers' compensation, occupational disease, and occupational health and safety laws, statutes, and regulations to the full extent applicable. The state will not be held responsible in any way for claims filed by the Contractor or its employees for services performed under the terms of the contract.

2.18 EVALUATION PREFERENCE

Pursuant to RCW 39.26.160(3) (best value criteria) and consistent with Executive Order 18-03 – Supporting Workers' Rights to Effectively Address Workplace Violations (dated June 12, 2018), OSOS will evaluate bids for best value and will provide a bid preference in the amount of 5% to any Contractor who certifies, pursuant to Exhibit A-1 – Contractor's Certification, that their firm does NOT require its employees, as a condition of employment, to sign or agree to mandatory individual arbitration clauses or class or collective action waivers.

3. PROPOSAL CONTENTS

Proposals must be complete, legible, signed, and follow all instructions stated in the solicitation (including the exhibits). Unless otherwise specified in writing by OSOS, documents included with an electronic proposal must be prepared in MS Word, MS Excel, or Adobe PDF. Where required to do so, Contractors may sign using either a physical or electronic signature.

Contractors' Proposals must respond to all of the solicitation requirements. Do not respond by referencing material presented elsewhere. The e-mailed Proposal shall be considered complete and stand on its own merits. Failure to respond to any portions may result in rejection of the Proposal as non-responsive.

This section identifies the submittals that must be provided as instructed below to constitute a responsive Proposal. Proposals that do not include all of the applicable submittals identified below are considered non-responsive and will be rejected. In addition, a Contractor's failure to complete any submittal as instructed may result in the Proposal being rejected. Contractors may not provide unsolicited materials. For any supplemental materials expressly required by OSOS in writing, Contractors must identify such supplemental materials with the Contractor's name.

Contractors must submit the following six (6) electronic documents separately as email attachments:

- EXHIBIT A-1 – CONTRACTOR’S CERTIFICATION

Complete the certification, attach any exceptions or required explanations, and submit it to the RFP Coordinator using the following file naming convention:

ContractorName_CERTIFICATION.pdf. The certification must be complete. Where there are choices, bidders must check a box. The certification must be signed and submitted by a duly authorized representative of the Contractor.

(PARTIALLY SCORED – Pursuant to Executive Order 18-03, a 5% evaluation preference is given to those Contractors that certify that they do NOT require their employees, as a condition of employment, to sign or agree to mandatory individual arbitration clauses or class or collective action waivers).

- EXHIBIT A-2 – CONTRACTOR’S PROFILE & REFERENCES

Complete as instructed and submit to the RFP Coordinator using the following file naming convention: ContractorName_REFERENCES.pdf.

(PARTIALLY SCORED – A Contractor’s submitted references can earn up to a maximum of 10 points if they are a top-scoring Contractor).

- TECHNICAL PROPOSAL

No form is provided for this submittal. The technical proposal must contain a comprehensive description of services including the following elements:

The Contractor shall support the expansion of the Mark the Ballot brand by building a library of creative assets beginning in 2025 through 2026 and launching a coordinated, multi-platform outreach and advertising campaign in 2026. The campaign’s goal is to educate Washingtonians about elections and voting, reinforce public trust in the state’s vote-by-mail system and elections infrastructure, and combat rumors by proactively delivering accurate, accessible, and timely information.

This work will include the development of:

- A robust asset library of graphics, animations, videos, and supporting creative elements aligned with the existing Mark the Ballot visual identity and tone;
- A public-facing outreach toolkit designed for use by county election offices, civic organizations, and other stakeholders;

- A multi-platform advertising campaign, with a gradual year-round presence and increased intensity around Washington state’s major 2026 elections;
- Pre- and post-campaign research, including at least one public survey before the campaign, one midway through, and one at the conclusion to assess impact, gather insights, and inform ongoing adjustments.

In 2025 and early 2026, the Contractor’s primary focus will be on content development — creating foundational assets, animated videos, building out the Mark the Ballot creative universe, and preparing the toolkit. In 2026, these materials will be activated through a slow-drip advertising strategy that maintains a consistent public presence throughout the year, with strategic increases around election milestones and civic holidays.

All creative products must be impartial, accurate, and specific to Washington state’s elections laws and procedures. Content must use plain language, incorporate “rooted-in-place” imagery that reflects the state’s people and communities, and be delivered in multiple languages, including but not limited to Spanish, Chinese, and Vietnamese. The Contractor must identify media and outreach opportunities that reach both major markets and underserved areas, including rural, disenfranchised, and historically marginalized communities.

Campaign messaging must clearly amplify OSOS and county election officials as trusted sources of elections information and encourage civic participation. Materials developed must support “pre-bunking” strategies — preemptively addressing common misinformation and rumors before they take hold.

All creative work is subject to OSOS review and approval. The Contractor must collaborate closely with OSOS throughout development to ensure alignment with strategic messaging objectives and the established Mark the Ballot identity.

Expected deliverables include, but are not limited to:

- Asset library and outreach materials:
 - Graphics, animations, and short videos for use across digital, social, out-of-home, and print platforms
 - A collection of evergreen and topical assets that can be adapted for various audiences and campaign phases
 - Icons, illustrations, and graphical elements for use in OSOS-led education and outreach efforts
- Advertising campaign (2026):
 - Digital ads for social media, programmatic placements, and online partnerships

- Out-of-home advertising, including but not limited to billboards, transit, and signage in high-visibility and high-need areas
- Print and broadcast-ready assets for use in multilingual and community-focused publications
- A strategic media plan that includes a slow-drip approach with heightened presence around major election dates
- Other recommendations for platforms and placements as provided by Contractor
- Strategic partnerships:
 - Co-created content with trusted community-based organizations, educational institutions, nonprofits, and other entities that allow OSOS to meet people where they are — online, in their neighborhoods, and within their trusted networks
- Research and reporting:
 - Pre- and post-campaign public surveys to evaluate awareness, message retention, trust indicators, and other performance metrics
 - Mid-campaign analysis of campaign performance to identify trends in election-related messaging and adjust strategy as needed to maximize impact.
 - A final campaign report and hourlong briefing in early 2027, including data analysis and recommendations for future outreach efforts
 - Follow-up engagement with OSOS for any additional questions, post-campaign PR, and campaign closeout

The campaign is expected to target Washington adults statewide, with a strategic emphasis on reaching rural populations, historically marginalized communities, and residents aged 18 to 39.

The technical proposal must contain a comprehensive description of services including the following elements:

- A. **Project Approach/Methodology** – Include a complete description of the Contractor’s proposed approach and methodology for the project. This section should convey Contractor’s understanding of the proposed project.
- B. **Work Plan** – Include all project requirements and the proposed tasks, services, activities, etc. necessary to accomplish the scope of the project defined in this RFP. This section of the technical proposal must contain sufficient detail to convey to members of the evaluation team the Contractor’s knowledge of the subjects and skills necessary to successfully complete the project. Include any required

involvement of OSOS staff. The Contractor may also present any creative approaches that might be appropriate and may provide any pertinent supporting documentation.

- C. **Project Schedule** – Include a project schedule indicating when the elements of the work will be completed and when deliverables, if any, will be provided. Contractors should allow sufficient time for OSOS to review and approve all creative and strategic approaches, as determined by OSOS. No assets may be finalized or put into production without prior approval.
- D. **Deliverables** – Fully describe deliverables to be submitted under the proposed contract.
- E. **Outcomes and Performance Measurement** – Describe the impacts/outcomes the Contractor proposes to achieve as a result of the delivery of these services, including how these outcomes would be monitored, measured and reported to OSOS.
- F. **Risks** - Define risks you identify as being significant to the success of the project. Include how you would propose to effectively monitor and manage these risks, including reporting of risks to OSOS's contract manager.

Submit to the RFP Coordinator using the following file naming convention:

ContractorName_TECHNICAL.pdf.

(SCORED – Up to a maximum of 115 points).

- MANAGEMENT PROPOSAL

No form is provided for this submittal. The management proposal must include the following and demonstrate that the minimum qualifications set forth in Section 1.3 are met:

A. Project Management

1. Project Team Structure/Internal Controls - Provide a description of the proposed project team structure and internal controls to be used during the course of the project, including any subcontractors. Provide an organizational chart of your firm indicating lines of authority for personnel involved in the performance of this potential contract and relationships of this staff to other programs or functions of the firm. This chart must also show lines of authority to the next senior level of management. Include who within the firm will have prime responsibility and final authority for the work.

2. Staff Qualifications/Experience – Identify staff, including subcontractors, who will be assigned to the potential contract, indicating the responsibilities and qualifications of such personnel, and include the amount of time each will be assigned to the project. Provide resumes for the named staff which include information on the individuals' particular skills related to this project, education, experience, significant accomplishments and any other pertinent information. Contractor must commit that staff identified in its Proposal will actually perform the assigned work. Any staff substitution must have the prior approval of OSOS.

B. Experience of the Contractor

Indicate the experience the Contractor and any subcontractors that demonstrates the qualifications of Contractor and any subcontractors for the performance of the potential contract. Include a list of contracts the Contractor has had during the last five years that relate to the Contractor's ability to perform the services needed under this RFP. List minimum of 2 contract reference numbers, contract period of performance, contact persons, telephone numbers, and fax numbers/e-mail addresses.

Submit to the RFP Coordinator using the following file naming convention:
ContractorName_MANAGEMENT.pdf.

(SCORED – Up to a maximum of 60 points).

- **COST PROPOSAL**

No form is provided for this submittal. Identify all costs including expenses to be charged for performing the services necessary to accomplish the objectives of the contract. The Contractor is to submit a fully detailed budget including staff costs and any expenses necessary to accomplish the tasks and to produce the deliverables under the contract. Contractors are required to collect and pay Washington state sales tax, if applicable. Costs for subcontractors are to be broken out separately.

The total cost of the contract must not exceed \$1,600,000.00 million to be considered responsive to this RFP. However, up to an additional \$600,000 may become available contingent upon appropriations made by the Washington State Legislature during the 2026 legislative session and the Governor's approval. The availability of these funds will likely be known by May 1, 2026.

Costs shall be structured across two distinct phases of work:

Phase 1: August 2025 – June 30, 2026

During this period, services will focus primarily on creative development, content production, and initial outreach preparations. Invoices submitted for work performed during this timeframe must not exceed \$850,000.

Phase 2: July 1, 2026 – Early 2027 (final invoice no later than March 31, 2027)

This period will focus on campaign activation, including advertising and media placements, content distribution, and public engagement efforts. Invoices submitted for work during this phase must not exceed \$750,000. If additional funding is approved, up to \$600,000 in supplemental funding may be applied exclusively to Phase 2 activities.

The Contractor's cost proposal must reflect this phased approach and clearly outline how funds will be allocated across deliverables and timeframes within the \$1,600,000.00 base budget. Additionally, proposals must include a supplemental plan detailing how the contractor would utilize up to an additional \$600,000.00 in Phase 2, should those funds become available. Proposals that exceed the total contract maximum of \$1,600,000.00 or fail to comply with the phase-specific funding limits may be deemed non-responsive.

Contractors are encouraged to provide a list of optional products and services that may be added at an additional cost, subject to available OSOS funding.

Submit to the RFP Coordinator using the following file naming convention:

ContractorName_COST.pdf.

(SCORED – Up to a maximum of 50 points).

- **SAMPLES OF WORK**

No form is provided for this submittal. Proposals should include a brief portfolio of previous work in one or more of the following areas:

- Creative design
- Media planning
- Advertising
- Public service announcements
- Brand partnerships
- Video production
- Animation

Submit to the RFP Coordinator using the following file naming convention:
ContractorName_SOW.pdf.

(SCORED – Up to a maximum of 30 points).

- **CONTRACT ISSUES LIST [IF APPLICABLE]**

No form is provided for this submittal. This is a required submittal ONLY IF Contractor has business issues with the contract attached as Exhibit B. If so, Contractor must prepare a Contract Issues List, attach it to Exhibit A-1 and submit it to the RFP Coordinator using the following file naming convention: ContractorName_ISSUES.pdf. Note, however, that OSOS reserves the right not to modify the contract and to award the contract on the basis of a Contractor's willingness to agree to the contract attached as Exhibit B.

(NOT SCORED)

- **CONTRACTOR'S DIVERSE BUSINESS INCLUSION PLAN – SUBCONTRACTORS [IF APPLICABLE].**

No form is provided for this submittal. This is a required submittal ONLY IF Contractor will be using subcontractors to perform the contract. If so, Contractor must outline its inclusion plan for diverse business subcontractors pertaining to the contract and submit it to the RFP Coordinator using the following file naming convention: ContractorName_INCLUSIONPLAN.pdf.

(NOT SCORED)

4. EVALUATION AND CONTRACT AWARD

4.1 EVALUATION PROCEDURE

Proposals will be evaluated strictly in accordance with the requirements stated in this solicitation and any addenda issued. The evaluation of Proposals shall be accomplished by an evaluation team, to be designated by OSOS, which will determine the ranking of the Proposals. Both the Contractors' responsibility and the responsiveness of their Proposals to this solicitation will be evaluated. In scoring against stated criteria, the evaluation team may consider such factors as accepted industry standards and a comparative evaluation of other Proposals in terms of differing price and quality. These scores will be used to determine the most advantageous Proposal to OSOS.

After receipt of Proposals and prior to the recommendation of an award, OSOS, at its sole discretion, may initiate discussions with one or more Contractors for

clarification, and/or select the top-scoring Contractors as finalists for an oral presentation, and/or initiate a best and final offer process.

4.2 RESPONSIBILITY

In determining whether a Contractor is responsible, OSOS will consider (1) the Contractor's ability, capacity, and skill to perform the contract; (2) The Contractor's character, integrity, reputation, judgment, experience, and efficiency; (3) Whether the Contractor can perform the contract within the time specified; (4) the quality of Contractor's performance of previous contracts; (5) The previous and existing compliance by the Contractor with laws relating to the contract; (6) Whether, within the three-year period immediately preceding the date of this RFP, the Contractor has been determined by a final and binding citation and notice of assessment issued by the Washington Department of Labor and Industries or through a civil judgment entered by a court of limited or general jurisdiction to have willfully violated, as defined in RCW 49.48.082, any provision of RCW Chapter 49.46, 49.48, or 49.52; and (7) Such other information as may be secured having a bearing on the decision to award the contract.

4.3 RESPONSIVENESS

OSOS will initially classify all Proposals as either "responsive" or "nonresponsive". OSOS may deem a Proposal nonresponsive if: (1) any of the required information is not provided; (2) the submitted price is found to be excessive or inadequate as measured by the RFP criteria; or (3) the Proposal does not meet RFP requirements and specifications. OSOS may find any Proposal to be nonresponsive at any time during the procurement process. If OSOS deems a Proposal nonresponsive, it will not be considered further. The RFP Coordinator will notify the Contractor by email.

4.4 EVALUATION WEIGHTING AND SCORING

The following weighting and points will be assigned to the Proposal for evaluation purposes:

Technical Proposal – 43%	115 points
Project Approach/Methodology	15 points (maximum)
Quality of Work Plan	40 points (maximum)
Project Schedule	20 points (maximum)
Project Deliverables	40 points (maximum)

Management Proposal – 23%	60 points
Project Team Structure/	
Internal Controls	25 points (maximum)
Staff Qualifications/Experience	20 points (maximum)
Experience of the Contractor	15 points (maximum)
Cost Proposal – 18%	50 points
Samples of Work – 11%	30 points
Executive Order 18-03 Evaluation Preference – 5%	10 points
Sub-Total	265 points
References (top-scoring Contractor(s) only)	10 points
	<hr/>
GRAND TOTAL	275 POINTS

The score for the cost proposal will be computed by dividing the lowest cost Proposal received by the Contractor's total cost. Then the resultant number will be multiplied by the maximum possible points for the cost section. References will be contacted for the top-scoring Contractor(s) only, based on the written Proposal. References will then be scored and included in the Grand Total.

4.5 ORAL PRESENTATIONS

Oral presentations, if considered necessary or desirable, may be utilized in selecting the Apparent Successful Contractor. OSOS, at its sole discretion, may elect to select the top-scoring Contractors from the evaluation of Proposals for an oral presentation and final determination of contract award. The cut-off for the top-scoring Contractors will be based on several considerations, such as responsiveness, qualifications, and competitiveness, suitability of the products and services offered, cost and economy, and the ability of the Contractor to perform. Should OSOS elect to hold oral presentations, it will contact the top-scoring Contractors to schedule a date, time and location. Commitments made by the Contractor in the oral presentation, if any, will be considered binding. The score from the

oral presentation will be considered independently and will determine the Apparent Successful Contractor.

4.6 BEST AND FINAL OFFER (BAFO).

Contractors are encouraged to submit their most competitive offer, but there is a potential for a best-and-final offer (BAFO) process. This section defines that process. OSOS reserves the right, any point during the evaluation of Proposals, to notify all remaining responsive and responsible Contractors that OSOS will require them to submit BAFOs. Contractors will not be allowed to make material changes to their Proposals unless they receive a request for a BAFO from OSOS.

The notice will be in writing and will set a specific time and date certain by which the Contractor must submit the BAFO to OSOS. The BAFO notice may set additional conditions and requirements for its submission. The notice will advise Contractors that the BAFO shall be in writing and that following the closing date for submission, OSOS intends to select the highest scoring responsive and responsible Contractor for award. Prior to the closing date for the submission of BAFOs, OSOS may, at its discretion, engage in discussion with any or all remaining Contractors regarding how they can make their Proposals more responsive to the selection criteria in the RFP. All Contractors shall be accorded fair and equal treatment with respect to any opportunity for discussion and revision of Proposals, and such revisions may be permitted after submissions and prior to award for the purpose of obtaining BAFOs. In conducting discussions, there shall be no disclosure of any pricing information or other content derived from Proposals submitted by competing Contractors.

For purposes of the BAFO, Contractors may make such changes to their original Proposals as they believe appropriate to enhance their potential for selection and award under the selection criteria set forth in the RFP and the BAFO notice. Changes to the original Proposal must be clearly identified in the re-submitted Proposal using the Track Changes function in Microsoft Word.

Evaluation of BAFOs and selection of the Apparent Successful Contractor will be based upon the evaluation criteria set out in the RFP. Terms proposed as part of a BAFO must be substantially in accordance with the terms requested in this RFP and may not materially alter the requirements of the RFP. Contractors may be requested to make an oral presentation regarding their BAFO. The evaluation team may accept or reject any information submitted in a BAFO.

Contractors are not required to submit a BAFO and may submit a written response stating that their original Proposal remains as originally submitted. If a BAFO process is initiated, all Contractors that submitted a Proposal will be eligible for a debriefing conference.

At the conclusion of negotiations with the Apparent Successful Contractor, OSOS will require that the Contractor submit a signed contract as a BAFO pending acceptance.

4.7 REQUEST FOR DOCUMENTS

Upon concurrence with the recommendation of the evaluation team, the RFP Coordinator will request from the Apparent Successful Contractor the required documents and information, such as insurance policy documents, contract performance security, an electronic copy of any requested material (e.g., the Proposal, responses to clarification questions), and any other necessary documents. Receipt of this request does not constitute a contract between the Contractor and OSOS.

4.8 CONTRACT EXECUTION

Upon receipt of all required materials, a Contract substantially in the form of the attached Exhibit B will be presented to the Apparent Successful Contractor for signature. The Apparent Successful Contractor will be expected to accept and agree to all material requirements contained in the contract. If the Apparent Successful Contractor does not accept all material requirements, OSOS may move to the next highest scoring Contractor, or cancel the RFP. Work under the contract may begin when the contract is signed by all parties and OSOS has given Contractor a notice to proceed.

4.9 NOTIFICATION TO CONTRACTORS

Contractors whose Proposals are not selected for further consideration or award will be notified via facsimile or e-mail.

4.10 COMPLAINT, DEBRIEFING AND PROTEST PROCEDURES

This section details the applicable requirements for complaints, debriefs, and protests.

A. COMPLAINTS. This solicitation offers a complaint period for Contractors wishing to voice objections to this solicitation. The complaint period ends five (5) business days before the proposal due date. The complaint period is an opportunity to voice objections, raise concerns, or suggest changes that were not addressed during the question-and-answer period. Failure by the Contractor to raise a complaint at this stage may waive its right for later consideration. OSOS will consider all complaints, but it is not required to modify or cancel the solicitation. If Contractor complaints result in changes to the solicitation, written amendments to the solicitation will be issued and posted on WEBS and the OSOS website.

1. CRITERIA FOR COMPLAINT. A formal complaint may be based only on one or more of the following grounds: (a) The solicitation unnecessarily restricts

competition; (b) The solicitation evaluation or scoring process is unfair or flawed; or (c) The solicitation requirements are inadequate or insufficient to prepare a response.

2. INITIATING A COMPLAINT. A complaint must: (a) Be submitted to and received by the RFP Coordinator no less than five (5) business days prior to the proposal due date; and (b) Be in writing. A complaint should clearly articulate the basis of the complaint and include a proposed remedy.

3. RESPONSE. When a complaint is received, the RFP Coordinator (or designee) will consider all the facts available and respond in writing prior to the deadline for proposal submittals, unless more time is needed. OSOS is required to promptly post the response to a complaint on WEBS.

4. RESPONSE IS FINAL. The RFP Coordinator's response to the complaint is final and not subject to administrative appeal. Issues raised in a complaint may not be raised again during the protest period. Furthermore, any issue, exception, addition, or omission not brought to the attention of the RFP Coordinator prior to Proposal submittal may be deemed waived for protest purposes.

B. DEBRIEF CONFERENCES. A debrief conference is an opportunity for a Contractor and OSOS to meet and discuss the Contractor's Proposal (and, as further explained below, is a necessary prerequisite to filing a protest). Following the evaluation of the proposals, OSOS will issue an announcement of the Apparent Successful Contractor. Contractors will have three (3) business days to request a debrief conference. Once a debrief conference is requested, OSOS will offer the requesting Contractor one meeting opportunity and notify the Contractor of the debrief conference place, date, and time. Please note, because the debrief process must occur before making an award, OSOS likely will schedule the debrief conference shortly after the announcement of the Apparent Successful Contractor and the Contractor's request for a debrief conference. OSOS will not allow the debrief process to delay the award. Therefore, Contractors should plan for contingencies and alternate representatives. Contractors who wish to protest must first participate in a debrief conference. Contractors who are unwilling or unable to attend the debrief conference will lose the opportunity to protest. Participation in a debrief conference is a prerequisite for a Contractor wishing to file a protest.

1. TIMING. A debrief conference may be requested by a Contractor following the announcement of the Apparent Successful Contractor.

2. **PURPOSE OF DEBRIEF CONFERENCE.** Any Contractor who has submitted a timely Proposal may request a debrief conference. A debrief conference provides an opportunity for the Contractor to meet with OSOS to discuss Contractor's Proposal and evaluation. It does not provide an opportunity to discuss other Contractor's proposals and evaluations.

3. **REQUESTING A DEBRIEF CONFERENCE.** The request for a debrief conference must be made in writing via email to the RFP Coordinator and received within three (3) business days after the announcement of the Apparent Successful Contractor. Debrief conferences may be conducted either in person at the OSOS offices in Olympia, Washington, or virtually (e.g., by telephone or web-based virtual meeting such as Zoom, Skype, MS Teams), as determined by OSOS, and may be limited by OSOS to a specified period of time. The failure of a Contractor to request a debrief conference within the specified time and attend a debrief conference constitutes a waiver of the right to submit a protest. Any issue, exception, addition, or omission not brought to the attention of the RFP Coordinator before or during the debrief conference may be deemed waived for protest purposes.

C. **PROTESTS.** Following a debrief conference, a Contractor may protest the contract award(s).

1. **CRITERIA FOR A PROTEST.** A protest may be based only on one or more of the following: (a) Bias, discrimination, or conflict of interest on the part of an evaluator; (b) Error in computing evaluation scores; or (c) Non-compliance with any procedures described in the solicitation.

2. **INITIATING A PROTEST.** Any Contractor that participates in a debrief conference may protest an award to the Apparent Successful Contractor. A protest must: (a) Be submitted to and received by the Protest Officer specified below, within five (5) business days after the protesting Contractor's debrief conference (see Form and Substance, and Other below); (b) Be in writing; (c) Include a specific and complete statement of facts forming the basis of the protest; and (d) Include a description of the relief or corrective action requested.

3. **PROTEST RESPONSE.** After reviewing the protest and available facts, the Protest Officer will issue a written response within ten (10) business days from receipt of the protest, unless additional time is needed.

4. **DECISION IS FINAL.** The protest decision is final and not subject to administrative appeal. If the protesting Contractor does not accept the protest response, the protesting Contractor may seek relief in Thurston County Superior Court.

D. COMMUNICATION DURING COMPLAINTS, DEBRIEFS, AND PROTESTS. All communications about this solicitation, including complaints, debriefs, and protests, must be addressed to the RFP Coordinator unless otherwise directed.

1. **FORM, SUBSTANCE, & OTHER.** All complaints, requests for debrief, and protests must:

- i. Be in writing;
- ii. Be signed by the complaining or protesting Contractor or an authorized agent, unless sent by email;
- iii. Be delivered within the time frame(s) outlined herein;
- iv. Identify the solicitation number;
- v. Conspicuously state “Complaint,” “Debrief,” or “Protest” in any subject line of any correspondence or email; and
- vi. Be sent to the address identified below.

2. **COMPLAINTS & PROTESTS.** All complaints and protests must (a) State all facts and arguments on which the complaining or protesting Contractor is relying as the basis for its action; and (b) Include any relevant documentation or other supporting evidence.

E. HOW TO CONTACT OSOS

1. **TO SUBMIT A COMPLAINT.** Send an email message to the RFP Coordinator listed in this solicitation. The email message must include “Complaint” in the subject line of the email message. Alternatively, mail the complaint to the RFP Coordinator at the following address:

Attn: Madilyn Graversen, RFP Coordinator
Office of the Secretary of State
Operations Division
PO Box 40224
Olympia, WA 98504-0224

2. TO REQUEST A DEBRIEF CONFERENCE. Send an email message to the RFP Coordinator listed in this solicitation. The email message must include “Debrief” in the subject line of the email message.

3. TO SUBMIT A PROTEST. Send an email message to the RFP Coordinator listed in this solicitation. The email message must include “Protest” in the subject line of the email message. Alternatively, mail the protest to the RFP Coordinator at the following address:

Attn: Madilyn Graversen, RFP Coordinator
Office of the Secretary of State
Operations Division
PO Box 40224
Olympia, WA 98504-0224

5. RFP EXHIBITS

Exhibit A A-1 Contractor’s Certifications

A-2 Contractor’s Profile & References

Exhibit B Contract