



SouthWest Transit

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Request for Proposal

Title: Marketing Professional Services

Proposal Number: 26-00005

Due Date: 11/06/2026

Time: 05:00 PM

Issue Date: 09/25/2026

Pre-Proposal Meeting: 09/30/2026

Proposal Questions Due: 10/07/2026

Questions Answered: 10/12/2026

Proposal Due: 11/06/2026

Award Date: 11/23/2026

Proposals received late, for any reason, will not be accepted.

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RFP: 26-00005 Marketing Professional Services
INSTRUCTIONS FOR PREPARATION OF PROPOSAL

1. REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

SouthWest Transit (“SWT”) is requesting proposals from qualified agencies to provide professional marketing campaign consulting services, media buying, and creative support as needed in accordance with Attachment A: Agency Requirements. 26-00005 Marketing Professional Services must be completed by 11/06/2026 at 05:00 PM.

Failure to follow these instructions and requirements may result in the rejection of your Proposal. SWT is not responsible for any costs incurred by prospective proposers in the preparation and presentation of their proposals. The entire Request for Proposal (“RFP”) and the specifications must be used by proposers in preparing their proposals. SWT does not assume any responsibility for errors or misinterpretations resulting from use of an incomplete set of these documents by a proposer.

All references in this RFP to a time of day are references to the legal local time in Eden Prairie, Minnesota.

Questions regarding the proposal documents will be answered at an optional pre-proposal meeting, which will be held on 09/30/2026, at 02:00 PM, at [Teams Meeting - RFP Questions](#); Meeting ID: 218 315 280 011 248; Passcode: r4h7XU6Z.

Questions that arise after the pre-proposal meeting must be submitted in writing by 02:00 PM on 10/07/2026, to:

E-mail : marketing@swtransit.org

Subject line: Marketing Professional Services – Questions and Clarifications

All questions will be answered in a written addendum no later than 05:00 PM on 10/12/2026.

To be considered, the valid proposal must be **received** by 05:00 PM on 11/06/2026.

Proposals may be email. Oral, facsimile, telephone, or telegraphic proposal are invalid and will not receive consideration. SouthWest Transit reserves the right to reject any or all proposal submitted.

Proposals submitted by email must be a .pdf file attached to an email with the subject line “26-00005 Marketing Professional Services - Proposal”.

The email must be addressed to: Marketing Manager, SouthWest Transit, marketing@swtransit.org.

2. SWT’S RIGHTS

SWT reserves the right to cancel this RFP in writing or postpone the date and time for submitting proposals at any time prior to the proposal due date. SWT shall have the right to accept or reject any or all proposals. SWT is not obligated to accept any proposal and specifically reserves the right to reject any or all proposals; to waive any or all informalities or irregularities in the proposals received; to investigate the qualifications and experience of any proposer; to reject any provisions in any proposal; to modify RFP contents; to obtain new proposals; to negotiate the requested services and contract terms with any proposer; and/or to proceed to do the work otherwise.

3. TIME FRAME

<u>Milestones</u>	<u>Tentative Date</u>
RFP Advertisement:	09/25/2026
Deadline for questions or request for clarifications:	10/07/2026
Response to Questions Released:	10/12/2026
Proposal Due Date:	11/06/2026
Notice of Award:	11/23/2026

*Completion dates for the project milestones in this section are tentative only and are subject to modification by SWT.

4. BACKGROUND

SouthWest Transit (SWT) is soliciting proposals from qualified agencies with experience in providing professional marketing campaign consulting services, media buying, and creative support as needed on a project-by-project basis.

SWT was created in 1986 under a Joint Powers Agreement between the Cities of Chanhassen, Chaska and Eden Prairie to provide the three (3) cities with public transit service. SWT is governed by a seven (7) person commission ("Commission"). Each of the three cities has an appointed member as well as an elected official, and the seventh member is at large member. SWT offers service to and from downtown Minneapolis, the University of Minnesota, Normandale Community College, Best Buy headquarters, and local malls, as well as service between Chanhassen, Chaska and Eden Prairie. SWT currently operates four major park-and-ride lots.

The Mission of SouthWest Transit is that "we provide a premium experience for the southwest Twin Cities through safe, reliable, and cost-effective transit that builds community and connects our customers from where they are to where they want to go."

SouthWest Transit provides three main services which provide connections within our main service areas of Chaska, Chanhassen, and Eden Prairie as well as connecting service to our surrounding Twin Cities Metropolitan area, including the cities of Minneapolis, St Paul, Bloomington, Edina, Shakopee and others.

More information about SWT can be found at www.swtransit.org.

5. RFP ADMINISTRATOR; PROPOSAL QUESTIONS; ADDENDA

The RFP administrator for the Request for Proposals is:

26-00005 Marketing Professional Services
SouthWest
14405 West 62nd Street
Eden Prairie, MN 55346
Email: marketing@swtransit.org

The RFP administrator shall serve as the contact person and will send and receive all communications regarding the RFP. **Proposers may be disqualified if any unsolicited contact related to this RFP is made**

with an employee, commission member or representative of SWT during the proposal process except as provided in these instructions.

If any person contemplating submitting a proposal is in doubt as to the true meaning of any part of the RFP or specifications or finds discrepancies in or omissions from the RFP or specifications, the person shall submit to the RFP administrator a written request for an interpretation or correction by the date indicated in this RFP.

Any corrections or changes to this RFP, including any changes made because of the pre-proposal meeting, will be made by written addendum only. SWT shall not be bound by any oral comments or representations.

6. PROPOSAL FORMAT

The Proposal Format must be a .pdf file.

7. SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

Proposals must be received by 05:00 PM on 11/06/2026 as indicated in Section 1 of this RFP. Proposals received after 05:00 PM on 11/06/2026 will not be considered. **It is wholly the responsibility of the proposer to ensure that the proposal package is properly addressed, delivered, and received by SWT on time.**

Proposals may be submitted by email. Oral, facsimile, telephone, or telegraphic proposals are invalid and will not receive consideration. SouthWest Transit reserves the right to reject any or all proposals submitted.

Proposals submitted by email must be attached to an email with the subject line **“26-00005 Marketing Professional Services – Proposal”**. The email must be addressed to: Marketing Manager, SouthWest Transit, marketing@swtransit.org.

SWT may evaluate an improperly marked proposal only if it discovers prior to the deadline for submission of proposals that it is a proposal for this project. Improperly marked proposals that are not discovered prior to that deadline will be treated as late proposals.

The submission of a proposal shall constitute an acknowledgment upon which SWT may rely that the proposer has thoroughly examined and is familiar with the RFP, the specifications, the addenda (if any), and has reviewed and inspected all applicable statutes, regulations, ordinances and resolutions dealing with or related to the services to be provided. The failure or neglect of a proposer to do so shall in no way relieve the proposer of any obligations with respect to the proposal or the contract issued because of this RFP. No claim for additional compensation will be allowed, which is based upon a lack of knowledge of any aspect of the RFP, addenda (if any), work sites, statutes, regulations, ordinances or resolutions

8. PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

Items listed in this section must accompany the Proposal. If any required item is omitted, the Proposal may be rejected and returned without further consideration.

- Agency overview and capabilities
- Description of a key differentiator or what sets your agency apart
- Team bios / qualifications
 - Profile of day-to-day account team members and their experience.
 - Outline workflow or project management process
- Case studies
 - Provide at least three examples of relevant **past** work demonstrating success with similar objectives as outlined in Attachment A (Agency Requirements). Examples should showcase your agency's

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strategic approach, creativity, and demonstrate the capabilities as outlined in Attachment A. You do not need to develop and submit a new campaign plan or proposal.

- List of tools used and/or subscriptions leveraged to inform campaign development.
- Breakdown of fee structure / outline of what is included in fees
 - Fees for marketing campaign consulting
 - Media management fees
 - Hourly rates or project-based rates for creative development
- Name, title, address, telephone number, and e-mail address of contact person during period of proposal evaluation.
- Cancellation or agreement termination policy
- References
 - Provide at least two references from previous or current clients.

Please note the above is not a complete list. Proposers must refer to the RFP and specifications for all information or documentation required to be submitted with the proposal. Proposers are responsible for providing all information or documentation required to be submitted with the proposal.

9. WITHDRAWAL OR MODIFICATION OF PROPOSALS

Proposals which are timely withdrawn shall be returned to the proposer. If a substitute proposal is submitted timely, SWT shall deem a previous proposal submitted by the proposer to have been withdrawn and the previous proposal shall be returned to the proposer unopened. A proposer may submit a substitute proposal only prior to the time proposals are due. A substitute proposal must be **received** prior to the time proposals are due.

10. PROPOSAL REVIEW, CONTRACT AWARD, AND EXECUTION

Proposals received by the deadline (05:00 PM on 11/06/2026) will be reviewed and evaluated by an SWT selection committee in accordance with the evaluation criteria set forth in this RFP.

Proposals will not be opened publicly. Proposal contents will remain non-public to the extent permitted by applicable law until an award is made.

During the evaluation process, SWT reserves the right to request clarification of minor issues from any proposer to assure a complete understanding of the proposal and to correct or clarify any information that may be incomplete or ambiguous. Requests for any such clarifications will be initiated by SWT and may be addressed through telephone calls, correspondence, or meetings with a proposer and may be confirmed in writing.

SWT may also, at its discretion, invite one or more proposers to participate in interviews or presentations as part of the evaluation process.

The SWT Commission will make the final award decision based on the recommendation of the evaluation committee and the criteria outlined in this RFP. The contract will be awarded to the proposer whose proposal is determined to be the most advantageous to SWT.

SWT shall not have any obligation whatsoever until a contract is fully executed with the successful proposer.

The proposer to whom SWT awards the contract shall sign and return the written contract to SWT. Upon receipt by SWT all required documentation and submittals, including certificates of insurance, and the signed contract, SWT will execute the contract.

11. EVALUATION CRITERIA

All proposals will be evaluated based on the following scoring criteria:

Table 1 – Scoring Grid

Area	Points	Weighting	Weighted Points
1. Agency overview	5	15	75
2. Team & qualifications	5	15	75
3. Case studies	5	30	150
4. Fee structure	5	20	100
5. References	5	20	100
Overall	25	100	500

Table 2 – Scoring Matrix

Score	Quality Indicator	Description
5	Exceeding Expectations	The response is specific and comprehensive. There is complete, detailed, and clearly articulated information as to how the criteria are met. The ideas presented are innovative, well-conceived, and thoroughly developed.
4	Highly Meeting Expectations	The response is reasonably comprehensive and includes sufficient detail. It contains many characteristics of a very good response, though it may require additional specificity, support, or elaboration in certain areas.
3	Moderately Meeting Expectations	The response is non-specific and lacks focus and detail. It addresses some of the selection criteria but not all. Some ideas presented are sound, but others do not fully align with the RFP's purpose. Additional information is needed for a comprehensive response.
2	Somewhat Meeting Expectations	The response does not meet many criteria; it provides inaccurate information or requires substantial clarification on how the criteria are met. It lacks meaningful detail, demonstrates inadequate preparation, or raises concerns about the applicant's understanding and ability to meet the requirements.
0-1	Not Meeting Expectations	The response does not address the criteria or merely restates the criteria without providing substantive information.

ATTACHMENT A: AGENCY REQUIREMENTS

SWT is looking to establish a partnership with an agency that will consult and execute promotional marketing campaigns on a project basis. Below is a little more about what SWT is trying to achieve, our current challenges, an example promotional campaign budget, as well as the agency capabilities we are looking for.

CORE OBJECTIVES:

- Increase brand conversions within our service area (Eden Prairie, Chanhassen, Chaska, Carver, Victoria) as measured by daily ridership
- Grow YoY ridership for the three services (SW Transit, SW Prime, SW Shuttle)
- Market new and existing service(s)
- Support service area expansion and new launches

CURRENT CHALLENGES:

- SWT does not have data-defined target audience
- SWT does not currently use a data warehouse or CRM platform
- SWT needs strategic guidance/recommendations for search and paid social campaign structures and best practices but will manage those channels in-house

3 MONTH MARKETING CAMPAIGN BUDGET EXAMPLE (ASSUMES CREATIVE ASSETS ALREADY EXIST):

- \$24,000 (inclusive of campaign consulting, execution and media spend)

AGENCY CAPABILITIES:

MARKETING CAMPAIGN CONSULTING SERVICES:

- Strategy development: create overarching campaign framework, key messaging pillars, and channel mix recommendations
- Campaign timelines: identify critical deadlines for agency and SWT internal teams to execute campaigns
- KPI definition: establish campaign metrics, tracking and reporting plan

CAMPAIGN EXECUTION:

- Campaign build and trafficking – platform access, setup, asset uploads and QA before launch
- Daily management and optimizations – budget pacing, audience optimization, and creative rotation
- Reporting and analysis – monthly reports regarding campaign delivery, insights and optimizations made, learnings/recommendations for future campaigns

MEDIA BUYING:

- Planning, buying, optimizing and reporting across digital (excluding search and paid social) and traditional channels

CREATIVE SUPPORT (AS NEEDED):

- Ad concept development
- Graphic design
- Copywriting
- Video production
- Other TBD