



Marketing & Communications Services

Request for Proposal Number 03232018

Responses are due Monday, April 16, 2018 at Noon Eastern Time

Important Dates

Date	Item
Friday, March 23, 2018	RFP is posted to the <i>Michigan Virtual</i> website
Friday, March 30, 2018	Written Vendor questions submitted to <i>Michigan Virtual</i>
Friday, April 6, 2018	<i>Michigan Virtual</i> responds to Vendor questions
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I. INTRODUCTION

Michigan Virtual™ is requesting proposals for Marketing Services. We seek to engage with a Vendor that will provide the best overall value on a project basis. This project is in support of the work of the Early Literacy Task Force. While the initial project is limited in scope, the vendor selected may be granted additional work as the project continues. The proposal should incorporate the development of a marketing plan, a marketing tool kit, including a video, and all asset creation to support the marketing activities identified in the marketing plan.

In addition to those items, other factors will be considered, including the Vendor's customer references and expertise. By releasing this RFP, *Michigan Virtual* makes no guarantee of any awards of work to any respondents now or in the future.

II. BACKGROUND OF MICHIGAN VIRTUAL

Michigan Virtual is a 501(c)(3) organization located in Lansing, Michigan, and was established by the State of Michigan in 1998 to expand the use of learning technologies with a focus to serve Michigan's K-12 community with quality online instructional services.

Today, *Michigan Virtual* offers online courses to students and professional development services to educators. Annual operating budget is estimated to be about \$20million. *Michigan Virtual* is funded through state and federal grants as well as tuition revenue. Annual expenses are approximately \$14 million with a September 30th fiscal year end. *Michigan Virtual* employs over 200 people in one location.

Additional information is available on our website at michiganvirtual.org.

Our target audience

For the purpose of this project, our customers are intermediate school districts, school district administrators, K-3 teachers, and funding agencies.

- Administrators in intermediate school districts and individual school districts are our primary audience targets, including Superintendents, Curriculum Directors, Elementary School Principals and Literacy Coaches. Many have already signed a pledge to support literacy essentials in their districts and started work implementing the *Literacy Essentials* practices.
- K-3 teachers.
- A secondary audience is funding agencies.

III. DESCRIPTION OF THE REQUEST

Michigan Virtual is seeking Marketing services to be performed and implemented before September 30, 2018. After reviewing all proposals, we may interview two to three firms.

This project is in support of The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) Early Literacy Professional Learning Grant. In early 2016, *Michigan Virtual* and the Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators (MAISA) were awarded grants from the MDE to develop,

implement and evaluate professional learning around Early Literacy Instructional Essential Strategies (Pre-K through third grade). The Essential Strategies are evidence-based practices that should be provided in every classroom, with every student, every day, and were developed collaboratively by leading literacy researchers with the assistance and input of the Early Literacy Task Force, a committee developed through MAISA's General Education Leadership Network. This work, and the resulting professional learning experiences developed are in response to several factors that are resulting in a literacy crisis in the state. The *Literacy Essentials* are a framework that all Michigan educators are encouraged to implement in their classrooms to raise literacy performance in our youngest learners, and are designed to move Michigan students from the bottom 10 in achievement in our country to the top 10.

For an overview of the current situation, please review the information contained in this document: [Michigan Literacy - From Lagging to Leading](#). Detailed information on the Early Literacy Essential Instructional Strategies can be found at www.literacyessentials.org.

The professional learning experiences designed through the grant funding encompass several layers:

1. Literacy Coaches Training, involving blended intensive 4 day trainings, monthly coaches sessions, and online modules regarding the Literacy Essentials and coaching skills. This training was initially developed for coaches hired by intermediate school districts, but has expanded to include local school district coaches during the 2017-18 school year (<http://literacyessentials.org/coaching/>).
2. Online teacher training modules for each of the 10 Literacy Essentials, and video clips of the Literacy Essentials being implemented in Michigan classrooms for use by individual teachers, groups of teachers in professional learning networks, and coaches leading training with teacher groups (<http://literacyessentials.org/k-to-3/>).
3. Administrator modules are planned for development around essential practices that must be in place in schools in order to ensure effective implementation of the literacy essentials (<http://literacyessentials.org/schoolwide/>).

Work is also underway to finalize modules for Pre-K teachers and supervisors on the Literacy Essentials for pre-K instruction.

III. CRITERIA FOR SERVICES PROVIDED

A strong marketing plan must be both designed and implemented to ensure statewide awareness of the resources made available to all Michigan educators. Formal grant funding ends in September, 2018, so statewide marketing is both critical and timely. Within the state, there are approximately 23,000 pre-K-3 teachers who need to learn about and implement the Literacy Essentials, along with approximately 150 intermediate school district Literacy Coaches, and a currently unknown number (but likely upwards of 1,000 to 2,000) local district-level

coaches. Further, there are more than 2,000 building and central office administrators for whom training is needed.

The focus of the marketing plan and implementation will be to build awareness of the *Literacy Essentials* resources and training in all schools across Michigan and create a sense of urgency to implement these practices in every classroom, every day, with every child including the following:

- Build awareness of the *Learning Essentials* as the minimum tier-one instruction for each and every child, agnostic of curriculum.
- Build awareness of and drive enrollments of K-3 teachers in *Literacy Essentials Training Modules for Grades K-3*.
- Build awareness of and drive enrollments of pre-K teachers in *Early Literacy Essentials Training Modules for Pre-K* (not yet complete).

A. DELIVERABLES

We require three primary deliverables:

1. Marketing/Communications plan including
 - Message crafting/copywriting for advertising and communications
 - Implementation methods and timeline
 - Budget
2. Campaign creation (graphic design, messaging)/implementation/reporting
3. Collateral Material production (graphic design, messaging, print management)

Further, all assets created by the selected vendor must meet the following standards:

- Literacy Essential brand standards, which will be provided to the selected Vendor.
- Provide assets that enable current best practices for measurement and analysis of digital marketing performance using core elements of Marketing Automation Software (e.g., Hubspot, Marketo, etc).
- Web accessibility standards
- Develop results-oriented solutions that will build awareness and drive enrollments.

B. BUDGET

The budget for this work is flexible and dependent on a variety of factors. As a target for potential responders to this RFP, we estimate a monthly pattern of expensing approximately \$5,000 to \$10,000 a month in consulting and media buys.

IV. PROPOSAL INSTRUCTIONS

A. PROPOSAL CONTENT AND FORMAT

In order to simplify the evaluation process and obtain maximum comparability, *Michigan Virtual* requires that all responses to the RFP be organized in the manner and format described below. Any relevant supplemental information should be included as attachments. *Michigan*

Virtual is not subject to FOIA. Contents of proposals submitted are confidential and will not be disclosed to any parties outside of *Michigan Virtual*.

1. Business Information

- a. Describe your business including legal business name, year the business was organized, legal status (corporation, partnership, sole proprietorship, etc.) and state of corporation.
- b. Describe your organization's experience with not-for-profits related to our request.
- c. Describe commitments you will make to staff continuity, including your staff turnover experience in the last three years.

2. Proposal and Capabilities. Your proposal should also include the following as they relate to the deliverables we expect:

- a. Sample key messages, primary program elements and evaluation criteria
- b. Demonstrated expertise in and understanding of *Michigan Virtual* and the education industry
- c. Demonstrated experience in digital and traditional media outlets
- d. Brief case histories of your work with at least three clients that illustrate your ability and experience
- e. Representative list of current and former clients in K-12 education or related fields for whom you have worked in a similar vein, including independent contractors

3. Key Team Members. List of proposed team members, including biographies, billing rates and level of participation in the account.

4. Fee Proposal

- a. Proposed budget allocation per line item of deliverables and total cost of proposal.
- b. Explanation of your firm's billing procedures, including rates, mark-ups, etc.

5. Implementation Plan. Provide a draft plan, including timeline and responsible party for implementing your proposal. Include your practices that demonstrate how your firm meets or exceeds its clients' expectations.

6. Client References. Provide the names and contact information for a minimum of three similarly sized clients for reference purposes.

7. Nondisclosure Agreement (NDA). All firms wishing to submit a response to this RFP are encouraged to sign and submit *Michigan Virtual's* Nondisclosure Agreement along with their proposal in response to this RFP. A copy of the NDA is posted with this RFP on the *Michigan Virtual* website.

B. VENDOR SELECTION CRITERIA

The following factors will be considered by *Michigan Virtual* in making the selection.

- Preference given to Michigan-based businesses
- Fit between Vendor's experience and capabilities, and *Michigan Virtual's* deliverables and needs
- Vendor's understanding of work to be performed and ability to meet our goals and objectives
- Effectiveness of planned implementation approach

- Firm and personnel qualifications and experience, with weight given to experience of account team
- Quality of references
- Value delivered in proportion to fees proposed
- Completeness of the proposal

Michigan Virtual reserves the right to select the Vendor of its choosing, reflective of our understanding of needs, the audiences served and results desired rather than solely based on pricing or other combinations of factors. Further, this RFP does not obligate *Michigan Virtual* to award any contract. We reserve the right to cancel the RFP at our discretion.

C. RFP QUESTIONS, DUE DATES, CONTACT

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Please direct all correspondence and questions related to this RFP and the required elements as indicated below.

1. Emailed questions are due by Noon, Friday, March 30, 2018.
2. Responses to submitted questions will be posted on the website along with the original RFP.
3. One (1) electronic copy of your proposal sent by email to the contact below, and one (1) printed and signed hard copy of your proposal and a signed Non-disclosure Agreement delivered no later than Noon, Monday, April 16, 2018. Please note that the submission of the emailed materials will be the measure of on-time delivery rather than the arrival of the printed materials.

The single point of contact for RFP #03232018:

Dean Leutscher
 Process/Project Manager
Michigan Virtual
 3101 Technology Boulevard, Suite G, Lansing, MI 48910
dleutscher@michiganvirtual.org

Michigan Virtual reserves the right to not consider late or incomplete proposals. Amendments to proposals will be included in our review only when they are received by the above deadline.