



1601 S. Burdick Street, Kalamazoo, Michigan 49001-2711

**Michigan Works! Southwest
Workforce Development Program
Request for Proposal 2026-1**

Communications and Outreach Services

*Funding for activities identified in this RFP are made possible through
Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity, State of Michigan (LEO) funding*

**This RFP Notification Expires on
April 17, 2026 at 4:00PM EST**

**Michigan Works! Southwest Workforce Development Program
Request for Proposal (RFP) 2026-1**

Section 1: INTRODUCTION provides a summary of the context within which services requested are to be delivered within the Michigan Works! Southwest Area.

Section 2: SCOPE OF RFP provides a description of the requested services to be delivered in the Michigan Works! Southwest Area, funding levels, period of performance, target populations to be served, service delivery structure and expected deliverables.

Section 3: SOLICITATION SCHEDULE provides a timeline of key activities that will take place during the solicitation process.

Section 4: PROPOSAL REVIEW AND EVALUATION highlights the elements considered in the review and evaluation of the proposals.

Section 5: PROPOSAL section is to be completed and submitted.

Section 6: BUDGET SUMMARY describes costs, by line item category, to be submitted with proposal.

REFERENCES

These RFP instructions have incorporated supplemental resources including data and information on local workforce development activity. The following are enclosed as References:

- Reference # 1 Michigan Works! Southwest Employment and Training Programs –Line-Item Codes and Descriptions
- Reference # 2 Conflict of Interest Statement
- Reference # 3 Assurances, Certifications, and Stipulations
- Reference # 4 Request for Proposal (RFP) Appeals Procedure

Section 1 – INTRODUCTION

Michigan Works! Southwest is releasing funding for the development and implementation of a communications and outreach plan related to workforce development pathways and is placing high expectations that the entity selected will provide a level of professional services commensurate to the funding awarded.

The Michigan Works! Network is a demand driven workforce development system that serves businesses as the primary customer to ensure that employers have the skilled workers they need. It is based on the fundamental premise that in order for the state's employers to compete successfully in the international marketplace, they need well-developed-workers, well-educated students from our school systems, and skillfully-trained individuals coming from our public and private training providers. Through the Michigan Works! Demand Driven System and the implementation of the Michigan Industry Cluster Approach we will be able to better match employer needs with training provided to workers. A focus on businesses as a primary customer does not minimize our commitment to excellent customer service to our job seekers, instead it is through the utilization of this demand driven strategy that local businesses are engaged and Michigan Works! Agencies can effectively direct job seekers to appropriate training and stable job placements that lead to financial self-sufficiency.

The system includes Michigan Works! Service Centers in all counties across the state providing locally designed and operated services to meet local labor market needs.

- Employers seeking workers can post their job listings on the state-wide public labor exchange; Pure Michigan Talent Connect (PMTTC) available at <http://www.mitalent.org>.
- Job seekers can also post their resumes on PMTTC for review by employers who are recruiting workers.
- Dislocated workers can get help finding new jobs through labor market information and help with job seeking skills, such as resume writing assistance, and, as appropriate, in-demand skills training.
- Individuals receiving public assistance receive help in finding and maintaining employment.
- Young people can find information and assistance in making the transition from school to higher education or a long-term career.
- Individuals looking for training opportunities can utilize the state-wide Internet-based eligible training provider list; Michigan Training Connect (MiTC) available at <http://www.mitalent.org/mitc>.

The Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity (LEO) is the lead agency in the implementation of the statewide Michigan Works! Network. Locally, the County of Kalamazoo (Board of Commissioners) has been designated as the Grant Recipient by the State of Michigan to provide for the planning, implementation, delivery, and overall management of workforce development services for Branch, Calhoun, Kalamazoo, and St. Joseph Counties.

In accordance with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, or any successor legislation, Kalamazoo County as the local grant subrecipient designated the W.E. Upjohn Trustee Corporation (W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research) to act as both Administrative and Fiscal agent for employment and training funds awarded to the service area and as governed by Public Act 8 of 1967 agreement between the Michigan Counties of Branch, Calhoun, Kalamazoo, and St. Joseph.

The W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research, Center for Workforce Innovation and Solutions, otherwise identified as Michigan Works! Southwest provides the administrative and fiscal management duties for this Michigan Works! Agency. Michigan Works! Southwest is one of two Michigan Works! agencies that make up the State of Michigan's Prosperity Region 8.

The focus of Michigan Works! is to provide information and resources to enable customers – employers and job seekers – to achieve economic security. Services from the state's major workforce development programs are to be accessible in a seamless manner and a core set of services are to be available, free of charge, to all that seek them. Special attention is given to meeting the needs of veterans and individuals with disabilities. Generally, this is achieved through One-Stop Service Centers located throughout the State in each Michigan Works! Area. The One-Stop Service Centers (also referred to in Michigan as "Michigan Works! Service Centers") encourage co-location, functional alignment, integrated services, and a customer focus.

Section 2 – SCOPE OF RFP

Michigan Works! Southwest is seeking proposals for the development and implementation of communications and outreach plans to increase the awareness and knowledge of the multiple public workforce development programs and services provided through Michigan Works! Southwest within the counties of Branch, Calhoun, Kalamazoo and St. Joseph. Michigan Works! Southwest is committed to a multimedia strategy designed to inform multiple audiences.

A. OUTREACH GOALS

The successful bidder should describe the process for the promotion of employment and training services provided through multiple federal and state funding sources for programs operating within Michigan Works! Southwest. Once selected, the successful bidder will provide quarterly and annual reporting of implemented promotions with a focus on connections to job seekers and employers in the four-county service area of Michigan Works! Southwest. The successful bidder will target these audiences while promoting the value of services provided by Michigan Works! Southwest.

The focus of bidder narrative response should be how to achieve maximum awareness in the Southwest Michigan area, while targeting audiences of job seekers, employers and community partners. Proposals should demonstrate how the outreach solution will help Michigan Works! Southwest to meet this objective.

B. FUNDING

Funding levels identified in this RFP are preliminary estimates to be used for planning purposes only.

A level of funding for this project is \$45,000 per contract year. The budget for this project will not exceed this amount.

PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE

Services are projected to commence on or about July 1, 2026 and completed no later than June 30, 2029.

C. SUITABILITY

The bidder must have demonstrated qualifications and experience in outreach and communications, the use of multimedia (including video and still images), and engagement of multiple stakeholders.

D. TYPE OF AGREEMENT

Agreements resulting from this solicitation will be fixed, and a payment schedule will be negotiated upon award.

Section 3 – SOLICITATION SCHEDULE

A. SCHEDULE OF SOLICITATION ACTIVITIES

To the extent possible, the following schedule will be followed for the administration of this Request for Proposal:

RFP Instructions Released	Friday, March 13, 2026
Technical Assistance Deadline	Friday, March 20, 2026 by 4:00pm EST
Technical Assistance Responses Available	Tuesday, March 24, 2026 by 4:00pm EST
Notice of Intent to Bid Due	Friday, April 3, 2026 by 4:00pm EST
Proposals Due	Friday, April 17, 2026 by 4:00pm EST
Award Announcements	Approximately Friday, May 1, 2026

In addition, based on the discretion of the Michigan Works! Southwest Workforce Development Board RFP Review Committee, an interview process for bidders may be implemented and individual interviews with each bidding organization may be scheduled.

This schedule will be adhered to as closely as possible. However, Michigan Works! Southwest reserves the right to make revisions without prior notification.

B. SUBMISSION DETAILS AND DEADLINE

A Notice of Intent to Bid is an mandatory submission and must be emailed to MIWorks@upjohn.org prior to 4:00pm EST on Friday, April 3, 2026, for proposals to be considered.

Proposals must be submitted by 4:00pm EST, on April 17, 2026 to:

Amanda Rosenberg
MIWorks@upjohn.org

Proposals must include signature in an electronic copy via e-mail to MIWorks@upjohn.org. Please note: RFP 2026-1 in the subject line.

1. It is the responsibility of the interested bidder to ensure that the proposal is received by Michigan Works! Southwest by the date and time specified above.
2. Proposals must be complete, legible, and technically accurate at the time of submission. Each proposal will be reviewed as submitted. After a proposal is submitted, it may not be modified prior to review unless requested by Michigan Works! Southwest.
3. A proposal may be withdrawn from consideration for funding if such a request to do so is transmitted in writing to Amanda Rosenberg at MIWorks@upjohn.org. Please note: RFP 2026-1 in the subject line.

C. LATE PROPOSALS

Proposals received by Michigan Works! Southwest after 4:00 P.M. EST on the date specified may not be considered for award under this solicitation.

D. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Technical assistance will be provided for questions submitted by 4:00 p.m. EST, Friday, March 20, 2026. Only written questions submitted via email will be accepted. Responses that may have an impact on the interpretation or clarification of these RFP Instructions will be posted on the Michigan Works! Southwest website (<https://www.michiganworkssouthwest.org/rfps>).

For purposes of administering this solicitation, the individual responsible for responding to any question that may arise during the preparation of proposals in response to this RFP is Amanda Rosenberg at MIWorks@upjohn.org. Please note: RFP 2026-1 in the subject line.

E. PROPOSAL CONTENT AND ORGANIZATION

All proposals shall be prepared to ensure consistency and uniformity in terms of appearance and content. All proposals must be submitted in accordance with the following specifications.

- Proposals must be single-spaced in 11-point font with 1" margins all around.
- Pages should be numbered consecutively and not exceed 8 pages in length.
- Charts, Flowcharts and/or graphs may be used if they convey required information. These should be provided as attachments and are not included in the 8 page limit (see Section 5).
- Supplementary documentation as required by these RFP instructions is to be included as attachments to the proposal. However, do not provide additional information if it does not directly support the proposal narrative.
- All proposals submitted shall contain the following documents and be compiled in the following order:
 1. Cover Page and Proposal Certification (Section 5) (Do not provide a separate cover letter)
 2. Narrative Response (Section 5)
 3. Proposed Budget Summary (Form A)
 4. Conflict of Interest Statement (Reference #2)
 5. Other Documents (as appropriate)

F. DISCLAIMER

This RFP does not commit Michigan Works! Southwest to award a contract or pay any cost incurred in the preparation of a proposal. Michigan Works! Southwest reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals or parts of proposals received as a result of this request. Michigan Works! Southwest can cancel this RFP, in part or in its entirety, if it is in the best interest to do so.

Additionally, Michigan Works! Southwest reserves the right to make an award without further discussion of the proposals submitted. Therefore, proposals should be submitted initially on the most favorable terms, from both technical and price standpoints, which the bidder can propose. Michigan Works! Southwest contemplates awarding the responsible bidder with the highest total points.

SECTION 4 – PROPOSAL REVIEW & EVALUATION

In addition to meeting the technical requirements of the proposal submission, proposals will be evaluated and selected based on reasonableness and competitiveness.

Evaluation of each proposal will be based on the following criteria:

	<u>Possible Points</u>
<p>Qualifications and Experience Bidder has successfully completed similar projects and has the qualifications necessary to undertake this project. Bidder has appropriate staff/resources to develop outreach materials and reporting in the scheduled time period.</p>	40
<p>Suitability of Proposed Services The proposed solutions meet the needs and criteria set forth in the RFP. The proposal demonstrates artistic and innovative design, user-friendly materials, that engage multiple targets. Expertise in recommending and communicating appropriate solutions, along with a full timeline including milestones/stages of the proposal, and attachments of sample work.</p>	40
<p>Reasonableness of Cost The price is commensurate with the value offered by the bidder, directly related to services required in the RFP, and adequate to support implementation.</p>	20
Total Points Possible	100

Information provided by a bidder that is willingly, knowingly, and purposely false, inaccurate, or misleading will be grounds for not considering a proposal for funding, for not awarding a contract, or for canceling a contract, if awarded.

Code of Conduct and Conflict of Interest Policies held by Michigan Works! Southwest will be in effect throughout all phases of this procurement process.

A. REVIEW AND APPEAL PROCESS

Bidders wishing to appeal the final funding decision resulting from this solicitation must submit their written request to the RFP Technical Assistance Contact at Michigan Works! Southwest Agency, 1601 S. Burdick St., Kalamazoo MI 49001-2711, within ten (10) calendar days following the date of the written notification of the funding recommendation.

The request for appeal shall include a clear description of the grievance and basis for appeal. The request shall be signed by the bidder’s authorized signatory. The request will be processed through the established appeal process for the Michigan Works! Southwest Area (Reference #4, Request for Proposal (RFP) Appeals Procedure).

SECTION 5 – PROPOSAL

I. General Information – COVER PAGE

Applicant Organization	Federal ID Number
Street Address	Suite
City, State	Zip Code
Name and Title of Bidder’s Authorized Representative	
Telephone Number	
Email address	

Certification

I certify that I have been authorized to submit and sign this proposal on behalf of the submitting organization(s). In addition, I certify that the entire proposal is true and accurate and to the best of my knowledge the projected costs are reasonable and necessary for the proposed Service and do not duplicate other funds already available, or which will be available, to pay the projected costs. I also certify that my organization will implement this project in compliance with the stipulations and guidelines set forth by Michigan Works! Southwest.

Signature of Authorized Representative (digital accepted)

Date

II. Qualifications and Experience

Please provide the following information.

1. Describe the organization's background, organizational capacity, experience, and expertise to produce the requested materials.
Response not to exceed one (1) page in length. Up to five (5) attachments may be included to demonstrate previous work completed.
2. What type of team will be assigned to this project? What will each person's role be?
Response not to exceed 1/2 page in length.
3. Provide references of clients that the organization has completed similar projects for.
Response not to exceed 1/2 page in length.

III. Proposed Services

1. Through a robust innovative strategy, describe, in detail, the organization's plan for the promotion of employment and training services provided through multiple fund sources for programs operating within Michigan Works! Southwest. The focus of the bidder's narrative should be how to achieve maximum awareness in the Southwest Michigan area, while targeting audiences of job seekers, employers and community partners.

Response not to exceed three (3) pages in length. Up to five (5) attachments may be included to demonstrate proposal.

2. Provide a timeline for the proposed plan. The proposal response should include milestones/stages of the process, including an annual report for each contracted year, with the MWSW services ending September 30, along with an estimated delivery and implementation schedule for services.

Response not to exceed one (1) page in length.

IV. Reasonableness of Cost – Fees and Charges

1. Please describe all the costs of the proposed services, as summarized on form A.
Response not to exceed two (2) pages in length.

The Michigan Works! Southwest Agency may amend, add, or delete provisions to this Statement of Work prior to the execution of any agreement that may result from this solicitation.

Section 6 - BUDGET SUMMARY

A. BUDGET INFORMATION AND FORMS

The **Budget Summary** (Form A) provides the summary of line-item cost, by cost category. This form has been produced in an electronic spreadsheet format (Microsoft Excel). The budget summary should reflect expenses for the period of performance stated in the proposal. The term of this funding cycle extends from July 1, 2026 through June 30, 2027.

For purpose of this RFP, expenditures identified must comply with the limitations on certain costs as defined by regulation.

Only costs directly related to outreach and communications, allowable per 2 CFR 200 and properly supported with back-up data and records will be allowable charges.

Indirect Costs

Each item of cost incurred for the same purpose shall be treated consistently in like circumstances either as a direct or indirect cost in order to avoid possible double charging of Federal awards. Guidelines for determining direct and indirect costs charged to Federal awards are provided in OMB 2 CFR Part 200 Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards; Subpart E – Cost Principles §200.413 and §200.414.

If a bidder is requesting for indirect costs to be considered, a complete justification of indirect charges is to be submitted as an attachment at the time of submission.

B. LINE ITEM CODES AND DESCRIPTIONS

A chart of “Line-Item Codes and Descriptions” provides a description of the types of cost that are most likely to be included in the respective line item of the budget documents. Because these definitions may differ from the descriptions that may be used by other organizations, please consult Reference #1, Michigan Works! Southwest, Chart of Line-Item Codes and Descriptions, when assigning costs to budget line items.