REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP):

Opportunity Name	Detroit Regional Partnership (DRP) – Integrated Communications and PR Support
Contract Duration	February 2027 through January 2028, with the opportunity to extend.
Estimated Budget	Approximately $10,000 per month
Direct Proposals to	Rebecca White, VP of Marketing and Communications
Location	Remote, Detroit Metro Region
Key DRP Contacts	Rebecca White, VP of Marketing and Communications rebecca.white@detroitregionalpartnership.com Justin Robinson, President and CEO justin.robinson@detroitregionalpartnership.com
Timeline	A. Request for proposals release date: 10/23/2026 B. Deadline for submitting proposals: 11/11/2026 by 5:00pm EST C. Delivery Method for submitting proposals: E-mail proposals to rebecca.white@detroitregionalpartnership.com. In the email subject line, please include: "Proposal for DRP Integrated Communications Support." Proposals submitted in other forms will not be accepted. D. Contract and Payment Schedule: Once proposals are received, DRP will evaluate proposals and select a vendor, develop a statement of work, and set contract terms, including a payment schedule. A monthly invoiced payment schedule is anticipated. This is an RFP for a retainer contract. E. Notification of Award: It is expected that a decision to select the successful bidder will be made approximately within 2 weeks of the closing date of this RFP. Upon conclusion of final negotiations with the successful bidder(s), all offerors submitting proposals in response to this Request will be informed, via e-mail, of the decision.

OVERVIEW AND PURPOSE

The Detroit Regional Partnership (DRP) is a nonprofit economic development organization dedicated to attracting private investment, creating jobs, and advancing economic growth across the 11-county Detroit Region. Representing 348 communities, 5.5 million residents, and a workforce of 2.6 million, DRP works with businesses, site selectors, local governments, economic development organizations, utilities, workforce partners, and other regional stakeholders to strengthen Southeast Michigan's position as a destination for business investment.

Since its founding, DRP has helped secure $10.8 billion in investment, 42,300 jobs, and $3 billion in payroll for the region. In 2025, the organization opened 219 new projects, hosted 102 prospect visits, and won 20 projects representing $343 million in investment and 2,867 jobs.

DRP's mission remains focused on growing jobs and investment. However, the conditions that determine a region's competitiveness have evolved. Companies evaluate not only a region's assets and economic advantages, but also its

capacity to deliver coordinated solutions, prepared sites, available infrastructure, responsive local partners, and predictable development processes. Increasingly, the work required to win investment begins well before a company enters the project pipeline.

In response, DRP is evolving its operating model to complement its core business attraction activities with a more deliberate focus on strengthening the conditions that enable investment. This approach is organized around two complementary strategic priorities:

> **Grow:** Generate and capture business investment and expansion opportunities by positioning the Detroit Region as a premier business location, engaging companies and site selectors, and building a pipeline of opportunities for job creation and economic growth.
>
> **Ready:** Strengthen the region's capacity to receive investment by advancing site and community readiness, addressing barriers, and supporting the conditions that allow opportunities to move successfully from consideration to execution.

As DRP's work evolves, so too must the way we tell the region's story. Communications plays a critical role in both generating opportunities for growth and building the conditions that support it. This means positioning the Detroit Region as a premier business location, reaching and influencing corporate decision-makers and site selectors, and creating awareness and interest that helps bring new investment opportunities into the pipeline. It also means demonstrating the broader value of economic growth, building understanding of what makes a region competitive, and making the benefits of investment tangible and relevant to the communities and people it serves.

Delivering on these objectives requires a connected approach to storytelling and communications - one that translates regional intelligence and competitive advantages into compelling market positioning, elevates the real experiences of businesses and communities, and equips regional partners to communicate a shared vision of growth and prosperity in ways that resonate with their own audiences. It also requires DRP to articulate its evolving role and value clearly, while ensuring that its programs, leadership, and regional partners reinforce a consistent and credible narrative.

DRP is seeking an integrated communications partner to help advance this work, connecting market positioning, regional growth storytelling, organizational positioning, thought leadership, and programmatic communications into a coordinated effort that strengthens the region's visibility, credibility, and competitiveness.

Communications Goals and Audiences

2027+ Communications Goals:

1. **Elevate the Detroit Region's competitive position.** Strengthen awareness and consideration of the Detroit Region as a premier location for business investment and expansion, communicating its competitive advantages, industry strengths, and investment opportunities to corporate decision-makers, site selectors, and other national and international audiences. Leverage regional intelligence, business success stories, and demonstrated results to build credibility and generate market interest.
2. **Build a compelling and relatable regional growth narrative.** Demonstrate how business investment and job creation contribute to regional prosperity through credible, accessible storytelling that connects economic growth to businesses, workers, and communities. Support a more informed public understanding of responsible development and the value of economic development.
3. **Establish DRP's leadership and evolving value proposition.** Build understanding of DRP's expanded approach to regional competitiveness, demonstrate how its programs and partnerships deliver value, and reinforce its role as a trusted regional leader and partner in advancing economic growth.

4. **Mobilize partners and strengthen stakeholder engagement.** Equip regional partners, business leaders, community voices, and other stakeholders to communicate shared priorities and advance coordinated action. Reinforce DRP's value to current and prospective investors, philanthropic partners, and public-sector stakeholders.

Priority Audiences:

DRP's communications efforts must reach distinct audiences whose decisions, participation, and perceptions influence the region's ability to attract investment and sustain economic growth:

- **Business investment decision-makers:** Corporate executives responsible for location, expansion, and capital investment decisions; corporate real estate and location strategy teams; site selection consultants; industrial developers; and decision-makers within DRP's targeted industries.
- **Local and regional economic development partners:** County and municipal economic development professionals; mayors, county executives, and local elected officials; municipal planning, zoning, and permitting officials; and organizations responsible for industrial site development, infrastructure, and business support.
- **Regional business and institutional leaders:** Executives from major regional employers; chambers of commerce and business associations; utilities and infrastructure providers; workforce development organizations; and education and training institutions whose participation is important to regional competitiveness.
- **Residents and community voices:** Residents and workers in communities experiencing or considering new investment, along with neighborhood and civic organizations that can help communicate local priorities, opportunities, and concerns.
- **Investors, funders, and public-sector decision-makers:** Current and prospective DRP corporate investors; philanthropic foundations; county and municipal funding partners; and state and federal officials and agency leaders whose decisions influence economic development policy, resources, and investment.
- **Media and influential messengers:** Local and regional news outlets; national business and economic development media; industry and trade publications; and business, civic, and community leaders who can credibly communicate the region's strengths and the value of economic growth.

The selected firm will be expected to recommend how communications priorities, messages, channels, and engagement approaches should differ across these audiences, recognizing that some are prospective customers for the region, others are partners in delivering its competitiveness agenda, and others are essential to building public understanding and confidence.

SCOPE OF WORK & DELIVERABLES

How the scope is organized

The scope has five parts. Parts 1 through 4 are communications deliverables; Part 5 covers project management and reporting across all of them.

General conditions that apply to every deliverable:

- All deliverables are subject to DRP review and approval before use.

- DRP will own all work product, including the story library, toolkits, and frameworks, and will maintain them after the term.
- Quantities below are sized for the 12-month term. Proposers may suggest alternatives with a rationale.
- Where the scope calls for a count (for example, articles or events), the count is a target for planning and pricing; DRP and the firm will confirm priorities quarterly.

Part 1: Growth Narrative and Coalition Storytelling

Build a clear, consistent narrative about business growth and its impact on communities and equip Regional Growth Coalition communities and partners to share it. The narrative should reflect DRP's position that business and industrial growth is key to regional prosperity and should help audiences see what modern business investment looks like today and how it can strengthen the communities where it happens. It must be consistent with the Coalition's principles: communities decide what kind of growth they want, and DRP wants to share and lift their stories.

Messaging and strategy

Audience and messaging framework. Identify priority audiences and develop a core narrative with tailored messages, proof points, and language guidance for each. The framework must account for outdated perceptions of modern manufacturing and industry, and for communities that have not yet decided what kind of growth fits them. It should also reconcile a pro-growth position with the principle that communities decide, and proposers are asked to explain how they would do this.

Activate the Growth Coalition. Develop an activation plan covering a partner kickoff, ongoing engagement and a regular cadence of new content; equip partners and leaders to speak from a shared narrative; and recommend simple ways to track partner adoption and reach, including a central resource hub.

Messaging and amplification toolkit. Package campaign content (story frames, pro-growth messaging, principles and proof points) into ready-to-use, locally adaptable materials such as messaging guides, social posts, newsletter templates, op-ed and letter-to-the-editor frameworks, board-report one-pagers and staff briefing cards, including an audience-specific version for state and local policymakers. Ease of use is a requirement.

Extend DRP's storytelling. Develop narrative frames (for example growth and the tax base, the cost of standing still, community-driven growth, community readiness, good jobs, and a region with a plan); identify and prepare local ambassadors and examples; keep the tone credible by acknowledging community frustration, avoiding partisanship and leading with community voice and evidence; adapt content for local media, partner newsletters and social channels; and prepare to extend messaging toward residents and communities in later 2027.

Storytelling and media

Story library. Gather, develop, and organize 8-10 stories, using the criteria above, into a library that DRP will own and maintain after launch. Stories should be usable in the ambassador media series and in earned media.

Earned media plan and placement support. Provide a plan for media coverage of business growth and community impact, including target outlets, story angles, and timing, with support for pitching, spokesperson preparation, and follow-up.

Part 2: DRP's Expanded Business Model Communications Integration

This part ensures that communications keep pace with the next iteration of DRP's business model and carry its logic to external audiences. DRP will supply finalized framing and priorities as they are confirmed.

Narrative and messaging architecture. Translate DRP's shift into plain-language messaging for investors, partners, communities, and policymakers: that regions now compete by strengthening the conditions for investment as well as by marketing themselves, and that Grow and Ready work together as one system. Messaging must preserve one regional voice across global perception, community engagement, and the public case for growth, and must make DRP's lane clear alongside statewide and local partners.

Competitiveness intelligence storytelling. Work with DRP's research team to turn outputs of the regional competitiveness research (benchmarking, project debriefs, readiness data, and policy analysis) into thought leadership, briefing materials, and data-driven stories that show partners and policymakers what the market is telling the region and what is being done about it.

Proof-of-results storytelling. DRP expects 2027 to be a year of demonstrating that regional readiness converts into deals, faster approvals, and communities that say yes. Develop case studies and communications materials that make that case with results, aimed at corporate investors, philanthropy, and state policymakers, including communication of DRP's quarterly scorecard and unit-economics measures as DRP develops them.

Convening and partner communications support. Support communications for DRP's regional convenings, including the Coalition and its partner council of the 11 counties and the City of Detroit, and for alignment with statewide business and economic development organizations, MEDC, county and local EDOs, and regional planning partners.

Perception and message-effectiveness measurement. Propose and carry out a practical method (for example, media analysis, social listening, or a brief survey) to establish a baseline and track movement in perception in target markets and in community sentiment toward growth, so results can feed DRP's system-level outcome measures.

Part 3: Thought Leadership, Media Relations and Ambassador Voice

Thought leadership and integrated counsel.

- Research and maintain a list of speaking opportunities, and work with DRP to select which to pursue; develop up to one speaking nomination per quarter.
- Conduct individual or group spokesperson training sessions for key DRP subject matter experts, including CEO.
- Provide dedicated integrated communications support and counsel, including as-needed meetings with DRP executive leadership for CEO support and strategic planning, and strategic audit and recommendations on components of the DRP marketing plan.

Investor, stakeholder, and policy engagement support. Adapt campaign content for legislative briefings, stakeholder presentations, partner communications, and investor engagement materials, using a consistent call to action: Invest in the DRP. Include a plan for engaging the new state administration and legislature in the first half of the term.

Earned media strategy and outreach. Develop and implement a proactive earned media strategy targeting priority regional outlets, as well as national, trade, and site-selection publications. Pitch story concepts, manage media relationships, and coordinate placements.

Paid media strategy and coordination. Support planning and placement of approximately three to five paid advertorials, aligned with campaign messaging, including content development, placement coordination, and alignment of paid and earned messaging.

Regional ambassador media series. Develop and execute a coordinated thought-leadership series featuring regional ambassador voices, including the campaign editorial calendar, identification and coordination of contributors, drafting of op-eds and contributed articles, and media outreach and placement in priority publications. Plan for one placement

approximately every four weeks, rotating across three themes: pro-growth and pro-economic development; long-term regional vision and strategy; and DRP programs in action. Proposers should show how DRP's expanded business model and competitiveness content fits within these themes.

Part 4: Core DRP Programmatic Communications

DRP's communications program supports its four core business units: Business Development, Talent Solutions, Site Readiness (VIP by DRP), and Research. Its 2027 priorities are to build consistent national awareness of DRP's work, strengthen DRP's presence at key events and with industry audiences, and sustain adoption of DRP's flagship programs and tools, including VIP by DRP and the Industrial Development Toolkit released in 2026. The contractor will support the following across all business units:

Activity	Scope
Earned media	Identify angles, draft pitches, and secure interviews and placements for success stories, VIP site news and updates, talent and workforce initiatives, and research findings. Produce one media-focused material per month.
Paid media	Support planning and placement of limited paid advertorial content aligned with campaign messaging, including content development, placement research and coordination, and alignment with earned messaging.
Thought leadership	Identify and secure one speaking nomination per quarter for DRP leaders and subject matter experts.
Event support	Support events (estimated 8 per year) where DRP business units will have varying levels of presence, including identifying speaking opportunities, amplifying event messaging, and pitching media on DRP's presence and speaking roles with the aim of earning coverage.

Part 5: Project Management, Measurement, and Reporting

The firm will lead project management across Parts 1 through 4, including:

- Weekly status updates via email and participation in regular status calls with DRP staff.
- Coordination with external partners and contributors as needed.
- Tracking of media placements and performance metrics.
- A monthly reconciled list of deliverables achieved and outstanding items, reported by part so DRP can attribute work to Grow and Ready.
- Additional performance reports and project management support as needed to ensure successful execution.

DRP Responsibilities

DRP will assign a day-to-day contact, provide timely review and approval, provide access to staff and subject matter experts, share brand guidelines and relevant research and data, and make introductions to ambassadors, partners, and communities.

TERM AND RENEWAL

The initial term is February 1, 2027 through January 31, 2028. At its sole discretion, DRP may extend the agreement for additional 12-month terms, subject to satisfactory performance, available funding, and agreement on scope and fees. DRP will give notice of its intent to renew at least 30 days before the end of the then-current term.

PROPOSAL CONTENT AND SUBMISSION

Proposals should be prepared as simply as possible, provide a concise description of the bidder's capabilities to produce deliverables, and include the following:

1. Name of the firm, list of principals, and brief biographies on the staff that will be executing the specific scopes of work.
2. If more than one firm, a clear description of the roles and responsibilities of each firm for the project and a brief description of the firm's history or work together on similar projects.
3. Description of the steps the bidder will take to accomplish the scope of work within the proposed timeline.
4. A detailed budget broken down by the deliverables, including a proposal for the schedule of payment. Please include all anticipated meetings in the budget. Please include hourly rate sheet if applicable.
5. Disclosure of any potential conflicts of interest.

Note: Examples of work may be included as an appendix.

RFP REVIEW PROCESS:

The application is a preliminary mechanism used to determine the suitability of a service provider for funding. The review process involves:

A. **Preliminary Screening**
To be considered for funding you must submit information in the proposal format. Based on your response, an evaluation team will determine whether further consideration of the proposal is warranted.

B. **Follow-up / Fact-Finding Documentation**
Upon analysis of your completed application and budget, you may be asked by DRP to submit additional information or details to the evaluation team or to participate in a call or web meeting to discuss your proposal.

C. **Evaluation Process**
Proposals will be scored using a pre-determined scoring matrix by an evaluation committee based on the below criteria:

- Total Cost: 30 points maximum
  Since the basis of the award to service providers is a competitive process, the proposed cost will be the primary selection criteria. Proposers must submit the expenses related to producing each of the items identified in the scope of work/deliverables. Please break down project costs into two general categories:

- Execution costs refer to salaries, wages, fringe benefits and related costs of the overall program management, program coordination, and general administrative functions.
- Ancillary costs refer to all costs not attributed to execution costs. This can include costs such as travel, registration fees, meeting fees, etc.

- Description of Deliverables: 30 points maximum
  Provide a description of how your organization intends to fulfill the scope of work and deliverables associated with this project and other relevant services provided by your organization. Describe how your approach will meet the expectations identified in the previous sections. Indicate if any work will be contracted to other organizations.

- Project Team & Client Engagement Process: 20 points maximum
  DRP expects the service provider to have staff in their employ who have credentials and the capacity to perform the required services. Provide a description of the proposed project team, including names, titles, and role in the project and the planned engagement process with DRP staff throughout the project lifecycle.

- Past Performance & Experience: 20 points maximum
  Please provide an organizational overview of experience and demonstrate the credentials and capacity to perform the required work. Provide two case studies (attachments or links) to past projects on similar work. Please provide the same information for any individuals or businesses outside of your own organization that will be contracted for any portion of this project.

Evaluation Scoring:

Total Cost	30
Description of Deliverables	30
Project Team & Client Engagement Process	20
Past Performance & Experience	20
Total Points	100

DRP may invite finalists to interview or present. DRP reserves the right to negotiate scope and fees with the selected firm.

Additional Factors: Content developed will be considered intellectual property and will be owned by DRP. Consultants must also commit to open communication with DRP about delivery dates, launch dates, and any contingency plans should delivery dates need to be adjusted. Proposals should include pricing, time estimates, and capacity for all sections and activities within the RFP.