

Request for Proposals

National Forest Foundation Creative & Paid Media Agency

Background and Purpose:

With a vision of maintaining healthy, resilient forests and grasslands, the National Forest Foundation undertakes vitally important work – every year, we treat thousands of acres of forests for wildfire resiliency, we improve thousands of miles of trails for enhanced recreational experiences, and we plant millions of trees. By working in 154 different forests, our impact is felt locally and nationally, ensuring these awe-inspiring places continue to provide clean water for more than 60 million people, drive local and regional economies, and provide a place of solace and recreation for all.

The NFF is deep in developing the organization’s next five-year strategic plan. Once developed, this plan will provide the roadmap for success in accomplishing our mission over the next five years. A key component of this plan will be establishing the NFF as a brand that stands out and leads with storytelling and impact. We look forward to engaging deeply with our creative partner to make this pillar of our strategic plan come to life.

Regarding our big picture marketing strategy and plan, the foundational work has been developed related to audience personas, target markets, brand positioning, and a brand awareness study. We believe this will save significant onboarding and startup time as our intention is not to revisit these pieces of our marketing strategy.

Lastly, the NFF has begun the process of redesigning the organization’s website. This effort will create a best-in-class user experience highlighting the importance of National Forests and the NFF’s work, connecting them to our key audiences and inspiring action.

This Request for Proposals is for creative services related to the mission of the National Forest Foundation. The National Forest Foundation (NFF) seeks to enter into an indefinite quantity/ indefinite delivery Master Rate Agreement (MRA) with a creative partner to develop brand and conversion campaigns and manage paid media to support our impact-driven mission objectives. The partner will provide services to NFF via executed work orders under the MRA. Specifications and requirements for this work are detailed below.

INVESTMENT

The NFF sees this work as a key to our future success and will invest accordingly. We have set a maximum annual budget of \$500,000 for this relationship, not including ad placement. Over time this budget will increase as our brand grows and additional opportunities arise.

Price will be one of several critical components in awarding the contract and those proposals that fully satisfy the Foundation’s objectives and requirements for less than the fully allocated budget will be viewed favorably.

Note: Recognizing the philanthropic nature of the NFF’s work, it is possible for agencies to include an “in-kind” donation of labor to offset the total cost of the project. Such a donation is not a requirement of submission and all submissions will be considered on their merits.

I. WORK OVERVIEW AND REQUIREMENTS

CREATIVE & ADVERTISING OBJECTIVES

The NFF is seeking a creative partner to assist in the concepting, development, and delivery of tentpole campaigns to strengthen our brand and convert targeted, aware audiences to organizational supporters (email, donors, volunteers, event attendees, engaged social followers).

This partner will also develop the strategy and creative, and execute the advertising spend tied to tentpole campaigns, Google Grant, and any NFF brand related advertising spend.

Finally, this partner will take on the ownership of our “always on” digital lead generation campaign aimed at email capture for our target audiences. This effort consists of digital ad development and placement, incentive ideation for the campaign offer, and campaign reporting.

NFF’S VISION OF SUCCESS

A successful partnership will allow for the step function amplification of the NFF brand, reaching millions of targeted individuals and inspiring them to action.

The result of this partnership will be a year-over-year increase in aided and unaided awareness among key audiences and in key markets, and the effective filling of our marketing/fundraising funnel with prospects that convert to donors.

Additionally, this partnership should:

- Establish the NFF as the leader in forest conservation in the United States,
- Provide campaign-aligned opportunities for earned media,
- Align with NFF’s Advancement team to support every level of the philanthropic pyramid.

SCOPE OF WORK

Specific anticipated projects the partner will assist with include, but are not limited to:

- Develop the strategy and concepts, creative assets, and undertake specific execution for tentpole campaigns – Earth Month, National Forest Week, National Public Lands Day, Year End fundraising appeal.
 - Strategy and Concepts – develop creative approaches to each campaign designed to target and engage key audiences. Provide Segmentation, Timelines, Budgets, and Channel recommendations.
 - Creative Asset Development – apply the campaign themes for social/digital, email, print, OOH, etc.
 - Execution – execute digital, print, and OOH ad buys.

- Develop strategy and creative assets, and manage ad buy (primarily Meta and Google) for “always on” lead generation campaign.

Potential future projects that partner may assist with, as budget allows, include but are not limited to: (Provide separate budget for this work)

- Research and execute opportunities to expand distribution for NFF magazine, Light & Seed®
- Miscellaneous graphic design services for document design, infographics
- Continued message development and evolution of NFF brand and key messages
- Storytelling through video production to support the brand and tentpole campaigns

II. REQUIRED COMPONENTS

Information Requested

If interested in submitting a bid for this project, Bidders must include the following information in their proposals:

- Agency capabilities and experience
- Team structure and bios for project team, including any subcontractors to be used
- High level approach to tentpole campaign concept development
- Outline of how you will measure success
- Relevant work examples
- Schedule of Services along with applicable units and rates for each service

Contractor Qualifications

- Past Experience – Please provide a brief explanation of previous work with brands in the nonprofit or outdoor space, with particular focus paid to brand and conversion campaigns and their effectiveness.
- Company’s Competitive Advantage – Why the NFF should partner with you? Clearly communicate that you get us, our audience, and our goals.
- Measuring Success – How will we know we’ve succeeded? What KPIs are on your dashboard?
- References – Please provide three professional references that can speak to past performance as it relates to NFF’s marketing objectives.

Fee Structure

Bidders shall submit a comprehensive schedule of services provided by the Bidder. The schedule should list all relevant information related to services, units, rates, and personnel, as applicable. Bidders shall indicate that rates provided will be firm for a period of 1 year with an annual option for the Bidder (if selected) and NFF to negotiate an increase of MRA rates. Such increases will be agreed upon in a signed written amendment to the MRA. No increases shall be allowed that exceed 5 percent.

III. SUBMISSION, EVALUATION, AND CONTACTS

Contractor Selection Process

This is a request for proposals only and bids furnished do not bind NFF in any way. This request does not commit NFF to pay any costs incurred in the preparation or submission of the proposal or to contract for supplies or services. NFF may, in its sole discretion, choose not to award a contract to any bidders.

NFF will use the Evaluation Factors below to review bids. Based on the outcomes of that evaluation process, NFF will notify successful and unsuccessful bidders by June 20, 2025, and will prepare a separate contract document with the selected bidder. No agreement will exist between the NFF and any Bidder until a MRA is signed by both parties.

Evaluation Factors and Relative Importance

The following criteria will be used in the evaluation of submitted proposals, ordered from highest weighting (level 3) to lowest weighting (level 1).

Level 3 Criteria

- Creative approach to reaching and engaging key audiences as outlined in Section I and the Scope of Work
- Effective proposed use of advertising dollars

Level 2 Criteria

- Agency price
- Previous work history and examples provided

Level 1 Criteria

- References

Bid Submission & Requirements

Submit pdf versions of bids via email to Jeff Zanelli at Marketingandcommunications@nationalforests.org by 11:59 pm ET, Wednesday, May 21 with email subject of "NFF Creative Agency RFP."

Bids should follow the following naming conventions: (Agency name) – (Date of Submission).pdf

One-hundred-page decks are difficult to distill into cogent key messages. As such, being great marketers, your submission should be as brief as possible while addressing the needs outlined in this RFP. If necessary, additional resources can be included in an appendix.

Finally, we are unable to meet with agencies prior to bid submissions. With a considerable number of proposals expected, it is impossible to give everyone equal time to discuss the details of the project.

IV. AGREEMENT

Post-Selection and Contracting Process

Once a selected Bidder is identified, the NFF will work with the selected Bidder to prepare and sign a Master Rate Agreement. No contractual relationship shall exist until the MRA is signed by both parties. The initial MRA term is expected to be two years in length and begin on July 1, 2025. At the end of the initial MRA term, NFF shall have the option of entering into 3 additional one-year extensions of the MRA, not to extend beyond June 30, 2030.

Agreement Structure

As outlined above, the desired outcome of this request for proposals is for the NFF to enter into a Master Rate Agreement (MRA) with the selected Bidder. The MRA will be a no-cost, indefinite delivery/ indefinite quantity agreement. The NFF and the MRA Contractor will enter into funding specific work orders that specify services being requested from the Contractor. The NFF cannot guarantee any minimum amounts or work requests to be placed under the MRA.

V. GENERAL

Equal Opportunity Provider

In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, the National Forest Foundation is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, political beliefs, or disability.