

**Finance Authority of Maine**  
**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**  
**Marketing Communications Agency**  
**May 16, 2023**

**I. INTRODUCTION**

**A. General Information**

The Finance Authority of Maine ("FAME") is an independent state agency that develops and administers programs related to the financing of both business and higher education in the State of Maine. FAME's primary audiences are Maine businesses and lenders seeking financing or credit enhancement, as well as students, families, and schools seeking financial resources for higher education. FAME's primary goal is to expand opportunities for Maine residents and businesses to grow Maine's economy. FAME has been helping Maine people succeed for 40 years. To learn more about FAME, please visit [FAMEmaine.com](http://FAMEmaine.com).

FAME is seeking the services of a full-service marketing firm (Vendor) to serve as its marketing agency for most, but not all, of its programs. FAME has some in-house marketing capability and capacity, but has many projects whereby it wishes to collaborate and/or contract out all or part of the marketing process with an outside expert.

Submission of a proposal indicates acceptance by the firm of the conditions contained in this request for proposals ("RFP"). There is no expressed or implied obligation for FAME to reimburse responding firms for any expenses incurred in preparing proposals in response to this RFP. All information contained in a respondent's submission must be factual and accurate. Misrepresentation of facts may be grounds for dismissal from consideration.

**B. Term of Engagement**

A three-year contractual engagement is contemplated, subject to recommendation of FAME staff and satisfactory negotiation of terms. FAME will reserve the right to terminate the contract during any engagement period.

**II. NATURE OF SERVICES REQUIRED**

FAME is seeking a full-service marketing firm to provide marketing services on an as needed basis. This RFP includes services for NextGen 529<sup>®\*</sup> as well as other FAME programs.

## **Background**

FAME’s extensive business, education, and financial wellness programs are all intended to help Maine people grow their businesses, afford higher education, and build their financial wellness to do so.

As part of FAME’s mission, we encourage Maine residents to plan for future college expenses by, among other things, becoming financially capable and, as appropriate, opening NextGen accounts and regularly contributing to those accounts. We require a marketing agency with social marketing experience – a proven ability to create marketing programs that encourage behavior change.

\*Note: NextGen 529 marketing has some restrictions and requires approvals from third parties. NextGen is designed to comply with the requirements for treatment as a qualified tuition program under Section 529 of the Internal Revenue Code and is administered by FAME. Section 529 plans are tax-advantaged investment vehicles that involve the sale of municipal securities which are subject to various state and federal securities and other laws and regulations. In particular, advertising must comply with the applicable rules of the Municipal Securities Rulemaking Board and applicable state and federal securities laws and regulations and may also be subject to the rules of certain self-regulatory organizations. To learn more about NextGen, please visit [www.NextGenforME.com](http://www.NextGenforME.com).

## **Description of Services**

Marketing Firm (Vendor) will:

- Provide a single point of contact (account executive)
- Help coordinate, develop, and execute comprehensive annual marketing plans to achieve strategic plan goals for:
  - Business programs
  - Education programs
  - Student loan programs
  - NextGen 529
- Provide services to include, but may not be limited to:
  - Market research
  - Marketing strategy
  - Concept development
  - Digital marketing (including social media) strategy and implementation
  - Writing, editing, proofreading
  - Graphic design
  - Website development for FAMEmaine.com, NextGenforME.com, and ClaimYourFuture.org
  - A new Website build in Gutenberg WordPress for the front end “brochure-ware” of a statewide financial portal
  - Sourcing vendors to provide additional services as applicable (e.g. video, signage, printing, mail services, etc.)
  - Press opportunity development and execution for certain campaigns
  - Direct mail coordination

- Media placement
- Measurement and reporting on results
- Account management

Current marketing plans can be requested by contacting Director of Business Development, Elizabeth Vanderweide at [evanderweide@famemaine.com](mailto:evanderweide@famemaine.com). It is FAME's intention to use the Vendor for all its outsourced marketing service needs. However, FAME also plans to request estimates ahead of initiating certain projects and may or may not accept Vendor's quote or may use a different vendor for any marketing project. FAME also reserves the right to select multiple vendors.

### **III. PROPOSAL CALENDAR**

1. Questions concerning this RFP should be received electronically by 5:00pm on Thursday, May 25, 2023 and directed to Elizabeth Vanderweide at [evanderweide@famemaine.com](mailto:evanderweide@famemaine.com).
2. Answers to questions will be sent electronically to all known and interested vendors by 5:00 pm on Tuesday, May 30, 2023.
3. Responses should be e-mailed to Elizabeth Vanderweide at [evanderweide@famemaine.com](mailto:evanderweide@famemaine.com) by 1:00 pm on Thursday, June 8, 2023. FAME may, at its discretion, consider information received after that time, but shall be under no obligation to do so.
4. Estimated Notification Date: June 23, 2023
5. Estimated Start Work Date: July 1, 2023

### **IV. PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS**

#### **A. General Requirements**

1. Include a brief summary containing the most important reasons why you believe your firm should be selected. Provide information on your social marketing work and/or successful marketing campaigns that would relate to helping FAME reach our strategic and marketing goals.
2. State the size of the firm and describe the firm's history and relevant experience and the primary professional staff to be employed in this engagement, by role. Provide information on each primary person's qualifications and relevant experience. Identify the primary contact who would be assigned to the engagement (account executive).
3. Provide 4-5 samples of work which best illustrate your expertise.
4. Describe your proposed use of partners, alliances, affiliations and/or subcontractors for any of the services in the scope of work. Include the company names and describe how they are utilized.
5. Provide three references that can attest to your company's capabilities.
6. Provide any other information, suggestions and supporting materials that you believe will be relevant and should be considered in assessing your company's qualifications.

7. Provide details regarding the fees you propose to charge FAME for your services. If you propose a retainer, describe the services included in the retainer, and hourly rates by each type of service for services not included in the retainer. Identify all costs you would expect to bill to FAME for the services. Use example below and submit in similar format.

Retainer/month: \$

Describe what it includes. FAME would like this to include strategic support, marketing strategy and planning, immersion meetings, client meetings, phone calls to account executive, project management, vendor management, ongoing marketing consultation, ongoing recommendations, digital campaign set up, management, and monthly analytics reporting.

Rate Schedule/hour for services outside retainer:

- Creative direction
- Creative conceiving
- Copywriting
- Broadcast production direction
- Graphic design
- Digital design
- Website development
- Graphic production, editing, proof reading
- Public relations strategy and media outreach
- Social media management and content development
- Traditional media planning, buying, and reconciliation.

## **B. Form and Place of Submission**

All submissions must be received by 1:00 pm on Thursday, June 8, 2023 by email to [evanderweide@famemaine.com](mailto:evanderweide@famemaine.com).

FAME may, in its discretion, consider information received after the deadline, but is under no obligation to do so.

## **V. EVALUATION PROCEDURES**

### **A. Review of Responses**

Responses submitted will be evaluated by the Director of Business Development with assistance of other FAME staff. FAME reserves the right to:

- Ask for additional information from any one or more respondents;
- Select any company for these services regardless of whether it submits information in response to this RFP and to select more than one such company or to select no company at all;
- Enter into further discussions or negotiations with any one or more respondents as FAME deems advantageous;

- Accept a proposal that does not offer the lowest cost;
- Confirm all references and contact further references obtained from other sources as deemed necessary or desirable;
- Waive or not waive any informalities or deficiencies in any response;
- Answer or not answer any questions that may be asked by any respondents and to use its own judgment with regard to whether or not to provide any additional information, clarification or extension of time to any respondent or potential respondent; and
- Retain all proposals submitted and use any idea in a proposal regardless of whether that proposal is selected.

**B. Evaluation Criteria**

Proposals will be evaluated using the following criteria:

- Quality and completeness of your response; 20%
- Ability of service offerings and capabilities to meet FAME’s needs through experience, expertise, talents and skills of firm's staff and subcontracted vendors as shown through samples references, and the proposal; 50%
- Fees and anticipated total costs; 30%

**C. Oral Presentations and Site Visits**

During the evaluation process, FAME may request any one or all firms to make oral presentations or participate in teleconferences. Such presentations will provide firms with an opportunity to answer any questions FAME may have on a firm’s proposal. Not all firms may be asked to participate in such presentations. FAME may request none, one or more of the respondents to meet with representatives of FAME. All costs incurred in connection with responding to this RFP and travel to meetings with FAME shall be borne by the respondent.

**D. Right to Reject Proposals**

FAME reserves the right without prejudice to reject any or all proposals. This RFP does not commit FAME to contract with any respondent or to contract with any one or more respondent(s) for any particular period of time or scope of services or to contact any respondent following submission of information to confirm receipt or notify of any decision or for any other reason.

**VI. CONFIDENTIALITY**

All material submitted to FAME shall be the sole property of FAME, and material and information submitted may be used by FAME in any manner it chooses. FAME is required to comply with the Maine Freedom of Access laws, 1 MRSA §401 et seq., and the confidentiality provisions of the Finance Authority of Maine Act, 10 MRSA §975-A. If a firm believes any information submitted to be confidential, such information should

be clearly marked as such and accompanied by a request for confidential treatment based on one or more reasons set forth in 10 M.R.S.A. §975-A. FAME must disclose, upon request, information not deemed confidential and with respect to confidential information, is nevertheless authorized to disclose it to any person or entity when directed to do so by subpoena, request for production of documents, warrant or other order by competent authority, provided the requirements of 10 MRSA §975-A(3)(H) have been met.