

# REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

## 2025 Marketing Request for Qualifications (RFQ)

RFQ NO. 2025.01.09

RFQ Release Date: **January 9, 2025**

Due Date: **February 4, 2025 by 5:00 p.m. Pacific Time**

RFQ Coordinator: Joanna Armstrong  
[vendorsubmissions@sno-isle.org](mailto:vendorsubmissions@sno-isle.org)

Contract Amount: Not expected to exceed \$300,000

### Overview

Sno-Isle Intercounty Rural Library District (Library District) is requesting qualifications from qualified advertising firms with a strong background in graphic design and marketing to provide services for the Library District.

### Submitting a bid

Bids are hereby solicited and must be submitted via email to the RFQ Coordinator no later than 5:00 p.m. Pacific Time on the due date noted above.

Bidders are responsible for regularly checking the Sno-Isle Libraries Vendor Submissions page for any updates, clarifications or addenda to this RFQ at <https://www.sno-isle.org/vendors/>

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## 1. OVERVIEW AND BACKGROUND

### A. About Sno-Isle Libraries

Sno-Isle Intercounty Rural Library District (Library District) is a local two-county public library district headquartered at its distribution facility in Marysville, Washington, located approximately 35 miles north of Seattle, Washington. Sno-Isle Libraries is one of the largest Library Districts in the state of Washington serving more than 800,000 people throughout Snohomish and Island counties. Library District has approximately 478 active employees working across 23 community libraries, one service center, and through mobile services.

### B. About this RFQ

Library District is requesting qualifications from interested and qualified firms to provide advertising and marketing services throughout the Library District to attract and connect community members to their public library through strategic, cohesive communications to build sustainable growth of participation in Sno-Isle Libraries.

The successful bidder will collaborate with our marketing team to develop purpose-driven campaigns, content marketing, brand equity, social media engagement, EDI (Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion) marketing strategy, and targeted marketing support services for both immediate and long-term data-drive results.

### C. Available Funding and Contract Term

The approximate total funding for this contract is not expected to exceed \$300,000. The awarded bidder will receive a contract for an initial term of 1 year with the option to renew each year up to a maximum of 3 years.

## 2. ELIGIBILITY

This RFQ is open to all for-profit firms, nonprofit organizations, community-based organizations, individuals, tribes and tribal organizations, and public or governmental agencies serving the Sno-Isle Libraries community.

### A. Minimum Qualifications

To be eligible to apply for this RFQ, bidders must meet the following minimum requirements:

- i. Graphic design experience;
- ii. Experience building effective marketing campaigns; and
- iii. Content marketing experience.

**B. Desired Qualifications**

Eligible bidders that demonstrate the following desired qualifications will be prioritized for award according to the evaluation criteria detailed in this RFQ.

- i. Strong portfolio representing body of work, including design skills, typography, brand identity development, and content strategy.
- ii. Proven track record of successful marketing campaigns.
- iii. Ability to collaborate effectively with clients to understand their needs and target audience.
- iv. Demonstrated ability to develop innovative and engaging marketing campaigns across various channels, including social media, content marketing, and email marketing.
- v. Understanding of the specific market, target audience, and competitive landscape within the client’s industry.
- vi. Excellent communications skills with regular updates on project and campaign progress.
- vii. Capacity to quickly adapt to changing market trends and implement new strategies as needed.

**3. RFQ PROCESS**

**A. Timeline**

The projected timeline for this RFQ process is provided below. The Library District may, at its sole discretion, modify the schedule as necessary to allow for thorough and complete analysis of responses. Any changes to the schedule will be communicated via written addendum and posted to the [Sno-Isle Libraries’ Vendor Submission website](#).

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Date/Time</u>
Issuance of RFQ	January 9, 2025
Inquiry Period Begins	
Inquiry Period Ends	January 20, 2025 By 5:00pm
Final Response to Bidders’ Questions Posted	January 24, 2025 By 5:00pm

Bid Due Date	February 4, 2025 By 5:00pm
Review, Interviews, & Reference check, if needed	February 5 – 19
Award Notifications (approximate)	February 24

**B. Written Bidder Questions and Other Communication**

All questions or requests for clarifications should be submitted no later than 5:00 pm Pacific Time on the due date listed in the above [Section 3.A. Timeline](#), to the Contracting and Procurement Unit at [vendorsubmissions@sno-isle.org](mailto:vendorsubmissions@sno-isle.org).

Responses to questions will be posted on our website <https://www.sno-isle.org/vendors/> as an addendum to this RFQ and will be sent to the email address of the question submitter. The Library District may provide responses via addenda on a rolling basis depending on the nature and volume of inquiries. Final responses to all bidder questions will be posted online by 5:00 pm (PST) by the date listed in the above [Timeline](#).

The RFQ Coordinator is the sole point of contact for this RFQ. All communication between bidders and Library District must be in writing as follows:

Joanna Armstrong  
RFQ Coordinator  
[vendorsubmissions@sno-isle.org](mailto:vendorsubmissions@sno-isle.org)

Any other communication shall be considered unofficial and non-binding on Library District. Bidders may rely on all written statements issued by the RFQ Coordinators.

***Communication with any Library District staff other than the RFQ Coordinator while this RFQ is in process may result in disqualification.***

**C. How to Apply**

i. Process

Submissions must be complete, responsive, emailed to the RFQ Coordinator at [vendorsubmissions@sno-isle.org](mailto:vendorsubmissions@sno-isle.org) and be time-stamped as received before 5:00 pm Pacific Time on the due date noted on this RFQ.

Library District will confirm timely receipt of your submission with a confirmation email. If you do not receive a confirmation email within 24 hours of submission, please follow up at [vendorsubmissions@sno-isle.org](mailto:vendorsubmissions@sno-isle.org).

Any emails that are caught in the spam filters and not received will be investigated to ascertain whether the submissions were sent on time. Submissions that were not received on time due to technical challenges such as spam filters will be considered as submitted timely if we can confirm that the time stamp on the email was sent in advance of 5:00 pm Pacific Time on the due date.

You are encouraged to submit your bid early to avoid any delays or errors in submission. Library District is not responsible for any technical difficulties that you may experience, and ***late submissions may not be accepted.***

ii. Format

Bids shall be submitted via email and may include documents in Word, PDF, Excel, or equivalent documents, and links or attachments to materials which support, validate, or demonstrate the qualifications of the bidder.

Please review the RFQ carefully and respond to each requirement prior to preparing and submitting a bid. Bidders are not required to use a particular format as long as the bid is clear, responsive to the request, and complete.

## 4. SCOPE OF WORK AND SERVICES

Library District is seeking bids to perform the services as described in this RFQ. The successful bidder will collaborate with the Library District marketing team to develop robust, strategic marketing and communications campaigns utilizing multiple channels to reach Sno-Isle Libraries community members where they are at. The library is for everyone and it is essential for Library District to demonstrate public value to bring new communities into the library.

Marketing at Library District retains, attracts, and engages library staff, customers and communities through visual identity and storytelling to compel everyone to connect with their library. The Library District marketing team is seeking additional capacity from the successful bidder to provide specialized services to build departmental efficiency and expand our reach to gain traction.

The successful bidder will collaborate with our marketing team to perform the following activities:

- Develop an extension of brand foundation and current identity, including: mark, badge, and elements such as patterns to broaden the use of the brand in different marketing channels. Library District brand guide can be found here [bit.ly/SIL-BrandGuide](https://bit.ly/SIL-BrandGuide)
- Build brand awareness and demonstrate the value of the library through targeted campaigns driving individuals to get a library card.

- Create compelling content and messaging using approachable, inclusive and plain language. Examples include advertising content like call to actions and tag lines, storyboarding, and developing content for brochures.
- Build robust, strategic advertising campaigns using multiple channels, including print, digital, direct mail, radio, and social media.
- Develop and create compelling video content to utilize in pre-roll campaign and Google Performance Max.
- Support graphic design projects as requested for both print and digital. Examples include Annual Report, layout brochures, banner ads, and post cards.

## 5. BID CONTENTS

In order to be considered complete and responsive, all bids must include the requested information in this section and be submitted in accordance with [Section 3. RFQ Process](#), above. The Library District is looking for succinct responses with relevant information. Library District reserves the right to request, or not request, clarification of information submitted, and to request additional information from any bidder.

### A. General Information

#### i. **Cover Letter (on company letterhead)**

Please provide a summary of the submitted bid and a brief statement of the bidder's qualifications to meet the needs as described in this RFQ including the following:

1. the identification of the bidder, including name, address, email address, telephone number, and the Bidder's office location responsible for performance under the agreement;
2. the Bidder/Firm's Employer Identification Number (EIN) and Washington State Unified Business Identifier (UBI) Number; and
3. the name, title, and signature of the person authorized to bind the Bidder to the terms of this proposal.

#### ii. **General Company Profile and Experience**

Briefly provide pertinent information about the bidder including:

1. years in business;
2. business philosophy and mission, vision, and values;

3. Where is your main office located? Please note if you have any local Washington State offices; and
4. Please also include information about how the bidder approaches Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the delivery of services.

#### **B. Portfolio of Similar Past Projects**

Please submit a portfolio of content samples featuring your firm’s marketing materials, campaigns, and design skills. Bidder’s portfolio must include past projects of similar size and scope to the project described in this RFQ. The portfolio submission can be a weblink. Please ensure your portfolio includes the following:

- i. Examples of branding or extensions of branding;
- ii. Advertising samples;
- iii. Video pre-roll work;
- iv. Short writing samples (e.g. slogan, brief sample of copy for a brochure, etc); and
- v. Layout for mailers

#### **C. Work Style: Communication & Collaboration**

Please describe your process for collaboratively working with clients, including frequency and type of communication, work style, etc. Please ensure your response addresses, at a minimum, the following questions:

- i. Work style – please detail your process for when your clients send you a scope of work.
- ii. Timeliness of turnaround – how soon can you commit to turnaround after a request has been sent? If timeliness depends on circumstances, please describe any variables that affect timeliness.
- iii. Transparency – how do you communicate progress on a particular project?

#### **D. OPTIONAL: Sample Presentation**

Bidders have the option to submit a short sample presentation of a sample scope of work with options, timeline, and next steps that demonstrate at a high level the progression of a project from start to finish.

As the submission of a sample presentation is at the option of each bidder, it will not be scored as a separate factor. Rather, sample presentations will be reviewed and scored as part of the [Section 5.C. Work Style: Communication & Collaboration](#) above. Scores will be based on quality of the content, not quantity of materials submitted.

**E. Cost of Services**

In your bid, please provide a sample and/or a detailed description of how your firm sends your clients a quote for a requested scope of work.

Please also include a rate sheet for all costs and fees that may be charged on the scope of work as described in this RFQ.

**F. References/Client Testimonials**

Provide at least three (3) client references and/or client testimonials for which work of similar size and scope as described in this RFQ is or has been performed by the bidder within the last three (3) years. References and testimonials should demonstrate your firm's experience in graphic design and marketing campaigns. If applicable, please also include a case study.

If submitting references, please provide the name, title, entity, and contact information of the persons who may be contacted for reference regarding the services provided.

If submitting client testimonials, please provide the written or otherwise recorded documentation of the testimonials in a format that is readily accessible to Library District staff.

Library District reserves the right to be its own reference.

## 6. EVALUATION PROCESS

All responsive bids will be evaluated by a team of at least three Library District staff members and shall be rated and then ranked according to the criteria stated below. The evaluation team members will score individually and then make recommendations based on consensus on the highest scoring bidder. The highest scoring bidders may be asked to participate in an interview process after the initial evaluation if needed to make final decisions. If interviews are conducted, no additional points will be awarded. Rather, the interview will be used to better understand bidders' qualifications and adjust final scores accordingly.

**A. Scoring Matrix**

Members of the evaluation panel will assign scores on a scale of zero (0) to five (5) according to the general guidelines of the scoring matrix below. The score for all criteria listed in [Section 6.B. Scoring Criteria](#) table below will be multiplied by the accompanying Weight to get to the total available points.

Score	Description	Considerations
0	No Value	Submitted bid does not address any component of the scoring criteria.
1	Poor	Submitted bid only minimally addresses the requirements, is missing components, and/or information provided is not responsive to a portion, or all, of the requested information.
2	Below Average	Submitted bid demonstrates incomplete understanding of the request, does not respond adequately to all requested information, and/or has simply restated the requirements with no additional information.
3	Average	Submitted bid is considered to meet minimum requirements. Bid shows an acceptable understanding of the request, provides sufficient detail in response, and demonstrates an acceptable level of experience.
4	Above Average	Submitted bid is thorough, detailed, and demonstrates a firm understanding of Library District’s needs and ability to deliver services to our standards.
5	Excellent	Submitted bid has provided an innovative, detailed, and thorough response to the requirements. Bid clearly demonstrates a high level of experience with, or understanding of, the requirements and ability to deliver services at a high level.

**B. Scoring Criteria**

All submitted and complete bids will be scored on a scale of 0-5 for each scoring criterium multiplied by the respective weights in the table below. Each scoring criterium listed below shows the total points available for each of the requests in [Section 5. Bid Contents](#) with a short description of the primary considerations the panelists’ awarded points will be based on.

SCORING CRITERIA	Weight	Total Points
<b>Company Profile and Experience</b> <i>Depth of clients</i>	2	10

<i>Years of experience</i> <i>Aligned with our organization’s values and mission</i>		
<b>Portfolio</b> <i>Depth and skills demonstrated in work</i> <i>Quality of portfolio and/or samples provided</i> <i>Writing sample evaluated for quality and compelling</i>	5	25
<b>Work Style</b> <i>Frequency and quality of communication</i> <i>Timeliness of turnaround</i> <i>Transparency of work process</i> <i>Sample presentation, if included</i>	4	20
<b>References, Case Studies, and/or Client Testimonials</b> <i>Validate workstyle, quality of services, and communications</i>	1	5
<b>Cost</b> <i>Ability to complete multiple projects within the budget</i> <i>Rate sheet for services or by staff position</i>	3	15

The Library District will notify all responsive bidders of the final selection.

## 7. TERMS AND CONDITIONS

All answers and statements made in the bid documents must be true and correct.

Submission of the attached proposal constitutes acceptance of the solicitation contents and general terms and conditions as a required element of this RFQ. If there are any exceptions to these terms, please include those exceptions in detail on a page attached to your submission.

The truthfulness of the facts and statements in submitted bids and the continuing compliance with these requirements are conditions precedent to the award or continuation of the related contract:

### A. RFQ Terms

#### i. Bidders’ Responsibilities

1. It is the sole responsibility of the respondent to ensure they received the most current RFQ and pertinent addenda, which will be posted to the Library District’s website.
2. It shall be the responsibility of each bidder to call to the attention of the Library District any apparent discrepancy in the RFQ or any question of fairness or interpretation before the Inquiry Period deadline as detailed in

the Timeline above. Failure to do so by the stated deadline constitutes acceptance as written.

ii. Revisions to the RFQ

Library District reserves the right to “revise” or “amend” the RFQ prior to the due date by “written addenda,” which will be posted at <https://www.sno-isle.org/vendors/>

All questions and answers and any other additional pertinent information will also be provided as an addendum to the RFQ and posted to the website.

iii. Cost to Propose

Library District is not responsible for any costs incurred by the bidder in preparing, submitting, or presenting its response to this RFQ.

iv. Right to Contact References

Library District reserves the right to contact references and other customers, who may have pertinent information regarding the ability of the bidder and the lead staff to perform the services contemplated by this Request.

v. Right to be Own Reference

To serve the best interests of Library District, we reserve the right to be our own reference with any potential bidder as deemed necessary in its sole discretion.

vi. Right to Request Additional Information

Library District reserves the right to obtain from one or more of the bidders, supplementary information as may be necessary for Library District to analyze the bids pursuant to the selection criteria contained herein.

vii. No Unfair Bidding Practices

1. The bidders’ prices and/or cost data must have been determined independently, without consultation, communication, or agreement with others for the purpose of restricting competition. However, bidders may freely join with other persons or organizations for the purpose of presenting a single proposal.
2. No attempt has been made or will be made by the Proposer to induce any other person or firm to submit or not to submit a proposal for the purpose of restricting competition.

3. Unless otherwise required by law, the prices and/or cost data which have been submitted must not have been knowingly disclosed by the bidder and will not knowingly be disclosed prior to the RFQ deadline, directly or indirectly, to any other bidder or to any competitor.
4. In preparing submissions, bidders must not be assisted by any current or former employee of Library District whose duties relate (or did relate) to this RFQ or a prospective contract, and who was assisting in other than their official, public capacity.

viii. No Obligation to Contract

This RFQ does not obligate Library District to enter into any contract for services specified herein.

ix. Rejection of Bids

The Library District reserves the right to reject any bid without penalty for any reason including, but not limited to the following:

1. any bid which is incomplete, obscure, irregular, ambiguous, or lacking necessary detail and specificity;
2. any bid for which a bidder fails or neglects to complete and submit qualifications information; and
3. any bid which is received after the deadline date and time.

x. Acceptance Period

By submitting a bid in response to this RFQ, the bidder provides one hundred eighty (180) calendar days for acceptance by Library District without further negotiation (except where obviously required by lack of certainty in key terms) from the due date for receipt of bids.

xi. Protest Procedures

Protests may be made only by bidders who submitted a response to this RFQ. The Bidder must submit a written protest as directed in this paragraph within two (2) business days of the bidder's receipt of award notification. Protests received after this deadline will not be considered.

Library District will not execute a contract with any party other than the protesting bidder until the full two (2) business day protest period has expired.

Bidders submitting a protest shall follow the procedures described below. Protests that do not follow these procedures shall not be considered. This protest procedure constitutes the sole administrative remedy available to Bidders under this procurement.

1. Protests must be in the following format:
  - a. in writing
  - b. addressed to the procurement coordinator named in this solicitation document
  - c. signed by the protesting party or an authorized agent.
2. Protests must contain the following information:
  - a. bid solicitation name and number
  - b. grounds for the protest with specific facts and complete statements of the action(s) being protested
  - c. description of the relief or corrective action being requested.
3. Only protests stipulating an issue of fact concerning the following subjects shall be considered:
  - a. A matter of bias, discrimination or conflict of interest on the part of an evaluator;
  - b. Errors in computing the score;
  - c. Non-compliance with procedures listed in the bid solicitation documents or Library District's policy.
4. Protests will be rejected as without merit if it addresses the following issues:
  - a. An evaluator's professional judgment on the quality of a proposal; or
  - b. Library District's assessment of its own and/or other agencies' needs or requirements

Upon receipt of a protest, the Library District's Executive Director or designee who was not involved in the procurement will hold a protest review. In the protest review, the Executive Director or designee will consider the record and all available facts and issue a decision within five (5) business days of receipt of the protest. If additional time is required, the protesting party will be notified of the delay.

In the event a protest may affect the interest of another bidder that also submitted a bid, such bidder will be given an opportunity to submit its views and any relevant information on the protest to the procurement lead.

The final determination of the protest as rendered by Library District’s Executive Director or designee shall choose one of three courses of action: (1) find the protest lacking in merit and uphold the Library District’s actions, (2) find only technical or harmless error in Library District’s acquisition process and determine Library District to be in substantial compliance and reject the protest; or (3) find merit in the protest and provide Library District options to address the issue, which may include but is not limited to correcting the identified errors and re-evaluate all bids, re-issue the solicitation and begin a new process, and/or make other findings and determine other courses of action as appropriate.

If all protests are found to be without merit, Library District may enter into a contract with the apparent successful bidder.

xii. Public Disclosure

All bids received shall become the property of the Library District and remain confidential until a contract, if any, resulting from this request is signed by the Executive Director (or designee) of Library District.

After a contract is signed, all proposals received shall be deemed public records as defined in Chapter 42.56 of the Revised Code of Washington (RCW).

Any information contained in the bid that is proprietary must be clearly marked or designated as “confidential” in order to be excluded from public records request responses. Only information designated under current state law statutes as appropriate for exclusion from public records exposure may be marked and treated as confidential.

xiii. Proprietary Rights

All bids become the property of Library District, and bidders may claim no proprietary right to the ideas, writings, items, or samples, unless so stated in the responsive bid.

**B. Contract Terms**

i. Library District Contract

The successful bidder will be asked to sign a contract with Library District on its

own boilerplate agreement. Library District will not sign any company's service agreement, contract, or any other form of agreement.

Library District reserves the right to extract certain language from the successful bidder's agreement and incorporate it into Library District' contract, if agreeable to both parties.

Awarded bidders will be required to meet baseline requirements, including but not limited to insurance, record-keeping, and more.

The contents of the awarded bid(s) shall become contractual obligations if a contract ensues. A contract between the awarded bidder(s) and Sno-Isle Libraries shall include the following:

1. Standard Terms and Conditions
2. Scope of Work
3. The original RFQ, as issued by Library District
4. The bidder's response to the RFQ; and
5. Any other documents mutually agreed upon.

ii. Compliance with All Relevant Laws

The successful bidder must comply with all Federal, State, and local statutes and codes as may be applicable to the scope of work detailed herein, including all labor laws.

iii. Proprietary Rights

Any patentable or copyrightable material or article that results from the work described in this RFQ and any resulting contract shall be the sole property of Library District.

To the extent that any rights in such materials vest initially with the contractor by operation of law or for any other reason, the contractor shall perpetually and irrevocably assign, transfer, and quitclaim such rights to Library District.

Library District will grant to the Contractor a limited and royalty-free license to use in contractor's work portfolios, according to law, any material or article and use any method that may be developed as part of the work of the resulting contract.

The Contractor shall sign all documents and perform other acts as Sno-Isles Libraries deems necessary to secure, maintain, renew, or restore the rights granted to Sno-Isle Libraries as set forth in this section.