

Request for Proposal to Provide Services

Municipal Candidate Attraction and Voter Turnout Advertising Campaign

PROPOSAL SUBMISSION DEADLINE @ 2:00 P.M. ET
ON THURSDAY, MAY 22, 2025

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1. Background

1.1 About AMO

The Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) helps Ontario's 444 municipalities work together to achieve shared goals and meet common challenges. AMO engages in a variety of activities to support its mandate: develop policy positions and reports on issues of general interest to municipal governments; conduct ongoing liaison and advocacy with the provincial government (both elected officials and public administrators); inform and educate governments, the media, and the public on municipal issues; market innovative and beneficial services to the municipal sectors; and maintain a resource centre on issues of municipal interest.

1.2 Ontario's municipal sector

There are 444 municipalities in Ontario. They can be villages, cities, towns, regions, and counties. Each municipality is governed by a local council. As a sector, municipal governments invest over \$65 billion in important public services and infrastructure each year.

Municipal governments are integrated thoroughly into the day-to-day life of every Ontario resident. Municipal governments provide essential services like ambulances, roads and utilities infrastructure, parks and recreation, public transit, garbage and recycling collection, libraries, and affordable housing. Further, municipal governments also work to address many of the issues Ontarians prioritize, including housing, homelessness, economic opportunity, and climate change.

Municipally elected officials are the closest to their constituents, most working part time while in regular, direct contact with their constituents. The municipal order of government is also the least understood by the public, and the loss of local media creates new challenges when governments work to communicate with residents.

1.3 AMO's Healthy Democracy Project

In late 2022, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) Board of Directors approved its Healthy Democracy Project for a 4-year period and with more than \$1 million dollars in support funding.

The Healthy Democracy Project had grown from AMO's 2021-2022 pre-municipal election campaign, We All Win, to attract greater diversity in representation to municipal politics. The campaign was in recognition of the fact that Ontario's municipal councils are not representative of the diversity of the province and the populations municipal councils serve.

Additionally, several emerging trends led AMO's Board of Directors to support the development of AMO's Healthy Democracy Project:

1. Fewer people are voting and engaging in local democratic decision making.
2. Fewer people are running for municipal office, and acclamations are on the rise.
3. As indicated, Ontario's municipal councils are not representative of the diverse populations they serve.
4. And AMO's members, Ontario's municipally elected officials, are increasingly dealing with hostile, unsafe work environments where political dialogue has become toxic and unproductive.

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AMO understands these are complex and complicated issues. Addressing and reversing trends and systemic barriers will take time and is work that will not end, rather evolve. It is also work that requires effort from leaders and organizations apart from AMO.

Since 2022 AMO has undertaken significant work in service of the Healthy Democracy Project. More information is available [here](#).

In advance of the 2026 municipal elections, AMO is issuing a request for proposals to support the development of a public affairs campaign that will engage Ontarians in two specific ways:

- To run for municipal office;
- And turnout to vote.

The Healthy Democracy Project has a specific focus on increasing diversity in municipal government. We believe diversity of experience, thought and community is core to strong governance. Diversity in voter turnout is equally as important.

2. Purpose and project objectives

2.1 Purpose

AMO is soliciting proposals for the development and deployment of a public affairs campaign focused on two objectives:

1. Increase the number and diversity of candidates running in the 2026 municipal elections; and
2. Increase voter turnout in the 2026 municipal elections

The campaign will highlight the rewards of municipal political life and mitigate the risks of running for office through information, resources and supports. The key narrative in this element of the campaign will be to rebalance the current risk-reward dynamic with a focus on the value, importance and inspiration of community achievement.

We are aiming to change the narrative from one of negativity and fear to opportunity and success by celebrating the rewards of municipal office.

The campaign will also include a strategy to get out the vote highlighting, for Ontario's residents, the importance of voting in municipal elections building on the understanding of personal motivation as a major driver for voting intention. One of the main motivators for voter turnout is for people to understand the importance and role of local government—believing that local government is relevant in the voter's life and that their vote will make a difference.

The campaign can focus on digital advertising (web, social media, and podcasts), and may also include physical placement in appropriate Ontario regional markets through transit advertising, post-secondary campuses, and multicultural/ethnic media. The full campaign plan and exact composition of advertising tactics and assets will be developed through market research, the advice of the selected firm, and final budget.

The campaign will be from an Ontario-wide perspective reflecting the differing demographics and realities across the province.

3. Scope of services required

Planning and project management:

- Audience research to understand demographics and interests of target audience
- Develop plan for effective advertising placement and optimize budget
- Plan logistics and creative direction for content creation

Content creation and production

- Develop the campaign look and feel
- AMO has existing brand standards that might be integrated, but it's anticipated that this campaign will require its own visual identity
- Develop graphic assets for advertising, social media, and campaign toolkits for municipal members, post-secondary institutions, and other project partners as determined by AMO
- Photography, voice recording, and videography, if needed
- Develop campaign microsite/landing page
- Coordinate translation to additional languages, as directed by AMO staff
- The campaign should be compliant with accessibility legislation and regulation in Ontario.

Deployment and campaign management

- Manage deployment of digital ads, monitor performance, and adjust strategies (includes placement, optimization, cancellations, auditing, payment to vendors, and billing)

Timeframe

The work should begin as soon as is practical. Ideal campaign roll-out is Fall 2025, with the potential to develop a recurring campaign schedule.

Budget

AMO currently has a budget allocation set for \$400,000 (inclusive of HST) for planning and project management, content creation and production, and an initial deployment of the campaign. Upon the advice of the selected firm, additional budget can be requested and may be provided to achieve campaign goals. Proposals should clearly provide the methodology for calculation of fees to provide the services, including a breakdown of content creation (including research), production, and campaign deployment by the advertising channel/platform. AMO may modify the total advertising budget, subject to internal approvals.

4. Proposal submission requirements and selection criteria

4.1 General

Any questions and responses to this invitation should be addressed to Petra Wolfbeiss, Director of Membership Centre and submitted to membershipRFP@amo.on.ca. The deadline for submission of proposal is **Thursday, May 22, 2025, 2:00 p.m. ET**. Proposals received after the deadline will not be considered. All proposals should be submitted in PDF format only. All inquiries and proposals must be in English.

Questions regarding this RFP may be directed to Membership RFP at membershipRFP@amo.on.ca. Questions received by May 8, 2025 4:00 p.m. ET and their answers will be posted to: <https://www.amo.on.ca/about-us/request-proposals-rfp> by May 12, 2025.

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The firm is required to treat this selection process in the strictest of confidence. Except for use in the preparation of proposals, information concerning AMO cannot be used or disclosed in any way without prior written approval. If, in the submission of proposals, the proposing firm specifies that certain information is proprietary, AMO will make best efforts to keep such information confidential.

AMO is not liable for any costs incurred by any firm that responds to the invitation in the design, preparation, or submission of a proposal or any aspect of the selection process.

AMO reserves the right to contact any person or organization cited in a proposal and to take any steps necessary to fully assess the reputation and credibility of the proposing firm, without seeking the authorization of the proposing firm.

4.2 Proposal content and selection criteria

The proposal should include the following:

- An overview your firm's expertise in planning, producing, and executing large-scale public advertising campaigns, with Ontario examples provided, if possible
- Identify the individuals to be assigned to provide the services, including the primary point of contact (i.e. account manager)
- Provide details of past/current clients and managed campaigns in the required service areas and provide at least two references
- Proposals should clearly provide the methodology for calculation of fees to provide the services, including a breakdown of content creation, production, and campaign deployment by channel/platform

Selection of a firm will be based on, but not necessarily limited to, the following:

- The firm's ability to provide the services specified above through an effective and efficient project approach, with regard to budget and timeframe.
- The project team's experience and demonstrated ability to provide expert advice and quality service throughout a project, and to be responsive in liaising with AMO staff.
- Relevant experience and expertise with similar projects for non-profit advocacy/government relations associations or public-sector entities.
- An understanding of and sensitivity to diversity, equity and inclusion as relevant to the objectives of this campaign is beneficial.
- Ability to provide competitive fees for the type of services required.

Submissions will be scored according to below point system:

Selection Criteria	Points
Company profile, project team experience and qualifications in providing services required with past/current clients and managed campaigns (references)	25
Demonstrated internal capacity to manage the full scope of services required (please note where your firm may use contracted services for content creation, deployment, and campaign management)	15
Proposed approach to campaign planning and project management and to provide strategic advice to develop campaign assets and manage deployment	30
Understanding of Ontario's media market as it relates to the campaign audiences and objectives to engage in campaign planning and deployment	10
Fees/cost structure, including meeting budget for content creation, production, and providing campaign deployment estimates by the advertising channel/platform.	20

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Key Dates

- RFP issued: April 24, 2025
- Questions/clarifications due for response: May 8, 2025, 4:00 p.m. ET
- Responses to questions posted: May 12, 2025, 4:00 p.m. ET
- Full RFP submissions due: May 22, 2025, 2:00 p.m. ET
- Evaluation and interviews (if necessary) to be scheduled

Rights Reserved by AMO

- Accept or reject any proposal in whole or in part.
- Request supplementary written information or in-person meeting in relation to the proposal.
- Waive formalities and accept proposals which substantially comply with the requirements of this RFP.
- Verify with any Proponent or third party any information set out in a Proposal.
- Disqualify any Proponent whose Proposal contains misrepresentations or any other inaccurate or misleading information.
- Select any proponent other than the proponent whose proposal reflects the lowest cost to AMO or the highest overall score.
- Cancel this RFP process at any stage without award and issue a new RFP for the same or similar goods and services.
- Discuss with any Proponent different or additional terms to those contemplated in this RFP or in any proponent's proposal.
- Negotiate in respect of any term or condition proposed by the Proponent in its Proposal, whether a business or legal term or condition or otherwise
- And these reserved rights are in addition to any other express rights or any other rights which may be implied in the circumstances.

Other Terms and Conditions

- Any contracts with a successful proponent will be governed by the laws of Ontario
- AMO is not to be considered an employer to the successful proponent nor to such proponent's personnel or staff for any work or services
- The proponent agrees to avoid any conflict of interest in the performance of its contractual obligations, disclose to AMO without delay any actual or potential conflict of interest that may arise, and comply with the requirements imposed by AMO to resolve the conflict of interest. AMO organizations may immediately terminate the agreement, upon giving written notice to the proponent, if in the reasonable opinion of AMO organizations; it is not possible to resolve the proponent's conflict of interest.
- No act or omission by AMO organizations will be construed by the Successful Proponent as a renunciation or waiver of any rights or recourses for any breach by the successful proponent of its obligations set out in this RFP and in the Contract, unless the AMO organization provided the successful proponent with an express waiver in writing.