



DOWNTOWN
PARTNERSHIP

ADDENDUM NO. 1

Request for Proposals (RFP): Graphic Design Services
Downtown Partnership of Baltimore (DPOB)

Original Solicitation Issue Date: August 18, 2026

Original Proposal Due Date: Monday, September 14, 2026, by 2:00 PM (EST)

Addendum Issue Date: Friday, September 11, 2026

NOTICE TO ALL PROSPECTIVE RESPONDENTS

Addendum No. 1 is issued to extend the original deadline and is incorporated into the original RFP.

1. MODIFICATION TO SUBMISSION DATE

Due to the volume and scope of questions received, and to provide respondents adequate time to review DPOB's responses and incorporate any relevant information into their proposals, DPOB is extending the proposal submission deadline.

The revised deadline is **Friday, September 18, 2026, by 2:00 PM (EST)**.

2. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

Respondents who have **already submitted a proposal** may revise and resubmit their proposal without penalty prior to the revised deadline.

If a revised proposal is submitted, the most recent submission received by the deadline will be considered the respondent's final proposal.

3. PROPOSAL DEADLINE EXTENSION

The proposal deadline is revised as follows:



DOWNTOWN
PARTNERSHIP

- **Original Proposal Due Date:** Monday, September 14, 2026, by 2:00 PM (EST)
- **New Proposal Due Date:** Friday, September 18, 2026, by 2:00 PM (EST)

All proposals must be received by the revised deadline in accordance with the submission instructions provided in the RFP.

5. CONTACT INFORMATION

Questions regarding this addendum must be submitted in accordance with the original RFP instructions.

Downtown Partnership of Baltimore

Creative Services RFPs

Responses to Questions Received

VENDOR ELIGIBILITY, LOCATION & IN-PERSON REQUIREMENTS

1. Could you please confirm whether an independent remote digital designer/provider is eligible to submit a proposal.

Response:

Yes. Independent remote providers are eligible to submit. However, vendors should anticipate an initial in-person kickoff/strategy meeting and any in-person attendance necessary to execute the project. Vendors are responsible for incorporating anticipated travel expenses into their proposed pricing.

2. Could you please confirm whether firms based outside the United States are eligible to submit and join the vendor pool?

Response:

No. Firms based outside the United States are not eligible to apply. DPOB requires selected vendors to be available for in-person onboarding, project kickoff meetings, and/or on-site project execution when applicable.

3. Does DPOB anticipate that the work under this contract can typically be performed virtually? Does DPOB have any in-person expectation for the selected vendor?

Response:

Editing, design, review meetings, and routine project coordination may generally be completed remotely. DPOB will not provide office space or equipment. Vendors should anticipate in-person attendance for project kickoff meetings and any required on-site event, program, photography, or video coverage.

4. Are non-Maryland-based individual vendors eligible for the vendor pool if they can travel for planned assignments and disclose their availability for short-notice work?

Response:

Yes. U.S.-based vendors outside Maryland are eligible to apply. Vendors should incorporate anticipated travel costs into their pricing, as DPOB generally will not reimburse additional travel expenses. Vendors should anticipate at least one in-person project kickoff meeting and any required on-site project or event coverage. Review and editing meetings may be conducted remotely.

5. For assignments that require travel, may an approved project scope include actual travel costs plus a separately quoted travel-day fee, or does DPOB expect travel time to be absorbed into the creative/service rates?

Response:

Travel costs should generally be incorporated into the vendor's creative/service rates. Most assignments are expected to occur in Downtown Baltimore or surrounding areas.

6. Are in-person meetings or site visits anticipated for graphic design partners, particularly for environmental graphics and wayfinding projects? If so, would approved travel expenses be addressed through the individual project scope?

Response:

Project meetings and coordination will generally be conducted virtually; however, in-person meetings or site visits may be requested when appropriate or preferred for a particular project. Respondents should account for any anticipated travel costs associated with providing services in their proposed pricing. DPOB will not accommodate additional travel expenses outside of the agreed-upon project pricing unless otherwise specified in an individual project scope.

SERVICES & SPECIALIZATIONS

7. Are you accepting RFPs for photographers solely or is there an expectation that photographers can produce video as well?

Response:

DPOB is seeking both photography and videography services. Vendors should clearly identify the services they are able to provide. Vendors are not required to offer both photography and videography to be considered.

8. Does the RFP permit a provider to propose a focused subset of the requested services rather than the full range?

Response:

Yes. DPOB is seeking graphic designers, videographers, and photographers across a range of specialties. Vendors should clearly identify the services and capabilities they provide. Vendors are not required to provide every service listed in the RFP to be considered.

9. Are vendors expected to provide both photography and videography directly, or is it acceptable to use trusted production partners for certain services such as additional photographers or licensed drone operators?

Response:

Vendors are expected to manage the services for which they are contracted. If a vendor utilizes third-party production partners or subcontractors, the vendor will be responsible for managing and compensating those partners independently of DPOB unless otherwise agreed upon in writing.

VENDOR POOL, SELECTION & WORK DISTRIBUTION

10. Approximately how many vendors does DPOB anticipate selecting for the qualified pool? Once the pool is established, can you share any additional context about how vendors will be considered for individual assignments (e.g., whether DPOB expects to request estimates from multiple pool members or approach one vendor based on fit and availability, etc.)?

Response:

DPOB does not have a predetermined number of vendors it anticipates selecting. Individual assignments will be distributed based on factors including project fit, specialty, availability, capacity, turnaround time, and creative approach. DPOB does not anticipate requiring selected pool members to formally bid against one another for every individual project.

11. Does DPOB expect to assign work by discipline? For example, one partner for environmental graphics and another for digital campaign work; or, will all selected firms be considered for all project types?

Response:

DPOB intends to align assignments with vendors based on demonstrated strengths, specialties, project fit, availability, and capacity. Vendors may therefore become preferred partners for particular types of work while remaining eligible for other assignments.

4. EXISTING / INCUMBENT VENDORS

12. Is there an incumbent for this RFP? If so can you provide the RFI?

Response:

DPOB currently has an internal Marketing & Communications team and external providers supporting existing projects. This RFP is intended to expand DPOB's vendor pool and increase capacity for citywide events, DPOB events, new initiatives, and digital and print campaigns. There is no RFI associated with this solicitation.

13. Is this vendor pool replacing or expanding an existing creative-services arrangement? If DPOB currently works with external design partners, what prompted the current solicitation, and what would you most like to strengthen in the new arrangement?

Response:

This solicitation is intended to expand DPOB's existing creative-services capacity as our event and campaign volume increases. DPOB seeks to strengthen coverage capacity, expand social, email, print, and digital marketing capabilities, and increase the diversity of creative perspectives available for campaigns.

14. Does DPOB currently use one or more outside graphic design or creative firms for these services? If so, are those firms eligible to compete for inclusion in the new vendor pool?

Response:

Yes. DPOB currently works with external creative providers on existing projects and contracts. The purpose of this RFP is to expand our vendor pool and identify additional capabilities and creative offerings. Existing providers may continue supporting current and new assignments while new work is distributed among qualified vendors based on project fit, availability, capacity, and creative approach.

BUDGET, HISTORICAL SPEND & PRICING

15. Is there an estimated annual budget, historical annual spend, or typical project volume for photography and videography services under this contract?

Response:

DPOB has not established a fixed annual budget for this engagement and will not provide historical spend. Project volume fluctuates annually based on organizational needs, events, campaigns, and partner opportunities. Budgets will be determined on a project-by-project basis.

16. Since a budget is not outlined in the RFP, please provide a budget for a completed project that was similar in size.

Response:

Budgets are determined on a project-by-project basis. Vendors should provide an itemized list of services and pricing and indicate their willingness to develop negotiated project packages when multiple services or deliverables are required.

17. How is the budget being allocated for the year? Is it being broken down by month, quarter, bi-annual? Is this budget a fixed point or more of a sliding scale based on demand and relevance of available projects?

Response:

DPOB will not disclose its internal annual budget allocation as part of this solicitation. Individual project budgets will vary based on scope, number and type of deliverables, complexity, and project needs. Pricing will be established before each project begins using the vendor's submitted pricing structure as a reference.

18. Approximately what did DPOB and the DMA spend on photography and videography services in 2025? Of that work, roughly how does it divide between larger campaigns and productions versus smaller one-off assignments? Put another way, is a typical year closer to a handful of larger productions with steady small assignments in between, or mostly small assignments with one or two bigger pieces?

Response:

DPOB will not disclose historical spend as part of this solicitation, as expenditures fluctuate annually. DPOB manages a mix of recurring major events, larger campaigns, and smaller assignments. Larger projects may include approximately 10–12 deliverables, while smaller

campaigns may require approximately 2–3 deliverables. Assignments will be distributed based on project needs, vendor capacity, specialty, and creative fit.

19. What are the typical budget ranges for campaigns, reports, presentations, event systems, and environmental graphics?

Response:

Budgets vary based on project scope, complexity, timeline, and number of deliverables. Vendors should provide itemized pricing for their services and indicate their willingness to negotiate bundled project pricing when multiple deliverables are required.

20. For the estimated fees requested for commonly requested deliverables, would DPOB prefer vendors to provide fixed fees, estimated fee ranges, or representative pricing based on stated assumptions?

Response:

DPOB prefers fixed pricing for commonly requested deliverables. Vendors should also be prepared to negotiate bundled project pricing when multiple assets or services are required. Itemized pricing will serve as an important reference when establishing the overall project cost.

21. Section 7 asks for estimated fees for commonly requested deliverables. Would DPOB treat those estimates as a binding rate card for the contract term, or as indicative pricing to be confirmed in each written scope of work?

Response:

Submitted pricing will serve as indicative pricing and will not constitute a binding rate card for every assignment. Final pricing may be negotiated by project or bundled when multiple services or deliverables are required.

22. For pricing, would it be most useful to provide both hourly rates and sample project pricing for common deliverables?

Response:

Yes. As a nonprofit organization, DPOB works within established project budgets while seeking high-quality creative partners who can provide strong value and flexibility.

Before any work begins, DPOB and the selected vendor must mutually agree upon the project scope, deliverables, timeline and final cost. Each project will have a predetermined

budget, which will be communicated to the vendor during the assignment and scoping process.

Pricing submitted through the RFP will serve as a reference point when evaluating vendors and assigning projects. **Submitted rates or rate ranges will not automatically eliminate a vendor from consideration.** However, DPOB will consider proposed rates in relation to available project budgets, and selected vendors should be willing to discuss and negotiate pricing when necessary to align the scope of work with the approved budget.

Depending on the assignment, pricing may be:

- Based on an individual deliverable;
- Bundled into a project package;
- Negotiated based on the scope, volume or combination of deliverables; or
- Subject to a mutually agreed-upon expedited fee for rush assignments.

If a vendor's standard rate exceeds the available budget, DPOB and the vendor may discuss adjustments to the scope, deliverables or pricing before determining whether to proceed.

No work should begin without an approved scope, timeline and mutually agreed-upon cost.

PROJECT VOLUME & FREQUENCY

23. While we understand that work will be assigned on an as-needed basis with no guaranteed minimum, can you share any historical or anticipated context on the typical volume of requests, such as the approximate number of projects or assignments per month or quarter?

Response:

DPOB's total creative project volume generally ranges from approximately 50–100 projects annually and may exceed that amount. There is no guaranteed minimum for an individual vendor. Assignments will depend on project scope, specialty, availability, capacity, turnaround time, and vendor performance.

24. Approximately how many requests would be made in a typical month?

Response:

There is no guaranteed monthly volume. An individual vendor may typically receive up to approximately two assignments per month, although this may increase or decrease based on project size, organizational needs, vendor availability, turnaround time, specialty, and capacity.

SHORT-NOTICE & TURNAROUND REQUIREMENTS

25. What kind of assignments are the 24–48 hr short notice? Is there a particular reason that creates the short notice?

Response:

Short-notice requests are expected to be rare and would generally involve photography or graphic design. DPOB strives to plan projects at least 2–3 months in advance; however, last-minute partner, member, media, or event opportunities may occasionally require accelerated support. These requests are expected to be infrequent and will not typically require development of entirely new creative concepts. They may include on-site event coverage, resizing, adapting, or updating existing creative.

26. For rapid-response projects requiring 24–48 hour turnaround, can you confirm whether expedited fees are acceptable, or if vendors should include those costs in standard pricing?

Response:

Yes. Expedited fees are acceptable and should be estimated in the proposal. Vendors should provide their typical rush fee or expedited pricing structure. Final pricing will be confirmed or negotiated as part of the individual project scope.

27. In Section 6.1, regarding timelines and deliverables it states the final version is delivered within 5–8 days. How many rounds of revisions do you anticipate in that timeframe?

Response:

Revision needs and turnaround times will vary by project and will be outlined in the individual scope of work. DPOB generally anticipates approximately two rounds of revisions.

28. Can you clarify under #4 Proposal Requirements what you mean by availability and turnaround times? The RFP states the expected turnaround times are for most projects, so I just want to make sure I understand what you're looking for when you ask us to include that information.

Response:

Vendors should provide their typical turnaround time for the first draft of each type of deliverable they offer. Final project timelines will be established at kickoff and will account for revisions, approvals, and DPOB feedback. Completion dates may shift if feedback or required information from DPOB is delayed.

RETAINERS & LONG-TERM ENGAGEMENTS

29. The RFP invites respondents to propose retainer options while describing the engagement as project-based. Would DPOB consider using a retainer for some portion of the work, or do you anticipate issuing a separate scope and fee for each assignment?

Response:

The initial and most common engagement structure will be a separate scope and fee for each assignment. Retainer relationships may be considered after approximately 90 days and/or successful completion of two or more projects. Vendors interested in this structure should include proposed retainer options in addition to an itemized pricing list for individual deliverables and projects.

PROPOSAL LENGTH, PORTFOLIOS & SUBMISSION

30. Given the request to showcase a wide variety of creative work through our portfolio, is DPOB willing to exclude the sample portfolio from the proposal's 15-page limit?

Response:

No. The 15-page maximum applies to the full proposal from cover to end. Vendors are encouraged to prioritize the most relevant information and may provide links to resumes or additional supporting information where appropriate to conserve space.

31. Should the proposal go to bidders@dpob.org, or to you directly?

Response:

Proposals should be submitted to both bidders@dpob.org and tboston@dpob.org on or before the September 14 submission deadline.

GRAPHIC DESIGN, PRINTING, ENVIRONMENTAL & WEB SCOPE

32. Does the Scope of Services for items such as marketing and event collateral include printing and production of these items? (e.g., printing of flyers, production of branded merchandise or promotional items)

Response:

No. DPOB will manage and incur the costs associated with printing and production. Vendors are responsible for providing final electronic files in the dimensions and formats outlined in each project scope.

33. Can DPOB provide additional context about the website and user-experience services included in the scope? We're trying to understand the depth of website services you anticipate, as well as where the vendor's responsibilities end and DPOB's web development team begins. I.e., should the partner deliver design-only assets (such as wireframes, high-fidelity mockups, or Figma files), or does the scope also include front-end web development, coding, and CMS integration (e.g., WordPress or Webflow)?

Response:

The website scope refers only to creative assets for web use, such as website banners and campaign graphics. Vendors will not be responsible for front-end development, coding, CMS integration, or backend website management. DPOB's internal Marketing & Communications team and web development partners will manage website implementation.

34. For social media assets, does DPOB expect vendors to provide a specific quantity of posts or graphics per month, or should firms propose a flexible support model based on project needs?

Response:

Work will primarily be project-based. Vendors may also propose monthly bundled rates or flexible support models for consideration.

35. Are vendors expected to manage content posting and scheduling directly, or only provide design assets for DPOB staff to deploy?

Response:

Vendors are responsible for providing the requested creative files only. DPOB will manage posting, scheduling, and account access.

BRAND, STRATEGY & CREATIVE DIRECTION

36. The RFP notes that the selected partner will support both the “evolution and stewardship” of DPOB’s visual identity. Does DPOB anticipate initiating a comprehensive brand refresh or visual identity update in the near term, or will the immediate focus be primarily on applying and stewarding established brand standards across upcoming campaigns and collateral?

Response:

DPOB does not anticipate a comprehensive organizational rebrand in the near future. Existing DPOB brand guidelines will be provided. Individual campaigns and initiatives may have unique branding, visual concepts, and creative direction established during project kickoff.

37. Will DPOB generally provide finalized copy and content direction for each assignment, or should respondents include capabilities such as content strategy and copywriting in their proposed services?

Response:

DPOB will generally provide copy and content direction. Vendors are responsible for executing the deliverables outlined in the project scope. Vendors are welcome to recommend content strategy, rollout approaches, or copy enhancements, but these services are not required.

38. Are there specific perceptions, behaviors, or audience relationships DPOB most hopes to influence through this work such as increasing event participation, strengthening member value, attracting visitors or businesses, or changing perceptions of Downtown Baltimore?

Response:

All of the above. Specific objectives and target audiences will vary by project and will be identified during project kickoff.

39. Will DPOB provide selected vendors with current brand standards, templates, campaign examples, audience research, photography, messaging guidance, and other existing creative assets, or will there be opportunities to clarify, expand, or evolve the brand?

Response:

DPOB will provide existing brand standards, messaging guidance, relevant assets, and previous campaign examples when applicable. Individual campaigns may provide opportunities to expand or evolve creative concepts. Kickoff meetings will be collaborative and may include brainstorming and concept development. DPOB will provide final approval of project direction, deliverables, and timelines.

DPOB MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS TEAM ROLE

40. What role does the Marketing and Communications team play in this project?

Response:

DPOB's Marketing & Communications team will lead the relationship and serve as the primary point of contact for creative-service vendors. The team will establish project scopes, campaign themes, timelines, required deliverables, and strategic direction; facilitate kickoff meetings; coordinate feedback and revisions; provide final approvals; and manage public distribution of completed work.

41. For a typical assignment, does DPOB expect the selected partner to contribute to campaign strategy, messaging, content development, and audience planning, or will most projects begin with an established concept, copy, and creative brief?

Response:

Most projects will begin with an established objective, scope, audience, and general creative direction from DPOB. Vendors are encouraged to contribute creative concepts and recommendations during kickoff and throughout the project; however, DPOB's Marketing & Communications team will maintain responsibility for overall campaign strategy, messaging, audience direction, and final approval.

CREATIVE GOALS & SUCCESS

42. Audience and intent. Beyond the deliverables listed in Section 3, what is DPOB hoping this creative partnership accomplishes over the contract term? Which audiences matter most, and what should they think or do differently after seeing the work?

Response:

DPOB seeks to strengthen Downtown Baltimore storytelling and expand coverage of our internal and external events, economic development initiatives, members, residents, businesses, public realm, and other Downtown activity. Audiences will vary by project and may include residents, visitors, businesses, members, partners, stakeholders, DPOB staff, and social media audiences.

Each project will have its own storytelling objective and target audience while supporting DPOB's strategic priorities, including Downtown's physical and experiential transformation, financial resources and sustainability, organizational effectiveness, and collaborative leadership.

43. Of the services outlined in the RFP, which needs or initiatives does DPOB anticipate prioritizing during the first six to twelve months of the engagement?

Response:

All service areas identified in the RFP may be utilized during the first 6–12 months based on project needs.

44. What does success look like for a chosen partner for DPOB to offer these services?

Response:

Successful partners will be creative, flexible, reliable, collaborative, responsive, and current on relevant industry trends and best practices. They should consistently deliver high-quality work within agreed-upon scopes and timelines.

TYPICAL PROJECTS & DELIVERABLES

45. Are there certain types of projects you expect to come up most often, like event collateral, digital campaigns, sponsorship materials, environmental graphics, or something else?

Response:

DPOB anticipates a mix of event and campaign-based work. Event needs may include signage, real-time coverage, recap content, and access to approximately 5–6 priority photos within 12–24 hours. Graphic design needs frequently include social media, digital advertising, large-format applications such as billboards and IKE kiosks, and print collateral. Many campaigns require a full creative asset suite and will be treated as one project with one vendor whenever possible.

FILE DELIVERY, OWNERSHIP & PORTFOLIO USE

46. Does DPOB expect delivery of raw photo/video files, or only the final approved deliverables outlined within each project scope?

Response:

Final approved deliverables will generally be required. DPOB may occasionally request raw photo or video files for future promotional use, which will be identified as part of the project requirements when applicable.

47. Does ownership include editable production files, and may completed public work be shown in portfolios?

Response:

DPOB may request editable/source files when identified within the project scope. Once completed work has been publicly released by DPOB, vendors may display it in their portfolios, websites, social media channels, and other marketing materials.

48. What delivery system for media currently exists? Do you have a preference and/or open to updating it?

Response:

Dropbox is DPOB's preferred file-delivery system. DPOB will establish shared Dropbox folders for selected vendors as needed.

COLLABORATION WITH PARTNERS & OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

49. Will this contract encompass anything to do with Artscape and working in conjunction with MOACE and Create Baltimore?

Response:

This RFP is issued solely by DPOB and is not being conducted jointly with MOACE or Create Baltimore. DPOB does work closely with partner organizations and may engage vendors to cover relevant events occurring Downtown. Any such assignment would be contracted through DPOB, outlined in the individual scope of work, and delivered to DPOB. This contract does not prevent vendors from independently working with other organizations or partners. For

assignments contracted by DPOB, DPOB will remain the primary client and will own the requested deliverables.

50. Are there other creative, marketing, web, communications, production, or printing partners members of the vendor pool may need to coordinate with? If so, how do you envision responsibilities being divided?

Response:

For most assignments, selected vendors will coordinate directly with DPOB's Marketing & Communications team. DPOB will manage coordination with other vendors, partners, printers, developers, or stakeholders unless otherwise specified in the individual project scope.

OTHER RFP QUESTIONS

51. Section 6.2 references establishing a pool of “graphic design firms and professionals.” Can you confirm that this language should instead refer to photography and videography firms and professionals?

Response:

The language is applicable to both solicitations. DPOB intends to establish qualified vendor pools for graphic design services and photography/videography services.

52. Is this contract being developed as a test of the Capital Investment Program?

Response:

No.

53. What are the current parameters with the visuals and promotion for Baltimore Restaurant Week?

Response:

There are no predetermined creative parameters specific to this RFP. DPOB welcomes creativity and new ideas for individual projects. A strategy and kickoff meeting will occur before each applicable campaign, during which DPOB and the selected vendor will establish the creative direction, deliverables, and expectations.

54. Since DPOB has a Membership component, is this contract a way to increase memberships based on the visuals created?

Response:

No. The purpose of this RFP is to expand DPOB's creative vendor pool and capacity. Individual assignments may support programs involving DPOB members, partners, citywide events, and internal or external DPOB initiatives.

55. There is a map that shows a radial map and boundary map with their convergent points, is this to be assumed the coverage area for what work will be created with this project?

Response:

Not necessarily. The map represents DPOB's operational service area. Creative assignments may take place within that area or elsewhere in Downtown Baltimore and surrounding areas. Specific locations will be identified in each project scope.

56. Do you have a framework in place for how this contracted visuals department will operate? Or is this being developed from the ground up?

Response:

Yes. DPOB will establish the framework, scope, deliverables, timeline, approval process, and expectations for each individual project.

57. Which accessibility standards and deliverable requirements should respondents consider when proposing and pricing services—for example, WCAG 2.1 AA, Section 508, PDF/UA or another standard?

Response:

DPOB expects respondents to incorporate accessibility best practices into applicable design and deliverables. Where applicable, respondents should account for accessibility considerations in their proposed pricing and approach.

58. DPOB has issued a concurrent solicitation for photography and videography services with the same deadline. Is there any advantage to a firm responding to both, or are the two evaluated and awarded entirely separately?

Response:

Firms capable of providing services across both scopes should submit one proposal clearly outlining their full range of services and capabilities.

Request for Proposal Cover Page

Solicitation Issue Date: Tuesday, August 18, 2026			
Solicitation Closing Date: Monday, September 14, 2026		Solicitation Closing Time 2:00PM (EST)	
Issued By: Downtown Partnership of Baltimore			
Address: 20 S Charles St #6th FL Baltimore, MD 21201 Telephone Number: 410-244-1030			
DPOB is a non-profit organization in Baltimore, MD founded in 1983 and exempt from all state, federal and local taxes.			
Responses must be received on or before Monday, September 14, 2026 , by 2:00 PM (EST).			
Electronic Responses: Please submit your Proposal to bidbidders@dpob.org referencing “Graphic Design and Creative Services 2026” in the subject line.			
For questions/information, please email tboston@dpob.org referencing “Graphic Design & Creative Services 2026” in the subject line. Questions/information must be emailed no later than Friday September 4, 2026 . All questions received by the Q&A closing date will be answered within Five (5) business days and will be made available to all respondents. Please limit your file size to less than 25mb and no more than 15 pages in total. Please note that all questions must be submitted in writing during the established Q&A period outlined in this RFP to ensure that all respondents have equal access to information.			
Questions sent to bidbidders@dpob.org or any other email address will not be answered as this email address is not monitored on a regular basis. Do not copy any other person, doing so may subject your proposal to disqualification.			
DPOB reserves the right to waive informalities or irregularities, to reject any or all proposals received, to accept the proposal deemed best for the organization, and/or request new proposals if necessary.			
Any objection to the above conditions must be clearly indicated in the proposals.			
In compliance with this RFP and to all the conditions imposed herein, the undersigned offers and agrees to furnish the services in accordance with the attached signed proposal or as mutually agreed by subsequent negotiation.			
VENDOR IDENTIFICATION			
Company Name:			
Address:			
Telephone:			
Email:			
Federal ID:			
Print Name	Title	Authorized Signature	Date

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Graphic Design & Creative Services

Downtown Partnership of Baltimore / Downtown Management Authority

1. About the Organization

The Downtown Partnership of Baltimore (DPOB) has been building a better Baltimore for over 40 years. We are the convener and connector for downtown's progress bringing together residents, businesses, civic organizations, and government to make the urban core a place where people want to be.

DPOB operates as two entities working together for all of downtown's neighborhoods. The Downtown Partnership of Baltimore is a nonprofit organization responsible for marketing, events, economic development, advocacy, and community outreach across the broader downtown area. The Downtown Management Authority (DMA) is Baltimore's oldest and largest business improvement district, focused on delivering clean, safe, green, and hospitality services within the 106-block downtown core. Together, these two entities give DPOB a broader and more powerful set of tools to serve the full downtown community.

Our vision is for downtown Baltimore to be the economic and creative heart of the region in a dynamic city center where residents, businesses, and visitors thrive together. Our mission is to steward and a clean, safe, and thriving urban core, collaboratively enhancing the vitality of all of downtown's unique neighborhoods.

DPOB's work is guided by four strategic priorities: transforming the physical environment and overall experience of downtown; advancing financial sustainability and resource development; strengthening organizational effectiveness; and fostering collaborative leadership.

These priorities are reflected in the organization's day-to-day work, including operating the Clean Sweep Ambassadors, Downtown Baltimore Guides, and Park Stewards programs; supporting small business growth through the Downtown BOOST Program and other grant initiatives; and producing signature events such as the Charles Street Promenade, Courthouse Market, Baltimore Restaurant Week, and the annual State of Downtown Baltimore.

In addition, DPOB provides leadership in advocacy efforts, alley improvement projects, capital investment initiatives, and other collaborative efforts that enhance the vitality, economic growth, and long-term success of the downtown community.

2. Purpose

DPOB is seeking a qualified graphic design partner(s) to provide creative services that support place branding, public-facing communications, member engagement, event promotion, user journey experience, and storytelling through cohesive, high-quality visual design and brand-driven marketing materials. The selected creative partner will help strengthen DPOB's visual identity and bring Downtown Baltimore's stories, programs, initiatives, and experiences to life through compelling, strategic, and audience-focused design.

The ideal partner will demonstrate expertise in brand development and management, print and digital design, event marketing, environmental graphics, user-centered design, and visual storytelling, with the ability to translate DPOB's mission and vision into engaging creative assets and experiences that enhance awareness, improve audience and member engagement, foster community connections, streamline user interactions across touchpoints, and elevate the Downtown Baltimore experience.

3. Scope of Services

Proposals should describe the vendor's approach and capabilities across the following areas. DPOB does not prescribe a specific methodology and welcomes the firm's best thinking on how to achieve the objectives below.

Brand and Creative Development

- Develop creative concepts aligned with DPOB's brand identity, strategic priorities, and organizational goals.
- Create visually compelling designs that communicate Downtown Baltimore's energy, diversity, vibrancy, and sense of place.
- Provide creative direction and recommendations for campaigns, programs, events, and initiatives.
- Maintain consistency across all branded materials and communication channels.
- Support the evolution and stewardship of DPOB's visual identity while ensuring brand standards are upheld.

Marketing & Event Collateral

Design support may include, but is not limited to:

- Event flyers and promotional materials
- Posters and signage
- Digital advertisements
- Social media static and motion graphics
- Email newsletter graphics
- Website graphics and banners
- Eventbrite graphics
- Sponsorship and partnership collateral, including sponsorship decks, prospectuses, benefit guides, branded activation materials, recognition signage, and sponsor fulfillment assets
- Presentation decks

- Annual reports and impact reports
- Community outreach materials
- Print collateral
- Environmental graphics and wayfinding materials
- Branded merchandise and promotional items

Digital Design

- Create social media assets optimized for Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, and other platforms.
- Design website graphics, landing page visuals, and digital campaign assets.
- Develop templates that promote consistency, efficiency, and long-term usability.
- Create digital-first campaigns and promotional materials that support engagement and conversion goals.
- Design user-friendly digital experiences and visual assets that support audience navigation and interaction.

Member Engagement & User Journey Experience

- Develop creative assets that support member acquisition, onboarding, retention, and engagement initiatives.
- Design materials that enhance and streamline the member experience across key touchpoints, including email communications, event participation, sponsorship opportunities, and website interactions.
- Create visual frameworks and collateral that support member-facing programs, resources, and benefits.
- Collaborate with DPOB to map, evaluate, and improve the visual and user experience journey for members, stakeholders, visitors, and partners.
- Design user-centered communications and experiences that encourage participation, foster connection, and strengthen relationships with DPOB and Downtown Baltimore.
- Ensure visual consistency and accessibility across physical and digital touchpoints throughout the member and visitor journey.

Creative Collaboration

- Participate in creative planning meetings as needed.
- Collaborate closely with DPOB's marketing, communications, and stakeholder engagement teams.
- Provide recommendations on design trends, formats, accessibility standards, and industry best practices.
- Work within established timelines and production schedules while managing multiple concurrent projects.
- Contribute strategic creative insights that support organizational objectives, audience engagement, and overall brand growth.

Availability & Rapid-Response Support

- The selected creative partner should maintain a high level of responsiveness and flexibility to support DPOB's evolving marketing, communications, events, and organizational needs. While projects will generally be planned in advance, DPOB may occasionally require creative support on an accelerated timeline, including requests made approximately 24–48 hours before a required deadline.
- The selected partner should be prepared to accommodate reasonable short-notice requests when availability permits and communicate promptly regarding capacity,

timeline, and feasibility. DPOB may contact the selected partner directly by phone, email, or other agreed-upon communication method when time-sensitive creative needs arise. Vendors should identify their standard response time, typical turnaround times, and availability for urgent or expedited projects in their proposal.

4. Proposal Requirements

Interested designers or firms should submit a proposal including:

- Overview of the designer, agency, or studio, including years in business, location, and core service offerings.
- Description of relevant experience and areas of expertise, particularly in branding, marketing, event promotion, member engagement, and/or public-facing communications.
- Portfolio showcasing branding, event marketing, digital design, environmental graphics, user experience, and/or community-focused work.
- Description of the individual/firm's creative approach, project management process, and methods for incorporating stakeholder feedback.
- At least two professional references.
- Availability, communication, and estimated turnaround times, including standard response times, typical timelines by project type, availability for expedited requests, and the vendor's ability to accommodate projects initiated with approximately 24–48 hours' notice.
- Proposed pricing structure, including hourly rates, project-based rates, rush/expedited rates, and/or retainer options. Proposals should clearly identify what is included in each pricing structure, including revisions, meetings, production, and other applicable services.

5. Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on:

- Quality, creativity, and versatility of portfolio
- Relevant experience supporting nonprofit, civic, tourism, events, place-based, or community-focused organizations
- Understanding of DPOB's mission, audiences, and Downtown Baltimore
- Ability to create engaging, accessible, and brand-aligned visual communications
- Responsiveness, availability, flexibility, and ability to accommodate standard and time-sensitive deadlines
- Project management and communication approach
- Pricing structure, transparency, and overall value
- Overall fit with DPOB's marketing, communications, event, and organizational needs

6. Contract Terms

- The selected vendor(s) will be engaged on an **as-needed, project-based basis**. DPOB will request creative services as projects, campaigns, events, and organizational needs arise.
- Each project assignment will be confirmed through a written scope of work, including project deliverables, timeline, and associated fees prior to beginning work.
- There is no guarantee of a minimum number of projects, hours, or compensation during the contract term.
- The initial contract term will be one (1) year, with the option to renew upon mutual agreement.
- Work will be assigned based on DPOB's needs, available budget, project fit, and vendor availability.
- All final approved work products created under this engagement become the property of Downtown Partnership of Baltimore.
- Vendor must maintain confidentiality of non-public organizational information.
- Additional services outside the agreed scope of a project require prior approval and may require a revised estimate or separate agreement.

6.1 Service Levels & Turnaround Expectations

Because DPOB supports time-sensitive campaigns, events, programs, and public-facing communications, the selected vendor is expected to provide responsive and reliable creative support throughout the contract term.

Unless otherwise agreed upon in a project scope:

- Standard projects: Initial concepts or first-round designs should generally be provided within 3–5 business days of receiving a complete project brief and required materials.
- Time-sensitive projects: Projects identified as urgent may require turnaround within 24–48 hours, subject to vendor availability and project complexity.
- Major or complex projects: Projects involving multiple deliverables, extensive revisions, environmental graphics, large-format production, or significant creative development will be assigned mutually agreed-upon timelines.
- Communication: The vendor should acknowledge project requests within one business day and promptly communicate any scheduling, capacity, or production concerns.
- Urgent requests: DPOB may contact the vendor by phone, email, or other agreed-upon communication method for time-sensitive needs. Vendors should identify their availability for urgent requests and any applicable expedited or rush fees in their proposal.
- Revisions: Each project scope will identify the anticipated number of revision rounds. Additional revisions or changes outside the approved scope may require additional fees.

6.2 Establishment of Vendor Pool & Work Distribution

- **Establishment of Pool:** This Request for Proposals (RFP) is intended to establish a qualified pool of pre-vetted graphic design firms and professionals. Admission into this pool indicates successful vetting but does not represent an exclusive contract or a promise of employment.
- **Discretionary Utilization:** DPOB reserves the right to select and utilize any firm within the established pool at its sole discretion, pleasure, and convenience.
- **No Sequence or Order:** There is no predetermined order, rotation, or numerical sequence dictating how or when firms will be selected for assignments.
- **Project Matching:** Work will be distributed on a case-by-case basis depending entirely on project fit, creative alignment, budget availability, and vendor capacity at the time of the request. DPOB retains the absolute right to award projects to any pool member or to source services outside the pool if necessary.

7. Proposed Pricing & Compensation

- Proposals should provide a transparent pricing structure that may include hourly rates, project-based fees, retainer options, and expedited/rush rates. Vendors should identify applicable rates for design, creative direction, production, revisions, meetings, and other services included within the proposed scope.
- For project-based pricing, vendors are encouraged to provide estimated fees for commonly requested deliverables, such as flyers, social media graphics, digital advertisements, presentation decks, event signage, sponsorship materials, environmental graphics, and campaign packages.
- Any rush or expedited fees associated with projects requiring a 24–48 hour turnaround should be clearly identified in the proposal.

8. Submission Instructions

Proposals must be submitted by September 14, 2026 to binders@dpob.org with “Graphic Design & Creative Services 2026” in the subject line. Late submissions will not be considered. DPOB reserves the right to request follow-up presentations, negotiate with one or more firms, or decline any or all proposals received.

Questions regarding this RFP may be directed to tboston@dpob.org with “Graphic Design & Creative Services 2026” in the subject line no later than September 4, 2026. Responses to questions of general interest will be shared with all who have expressed interest.