



REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

Procurement
8600 University Blvd
Evansville, IN 47712-3597

Creative Campaign Partner

Proposal No: 25-8-10001-02150 Due Date / Time: 1-17-25 / 2PM/Local Time	Instructions: Please see attachment for specifications	Return to: Jeff Sponn, Director of Procurement University of Southern Indiana Procurement (Support Services Building) 8600 University Blvd Evansville, IN 47712 jsponn@usi.edu
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GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS TO PROPOSERS

USI Proposal form must be returned to:
JEFF SPONN, Director of Procurement
Email: jsponn@usi.edu
PROCUREMENT, Support Services Building
Late submissions will NOT be considered in bid analysis.

Please submit 2 copies of your proposal.

Please direct any questions concerning this proposal to:

Jeff Sponn, Director of Procurement
Phone: 812-464-1982 Email: jsponn@usi.edu

RFP Questions due to Jeff Sponn, Director of Procurement by 11-26-24 - 2PM/Local Time.
jsponn@usi.edu

Insurance Certificate naming USI as "Additional Insured", General Liability, Workers Compensation Liability, Auto Liability, and Employers Liability coverage is to be included in bid package.

For proposal results please view our website at www.usi.edu/procurement/competitive-bids-results

A. General Terms and Conditions

1. Prices to include F.O.B. University of Southern Indiana
2. Freight or other costs will not be allowed unless included in your proposal.
3. Unless otherwise understood, there are no restrictions on the number of items or quantity that may be ordered.
4. If alternates are offered, full descriptive information and literature must be submitted with proposal.
5. The University of Southern Indiana is a political subdivision of the state of Indiana and is not subject to state sales tax. A tax exemption certificate will be sent upon request.
6. Material Safety Data Sheets are to be submitted with your proposal for any applicable items or products.

B. Terms/Shipping (VENDOR: PLEASE COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING)

1. Prices are firm for _____ days
2. Expected terms are Net 30, if not, please indicate here: _____
3. Shipment to be made from _____ within _____ days

C. Minority Business Information (VENDOR: PLEASE COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING)

1. Is your business a certified minority?
Yes _____ No _____
2. If yes, how certified: _____

Company Name: _____

Authorized company signature: _____

Printed name: _____


For questions arising from this proposal request, please complete:

Contact Person Name: _____

Contact Person Email: _____

Contact Person Telephone: _____

Nondiscrimination and affirmative action. This contractor and its subcontractor(s), if any, shall abide by the requirements of Indiana Civil Rights Act, IC 22-9, Executive Order 11246 and the Equal Opportunity clauses as set forth in 41 CFR §§ 60-1.4(a), 60-300.5(a) and 60-741.5(a). These regulations prohibit discrimination against qualified individuals based on their status as protected veterans or individuals with disabilities, and prohibit discrimination against all individuals with respect to his hire, tenure, terms, conditions or privileges of employment or any matter directly or indirectly related to employment, based on their race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or national origin. Moreover, these regulations require that covered prime contractors and subcontractors take affirmative action to employ and advance in employment individuals without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, protected veteran status or disability. As used herein, "contractor" shall be deemed to mean "Vendor" or "Supplier" and "contract" shall be deemed to mean this Agreement. The contractor will also comply with all applicable affirmative action reporting requirements. In addition, the contractor shall cause the Equal Opportunity clause references to be included in their subcontracts or purchases orders hereunder unless exempted by rules, regulations and orders of the Secretary of Labor issue pursuant to Section 201 of the Executive Order 11246 and 11375 as amended.

Signature: 
Jeff Spohn, Director of Procurement

Date: 11-5-24

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

Creative Campaign Partner

November 5, 2024

Jeff Sponn

Director of Procurement

University of Southern Indiana

8600 University Blvd.

Evansville, IN 47712

812-464-1982 (office)

jsponn@usi.edu | www.usi.edu

OVERVIEW

Purpose and Timeframe

The University of Southern Indiana (USI) seeks proposals from qualified creative partners to develop a compelling creative story that will serve as the foundation for a multi-year marketing campaign. This creative direction will drive internal execution across various media formats, including print, digital, environmental graphics and brand messaging. The goal is to enhance the University's visibility, engage prospective students and strengthen the USI brand. We are seeking a partner with experience in crafting innovative brand concepts and providing creative guidance and templated tools for year-one campaign tactics, launching in fall 2025.

RFP Schedule:

November 5		RFP Issued to Agencies
November 26 2PM/Local Time		RFP Questions Due to Jeff Sponn, Director of Procurement (jsponn@usi.edu)
December 13		RFP Question Response Distribution
January 17/2PM/Local Time		Deadline for the Agencies to Submit Proposals to Bid to Jeff Sponn, Director of Procurement (jsponn@usi.edu)
January 31	Tentative	Selection of Finalists
February 10 – 14	Tentative	Agency Finalist Presentations (presented virtually)
February 21	Tentative	Final Agency Selected
March	Tentative	Target Start

About University of Southern Indiana

The University of Southern Indiana's appeal to students is found in its size, the accessibility of professors, its beautiful environment and innovative housing, its proximity to an urban center, the friendliness of students, employees, and the community, as well as its affordability and value.

Founded in 1965, USI enrolls nearly 9,500 dual credit, undergraduate and graduate students in more than 130 areas of study. A public higher education institution, located on a beautiful 1,400-acre campus in Evansville, Indiana, USI offers programs through the College of Liberal Arts, Romain College of Business, Kinney College of Nursing and Health Professions, Pott College of Science, Engineering, and Education and School of Graduate Studies.

USI is a Carnegie Foundation Community Engaged University and offers continuing education and special programs to more than 15,000 participants annually through Outreach and Engagement. The University offers study-abroad opportunities in more than 60 countries and hosts international students from around the globe.

A competitive member of NCAA Division I and the Ohio Valley Conference, USI offers 19 varsity intercollegiate men's and women's sports.

Mr. Steven J. Bridges '89 M'95 serves as Interim President.

About University Marketing and Communication

The mission of University Marketing and Communication is to strategically market and communicate the unique value of the University of Southern Indiana, elevating its visibility and reputation, to promote student recruitment and retention and foster a strong sense of community among stakeholders.

The Vice President for University Marketing and Communication, Kindra Strupp, oversees the areas of Athletic Communication, Special Events and Scheduling, University Creative and Print, University Strategic Communication, University Strategic Marketing and University Web and Digital Content. Special projects include Commencement, Archie Eagle Mascot, Brand Licensing and Athletic Marketing.

Brand Narrative

At the University of Southern Indiana, we know that our determination is our greatest strength. We bring dedication, perseverance, and a shared pride to everything we do, knowing that together we can overcome any challenge. We celebrate this courageous spirit not for its own sake but for the potential it unlocks in every member of our community, rippling outward as we turn our talent and ambition into action.

This growth happens through a passionately caring community that places the wellbeing of each person at the center of our work. We tailor our learning programs to the needs of our students, putting impactful education within reach. We create a continually evolving network of support resources that help our students flourish in every way. We seek to practice bold hospitality and inclusion for all. And we model a culture of care that inspires our students to demonstrate generosity and passion throughout their lives.

In a constantly changing world, we bring a forward-looking vision that anticipates needs and solves them with ingenuity and creativity. We treat challenges as opportunities to innovate, embracing the diverse gifts of our community along the way. We seek to embody a mindset of constant flexibility, equipping our students to lead change through emerging careers and technologies. At every step, we celebrate how the growth of our students benefits others, enriching their world as they prove the transformative power of education.

We are the University of Southern Indiana.

OBJECTIVES

Goals

The selected agency will work closely with the USI marketing team to develop and implement a multi-year marketing campaign that will effectively promote the University and attract potential students. The services to be provided by the agency will include, but are not limited to:

- Develop and implement a comprehensive marketing campaign and strategy to increase enrollment and expand the pool of high-quality applicants at all academic levels.
- Increase visibility, awareness and strengthen the reputation of the University and its academic offerings.
- The University already has established traditional and digital media plans, along with a full internal creative team and an existing digital marketing partner. Therefore, media buying, media planning and campaign execution services *are not requested* as part of this proposal. The selected agency will strictly focus on providing creative campaign direction and guidance.
- We are looking for an agency that can be an extension of our marketing and communications team. We produce the majority of our marketing and advertising campaigns with internal expertise that includes strategy, content development, graphic design, video and web services, but look to our agency partner for development of our overarching campaigns, and as needed recommendations for program specific offerings.

Background and Current Strategy

USI is on the fourth year of the current campaign, which was designed by an external agency in 2020 and has been executed by internal teams from 2021 to current academic year (to conclude in fall 2025). The concept has relied upon personality driven headlines and messaging that establishes USI as the starting point of a student's journey, allowing them to grow and develop well beyond their time on campus or formal education. The work was inspired by a brand personality assessment that defined University of Southern Indiana as caring supporters, dedicated competitors and transformative innovators.

Headlines from those campaigns included:

- FROM HERE WE SOAR
 - With themes of support, inclusivity and warmth
- FROM HERE WE DARE
 - With themes of resiliency, pride and dedication
- FROM HERE WE IGNITE
 - With themes of visionary forward-thinking, invention and advancement

In addition to the campaign work, there have been concerted efforts to define our brand and creative expression. We've conducted research to understand consumer perception, developed a

strategic platform that includes our brand personality and organized our brand architecture under a master brand with stated sub-brands. This work has resulted in a defined brand voice and a consistent visual identity. While we have made great strides in our brand development, there is more work to be done with increasing understanding of our brand both internally and externally.

Relevant channels that the University has used successfully in the past and may continue to use include, but are not limited to:

1. Digital: Meta, YouTube, DV360, PMAX, Spotify
2. TV/Video: Streaming (OTT/CTV, Roku, College Tour), Broadcast
3. Search: Google Keywords (Branded and Unbranded)
4. Out of Home: Billboards (Static and Digital), Bus Wraps, Sponsorship Activations
5. Limited Print: Magazine, Newspaper
6. Earned and Owned Media, including a strong social presence (Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, LinkedIn, YouTube) landing page optimization, search engine optimization, personalized video and lead nurturing through e-mail marketing (Slate)

Target Audience

Our target audience is prospective, undergraduate students and their influencers in the upper high school range who are highly digital and specifically mobile. Prospective students also include adult learners, online degree seeking and graduate students.

Secondary audiences include community, alumni, donors, athletics, internal audiences of faculty/staff, current students for retention and legislators.

Designated Market Areas have included:

- Southwest Indiana Counties including Dubois, Gibson, Knox, Pike, Posey, Spencer, Vanderburgh, Warrick, Daviess, Martin and Perry.
- Western Kentucky counties where we have reciprocity agreements in place, including Henderson, Hancock, Union and Daviess, and 32 counties in southern Illinois where we offer Regional Award scholarships.
- The state of Indiana, with more concentrated efforts in Indianapolis, Terre Haute and New Albany areas.
- Regional efforts have been tested for digital placements, extending as far as Chicago, St. Louis, Cincinnati, Nashville and Louisville.

Proposal Requirements

The proposal should include the following information:

- Overview of the agency, including qualifications and experience working with higher education institutions.

- Approach and methodology for developing and implementing a creative concept and campaign strategy for USI.
- Proposed timeline for project phases, creative process, including key milestones and deadlines.
- Detailed list of deliverables for each component of the campaign.
- Proposed budget for the project, including a breakdown for all aspects of the campaign. Include payment terms and any additional costs.
- Examples of successful creative campaigns conducted for previous clients.
- Description of the team members who will be working on the project and their roles and responsibilities.
- Photography and video production should be considered out of scope for this proposal but will be included as part of the overall campaign planning at a later date.

Deliverables

Campaign Strategy and Development

- Develop a comprehensive campaign strategy that aligns with USI's goals and objectives that can be the public facing creative messaging platform for 3-5 years.
- Create an on-brand creative brief and campaign narrative that resonates across various audiences, including explorations for students, alumni, athletics and community.
- Provide creative consultation that will help USI stay on top of current trends, audience segmentation and campaign delivery.

Creative Concept and Design

- Design materials for a templated toolkit, that could be extrapolated across paid digital and traditional platforms.
- Consider owned digital assets, including website graphics, social media content, email templates and landing page recommendations.
- Suggestions for environmental graphics for use on campus, including banners, signage, and interior displays.
- Include a 30-second TV storyboard or script that captures the essence of the campaign and consult for overarching video strategy.

Implementation and Management

- Coordinate with USI's internal marketing team for campaign rollout and integration.
- Provide recommendations on media placement, optimization and analysis.
- Work with internal team on development of all campaign materials.

CONSIDERATIONS

References

Provide references, preferably in higher education at institutions of similar size and scope as University of Southern Indiana is in the continental United States.

Evaluation Overview

Selection of the partner will be made by the Selection Committee, based on the vendor who provides us with the greatest level of confidence after reviewing each response, evaluating pricing and checking references. All bidders will be informed of our decision by February 28, 2025.

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- **Creativity and Innovation:** Quality and originality of creative concepts.
- **Experience and Expertise:** Relevant experience and successful case studies.
- **Strategic Approach:** Effectiveness of the proposed campaign strategy.
- **Budget and Value:** Cost efficiency and overall value for the proposed budget.
- **References:** Feedback from past clients.

Deadline and mode for submission

Vendors must submit an electronic copy of their proposals and all pertinent documentation, on or before January 17, 2025, 2:00 P.M. local time, to Jeff Sponn, Director of Procurement (jsponn@usi.edu). Proposals that are not received by this time and date will not be considered. It is the responsibility of the bidder to see that proposals are delivered by the time and date indicated above.