

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

Strategic Marketing, Branding, and Ridership Growth Initiatives

South Central Regional Transit District (SCRTD)

SCRTD seeks a visionary and collaborative marketing partner to reimagine and elevate the SCRTD brand, inspire increased regional ridership, and expand public awareness across South Central New Mexico.

This procurement is funded in whole or in part by Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Urbanized Area Planning funds (49 U.S.C. §5303) administered through the New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT).



Bus Fleet is stationed at 2001 Futurity Drive, Sunland Park Transit Facility

1. Introduction & Purpose

The South Central Regional Transit District (SCRTD) seeks a qualified marketing and advertising firm to develop, implement, and support a comprehensive branding, outreach, and communications program. The purpose of this engagement is to create a unified brand identity, elevate public awareness of SCRTD services, increase ridership, support zero-emission initiatives, and strengthen SCRTD's regional presence.

This procurement is anticipated to be funded in whole or in part with Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Urbanized Area Planning funds (49 U.S.C. §5303) and other eligible federal transportation funds. As such, all work performed under this contract must comply with applicable federal grant requirements and regulations.

About SCRTD

The District is a rapidly growing regional transit provider serving communities across southern New Mexico, with a mission to deliver safe, reliable, and equitable mobility options that strengthen economic opportunity and quality of life. The District is committed to advancing sustainability and innovation in public transportation and is actively transitioning its fleet toward **zero-emission technology**, including the deployment of **battery-electric buses (BEBs)** and **electric vans (EVs)** to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve air quality, and lower long-term operating costs.

SCRTD has invested significantly in modern infrastructure to support this transition, including the development of the **Sunland Park Mobility & Energy Hub**, which integrates a **solar microgrid and battery storage system** designed to support fleet electrification, improve system resiliency, and demonstrate leadership in clean transportation. The District is also advancing the creation of a **regional transit training and workforce development center** to provide professional training for operators, maintenance personnel, and administrative staff, in support of long-term organizational capacity and safety.

Over the past several years, SCRTD has experienced **significant service and fleet growth**, expanding routes, increasing ridership, and adding vehicles to meet growing regional demand. This marketing and communications effort is intended to support that growth by strengthening public awareness, reinforcing SCRTD's identity as a modern and innovative transit agency, and ensuring consistent, accessible communication with the communities it serves.

2. Project Objectives

1. **Unify and modernize SCRTD's brand identity.**
Develop and assist in the implementation of a Graphics and Brand Standards Manual that ensures all SCRTD communications present a consistent identity and build equity for the SCRTD brand.
2. **Increase public awareness of SCRTD services.**
Increase public awareness and use of SCRTD services and earn greater public understanding and support for SCRTD.
3. **Improve rider communications across all platforms.**
4. **Develop a professional suite of branded assets.**
Develop a graphic standard that includes all graphics, online products, and audio products the agency develops.
5. **Promote SCRTD's capital projects.**
Promote SCRTD's capital and development projects for the purpose of increasing economic growth in the SCRTD service area; improving air quality; reducing traffic congestion; and reducing transportation costs for low-income and no-auto households.
6. **Support bilingual and accessible communications.**
Develop and implement SCRTD's Language Access Plan to identify and provide information about its services to individuals with Limited English Proficiency (LEP).
7. **Expand visibility through advertising initiatives.**
Advertising alone does not convince individuals to try transit; rather, it is the integration of marketing, customer service, public and community relations, pricing (fare) strategy, and communications that encourages ridership growth.

3. Scope of Work

The consultant shall provide professional services in branding, digital design, communications, advertising, public outreach, and program strategy, including but not limited to the following components:

A. Branding & Graphic Identity Development

Develop and implement a comprehensive Graphics and Brand Standards Manual that strengthens SCRTD's brand equity and ensures consistent application across all platforms.

B. Website & Digital Presence

Develop and implement an agency-wide digital strategy, including:

- Updating and modernizing the current website
- Evaluating functionality for a potential SCRTD mobile application (including real-time transit information and potential fare payment)
- Developing and implementing a social media strategy aligned with agency goals

- Supporting implementation of digital displays in select bus shelters and real-time e-paper transit displays at shelters and major transfer points

C. Advertising, Signage & Vehicle Graphics

Using approved brand standards, implement a coordinated program to promote agency services through SCRTD-owned media (bus advertising, digital shelter displays, website, social media, and other platforms).

D. Community Relations

Develop and implement an ongoing Community Relations Program that engages communities across the SCRTD service area, including collaborating with community- and faith-based organizations, schools, healthcare providers, social service agencies, and municipal governments. Activities may include participation in community events such as street fairs, farmers' markets, car shows, and similar outreach opportunities.

E. Public Relations

Develop and implement ongoing public relations activities to build public trust and confidence in SCRTD. Activities may include news releases, story development, social media content, encouraging user-generated content, op-ed development, coordinating with local media, and organizing press events. The consultant shall also assist in developing a Crisis or Emergency Communications Plan for SCRTD.

F. Collaborative Marketing

Develop relationships with regional retailers, healthcare providers, and major employers (e.g., Walmart, Albertsons, Costco, Save Mart, Fiesta Foods, Mountain View Regional Medical Center, Memorial Medical Center, DaVita Healthcare, and others) to support collaborative marketing initiatives that increase transit use.

G. Employee Communications

Develop and implement internal communications and training tools to raise employee awareness of SCRTD goals and initiatives, foster unity across the organization, and enhance customer service delivery.

H. Marketing Strategy & Ridership Growth Plan

Develop and implement a multi-year Service and Customer Experience Plan designed to attract new riders and retain existing riders. The plan shall consider population and employment growth, regional development trends, economic indicators, service area demographics, current ridership, operations, and customer trends. The plan shall be informed by engagement with riders, frontline employees, and non-riders.

4. Federal Funding & Regulatory Compliance Requirements

Because this contract is expected to be funded with FTA Urban Planning funds and other federal transportation funds, the selected consultant must comply with all applicable federal requirements, including but not limited to:

A. Uniform Administrative Requirements (2 CFR Part 200)

The consultant must comply with the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (2 CFR Part 200), including:

- Allowable and allocable costs
- Financial management standards
- Recordkeeping and documentation
- Audit requirements, if applicable

B. FTA Third Party Contracting Requirements

The consultant must comply with all applicable Federal Transit Administration (FTA) third-party contracting requirements, including relevant provisions of FTA Circular 4220.1 (or its successor guidance), as incorporated into SCRTD's procurement documents and contract.

C. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

The consultant shall comply with Title VI and related nondiscrimination requirements. All outreach, marketing, and communications materials must be developed in a manner that supports equitable access to services and does not discriminate based on race, color, or national origin.

D. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

All materials and communications developed under this contract must support accessibility and be consistent with ADA principles, including consideration of accessible formats (e.g., screen-reader-compatible digital content, readable font choices, captioned media, etc.).

E. Limited English Proficiency (LEP)

The consultant shall support SCRTD's obligations under Executive Order 13166 by assisting with the development of materials and outreach strategies appropriate for individuals with Limited English Proficiency.

F. Debarment and Suspension (2 CFR Part 180 and 1200)

The consultant must certify that neither the firm nor its principals are debarred or suspended from participating in federally funded contracts.

G. Lobbying Restrictions (31 U.S.C. §1352)

No federal funds may be used for lobbying activities. The consultant must certify compliance with federal anti-lobbying requirements.

H. Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE)

If applicable, the consultant shall comply with DBE requirements under 49 CFR Part 26. Proposers are encouraged to utilize certified DBE firms as subcontractors where feasible.

I. Record Retention and Access to Records

The consultant must maintain all project-related records for the period required under federal regulations and provide access to SCRTD, NMDOT, FTA, or other authorized entities upon request for audit or review purposes.

5. Project Management Requirements

The consultant shall attend coordination meetings, provide monthly progress reports, maintain agreed-upon schedules, and deliver all final deliverables and source files to SCRTD upon completion of the work.

6. Deliverables Summary

- Branding assets and standards manual
- Bus wrap designs and signage templates
- Website redesign and digital materials
- Public outreach materials
- Annual report design
- 12-month marketing plan
- Performance tracking dashboards

7. Term of Contract

SCRTD anticipates a three-year contract with an optional performance-based extension, subject to continued funding availability and compliance with all applicable requirements.

8. Proposed Budget Table

Category	Estimated Cost	Description
Employee Internal	\$10,000	Communications
Branding	\$20,000	Logos, branding guide, templates
Digital	\$35,000	Digital services
Advertising Program	\$40,000	Advertising development and placement
Community & Public Relations	\$40,000	Community outreach
Marketing Strategy	\$30,000	Media relations and communications
Total	\$175,000	

The budget outlined herein is a projected amount intended for planning purposes. SCRTD anticipates the potential to increase funding as additional grants or other eligible revenue sources become available and reserves the right to amend the budget accordingly.

9. Proposal Submission Instructions

Proposals must be received no later than March 16, 2026, at 5:00 PM Mountain Standard Time (MST).

Physical Address

Proposals must be submitted **in person** to:

Liza Alonzo
South Central Regional Transit District
2001 Futurity Drive
Sunland Park, NM 88063

Number of Copies / Format

Proposals shall include 2 sealed hard copies and (optional) 1 electronic copy on USB.

Deadline for Questions

All questions regarding this RFP must be submitted in writing no later than February 27, 2026.

Contact Information

Questions must be submitted via email to:

Liza Alonzo

lalonzo@scrtd.org

Pre-Proposal Conference

No pre-proposal conference will be held for this solicitation.

Public Notice – El Paso Times

This Request for Proposals has been publicly advertised in the El Paso Times and will also be posted on SCRTD's official website and Facebook page in accordance with applicable procurement requirements.

Reservation of Rights

SCRTD reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, to waive informalities or minor irregularities, and to accept the proposal deemed to be in the best interest of the District.

EXHIBIT A — FTA FEDERAL CONTRACT CLAUSES

1. NO FEDERAL GOVERNMENT OBLIGATION TO THIRD PARTIES

The Recipient and Contractor acknowledge and agree that, notwithstanding any concurrence by the Federal Government in or approval of the solicitation or contract, the Federal Government does not assume any obligation or liability to any third party, including the Contractor, and that nothing in this contract imposes any responsibility or liability on the Federal Government.

2. PROGRAM FRAUD AND FALSE OR FRAUDULENT STATEMENTS AND RELATED ACTS

Contractor acknowledges that the provisions of the Program Fraud Civil Remedies Act of 1986 (31 U.S.C. §§ 3801 et seq.) and U.S. Department of Transportation (U.S. DOT) regulations, “Program Fraud Civil Remedies,” 49 C.F.R. Part 31, apply to its actions under this contract. Upon execution of this contract, Contractor certifies that all statements related to this contract are truthful, and Contractor acknowledges that if it makes a false, fictitious, or fraudulent claim, the Federal Government reserves the right to impose penalties under the Program Fraud Civil Remedies Act and under 18 U.S.C. § 1001.

3. ACCESS TO RECORDS AND REPORTS

Contractor shall maintain and retain intact all records, books, documents, and other materials relevant to this contract for a period of at least three (3) years after final payment under this contract or until all audits, reviews, and enforcement actions have been completed, whichever is later. Contractor shall grant access to such records to SCRTD, NMDOT, FTA, the Comptroller General of the United States, or any authorized representative for inspection, audit, or copying as reasonably required.

Contractor agrees to provide sufficient access to the sites of performance under this contract as reasonably may be required by SCRTD, NMDOT, FTA, or authorized representatives.

4. FEDERAL CHANGES

Contractor shall at all times comply with all applicable FTA regulations, policies, procedures, and directives, including those listed directly or by reference in the Master Agreement between SCRTD and FTA, as they may be amended from time to time during the contract period. Failure to comply constitutes a material breach of this contract.

5. CIVIL RIGHTS (TITLE VI, ADA, EEO, ETC.)

Contractor shall comply with all applicable Federal civil rights laws and implementing regulations, including but not limited to:

- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended (42 U.S.C. § 2000d), and U.S. DOT regulations, “Nondiscrimination in Federally Assisted Programs,” 49 C.F.R. Part 21;
 - The Americans with Disabilities Act (42 U.S.C. § 12101 et seq.) and implementing regulations;
 - Equal Employment Opportunity requirements under 49 U.S.C. § 5332 and related statutes;
 - Executive Order 11246, as amended, and Department of Labor regulations (41 C.F.R. Part 60 et seq.).
- Contractor agrees not to discriminate based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, disability, or any other protected class.

6. DISADVANTAGED BUSINESS ENTERPRISE (DBE)

Contractor shall comply with the requirements of 49 C.F.R. Part 26 and SCRTD’s approved DBE program. Contractor agrees to take all reasonable steps necessary to ensure nondiscrimination in subcontracting and, where feasible, to achieve DBE participation goals.

7. DEBARMENT AND SUSPENSION (NON-PROCUREMENT)

Contractor certifies, by execution of this contract, that it and its principals are not presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in federally funded transactions by any Federal department or agency. Contractor agrees to include this clause in each subcontract financed in whole or in part with federal assistance.

8. LOBBYING

Contractor certifies that:

- a. No federal funds have been paid or will be paid by or on behalf of it to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a member of Congress, or an employee of Congress in connection with the awarding of this contract; and
- b. Contractor shall require that the language of this certification be included in all subcontract awards at all tiers and that all subcontractors shall certify accordingly.

9. CLEAN AIR AND CLEAN WATER REQUIREMENTS

Contractor shall comply with all applicable standards, orders, or regulations issued under the Clean Air Act (42 U.S.C. § 7401 et seq.) and the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. § 1251 et seq.), as amended. Violations shall be reported to SCRTD, NMDOT, FTA, and EPA as required.

10. ENERGY CONSERVATION REQUIREMENTS

Contractor shall comply with mandatory energy efficiency standards and policies contained in federal regulations and state energy conservation plans as applicable.

11. BUY AMERICA / CERTIFICATIONS (IF APPLICABLE)

For contracts involving procurement of goods, materials, or rolling stock, Contractor must comply with Buy America requirements (49 U.S.C. § 5323(j) and 49 C.F.R. Part 661) and submit appropriate certifications with its offer.

EXHIBIT B — NMDOT FEDERAL LANGUAGE

1. STATE MANAGEMENT PLAN & TITLE VI ASSURANCES

Contractor acknowledges that SCRTD receives FTA funds through NMDOT's State Management Plan and agrees to abide by all conditions of that plan, including but not limited to NMDOT's Title VI Program for FTA subrecipients. Contractor shall assist SCRTD in meeting Title VI reporting and compliance obligations.

2. NMDOT REQUIRED CLAUSES (INCORPORATED BY REFERENCE)

Contractor shall comply with all NMDOT federal grant provisions, including but not limited to:

- NMDOT Title VI Plan and complaint procedures;
 - Environmental justice considerations consistent with state policy;
 - Record retention policies applicable to FTA and NMDOT;
 - Audit and reporting requirements required by NMDOT;
- These provisions are incorporated by reference and shall be binding on Contractor as if fully set forth herein.

EXHIBIT C — CERTIFICATIONS AND ASSURANCES

(As before, but now integrated with the above clauses and expressed as formal certification statements.)

Contractor must complete and sign the following:

1. **Certification Regarding Lobbying**
2. **Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, and Other Responsibility Matters**
3. **Certification Regarding DBE Compliance**
4. **Non-Collusion Affidavit**

Authorized Representative: _____

Title: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____
