

Request for Proposals

Strategic Marketing Partner

Issued by: Colleges Ontario

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1. About Colleges Ontario

Colleges Ontario is the advocacy organization representing Ontario's 24 public colleges and polytechnics.

Ontario's colleges and polytechnics educate and train hundreds of thousands of learners annually, supporting the province's economic growth, workforce development and economic resilience. Colleges prepare graduates for careers in health care, skilled trades, technology, business, advanced manufacturing, public safety and industries critical to Ontario's prosperity.

Colleges Ontario:

- Serves as a unified voice to government, employers, media and the public.
- Advances sector policy that strengthens Ontario's colleges.

Colleges Ontario, as the provincial advocacy and coordination body representing Ontario's 24 public colleges and polytechnics, is seeking an integrated marketing partner to reposition its brand, strengthen sector-wide reputation and deliver integrated campaigns that build public and political capital.

Learn more about Colleges Ontario at: www.collegeontario.org

2. Introduction

Colleges Ontario, as the provincial advocacy and coordination body representing Ontario's 24 public colleges and polytechnics, is seeking an integrated marketing partner to reposition its brand, strengthen sector-wide reputation and deliver integrated campaigns that build public and political capital.

To strengthen its positioning and amplify the sector impact, Colleges Ontario is seeking to retain an integrated marketing partner capable of delivering:

3. A comprehensive rebranding of Colleges Ontario brand,
4. Ongoing creative agency support and marketing campaign development for sector-wide campaigns,
5. Integrated media planning and buying services.

3. Scope of work

We are seeking a partner to provide services across three integrated streams:

3.1 Rebranding Colleges Ontario

3.1.1 Brand audit

- Review of current brand, messaging, visual identity and positioning
- Competitive and comparator analysis

3.1.2 Brand strategy and positioning

- Development of a clear positioning statement
- Messaging framework for government and key stakeholders
- Narrative aligned to Ontario's economic and policy priorities

3.1.3 Identity refresh

- Updated name
- Updated visual identity
- Logo refinement or redesign
- Accessible design standards compliance
- Bilingual implementation

3.1.4 Brand architecture and guidelines

- Brand guidelines and implementation toolkit
- Templates for presentations, advocacy materials and digital platforms

3.2 Creative agency support

3.2.1 Research and positioning

- Public perception research
- Government and stakeholder positioning review
- Media landscape analysis

3.2.2 Campaign strategy development

- Campaign framework and development
- Alignment with provincial political cycles and policy

3.2.3 Creative development

- Unifying campaign concept
- Creative assets (digital, social, OOH, print, video as required)

3.2.4 Ongoing advisory support

- Campaign refresh and optimization

3.3 Media planning and buying

3.3.1 Media Strategy

- Integrated paid, earned and owned media strategy
- Audience segmentation and targeting approach
- Channel recommendations

3.3.2 Media buying and management

- Placement negotiation
- Budget allocation and optimization
- Real-time campaign monitoring

3.3.3 Measurement and reporting

- Defined KPIs aligned with objectives
- Performance dashboards
- Post-campaign analysis and recommendations

4. Submission guidelines

4.1. Agency overview and relevant experience:

Overview of the agency, core capabilities and relevant experience of working with member associations/post-secondary education sector.

4.2. Proposed scope and deliverables:

Outline of proposed deliverables and any assumptions or exclusions informing the scope.

4.3. Diversity and inclusion

Approach to authentically representing the diversity of institutions, learners and communities across Ontario.

4.4. Team and project management

Proposed project team, governance model and collaboration approach.

4.5. Budget and pricing

Include a high-level budget estimate, outlining anticipated costs by phase and major workstreams.

4.6. Additional Information (Optional) Any risks, considerations, or value-added ideas that could supplement the submission.

5. Proposal evaluation

5.1 Evaluation Process

Proposals will be evaluated by an internal review committee based on the criteria outlined below. Following an initial review of written submissions, Colleges Ontario may, at its sole discretion, invite one or more proponents to participate in a presentation and/or interview.

Colleges Ontario reserves the right to seek clarification of any aspect of a proposal and to request additional information where required.

The contract will be awarded to the proponent whose submission is determined to provide the best overall value and alignment with the objectives of this RFP.

5.2 Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Demonstrated experience delivering similar projects, including examples of relevant work and outcomes achieved for comparable organizations.
- Demonstrated understanding of Colleges Ontario, Ontario's public college sector and the broader post-secondary education environment.
- Quality and feasibility of the proposed approach, methodology and work plan, including the ability to meet project objectives and timelines.
- Qualifications, experience and availability of the proposed project team.
- Demonstrated commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility in organizational practices and project delivery.
- Overall value for investment, including proposed fees, budget structure and anticipated outcomes.

5.3 Presentations and Interviews

Colleges Ontario may invite one or more shortlisted proponents to participate in a presentation and/or interview as part of the evaluation process. These sessions may be used to assess the

proponent's understanding of the project, proposed approach, team capabilities and overall fit with the organization's needs.

Colleges Ontario intends to award a contract to the proponent whose proposal represents the best overall value and strategic alignment.

Colleges Ontario reserves the right to reject any or all proposals and is under no obligation to award a contract.

6. Submission details

Proposals and any questions related to this RFP should be submitted electronically to:

Chris Jardine

Vice-President, Marketing, Communications and Public Affairs

Colleges Ontario

Email: jardine@collegesontario.org

Submission deadline: July 31, 2026

Colleges Ontario thanks all applicants for their interest. Only those selected for further consideration may be contacted.