



**Food
Export**
Midwest USA



YOUR CONNECTION TO GROWTH™

INVITATION FOR BIDS

Food Export Association of the Midwest USA (Food Export–Midwest) and **Food Export USA–Northeast** (Food Export–Northeast) are seeking the assistance of a qualified marketing and communications professionals (individuals or companies) in the areas of 1) marketing, communications and design services; 2) video and podcast production and postproduction; 3) website support; and 4) special projects.

The selected professional will be responsible for the aforementioned activities during our 2026 Program Year, from January 1, 2026, to December 31, 2026, and is renewable on an annual basis. Previous experience with not-for-profit groups/trade associations, international marketing, and food and/or agricultural groups will be considered favorably.

Attached please find the official Request for Proposal for details, requirements and deadlines.

The deadline for proposals is 12:00 noon ET on **Friday, July 18, 2025**. Emailed proposals will be accepted.

Please address all proposals and questions to:

Gina Donio, Marketing and Communications Manager

Food Export Association of the Midwest USA

Food Export USA–Northeast

1617 JFK Blvd., Suite 752

Philadelphia, PA 19103

Tel: 215.599.9746

E-mail: gdonio@foodexport.org



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Request for Proposals Marketing and Communications Contractors

Background

The Food Export Association of the Midwest USA (Food Export–Midwest) and Food Export USA-Northeast (Food Export-Northeast) are not-for-profit export associations whose primary function is to develop export markets for midwestern and northeastern (respectively) producers and processors of value-added food and agricultural products. Our members include state agricultural promotion agencies from 13 midwestern and 10 northeastern states.

Both groups are participants in the Market Access Program (MAP) and Regional Agricultural Promotion Program (RAPP) federal programs handled by the Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The MAP and RAPP are intended to boost the export of value-added food and agricultural products from the U.S. through a partnership between FAS and approximately 75 other industry-based trade organizations. This includes primarily commodity-specific groups, as well as two other unaffiliated regional groups similar to Food Export-Midwest and Food Export-Northeast that handle the southern and western regions of the U.S.

The products covered for export promotion by Food Export-Midwest and Food Export-Northeast include a wide variety of processed and semi-processed products found throughout the retail, foodservice, and food processing sectors. These include products or derivations of meat, dairy, poultry, seafood, grains, fruits and vegetables, salty and savory snack foods, confections, beans, sauces and condiments, pet foods, beverages, canned foods, animal feeds, bakery products, pasta, and many others. Marketing channels include mass market retail, specialty foods, convenience foods, private label, healthy/organic, food ingredients, frozen foods, and others. Additionally, Food Export– Northeast promotes benchmark seafood products from the northeastern U.S. including lobster, scallops, monkfish, Atlantic herring, squid, Atlantic mackerel, dogfish, and skate.

Food Export-Midwest and Food Export–Northeast are independent organizations that have been engaged in a strategic alliance since April of 2000. Through this alliance, the strategy and tactics of the organizations have been aligned so that the activities and services of each group are very similar with differences based primarily on geographic focus. Food Export-Midwest focuses on midwestern exporters and a series of ten overseas target markets, including China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan, Korea, India, Southeast Asia, Mexico, Oceania, and Africa. Food Export-Northeast targets northeastern exporters and nine

overseas markets, including Europe, Central America, Canada, South America, the Middle East, and the Caribbean. Further, Food Export-Northeast works with China, Hong Kong, and Southeast Asia for seafood export activities and services. By collaborating, the activities and services of each organization are open to participation by companies from the other region. The net effect is that exporters in the Midwest and Northeast have access to a larger range of export promotion opportunities, while the limited staff at Food Export-Midwest and Food Export-Northeast can focus on specific market development opportunities.

The states that are members of Food Export-Midwest include Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Dakota, and Wisconsin. Food Export-Northeast encompasses Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont.

More information about Food Export-Midwest and Food Export-Northeast is available at www.foodexport.org.

Communications Objectives

Food Export–Midwest’s and Food Export–Northeast’s communications, outreach and marketing efforts have a variety of goals and objectives including:

1. Broaden domestic outreach to Midwest and Northeast U.S. food and agricultural companies and increase their awareness about the benefits of exporting.
2. Educate Midwest and Northeast U.S. food companies about export opportunities, food export-related news, and “how to export.”
3. Establish the organizations as well-respected, credible industry resources, both for U.S. suppliers and international buyers.
4. Boost participation in Food Export-Midwest and Food Export-Northeast programs and services and help increase export sales of Midwest and Northeast U.S. food and agricultural products.
5. Broaden domestic outreach to industry partners, e.g., other associations, current partners, and industry stakeholders (i.e., partnerships).
6. Increase awareness about the two organizations and about Midwest and Northeast U.S. food and agricultural products/companies to international buyers.
7. Provide a variety of marketing and promotional support for the organizations’ network of overseas In-Market Representatives.

Scope of Work

Contractors may bid on one or any combination of the following projects.

Project 1: Marketing and Communications

Provide a wide variety of marketing, communications, and design services, including but not limited to:

- **Creative Design & Content Development:** Development of creative design and copywriting for digital, social, email, print, and trade show elements to support Food Export's broader marketing activities.
- **Marketing Strategy and Plan:** Collaborate with Food Export's Marketing and Communications team to develop marketing strategy that will define the overall approach to achieve Food Export goals and create and implement a marketing plan that has actionable recommendations, tactics, cadence, budget, KPIs, etc.
- **Campaign Development and Execution:** Create messaging and creative per agreed upon plan and be able to create assets which may include but are not limited to: digital, social, print, search engine marketing, and emails. Experience with Microsoft Dynamics Marketing preferred.
- **Video and Podcast Production:** Plan, produce, and edit multimedia content—including promotional videos, educational segments, and podcast episodes—that align with Food Export's messaging and strategic goals. Support includes scripting, recording, editing, distribution, and performance tracking across platforms.
- **Digital and Print Publications:** Develop and manage the production of digital and print publications that communicate Food Export's impact, programs, and success stories. Responsibilities include content planning, writing, editing, layout, and distribution, with an emphasis on accuracy, readability, and brand consistency.

Project 2: Website:

Provide ad-hoc support, hosting, and maintenance for Food Export's website (and related sites) that utilizes WordPress integrated with Microsoft Dynamics and our LMS. This may include but is not limited to: consultation and guidance on the use of the site, training, UI updates, text, image and content changes, content development, bug or error fixes resulting from changes made to the site, reporting of website analytics, software integration, enhancements to our portal, and coordinating with Food Export partner(s) as needed.

Project 3: Digital Campaigns

Create messaging and creative per agreed upon plan and be able to create assets which may include but are not limited to: digital, social search engine marketing, and emails. Experience with Microsoft Dynamics Marketing preferred.

Digital services to consider in your response:

- The successful Offeror shall create, run, and optimize Google AdWords campaigns to drive quality traffic to our website, www.foodexport.org, helping to lower the bounce rate and increase conversions.
- The successful Offeror shall optimize social and digital campaigns on a regular basis to continually increase performance and marketing Return on Investment (ROI): 1. Bid Optimization: Monitor and adjust keyword bids to attract visitors who are more likely to convert; 2. Budget Allocation: Analyze performance of the various campaigns to pull budget from low-performers and increase budget for campaigns that provide the greatest ROI; 3. Ad Testing: Test ad creativity to discover what variables (e.g., headlines, images, descriptions, display URLs, sitelink extensions, and call-outs) prove most effective in attracting high quality

- visitors to the www.foodexport.org website; and 4. Audience Targeting: Test and optimize ad messaging and/or images shown to targeted audiences to serve the most relevant and compelling ads based on known interests, demographics, and likely decision-making criteria.
- LinkedIn and possibly Facebook & Instagram Campaigns. The successful Offeror shall set up and manage LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram, and other recommended social media platform ad campaigns using the following delivery methods to test ad variations: 1. LinkedIn newsfeed ads testing unique combinations of images, headlines, copy, linking to relevant pages of our website, www.foodexport.org; and 2. Facebook/Instagram photo and video ads including reels, stories, and posts, using eye-catching visuals and compelling story lines to boost awareness, increase social following and engagement, and drive website visits.
 - The successful Offeror shall build onto the existing Google Tag Manager installation and set-up key goals and conversion events to quantify user engagement and compare the quantitative and qualitative value of visitors from each advertising source. Final tracking parameters will depend on the back-end flexibility of the current website's content management system (CMS). Deliverable will include documentation of new goals and conceptual analytics-based visitation funnel.
 - Performance Reports: The successful Offeror shall produce monthly reports summarizing campaign performance and key insights including: 1. Overview of KPIs like spend, clicks, CPC, CTR, and CPA (where applicable); 2. Highlights of top performance areas of campaign will be included; and 3. Overall analytics of performance with key insights and major action items (as needed).
 - Purchase Media per Campaign(s) The successful Offeror shall purchase media per campaign(s) including but not limited to: Google, LinkedIn, and possibly Facebook/Instagram as part of the agreed upon strategy and target markets.

Project 4: Special Projects

Provide assistance on an as-needed basis for additional domestic and international projects. Some examples include assisting with projects that support the development of marketing materials, e.g., custom marketing materials, newsletters, advertorials, copywriting projects, special presentations, or any other projects in need of marketing communications vendor assistance. Assistance may also be needed to create success stories, which includes reaching out to Food Export companies, gathering information about their activities and writing a success story based on the Food Export guidelines. The responsibilities of the contractor for these projects would be to work with the Marketing and Communications Manager to provide input on a plan of work for the project and to provide the assistance required.

Requirements and Submitting a Proposal

The vendor must be able to cite previous experience. Previous experience with not-for-profit groups, international marketing, and food and/or agricultural groups will be considered favorably. The proposal should also include the names of the individuals who will be conducting the work and the qualifications of the proposed individual / vendor. The proposal should also include references. The contractor must also be financially and

legally capable of entering into and executing a contract for the above-stated projects. In addition, please provide the following information:

1. Name of Entity (as it would appear on contract/invoices)
2. Main point of contact
3. Complete Mailing Address / Physical Office Address
4. EIN/TIN/SS number (or if an overseas entity, the equivalent tax identification number in your country)
5. Type of Structure (choose one):
☐ Individual ☐ Corporation ☐ LLC ☐ Partnership ☐ Sole Proprietorship

Food Export-Midwest and Food Export-Northeast are not liable for any costs associated with any company's response to this RFP. Food Export-Midwest and Food Export-Northeast reserve the right to not award this contract if, in the opinion of the evaluators, no suitable proposal is received. The awarded contract may be renewed for up to three (3) years.

The quotation(s) should be submitted with rates per hour for the projects described. Vendors may choose to submit different rates per hour for various components of the projects listed above. Vendors may choose to submit proposals for select project(s) and not all of the listed projects.

The selected contractor must agree to abide by Food Export–Midwest and Food Export–Northeast Terms and Conditions:

Food Export-Midwest and Food Export-Northeast do not discriminate on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity. Persons with disabilities who require alternate means of communication of program information should contact us. Food Export-Midwest and Food Export-Northeast do not tolerate fraud in their programs or services, and expect all participants to comply with our code of ethics (www.foodexport.org/termsandconditions).

If you suspect any instance of fraud, please contact our Ethics Reporting Line at: www.foodexport.ethicspoint.com or 1-855-727-6715 (domestic toll-free.)

We reserve the right to deny services to any firm or individual which, in the sole opinion of Food Export-Midwest or Food Export-Northeast does not comply with MAP and/or RAPP; FAS; Food Export-Midwest or Food Export-Northeast regulations or policies, or otherwise reflect positively on them; their members states; FAS; or USDA, in pursuit of their mission of increasing food and agricultural exports, or for continued public support for their programs. For more information, please see our Terms and Conditions located at www.foodexport.org/termsandconditions.

The selected contractor must agree to abide by the provisions contained in Section 202 of Executive Order 11246 (30 Federal Register 12319) with regard to employment and contracting practices. In addition, Food Export – Northeast require that its contractors may not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity

(including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, familial/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity. Food Export-Midwest and Food Export-Northeast acceptance of proposal is conditional upon contractor disclosing all existing relationship with another party that has the potential of impacting and/or influencing the contractor's ability to carry out the scope of work.

By responding to this request for proposal, you are certifying that your company nor its principals are presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in this transaction by any Federal department or agency. If you are unable to certify to the preceding statement, but wish to proceed with a proposal to this request, you will need to include an explanation as to why you cannot certify this statement as an attachment to your proposal.

The contents of this Request for Proposal and Scopes of Work are confidential and business proprietary. They may not be re-used for any purpose, in whole or part, including any text, or related concepts, strategies or tactics described, without written permission from Food Export-Midwest and Food Export-Northeast.

The deadline for proposals is 12:00 noon ET on **Friday, July 18, 2025**. Emailed proposals will be accepted.

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