



SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT SERVICES

PUBLISH DATE: THURSDAY, JULY 24, 2025

DUE DATE: FRIDAY, AUGUST 29, 2025

THE CITY OF MERCED

678 W. 18TH STREET, MERCED, CA 95340

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I. INTRODUCTION

The City of Merced invites proposals from qualified consultants to develop and manage engaging, informative, and community-focused social media content for its official accounts on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, X (formerly Twitter), and LinkedIn.

II. BACKGROUND & PURPOSE

The City of Merced is a dynamic community of 98,000 people, with friendly small-town living in a mid-size City. The University of California Merced campus, opened in 2005, provides new educational and economic opportunity, adding to the already-established growth of the region. Merced's population is youthful and diverse.

Located in the heart of California's agricultural Central Valley, Merced is the region's hub for education, culture, and business. The community offers abundant shopping, pleasant neighborhoods, and tree-lined streets. Bicycle paths along creeks link major City parks. Even with recent increases in prices, Merced's housing remains affordable compared to many other California locations. In addition, Merced's revitalized downtown is emerging as the area's entertainment center. Annual events and festivals bring regional and even national recognition.

Merced is a charter City operating under a council/manager form of government. There are six City council members currently elected by districts, serving over-lapping four-year terms. The mayor is elected at-large for a four-year term. The charter imposes a two-term limit on City council members and the mayor. The City has approximately 500 full-time employees serving various departments and divisions, including the City Manager's Office, Finance, Economic Development and Housing, Support Services, Information Technology, Public Works, Planning, Inspection Services, Engineering, Parks & Community Services, Police, Fire, and the City Attorney's Office. The City also operates a commercial service airport and has a small zoo.

The goal is to enhance communication, foster community engagement, and promote transparency between the City government and its residents, including the local college community.

III. SCOPE OF SERVICES

The selected consultant will be responsible for:

A. Content Development & Management

- Develop a content calendar in collaboration with the City Manager Department's Senior Management Analyst.
- Create engaging social media posts, including images, videos, graphics, and text content.
- Use data analytics to assess content performance and adjust strategies for improved engagement.
- Ensure all content adheres to accessibility standards and follows the City's communication guidelines, including meeting ADA WCAG 2.1 AA requirements for accessibility.
- Provide language translation of content as needed to ensure inclusivity and accessibility.
- All content produced, including "B" roll, graphics, titles, logos, and other work products, shall be exclusively (non-exclusively) owned by the City of Merced.
- Any content produced by AI must adhere to intellectual property rights and license agreements as outlined in item #1.

B. Platform-Specific Deliverables

- **Engagement HQ:** Promote City projects, surveys, community engagement opportunities.
- **Facebook:** Community stories, event promotions, and civic announcements.
- **Instagram:** Visual storytelling through photos, reels, and short videos.
- **YouTube:** Long-form videos covering City projects, interviews, and event recaps.
- **X (Twitter):** Real-time updates, quick facts, and live event coverage.
- **LinkedIn:** Professional updates, City development news, job postings, and business/community partnerships.

C. Weekly Deliverables

- At least 4-5 posts across Facebook, Instagram, and X.
- One video post on YouTube (event highlight or community story).
- Two LinkedIn posts focusing on City achievements, job openings, or partnerships.
- Live coverage of key events (City council meetings, public hearings, City project groundbreaking and ribbon cutting ceremonial events, community events, etc.).

D. Monthly Deliverables

- Develop a content calendar outlining key events and themes.
- Provide a storyboard monthly for video content to be approved before shooting.
- Create 2-3 short YouTube videos (3-5 minutes each).
- Perform post-production work, including up to 2 rounds of revisions for each video.
- Prepare a social media analytics report with insights and recommendations.
- Conduct performance analysis with retargeting and A/B testing.
- Attend a monthly stakeholder meeting to review performance and align strategies.

E. Additional Responsibilities

- Recommend strategies for social media campaigns and hashtag usage.
- Capture images and design graphics to support the content plan.
- Monitor social media trends and suggest new engagement strategies.
- Coordinate with City departments to promote their initiatives and events.
- Ensure all content used that is not directly produced by the consultant, such as audio, is royalty-free and has usage rights retained by the City.
- The consultant may not subcontract work without prior approval from the City.
- All published data shall be retained for the duration of the contract and shared with the City at its conclusion.
- Hours of work may extend beyond the standard 8 AM – 5 PM schedule as needed for event coverage.
- The scope of work does not cover reimbursement for expenses such as travel, food, and other incidentals.
- Adhere to the City's drone policy, requirements, and costs, including insurance, licenses, and permitting.

F. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

- Growth in followers and engagement across platforms.
- Improved community interaction and response times.
- Increased awareness of City events and programs.
- Strengthened connection with the college community and enhanced City-college collaboration.
- Note: Simple content sharing or re-tagging by partner organizations or accounts does not count toward KPI metrics unless it results in measurable engagement (e.g., clicks, comments, shares, or follower growth).

G. Out-of-Scope Activities

The following activities are not included in the scope of work unless specifically negotiated and approved in writing by the City:

- Responding to direct messages (DMs) or private inbox inquiries on social media platforms.
- Replying to or moderating comments on posts.
- Paid advertising or boosted post management (unless separately agreed).
- Reimbursement for travel, food, or other incidental costs.
- Subcontracting without prior written approval.

IV. QUALIFICATIONS

Eligible consultants must:

- Have prior experience in social media content development and management for government agencies, nonprofits, or community organizations.
- Demonstrate proficiency in graphic design, video production, and social media analytics.
- Have knowledge of accessibility standards and best practices for digital communication.
- Exhibit strong collaboration skills and experience working with multiple stakeholders.

V. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Interested applicants must submit the following items via USPS or courier service:

1. **Cover Letter** – A brief introduction summarizing qualifications and interest in the project.
2. **Proposal Narrative** – Explanation of the consultant’s approach, methodology, and understanding of the project.
3. **Work Samples** – Provide a visual and descriptive portfolio detailing applicable social media plans, communications plans, marketing plans, or campaigns developed that are similar to the requirements set forth in this RFP on a USB drive.
4. **Budget Proposal** – Detailed cost breakdown, including hourly rates and estimated total cost.
5. **References** – At least two references from past clients.

VI. APPLICATION REVIEW & SELECTION

Proposals will be evaluated based on:

- Relevance of experience and expertise (30%)
- Quality of proposed approach and methodology (25%)
- Cost-effectiveness of budget proposal (20%)
- Demonstrated creativity and engagement strategies (15%)
- References and past performance (10%)

VII. NOTIFICATION

Applicants will be notified of their selection status within **two (2)** weeks following the submission deadline.

VIII. AWARD OF CONTRACT FOR SUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS

The City of Merced intends to award a contract to the selected consultant for an initial term of twelve (12) months, with the option to extend the agreement for up to four (4) additional one-year terms, subject to mutual agreement and satisfactory performance.

IX. SPECIAL MATTERS & REQUIREMENTS

Submittal Information: Proposals are **due on Friday, August 29, 2025, by 5:00 P.M. PST.** It is the sole responsibility of the Proposer to ensure the proposal is submitted to the City of Merced City Manager's Office electronically before the stated deadline. The City shall not be held liable for late Submissions.

Mail proposals to:

Senior Management Analyst/Public Information Officer, Jennifer Flachman

City of Merced / Office of the City Manager

678 W 18th St Merced CA, 95340

flachmanj@cityofmerced.gov

Subject: Proposal for Social Media Content Services

Fees for Services: The City will issue payments on a monthly basis upon receipt of an invoice and verification of services rendered. The proposed fee shall remain fixed for the duration of the contract.

Labor Code: The Applicant shall comply with Sections 3700 et seq. of Labor Code of the State of California, requiring every employer to be insured against liability for worker's compensation.

Insurance: The Applicant shall meet the insurance requirements in Section 9 of the contract, including liability insurance in the amount of \$1,000,000, naming the City of Merced as an additional insured. In addition, due to the nature of the services involving direct access to the City's official social media accounts, the Applicant must maintain cyber liability insurance with minimum coverage of \$2,000,000, which includes provisions for data breaches, unauthorized account access, and reputational harm. The Applicant must also maintain professional liability (errors & omissions) insurance in the amount of at least \$1,000,000. The City may request documentation confirming access control practices such as use of multi-factor authentication, content approval processes, and secure credential management.

Conflict of Interest: The Applicant must be aware of and comply with conflict of interest rules included in the California Political Reform Act, and Section 1090 et seq. of the Government Code. The Political Reform Act requires City/Agency officers and committee members to file

statements of interest and abide by a Conflict of Interest Code. Section 1090 applies even where the office only reviews the contract for the approving body.

Public Record: Responses to this RFP become the exclusive property of the City of Merced. All proposals received in response to this RFP become a matter of public record and shall be regarded as public records, with the exception of those elements in each proposal which are defined by the Proposer as business or trade secrets and plainly marked as “Confidential”, “Trade Secret”, or “Proprietary”. The City shall not in any way be liable or responsible for the disclosure of any such proposal or portions thereof, if they are not plainly marked as “Confidential”, “Trade Secret”, or “Proprietary” or if disclosure is required under the Public Records Act. Any proposal which contains language purporting to render all or significant portions of the proposal “Confidential”, “Trade Secret”, or “Proprietary” shall be regarded as non-responsive.

Although the California Public Records Act recognizes that certain confidential trade secret information may be protected from disclosure, the City of Merced may not accept or approve that the information that a Proposer submits is a trade secret. If a request is made for information marked “Confidential”, “Trade Secret”, or “Proprietary”, the City shall provide the Proposer who submitted the information with reasonable notice to allow the Proposer to seek protection from disclosure by a court of competent jurisdiction.

Withdrawals of Proposals: The Applicant may withdraw its proposal at any time before the expiration of the time for submission of proposal as provided in the RFP by providing a written request (via email or mail) for withdrawal signed by, or on behalf of, the Proposer.

X. QUESTIONS OR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Direct all questions and inquiries to Senior Management Analyst/Public Information Officer, Jennifer Flachman via email, flachmanj@cityofmerced.gov by **5 pm, THURSDAY, AUGUST 21, 2025**.

XI. TIMELINE

Tentative Timeline



THURSDAY, JULY 24,
2025

Advertisement of RFP for Social Media Content Services



THURSDAY, AUGUST
21, 2025

Questions/technical assistance regarding RFP due by 5:00 pm



FRIDAY, AUGUST 29,
2025

Proposals due by 5:00 pm



MONDAY,
SEPTEMBER 1 –
FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER
12, 2025

Review of proposals



MONDAY, OCTOBER
20, 2025

Anticipated contract award



MONDAY,
NOVEMBER 3, 2025

Anticipated start date