



FMWF Chamber of Commerce
3312 42nd St. S, Ste. 101
Fargo, ND 58104

**Center for Civic Engagement
Phase 1: Strategic Planning and Research
Request for Proposals (RFP)**

Issue Date: **July 2, 2025**

Proposal Deadline: **July 16, 2025**

Decision Date: **July 23, 2025**

Anticipated Project Kickoff: **July 29, 2025**

Overview and Background

The Fargo Moorhead West Fargo (FMWF) Chamber of Commerce is launching a Center for Civic Engagement (CCE), an ambitious, strategic initiative to foster a culture of informed, values-driven, and active citizenship throughout the region. The Chamber's CCE will act as a private sector-led community hub for civic education, leadership development, and strategic outreach to enhance overall civic engagement. Please reference the following CCE Overview for additional information.

At the heart of this initiative lies a commitment to cultivating a community of civic leaders who embrace regional growth and prosperity, embodying business-minded principles. Through targeted leadership development, mentorship, and educational programming, the CCE will assist future candidates in confidently navigating the path to public service.

Additionally, the CCE will assist, empower, and support employers in understanding the importance of private sector leadership in candidate cultivation, building strategies for employee outreach and engagement, and developing internal protocols and best practices for employees interested in running for office. This involves guidance on flexible scheduling, conflict-of-interest policies, compensation and public service leave structures that enable professionals to lead without compromising their careers, employer responsibilities, and compensation. The CCE will use strong messaging to foster collaborative partnerships and engage in meaningful outreach to:

- Cultivate a diverse pool of candidates for public office.
- Inspire and empower community members to engage in civic activities.
- Provide comprehensive election and ballot education to inform voters.

To launch this initiative successfully, the Chamber is seeking a consultant or firm to lead the initial phase (Phase 1), which will include foundational aspects such as short and long-term strategic planning and community outreach work. Following Phase 1, The Chamber may award additional work to the selected consultant or firm to execute additional phases of the initiative.

Project Scope and Deliverables

The scope of work and deliverable for the Phase 1 of this strategic initiative includes, but is not limited to, the following:

1. **Strategic Consulting and Planning:** The selected partner will provide The Chamber's internal team with ongoing strategic support and consultation throughout Phase 1, to include:
 - a. Advising on the prioritization and creation of strategic programs (referenced in appendix)
 - b. Supporting the facilitation of discussions with regional stakeholders.
 - c. Providing guidance for developing funding strategies and external partnerships.
 - d. Helping to define the scope for future phases.
 - e. Assist with the public launch of the Center for Civic Engagement.

2. Research and Data Gathering:

- a. **Membership and Industry Research:** Assist the Chamber staff with:
 - i. Collecting regional, state, and national best practices in civic engagement.
 - ii. Conducting one-on-one interviews and pilot discussions with Chamber members, businesses and stakeholders.
 - iii. Surveying Chamber members on civic attitudes, participation, and employer engagement strategies.
 - iv. Synthesizing findings to inform messaging, strategic planning, and toolkit development.
- b. **Voter Research and Engagement:** The consultant or firm will lead the research and outreach strategy, to include:
 - i. Comprehending behavior and civic motivations among regional voters.
 - ii. Developing engagement strategies for population segments and target communities.
 - iii. Recommending practical outreach tools and channels, and scalable engagement tactics that can be reused or expanded in future phases.
 - iv. Integrating research findings into the overall messaging framework and strategic planning deliverables.

Proposal Requirements

Interested agencies must submit the following information in their proposals:

- **Firm or Agency Background and Experience:**
- **Team Structure and Bios:**
- **Examples of previous work:**
- **Approach and Timeline:**
- **Detailed budget, including line-item pricing for each deliverable:**
- **Three references from previous clients or partners:**

Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated on the following criteria:

- **Relevant Experience:** Demonstrated relevant experience with community initiatives, civic engagement, nonprofit, or public sector clients.
- **Strategy and Approach:** Developed a creative and strategic proposal that aligns with the objectives of The Chamber and the mission and vision of the CCE.
- **Team and Expertise:** Experience and qualifications of the project team, as well as the ability to execute the scope of work effectively, including strategic planning and community and voter research.
- **Budget and Pricing:** Cost-effectiveness of the proposal, including transparency in pricing.
- **References and Past Results:** Quality and relevance of references and the agency's proven track record in delivering measurable results.

Submission Process

Please submit proposals via email to:

Cale Dunwoody

Vice President of Public Policy

Fargo Moorhead West Fargo Chamber of Commerce

Email: cdunwoody@fmwfcchamber.com

Submission Deadline: July 16, 2025

Appendix:

- Center for Civic Engagement Overview:

- **Mission:** To inspire, empower, and educate current and future community leaders to increase their role and responsibilities in civic engagement.
- **Vision:** To have every individual possess the knowledge, skills, and motivation to participate meaningfully in civic life.
- **Purpose:** Across the nation, we are seeing a significant decline in civic engagement. The Center for Civic Engagement will strengthen civic participation at all levels within the community to include adults, college students and young professionals, and K-12 students.
- **Objectives:**
 - Cultivate a renewed mindset on the importance of civic engagement.
 - Motivate business-minded individuals to seek elected/ appointed office at all levels.
 - Empower employers to take an active role in civic engagement.
 - Educate and mobilize individuals to strengthen civic understanding and participation.
 - Inspire the next generation of civic leaders.

- Center for Civic Engagement Programs:

○ Candidate Cultivation and Development

- **Candidate Resources and Programs:** A comprehensive program designed to empower potential candidates by providing the skills, knowledge, and support they need to successfully run for office.
 - **Employee Toolkit:** A comprehensive resource developed to support individuals in the workplace who are interested in running for public office, this toolkit provides the foundational knowledge, guidance, and tools needed to navigate the decision-making process and take actionable steps toward candidacy.
 - **Mentorship Program:** A structured pairing of prospective candidates with experienced, current or former elected or appointed leaders who provide guidance, advice, and support throughout the electoral journey.
 - **Candidate Institute:** A workshop where aspiring candidates learn about the electoral process and necessities of a successful campaign.
- **Employer Engagement Initiatives:** A unique and collaborative strategy that elevates the importance of local business engagement in fostering a culture of civic engagement among their employees.
 - **Employer Toolkit:** A compilation of resources and best practices for employers, enabling them to create supportive environments for civic participation, such as flexible work arrangements for voting and volunteer initiatives, risk mitigation, communication strategies and tools, compensation and benefit examples for employees serving in office.
 - **Employer Outreach:** Private sector led convenings where local business leaders discuss the significance of civic engagement and explore strategies to enhance community and employee involvement.
 - **Civic Insights:** Strategic workplace discussions where The Chamber, public leaders and civic experts engage directly with employees to spark meaningful conversations about civic engagement and public service.

○ **Expand Voter Turnout, Education and Engagement**

- **Election Resources:** A series of initiatives aimed at educating voters about the electoral process and fostering informed participation in elections.
 - **VoteFMWF:** A non-partisan online resource hub that provides essential information on elections and voting, including guidelines, polling locations, ballot descriptions, and candidate profiles to encourage informed electoral decisions.
 - **Candidate Forums:** Virtual and/or in-person events where candidates present their platforms and respond to questions from community members, designed to enhance transparency and facilitate voter engagement.
- **Civic Literacy: A curated collection of educational materials aimed at enhancing civic knowledge and understanding of the electoral process.**
 - **Elections 101:** A resource that explains basic concepts of the electoral process, including voter registration, different types of elections, and how to vote.
 - **Local Government 101:** A resource that explains the local governance process, including how local ordinances and rules are made, the role of elected officials and the importance of advocacy, designed to demystify governance for community members.
 - **Legislative 101:** A resource that explains the legislative process, including how laws are made, the role of elected officials and the importance of advocacy, designed to demystify governance for community members.
- **Community Mobilization:** Initiatives focused on mobilizing community members to engage in civic activities, particularly during election cycles.
 - **Digital Engagement:** A robust digital, non-partisan campaign using various mediums to inform and remind citizens about upcoming elections, voting dates, and civic events.
 - **Mobilization Partnership:** Collaborations with local nonprofit organizations and civic groups to increase outreach efforts, volunteer engagement, and community participation in the electoral process.
 - **Community Gatherings:** Informal engagements designed to inspire dialogue amongst the community – discussing civic participation and encouraging active participation.
- **Expand Educational Participation and Early Engagement:**
 - **Next Generation Development:** Programs aimed at empowering young adults with knowledge and skills related to civic participation and government engagement.
 - **Higher Education Legislative Internship/Capstone:** An internship opportunity for college students to work within their local or state government, gaining practical experience in the legislative process and understanding civic duties.

- **Curriculum Enhancement Initiatives:** Initiatives aimed at augmenting local school curricula to foster early engagement in civic activities.
 - ***National Civics Bee:*** A competition for middle school students, hosted by the US Chamber Foundation, that emphasizes civic knowledge and engagement, encouraging young participants to learn about government, history, and their responsibility as citizens.