

Massachusetts College of Art and Design

Request for Proposal 25-05

Marketing Campaign Services for MAAM

Attachment # 1 - Specifications and Description of Services

Relevant Background

Massachusetts College of Art and Design (MassArt) is the only freestanding public college of art and design in the United States, located in Boston's vibrant Avenue of the Arts. Founded in 1873, MassArt is dedicated to providing an accessible, world-class art education and is a key contributor to the cultural and intellectual life of the Greater Boston region.

The MassArt Art Museum (MAAM), which opened in 2020, is Boston's freshest, most intriguing museum. MAAM is a *kunsthalle* (non-collecting museum) that features temporary exhibitions from both emerging and established artists. As Boston's only free contemporary art museum, it also serves as a teaching museum for MassArt students and faculty, providing an immersive space to engage and experience with contemporary art while offering free educational and gathering programming to the local community.

MAAM's mission is to **open eyes, expand minds, and create opportunity through the lens of contemporary art**. The museum is committed to educating and elevating the next generation of artists, both on campus and in the world beyond. MAAM provides a space where visitors can experience groundbreaking art from extraordinary artists at the forefront of contemporary practice.

Located near some of Boston's most visited cultural institutions, including Boston's Museum of Fine Arts and the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, MAAM seeks to establish itself as a key destination for art lovers in the region. The museum's values of being open, evolving, involving, illuminating, and visionary guide its mission to build meaningful relationships with individuals and institutions in order to spark positive change in the community.

Since its opening, MAAM has fostered an environment where art is accessible, ever-evolving, and visionary, encouraging visitors of all ages to create, experience, and reflect on contemporary art.

MAAM is free, vital, and welcoming to all. Visit maam.massart.edu to explore more.

Scope of Work

Project Overview

Massachusetts College of Art and Design (MassArt) is seeking a communications firm to develop and launch a comprehensive campaign that raises awareness of and encourages attendance at the MassArt Art Museum (MAAM), the College's contemporary art museum. This campaign will coincide with the Boston Public Art Triennial (May 22 – October 31, 2025) and may continue post-Triennial to ensure sustained engagement with patrons and potential patrons. This campaign will aim to target local and regional audiences, increase foot traffic to the museum, and grow MAAM's social media presence and community engagement.

1. Goals and Objectives

- a. **Raise Awareness:** Increase public knowledge of MAAM as a must-visit contemporary art museum in Boston
- b. **Increase Unified Awareness:** MAAM is part of Massachusetts College of Art and Design and this campaign should serve as an opportunity to better brand the College and the Museum as partners, collaborators, and resources.
- c. **Encourage Attendance:** Drive museum visitation, particularly during the upcoming summer months (June-August 2025).
- d. **Sustainability Beyond Triennial:** Develop a campaign strategy that can extend beyond the Triennial period into future phases of marketing for MAAM.

2. Target Audience

- a. **General Public:** Residents, families, and visitors to the Greater Boston metropolitan area.
- b. **Contemporary Art Enthusiasts:** People who actively engage with contemporary art in the Boston area.
 - i. Professional arts-purchasers and reviewers are a subset of this audience.
- c. **Tourists:** Individuals looking for cultural and arts-related activities in Boston, particularly those visiting nearby institutions like the Boston MFA and Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum.

3. Scope of Work

The selected communications firm will be responsible for:

a. Media Placements:

The selected firm will be responsible for planning and purchasing paid media advertising in the Greater Boston area. While the primary focus, due to budget, may be on digital and social media platforms, the campaign should also include targeted print ads, out-of-home advertising (such as transit advertising and guerrilla marketing), and/or geomarketing tactics. The firm will strategically plan and execute these various media placements to ensure maximum visibility and engagement for MAAM across multiple channels, optimizing the impact within the campaign's budget.

b. Campaign Strategy Development:

- Collaborate with the MassArt Marketing & Communications Office to design and develop the campaign strategy.
- Ensure the campaign integrates seamlessly with the Boston Public Art Triennial while laying the groundwork for ongoing awareness-building for MAAM.

c. Content Creation and Creative Direction:

- Content creation and creative direction will be managed in-house at MassArt, the selected firm should be collaborative in nature and is expected to provide input on creative strategies for maximizing engagement.

4. Metrics and Reporting:

- Track and report on key metrics, including:
 - MAAM attendance (June-August)
 - Newsletter sign-ups
 - Social media engagement (likes, shares, mentions)
- Provide weekly progress reports and ensure transparent communication throughout the campaign.

The College anticipates commencing services on the week of June 9, 2025. The project should be completed by August 1, 2025, or once the project budget limit has been reached, whichever occurs first. MassArt reserves the right to extend the contract for up to two additional six month periods with the same terms and conditions. Any changes must be agreed upon in writing.

Either party may terminate this agreement without cause by giving to the other party not less than thirty (30) days advance written notice of both its election to do so and the effective date of termination. If this agreement is terminated, the College shall have no further obligations other than payment for services already rendered and for expenses previously incurred.

Proposal Deadline

Bid proposals are due by 3:00 PM EST on Wednesday, May 21, 2025. MassArt is not responsible for delays and will not open any proposals received later than the deadline date and time as put forth in this RFP.

After a review of proposals, selected finalists will be invited for a Zoom interview with College representatives. The interviews will take place Monday & Tuesday, June 2 & 3, 2025, and will last for approximately one hour.

Desired Firm Experience

We seek a communications firm with experience in the following areas:

1. **Cultural Sector Experience:** Firms with experience in arts and culture organizations, particularly museums or other public-facing arts entities (e.g., theatre, symphony, opera, ballet, etc.).
2. **Higher Education Experience:** While not required, experience working with higher education institutions is a plus.
3. **Relevant Case Studies:** Firms should provide examples of similar campaigns focused on raising awareness and increasing attendance for public-facing cultural organizations and/or events.

Desired Firm Requirements

- The firm will provide transparent billing practices.
- The firm will provide a dedicated account manager/representative.
- The firm will be available for a standing weekly meeting (approximately 30 minutes).

Vendor Response and Evaluation Criteria

The proposal should include:

1. **Firm Overview:** A brief description of the firm's history, mission, and key capabilities.
2. **Relevant Experience:** Detailed examples of previous campaigns that are similar to this project (preferably in the arts/culture sector).
3. **Project Plan:** A detailed outline of how the firm would approach the campaign for MAAM, including proposed strategies, tactics, and deliverables.

4. **Budget Breakdown:** A clear breakdown of how a \$50,000 budget will be allocated across media buys, strategy development, and any other services and fees.
5. **References:** At least three client references from recent campaigns.
6. **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):** Clear metrics on how the firm plans to measure the success of the campaign.
7. **Team Members:** Credentials of the team members who will be involved in the campaign, including their relevant experience and roles. Note: The awarded bidder must consult with MassArt regarding any replacements to the original account team outlined in the RFP document. Any team member replacement(s) must be mutually agreed upon.
8. **Project Staff Information:** Identify the positions and levels (i.e. VP, Associate etc.) of the staff assigned to the MassArt account and hourly rates for each position/level. Bid responses must also include an estimated number of hours per position/level per month to accomplish the work outlined in this request for proposal.