



San Joaquin Valley
AIR POLLUTION CONTROL DISTRICT®



2026 REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

Advertising & Marketing Agency Representation for
Comprehensive, Multilingual Public Outreach Campaigns

*Emphasis on Media Planning, Buying, Placement,
& Performance Analysis*

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Section I – Introduction

Since its formation in March 1992, the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (District) has worked to improve air quality across Fresno, Kings, Madera, Merced, San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Tulare, and the Valley air basin portion of Kern County through a comprehensive approach that includes regulations, incentives, and public outreach. Central to this mission is ensuring that Valley residents understand, support, and actively participate in efforts to improve air quality and protect public health.

To achieve this, the District conducts ongoing, multilingual, multi-channel public awareness and education campaigns designed to reach diverse audiences, increase engagement, and encourage emission-reducing behaviors. These campaigns support key initiatives such as the Residential Wood Smoke Reduction Strategy, the Healthy Air Living program, and a wide range of voluntary incentive programs.

The District's Outreach and Communications (OC) team brings extensive in-house expertise in marketing, community outreach, media relations, and content development. This includes bilingual outreach staff, graphic design, organic social media, and video production capabilities. **Accordingly, creative development services are not included within the scope of this solicitation.**

The District seeks a qualified contractor with demonstrated expertise in media planning, buying, placement, and performance analysis. The selected contractor will collaborate with District staff to strategically place District-developed creative assets across appropriate media channels, ensuring efficient use of public funds while maximizing campaign reach and effectiveness throughout the San Joaquin Valley.

A primary objective of this contract is to enhance the effectiveness, transparency, and accountability of the District's media investments. The selected contractor will be expected to provide data-driven media strategies, ongoing optimization, and comprehensive performance reporting to support continuous campaign improvement and informed decision-making.

The District values partners who understand the unique air quality challenges of the San Joaquin Valley and are committed to supporting public health-focused messaging. While creative development is not included in this scope, the selected contractor shall bring strategic insight and innovative approaches to media placement approaches that strengthen and enhance the District's outreach efforts.

Proposals are solicited from firms with demonstrated experience in executing multilingual, multi-platform media campaigns, particularly in English and Spanish. Experience reaching Hmong, Punjabi, and other non-English speaking audiences in the Valley is highly desirable. Experience working within the San Joaquin Valley or with similar public agencies is also preferred.

The projected annual budget for media buying and placement services is approximately \$600,000. The contract may be renewed annually for up to four additional years, contingent upon performance and Governing Board approval. **All cost estimates, proposals, contracts and potential contract renewals require approval from the District's Governing Board through an annual contract approval process and annual budget approval process.**

No bidders' conference is being offered. All questions concerning the RFP must be directed to our LinkedIn Group "Valley Air District Advertising RFP Q&A Forum" where all appropriate questions will be answered openly. Request membership at:

<https://www.linkedin.com/groups/7036758/>

District staff contact for the RFP is:
Jaime Holt
Chief Communications Officer
San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District
1990 E. Gettysburg Ave.
Fresno, California 93726-0244
Phone (559) 230-5850
E-mail: jaime.holt@valleyair.org

Section II - Schedule

<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>
April 8, 2026	RELEASE OF REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
April 29, 2026 (5pm)	PROPOSAL SUBMISSION DEADLINE
May 2026	PROPOSAL REVIEW BY DISTRICT STAFF
Before May 11, 2026	FINALIST AGENCIES NOTIFIED FOR INTERVIEWS
Week of May 18, 2026	AGENCY INTERVIEWS WITH DISTRICT STAFF AND EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT (EITHER VIA ZOOM OR IN THE DISTRICT'S FRESNO OFFICE)
Late May, 2026	FINAL RECOMMENDATION FOR SELECTION ANNOUNCED
June 18, 2026	CONTRACT PRESENTATION TO DISTRICT GOVERNING BOARD FOR PUBLIC COMMENTS AND CONSIDERATION FOR FINAL APPROVAL
July 1, 2026	PROPOSED CONTRACT START DATE
YEAR ROUND	DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT MEDIA CAMPAIGNS AND EVENTS
June 30, 2027	CONTRACT END DATE (potential for up to four additional annual renewals)

Section III – Air Quality Context and Role of Public Engagement

The San Joaquin Valley continues to face significant air quality challenges, particularly in attaining federal standards for ozone and fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}). Ozone pollution is most prevalent during the summer months, while particulate matter concentrations are typically elevated during the fall and winter seasons or when wildfires bring smoke into the Valley. Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive approach that combines strong regulatory programs with effective public outreach and voluntary emission reduction efforts.

To complement its regulatory framework, the District has developed a wide range of incentive-based and educational programs designed to encourage cleaner technologies and support emission-reducing behaviors. The District's Grants and Incentives programs play a critical role in accelerating emissions reductions, particularly in sectors outside of the District's direct regulatory authority. As federal standards become increasingly stringent, public awareness and individual action are more important than ever in achieving continued progress.

Since its formation, the District has adopted hundreds of rules and amendments that have resulted in substantial emissions reductions from stationary sources. However, the majority of the region's remaining air pollution is generated by mobile sources, including cars, trucks, and heavy-duty equipment, which are primarily regulated at the state and federal level. This dynamic underscores the importance of targeted, effective public outreach to influence behavior, increase program participation, and support the transition to cleaner technologies. You can find a detailed overview of the District's activities in our [Annual Report to the Community](#).

Within this broader strategy, paid media plays a vital role in ensuring that the District's messages reach priority audiences across the Valley. This Request for Proposals is focused on securing a qualified contractor with expertise in media planning, buying, placement, and performance analysis who can strategically deploy District-developed messaging to maximize reach, engagement, and impact. The selected contractor will support the District's efforts by aligning media investments with program goals, audience needs, and seasonal air quality priorities.

Section IV – Project Specifications

This Request for Proposals includes a two-phase evaluation process consisting of:

1. Written proposal
2. Finalist interview

Following evaluation of the written proposals, the top three (3) highest-scoring firms, using the scoring criteria in Section VIII, will be invited to participate in a finalist interview, anticipated to occur during the third week of May. Written proposal scores will be used solely to determine the firms advancing to the interview phase.

While the interview panel will have access to each firm’s written proposals, the ranking and scores from the written proposals will not be considered during the final evaluation and selection of the winning agency.

Firms advancing to the interview stage will be considered technically qualified and capable of performing the scope of work. The interview process is intended to further assess each firm’s strategic approach, communication style, and overall fit with the District.

Finalists will be expected to demonstrate:

- A strong understanding of the District’s mission and the unique air quality challenges of the San Joaquin Valley; and
- The ability to strategically plan, buy, and optimize media across multiple platforms; and
- A clear, data-driven approach to analyzing and maximizing the effectiveness and efficiency of media investments; and
- The ability to work collaboratively with District staff and key stakeholders.

The interview process will focus on evaluating strategic thinking, communication, responsiveness, and the potential for a productive, long-term working relationship with the District.

Section V – Budget Framework and Program Overview

The anticipated annual budget for media buying and placement services is approximately \$600,000, subject to Governing Board approval. This budget is expected to support multiple campaigns and initiatives throughout the year and may be adjusted based on program needs, strategic priorities, and available funding.

For planning purposes only, the budget is generally allocated across the following major campaign areas:

- Winter Residential Wood Smoke Reduction Outreach (~\$250,000)
 - Focused on promoting compliance with rule requirements and encouraging cleaner heating alternatives. Media may include digital, social, broadcast, radio, and outdoor placements.
- Summer Healthy Air Living Campaign (~\$200,000)
 - Focused on increasing awareness of ozone-related air quality impacts and encouraging behavior changes to reduce emissions during peak ozone season. May also include time sensitive wildfire messaging if needed.
- Additional Programs and Initiatives (~\$150,000)
 - Supporting a range of District efforts, including:
 - Community outreach initiatives such as AB 617 programs
 - Grants and incentive programs
 - District-led events, workshops, and symposiums

These allocations are provided for illustrative purposes only and may shift based on strategic priorities, emerging needs, or Governing Board direction.

To support proposal development, firms may review examples of prior District-produced videos/commercials on the District's [YouTube Channel](#).

All budget amounts expressed in this RFP are estimates and remain subject to change based on annual budget approval and authorization by the District's Governing Board. Firms are encouraged to propose flexible media strategies that can be adapted across campaigns and adjusted in response to changing air quality conditions, seasonal priorities, and funding levels.

Section VI – Contract Terms, Expectations, and Deliverables

The selected contractor shall provide comprehensive media planning, buying, placement, optimization, and performance reporting services in support of the District's outreach efforts. All campaigns will utilize creative assets developed by the District unless otherwise specified.

Contract Term

The initial contract term will align with the District's fiscal year (July 1 through June 30), with the option for up to four (4) additional one-year renewals, contingent upon contractor performance and Governing Board approval. The initial contract will be considered by the District Governing Board at their regularly scheduled June 18, 2026 meeting.

Collaboration and Responsiveness

The selected contractor will work closely with District staff throughout the year and must be available for regular project meetings, which may be conducted virtually or in person at the District's discretion.

The contractor shall demonstrate the ability to respond quickly to time-sensitive needs, including, but not limited to, urgent public outreach related to air quality events such as wildfires.

The ability to operate in a fast-paced public agency environment, while maintaining flexibility and responsiveness, is essential.

Media Planning and Execution

The contractor shall:

1. Develop strategic media plans aligned with District goals, target audiences, and campaign objectives working in close coordination with the District.
 - a. It shall be noted that the District places media in three (3) designated market areas (DMAs):
 - i. Bakersfield
 - ii. Fresno
 - iii. Sacramento (note: only a small portion of the Sacramento DMA falls within the District boundaries; media placement must be carefully targeted to ensure geographic accuracy)
2. Campaigns will require placement in, at minimum both English and Spanish media, unless told in writing otherwise and will execute media buys across all relevant channels
3. Monitor and optimize campaigns on an ongoing basis
 - a. Provide weekly performance reporting for major campaigns, when data and analytics are available
 - b. When considering any modifications to an agency and District agreed upon advertising campaign (i.e. types of media to be used, markets

included, time of year, etc), the District will be consulted and changes approved prior to implementation

4. Provide detailed performance analysis
 - a. Include proof of performance for all placements
 - b. The District will provide any relevant District data needed to complete a thorough evaluation of a media campaign, which will be determined during campaign coordination meetings prior to commencement

Budget and Cost Structure

All proposals must clearly identify:

1. Media placement costs, including whether pricing is structured as:
 - a. A flat fee; or
 - b. A commission-based model
 - i. (Note: Commission will be paid on invoiced total from vendor. If vendor does not itemize agency commission, it cannot be added to the total.)
2. Agency fees
 - a. All agency fees must be itemized through hourly rates for any staff expected to work on this account
3. Any additional costs or expenses, clearly defined and justified

The District expects full transparency in all financial reporting and relevant proposal scoring will be based on cost-effectiveness and demonstrated ability to maximize the value of public funds.

Reporting, Documentation and Deliverables

The contractor shall provide:

1. Proof of performance and copies of invoices for all media placements
 - a. Including but not limited to connected TV (CTV), over-the-top (OTT), digital, and social media placements
2. Post-campaign performance summaries with clear, actionable insights to inform future strategies
 - a. Reports shall be delivered weekly during major campaigns, when data and analytics are available
3. Detailed documentation of billable hours for all staff time charged to the contract
4. All documentation necessary to support District reporting, compliance and audit requirements

All materials developed or placed under this contract shall be considered work for hire. The District will retain all rights of ownership and distribution for all work completed, including but not limited to creative, talent and digital rights.

Insurance and Compliance

Upon notification of award, the selected contractor shall provide proof of the following insurance coverage:

- Commercial General Liability Insurance with minimum coverage of \$2,000,000 per occurrence
- Automobile Liability Insurance covering bodily injury and property damage with a combined single limit of \$2,000,000 per occurrence
- Workers' Compensation Insurance, as required by California law

Section VII - Written Proposal Contents

All proposals must follow the format outlined below and include all requested information. Proposals must be received electronically at jaim.holt@valleyair.org or delivered to the District's Central Office at 1990 E. Gettysburg Ave., Fresno, CA 93726 by no later than 5:00 p.m. on April 29, 2026.

Incomplete proposals or proposals received after the deadline will not be considered. No exceptions or extensions will be granted. Contractors encountering technical or file size limitations when submitting electronically, must contact the District prior to the submission deadline to make alternative arrangements.

Written proposals may not exceed forty (40) total pages (8.5" x 11" format), inclusive of all content such as cover pages, cover letters, resumes, references, media plans, and performance plans. Hard copy submissions may be formatted as twenty (20) double-sided pages.

Proposals should be clear, well-organized, and demonstrate the contractor's ability to deliver high-quality media planning, buying, placement, optimization, and reporting services in alignment with the District's needs.

Required Proposal Components

1. Cover Letter

- a. Provide a signed cover letter that includes: Name, title, address, phone number, and email of the authorized representative
- b. A brief statement confirming the contractor's commitment to the terms outlined in this RFP
- c. A concise summary of the contractor's interest in and qualifications for this engagement

2. Summary of Qualifications - 15 points (15% of Total)

- a. Provide a detailed overview of the Contractor's capabilities, including:
 - i. Contractor Background
 - ii. Number of years in business
 - iii. Core areas of expertise, with emphasis on media planning and buying
 - iv. Staffing and Experience
 - v. Key personnel assigned to this account, including the expected Account Executive, list all roles and relevant experience
 - vi. Identification of staff with experience in air quality, government or public-sector campaigns
 - vii. Hourly billing rates for all proposed staff
- b. Operational Approach: Describe how your firm will meet the District's expectations regarding:
 - i. High-quality work product
 - ii. Responsiveness, accessibility, and flexibility

- iii. Efficient use of public funds and cost-conscious decision-making
 - iv. Strong budget management and financial transparency
 - v. Ability to operate within a public agency environment
 - vi. Timely execution and turnaround
 - c. Multilingual and Multicultural Capabilities
 - i. Experience executing multilingual media campaigns (TV, radio, digital, OTT/CTV, outdoor, social, etc.)
 - ii. Strategies for reaching Spanish-speaking audiences beyond traditional media channels
 - iii. Recommendations to enhance the District's outreach effectiveness among Spanish-speaking communities
 - d. Relevant Experience
 - i. Current or recent experience with at least two (2) public agencies, preferably in air quality, environmental, or related sector
 - ii. Description of work performed, including media planning, buying, placement and performance data presentation (i.e. input metrics, engagement metrics, outcome metrics, efficiency metrics, etc)
 - e. Identification of any subcontractors used and their roles
3. **Understanding of the San Joaquin Valley** - 10 points (10% of Total)
- a. Describe your firm's understanding of the San Joaquin Valley, including factors that may influence the effectiveness of media campaigns, such as:
 - i. Demographics and language diversity
 - ii. Media market fragmentation
 - iii. Cultural, economic, and geographic considerations
 - iv. Public perception and political context
4. **Air Quality Challenges and Opportunities** - 10 points (10% of Total)
- a. Provide your perspective on the key air quality challenges and opportunities in the San Joaquin Valley. Responses should demonstrate an understanding of how public outreach and media strategies can support behavior change and program participation.
5. **Media Planning and Buying** - 40 points (40% of Total)
- a. Provide a detailed description of your firm's experience and approach to media planning, buying, placement, and analysis, including:
 - i. Experience buying media across the San Joaquin Valley's media markets
 - b. Describe your firm's experience planning, executing, analyzing and invoicing paid media across digital platforms including but not limited to: social media, display advertising, Search Engine Optimization (SEO), Geotargeting (GEO), and/or CTV/OTT
 - i. Provide example media plans with associated budgets and rationale

- c. Describe your approach to performance tracking, optimization, and reporting for digital campaigns
 - i. Provide example media plan performance analysis
- d. Approach to audience targeting, frequency, and reach optimization
- e. Experience addressing market-specific challenges, including media buying constraints in San Joaquin and Stanislaus Counties

Contractors should demonstrate the ability to develop flexible and adaptive media strategies that can respond to changing air quality conditions, seasonal priorities, and funding levels.

1. **Budget and Billing** - 10 points (10% of Total)
 - a. Submit a proposed media buying fee structure, clearly identifying whether pricing is based on a commission model or flat fee
 - i. Include strategies for negotiating rates and securing added value
 - b. Staffing costs and hourly rates
 - c. Any additional administrative or overhead costs

The District will evaluate proposals based on cost transparency, competitiveness, and demonstrated ability to maximize the value of public funds.

6. **Sample Work (Portfolio)** - 10 points (10% of Total)
 - a. Provide examples of three (3) recent campaigns demonstrating contractor's media-buying abilities. Each example must include:
 - i. Campaign overview and objectives
 - ii. Media strategy and channels utilized
 - iii. Performance outcomes, key results, and data analytics used
 - iv. Role of your firm in planning, placement, buying, and campaign analysis
 - v. Identification of any subcontractors and their contributions
 - b. Preference will be given to campaigns:
 - i. Conducted within the San Joaquin Valley or involving public agencies, air quality or public health messaging
 - ii. Demonstrating multilingual outreach

7. **References** - 5 points (10% of Total)
 - a. Provide three (3) client references, including:
 - i. Organization name
 - ii. Contact person
 - iii. Phone number and email address

References should reflect experience delivering comprehensive, multilingual media campaigns, preferably for public agencies within the San Joaquin Valley or similar air district regions.

Section VIII –Proposal Evaluation & Interview Process

Written Proposal Evaluation

An evaluation committee comprised of District staff will review and score all written proposals based on the criteria outlined in Section VII. Each proposal component has been assigned a point value, and proposers are encouraged to respond thoroughly, clearly, and in the format requested.

In evaluating proposals, the District will consider, but is not limited to the following factors:

- Demonstrated expertise in media planning, buying, and placement
- Ability to develop strategic, cost-effective media plans aligned with public outreach goals and objectives
- Understanding of the San Joaquin Valley, including its diverse communities and media landscape
- Experience working with public agencies and managing taxpayer-funded programs
- Strength of the proposed approach to data analysis, performance measurement, and campaign optimization
- Transparency in budgeting, fee structures, and media costs
- Responsiveness, flexibility, and ability to meet timelines
- Quality, organization, and completeness of the proposal
- Ability to follow instructions and adhere to RFP requirements

The written proposal evaluation will be used to identify the highest-ranked firms. The top three (3) firms will be invited to participate in the interview phase.

Interview Process

Firms selected as finalists will be invited to participate in an interview with District staff and leadership. Interviews may be conducted in person at the District's Fresno office or virtually via Zoom.

The purpose of the interview is to further evaluate each firm's:

- Strategic thinking and approach to media planning and buying
- Approach to allocating and optimizing media budgets
- Understanding of the District's mission and air quality challenges
- Approach to collaboration with District staff and stakeholders
- Communication style, responsiveness, and overall fit

Unlike traditional agency selection processes, the District is not seeking a creative pitch as part of the interview. Finalists are not expected to present speculative creative concepts. Instead, the interview will be structured as a working discussion focused on how the firm would:

- Approach media strategy development across multiple campaigns

- Adjust media investments based on performance data, campaign analytics, and seasonal priorities
- Provide clear, actionable campaign reporting and insights
- Ensure efficient and transparent use of public funds

Finalists should be prepared to discuss real-world examples of how they have:

- Communicated performance metrics during active campaign placements
- Optimized campaigns over time
- Adjusted budgets based on performance data
- Delivered measurable outcomes through media strategy

Additional Evaluation Considerations

As part of the evaluation process, the District may, at its sole discretion:

- Request additional information or clarification from proposers
- Conduct reference checks
- Visit finalist offices (in person or virtually) to assess staffing, operations, and workflow

Final Selection and Award

Following completion of the interview process, the District will select the firm that best demonstrates the ability to deliver high-quality, strategic, and accountable media services in alignment with the District's goals.

The selected firm will be notified by telephone and in writing and will be required to:

- Execute a formal agreement with the District
- Provide proof of required insurance coverage
- Meet all contractual and administrative requirements within the specified timeframe

All contract awards are subject to approval by the District's Governing Board.

The District reserves the right to reject any or all proposals and to waive any informalities or minor irregularities in proposals received.