



Request for proposals for recycling and organics (food scraps) collection message testing and evaluation

Date Issued: July 15, 2025
Response Date: August 8, 2025

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I. Background

Dakota County is in the southeast corner of the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area (TCMA – Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott and Washington counties) and is comprised of 22 cities and 12 townships and nearly 600 square miles of land. Dakota County is the third most populous county in Minnesota with a population of approximately 453,200 residents.

In Minnesota, counties are responsible to manage solid waste to meet state goals, including the state law for TCMA counties to achieve a 75% recycling rate (includes organics recovery) by 2030.

The county uses multiple approaches, including education and regulation to increase recycling. Dakota County's Solid Waste Management Plan uses the following outreach strategies to help achieve state objectives:

- Commit to standardized outreach and education; and
- Provide messages and education programs to all audiences using communication methods most effective for the intended audience.

The Recycling Education Committee (REC) is a state-wide group tasked with developing messaging for recycling and organics (food scraps) collection that is generally applicable state-wide to help standardize this messaging for residents. In 2019, Dakota County amended Ordinance 110, which directs how waste is managed in Dakota County, by adopting standardized recycling and organics (food scraps) messaging for all waste generators and haulers in the county.

Dakota County is seeking research on our recycling and organics (food scraps) messaging (e.g., terms, images and resources). The objectives of this project are to

1. test our existing recycling messaging on the public; and
2. gather baseline data on our organics (food scraps) collection messaging in preparation for the rollout of curbside organics collection; and
3. develop recommendations for improvements to our standardized messaging that help them resonate with all residents in the county.

II. Scope of Service

Dakota County seeks proposals to test our existing recycling and organics (food scraps) collection standardized messaging with residents from single and multi-unit households for statistically significant data. For purposes of this proposal, messaging includes but is not limited to terminology, instructions and images. The results of the survey will help Dakota County achieve the following goals:

Recycling messaging

- Assess residential attitudes, motivations and behaviors around recycling.
- Understand the effectiveness of our existing standardized recycling messaging.
- Inform any recommended changes to our standardized recycling messaging.

Organics (food scraps) collection messaging

- Assess residential attitudes, motivations and behaviors around organics (food scraps) collection.
- Understand the effectiveness of our existing standardized organics (food scraps) messaging.
- Inform any recommended changes to our standardized organics (food scraps) collection messaging.

To ensure the survey will reflect a representative sample of Dakota County residents, it is anticipated that a combination of methodologies may be used, such as mail, internet, social media surveys and focus groups. The proposal must include at least one focus group. Priority will be given to proposals that take a Community-Based Social Marketing approach to its strategy.

The total cost for the contract shall not exceed \$90,000.

Dakota County staff responsibilities are to provide:

- all recycling and organics (food scraps) collection standardized messaging (images, terms, instructions, etc.)
- a draft set of survey questions
- a draft list of crosstabs for analysis
- findings from previous surveys, as appropriate, and
- staff time to answer questions throughout the course of this project

Contractor responsibilities are to:

- assist in the development and finalization of survey(s) questions
- comment on a draft list of crosstabs and suggest additional analyses that could be run to help achieve the goals itemized above
- acquire all necessary contact information for the target audiences including ethnically diverse areas of Dakota County
- develop, in consultation with Dakota County staff, methodology(ies) for data collection including how to reach statistically significant results
- implement methodology(ies), collect and document all data
- provide a concise draft report to Dakota County staff, including but not limited to: an executive summary, a summary of results for all survey questions and crosstabs, key findings, and appropriate graphics
- provide a concise, final report that incorporates suggested revisions from Dakota County and meets digital accessibility requirements and an Excel file of the raw data
- provide all documents in electronic format, submitted before contract expiration and
- communicate with Dakota County staff as necessary.

III. Timeline

Release of RFP: July 15, 2025

Questions due: July 25, 2025, by 4:30 p.m.

Responses to questions posted: July 30, 2025, by 4:30 p.m.

Proposals due: August 8, 2025, by 4:30 p.m.

Interviews*: August 20, 21

Tentative start date: Sept. 10, 2025

**In-person interviews are preferred. A virtual option will be available.*

IV. Contact and Questions

Contact

The Contractor's sole point of contact for this proposal is:

Rachel Kennedy

Environmental Specialist

Dakota County Environmental Resources Department

14955 Galaxie Avenue, Apple Valley, Minnesota 55124

Rachek.Kennedy@co.dakota.mn.us

Phone: 952-891-7043

Submit all questions and final proposals to the sole point of contact.

Questions

Questions regarding this RFP must be submitted via e-mail by 4:30 p.m. on July 25, 2025. Responses to the questions and any other RFP revisions will be posted on Dakota County's [Request for Bids, Proposals](#) webpage.

V. Submission of Proposal

The Contractor must review the attached specifications and attachments and submit one proposal by 4:30 p.m. on Aug. 8, 2025, to the address listed under Contact and Questions. Contractor must include the following:

1. Letter of Transmittal

- Include company title and sales representative(s) name, address, phone and email.
- A statement to the effect that the proposal shall remain valid for a period of not less than 120 days from the date of submittal.
- Indicate the firm's willingness to agree to Standard Assurances ([found here](#) or requested from main contact) including non-discriminatory workplace practices and data privacy.
- Signature of a person authorized to bind the offering firm to the terms of the proposal.

2. Experience and Qualifications

- Describe who will be working on this project.
- Identify similar projects undertaken by the Contractor within the last five (5) years. For each project, provide the client's name, address and telephone number for a contact person currently available who is familiar with the firm's performance on each project listed.

3. Work Plan

Include a clear description of the methods or processes to be used to complete each item in the scope of services. In addition, the Contractor must include a preliminary work plan that details tasks, timelines and work products if different or supplemental to the Scope of Services. The selected Contractor will work with Dakota County to make any necessary adjustments to the work plan as determined by Dakota County, in consultation with the Contractor, during the contract period.

4. Budget

Provide a detailed budget for the project including items such as professional fees, direct expenses, and contract labor. Itemized by activity so that certain activities can be negotiated by Dakota County.

5. Conflict of Interest

Identify any potential conflict of interest using the Non-Collusion and Conflict of Interest Statement (Attachment A).

6. Exceptions and Deviations

Any exceptions to the requirements in this RFP must be included in the proposal submitted by the Contractor under the heading "Exceptions and Deviations."

7. Trade Secret Form

Complete the Trade Secret Form (Attachment B).

All responders must be in compliance with Minnesota law governing transaction of business in the [State of Minnesota](#). Upon award of the contract, Dakota County will verify compliance prior to contracting.

Please review the sample contract and insurance requirements before submitting a proposal by clicking on a link below or requesting from main contact.

- [Sample contract for professional services](#)
- [Insurance terms](#)

Joint Offers

Where two or more Contractors desire to submit a single proposal in response to this RFP, they should do so on a prime-subcontractor basis rather than as a joint venture. Dakota County intends to contract with a single firm and not with multiple firms doing business as a joint venture.

VI. Proposal Evaluation

Proposals that are missing any part of the submission guidelines above will be disqualified. The proposal will be evaluated based on (total 50 points):

- Experience (10 points)
- Work plan: Ability to satisfy all requirements under Scope of Service (30 points)
- Budget (10 points)

VII. Budget

Billing for completed services shall be based upon a monthly invoice submitted by the Contractor. The invoice shall indicate the hours of labor performed by each person charging time to the project, their charge out rate, and itemizations of the reimbursable expenses charged to the project. Dakota County staff will have the right

to inspect the project timesheets. The invoice must also indicate the total contract amount, the total paid to date, the remaining amount to be paid, and the estimated percent of Program completed. Dakota County staff, at staff's option, may retain a portion of the total fee to ensure that sufficient fees are available to complete the project.

VIII. Pre-Contractual Expenses

Pre-contractual expenses are expenses incurred by the Contractor in: 1) preparing its proposal in response to this RFP; 2) submitting that proposal to Dakota County; or 3) any other expenses incurred by the Contractor prior to the date of execution of the proposed contract. Dakota County shall not, in any event, be liable for any pre-contractual expenses incurred by the Contractors in the preparation of their proposal. Contractors shall not include any such expenses as part of their proposal.

IX. Public Records and Requests for Confidentiality

Pursuant to the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act, Minnesota Statutes Section 13.591, the names of all entities that submitted a timely bid/proposal to Dakota County will be public once opened. All other information remains private until Dakota County has completed negotiating a contract with the selected Responder. After a contract has been negotiated, all information received is public information except "trade secret" information as defined in Minnesota Statutes Section 13.37. All information submitted by a Responder therefore shall be treated as public information by Dakota County unless the Responder properly requests that information be treated as a confidential trade secret at the time of submitting the bid.

Any request for confidential treatment of trade secret information in a Responder's bid must sufficiently describe the facts that support the classification of information as confidential trade secret. The request must include the name, address, and telephone number of the person authorized by the Responder to answer any inquiries by Dakota County concerning the request for confidentiality. This information shall be provided on the Trade Secret Information Form, see Attachment E. Dakota County reserves the right to make the final determination of whether data identified as confidential trade secret by a Responder falls within the trade secret exemption in the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act.

The envelope or mailing container of any documents submitted with the bid/proposal that the Responder believes contain confidential trade secret information must be clearly marked as containing confidential trade secret information. Each page upon which trade secret information appears must be marked as containing confidential trade secret information.

In addition to marking the documents as confidential, the Responder must submit one paper and one digital copy of the bid from which the confidential trade secret information has been excised. The confidential trade secret information must be excised in such a way as to allow the public to determine the general nature of the information removed while retaining as much of the document as possible.

The Responder's failure to request confidential treatment of confidential trade secret information pursuant to this subsection will be deemed by Dakota County as a waiver by the Responder of any confidential treatment of the trade secret information in the bid.

Requests by the public for the release of information held by Dakota County are subject to the provisions of the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act, Minnesota Statutes Chapter 13. Responders are encouraged to familiarize themselves with these provisions prior to submitting a bid.

By submitting this proposal, Responder agrees to indemnify and hold the Dakota County, its agents and employees, harmless from any claims or causes of action relating to Dakota County's withholding of data based upon reliance on the representations that the information is a trade secret as defined in Minnesota Statutes Section 13.37 and therefore is not public, including the payment of all costs and attorney fees incurred by Dakota County in defending such an action. Public Data Requests can be submitted on [Dakota County's Data Practices webpage](#).

X. Dakota County Rights

Dakota County staff may investigate the qualifications of any Contractor under consideration, require confirmation of information furnished by Contractor, and require additional evidence of qualifications to perform the work described in this RFP. Dakota County staff reserves the right to:

Reject any or all proposals if such action is in the public interest;

- Cancel the entire RFP;
- Issue a subsequent RFP;
- Remedy technical errors in the RFP process;
- Appoint evaluation committees to review proposals;
- Establish a short list of Contractors eligible for interview after evaluation of written proposals;
- Negotiate with any, all, or none of the RFP respondents; and
- Reject and replace one or more subcontractors.

This RFP does not commit Dakota County to enter into a contract, nor does it obligate Dakota County to pay for any costs incurred in preparation and submission of proposals or in anticipation of a contract.

Attachment A. Non-collusion and Conflict of Interest Statement

Submit this form as part of the Bid, Proposal or Proposal response.

Please print or type (in ink)

CONTRACTOR NAME:

FEDERAL TAX ID NUMBER:

Company Address:

City/State/Zip:

Contact Person:

Title:

Phone Number:

Fax Number:

Email:

In signing this bid, proposal or proposal, Contractor certifies that it has not, either directly or indirectly, entered into any agreement or participated in any collusion or otherwise taken any action in restraint of the competition; that no attempt has been made to induce any other person or firm to submit or not to submit a bid, proposal or proposal; that this bid, proposal or proposal has been independently arrived at without collusion with any other party submitting a bid, proposal or proposal, competitor or potential competitor, that this bid, proposal or proposal has not been knowingly disclosed prior to the opening of the bids, proposals or proposals to any bid, proposal or proposal competitor; that the above statement is accurate under penalty or perjury.

Contractor also certifies that to the best of its knowledge none of its owners, directors, officers or principals (collectively, "Corporate Executive") are closely related to any Dakota County employee who has or may appear to have any control over the award, management, or evaluation of the contract. A Contractor's Corporate Executive is closely related when any of the following circumstances exist:

1. A Corporate Executive and any Dakota County employee who has or appears to have any control over the award, management or evaluation of the contract are related by blood, marriage or adoption; or
2. A Corporate Executive and any Dakota County employee who has or appears to have any control over the award, management or evaluation of the contract are current or former business partners, co-workers, or have otherwise previously worked closely together in the private or public sector; or
3. A Corporate Executive and any Dakota County employee who has or appears to have any control over the award, management or evaluation of the contract share a personal relationship that is beyond that of a mere acquaintance, including but not limited to friendship or family friendship.

If one or more of the above circumstances exist, Contractor must disclose such circumstance(s) to Dakota County in writing. Failure to disclose such circumstances invalidates the Contract.

Contractor will comply with all terms, conditions, specifications required by the party submitting a bid, proposal or proposal in this Request for Bid, Proposal or Proposal and all terms of our bid, proposal or proposal response.

Authorized Signature

Title

Date

You are advised that according to Dakota County Board Resolution 18-485 and Policy 2751, if there is a question as to whether there may be an appearance of a conflict of interest, the contract shall be presented to the County Board for approval, regardless of the amount of the contract. Whether a conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest exists is a determination made by Dakota County.

Signatures on your Bid/Proposal/Proposal Response (Non-Collusion, Trade Secret, Bid/Proposal/Proposal Forms, etc.) require a 'WET' signature.

V.7 Revised: MMH (06-19)

Attachment B: Trade Secret Form

Submit this form as part of the Bid, Proposal or Quote response.

The following form must be provided by Responder to assist Dakota County in making appropriate determinations about the release of data provided in Responder's bid or proposal.

All responders must select one of the following boxes:

- ☐ My bid/proposal does not contain "trade secret information", as defined in Minn. Stat. § 13.37, Subd. 1(b). I understand that my entire bid/proposal will become public record in accordance with Minn. Stat. § 13.591
- ☐ My bid/proposal does contain "trade secret information" because it contains data that:
1. is a formula, pattern, compilation, program, device, method, technique or process; AND is the subject of efforts by myself or my organization that are reasonable under the circumstances to maintain its secrecy; AND derives independent economic value, actual or potential, from not being generally known to, and not being readily ascertainable by proper means by, other persons who can obtain economic value from its disclosure or use.
 2. I have submitted one paper and one digital copy of my bid or proposal from which the confidential trade secret information has been excised. The confidential trade secret information has been excised in such a way as to allow the public to determine the general nature of the information removed while retaining as much of the document as possible AND I am attaching an explanation justifying the trade secret designation.

Please note that failure to attach an explanation may result in a determination that the data does not meet the statutory trade secret definition. All data for which trade secret status is not justified will become public in accordance with Minn. Stat. § 13.591.

_____	_____	_____
Authorized Signature	Title	Date

Signatures on your Bid/Proposal/Quote Response (Non-Collusion, Trade Secret, Bid/Proposal/Quote Forms, etc.) require a 'WET' signature. Digital signatures are NOT accepted.