



Request for Proposals (RFP)

Strategic Planning Services

January 31, 2026

1. Introduction

Michigan Community Action is a Michigan-based nonprofit and statewide trade association representing Michigan's 27 federally-designated community action agencies. We are seeking proposals from qualified consultants or firms to guide our organization through a comprehensive strategic planning process. The goal is to develop a clear, actionable, and forward-looking strategic plan that strengthens our mission, enhances member value, and positions us for long-term impact across the state.

2. Organizational Background

Michigan Community Action (MCA) was founded in 1975 to serve as the membership network for Michigan's federally-designated Community Action Agencies. In 2025, we celebrated our 50th anniversary. MCA's membership currently consists of 27 separate agencies, covering all of Michigan's 83 counties. MCA's members operate a wide variety of human- and social-service oriented programs, all aimed at addressing and ending the root causes of poverty for individuals and families. The program offerings of member agencies may include Head Start and other early childhood services, utility or food assistance, housing assistance or creation, senior services, and so on. Our 27 member agencies are part of a national network of some 1,000 agencies that all help people move from poverty to economic stability and self-sufficiency.

MCA itself exists as a service provider to these members. We engage in advocacy efforts on their behalf, whether that's as a voice to governmental officials in Lansing or Washington, or as a trusted expert speaking to the public about the positive community effects they produce. We also serve them in a capacity building role, by training individuals through specialized programming and

frequent educational opportunities. We strive to bring more resources to the table for them so they can increase their impacts locally.

Our mission reflects this:

Michigan Community Action leads and serves a poverty-fighting network. We are dedicated to helping people and changing lives, through advocacy, education, and collaboration.

Our vision is:

Economic Opportunity and stability for all.

MCA is geographically located in the greater Lansing area. We have a staff of seven employees and a Board consisting of 10 member agency directors. We utilize some contract services in achieving our goals.

3. Project Overview

The purpose of this project is to develop a strategic plan that will guide Michigan Community Action. Our current strategic plan, covering the years 2023-2026, will obviously be coming to a conclusion this year. Our new plan will begin in 2027 and will cover the next **3–5 years**. The plan should reflect the needs of our members, the realities of our industry, and the unique policy and economic landscape of Michigan.

The selected consultant will be expected to design and facilitate a collaborative planning process that includes staff, board members, and key stakeholders.

4. Scope of Work

The scope may include, but is not limited to:

A. Discovery & Assessment

- Review existing organizational documents (mission, bylaws, past plans, financials, program data)
- Conduct stakeholder engagement (e.g., interviews, focus groups, surveys) with:
 - Board of Directors
 - Staff
 - Key Staff at MCA's members
 - External partners or funders

- Analyze internal strengths and challenges, as well as external opportunities and threats (SWOT or similar framework)

B. Facilitation of Strategic Planning Process

- Facilitate planning sessions with the Board and/or staff
- Review mission, vision, and values
- Guide development of strategic priorities, goals, and measurable objectives
- Incorporate considerations unique to a statewide trade association, such as:
 - Member engagement
 - Advocacy and government relations
 - Industry trends
 - Acknowledgment of differences across membership (such as geography, size, program composition)

C. Final Strategic Plan Development

- Produce a written strategic plan that includes:
 - Strategic priorities and goals
 - Key objectives and success indicators
 - Implementation roadmap
 - Suggested metrics and evaluation framework
- Present the final plan to the Board of Directors

5. Deliverables

The selected consultant will provide:

- Project work plan and timeline
- Stakeholder engagement summary
- Facilitation of planning meetings
- Draft strategic plan
- Final strategic plan (print-ready and digital formats)
- Presentation to Board and/or membership

6. Project Timeline

We anticipate the project beginning during the summer of 2026 and concluding by the end of calendar year 2026, with the MCA Board to vote on adoption no later than their January 2027 meeting. Proposers should propose a methodology that fits within this timeline.

7. Proposal Requirements

Proposals should include:

- 1. Cover Letter**
- 2. Consultant/Firm Background**
 - a. Qualifications
 - b. Experience with nonprofits and/or trade associations
 - c. Experience working in Michigan or with statewide organizations
- 3. Project Approach & Methodology**
- 4. Proposed Timeline**
- 5. Detailed Budget**
 - a. Include hourly rates, estimated hours, and any additional costs
- 6. Examples of Previous Work**
 - a. At least two relevant strategic plans or summaries
- 7. References**
 - a. Minimum of three, preferably from nonprofits or associations

8. Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on:

- Demonstrated experience with nonprofits and trade associations
- Understanding of Michigan's policy, economic, or industry landscape
- Quality and clarity of proposed methodology
- Consultant qualifications and team expertise
- Cost-effectiveness and value
- References and past performance

9. Budget

MCA's organizational budget in FY25 was approximately \$9million; after removing direct pass-through dollars, MCA's core operating budget was closer to \$1million. We ask that respondents design a budget for this strategic planning process keeping in mind the smaller core size of our nonprofit agency.

10. Submission Instructions

Please submit your proposal electronically in PDF format to:

Contact Name: Brian McGrain, Executive Director, bmcgrain@micommunityaction.org

Deadline for Submission: February 28, 2026 (Late submissions may not be considered.)

11. Questions

Questions regarding this RFP may be directed to:

Brian McGrain, Executive Director, bmcgrain@micommunityaction.org

Questions must be submitted by **5pm on February 18, 2026**. Answers may be shared with all applicants to ensure fairness.

12. Reservation of Rights

Michigan Community Action reserves the right to:

- Reject any or all proposals
- Request additional information
- Modify the scope of work
- Negotiate terms with the selected consultant