

HELENA, MONTANA

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP):
WAYFINDING SIGNAGE: PLAN
& IMPLEMENTATION

BIDS DUE: AUGUST 15, 2025
5:00 P.M. MST

105 REEDER'S ALLEY
HELENA, MT 59601



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SECTION 1 | INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE

1.1 PURPOSE

Notice is hereby given that the **Helena TBID/Helena Area Chamber of Commerce (CVB)** is seeking proposals from qualified firms specializing in wayfinding and signage systems to enhance navigational experiences, reinforce community identity and brand, and support local businesses. This community project aims to design and implement a comprehensive wayfinding system that is both intuitive and technologically advanced, reflecting our community's unique character and modern needs.

The Wayfinding Plan's goals include:

1. Improve overall connectivity.
2. Enhance the overall image of Helena as a destination with a consistent and attractive design standard for tourism wayfinding signage.
3. Increase and encourage visitor and resident discovery and exploration of Downtown Helena as well as the surrounding area to boost the local economy through increased spending.
4. Allow easy deciphering of directions to increase a person's ability to traverse to and from Helena's primary attraction, The Montana Heritage Center-Montana's Museum, and Downtown utilizing **Exhibit A & B**.
5. Incorporate inclusive and universal design into the entire wayfinding program and system so that wayfinding can be used by a wide range of diverse users including children, non-English speakers, and persons with disabilities, including those with (but not limited to) vision, hearing, and/or cognitive impairment.
6. Welcome and guide the traveling public from gateways into Downtown as well as to and from key destinations and points of interest such as the Montana Heritage Center/Montana's Museum, entertainment amenities, colleges, and parks.
7. Develop design standards for wayfinding that are reflective of Helena's identity while using the City of Helena Guidelines & referencing Lewis & Clark County's Active Living Wayfinding Plan should be used as basis for the wayfinding design and signage to ensure compatibility with the recommended streetscape elements.
8. Anticipate future development in each area, changes in traffic patterns, new attractions, and increased pedestrian, bicycle, and micro mobility vehicle traffic.
9. To the extent that makes sense, all wayfinding installations should be able to be easily updated. The project scope should include recommendations that clarify roles and responsibilities for managing wayfinding signage content and information.
10. Condense sign clutter to contribute to beautifying Downtown Streetscapes and limit sidewalk obstructions.

Respondents must offer a proposal that will meet the scope of services, requests and general description of work activities identified in this Request for Proposal ("RFP"), while adding what the Respondent would have to offer.

1.2 RFP COORDINATOR; ISSUING OFFICERS.

This RFP is issued for Visit Helena. The RFP Coordinators, identified below, are the point of contact regarding this RFP from the date of distribution until the selection of the successful Respondent.

Andrea Opitz
Executive Director
The Tourism Business Improvement District
(406) 449-1270
aopitz@helenamt.com

Callie Aschim
President Helena Area
Chamber & Convention &
Visitors Bureau
(406) 442-4120 ext. 101
caschim@helenachamber.com

1.3 PRESENTATION AND CLARIFICATION INTENTIONS

As a result of this RFP, Visit Helena intends to enter into a contract with the selected Respondent to supply the services described in in this RFP. However, this intent does not commit Visit Helena to award a contract to any Respondent, or to pay any costs incurred in the preparation of the proposal in response to this request, or to procure or contract for any services. Visit Helena reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to accept or reject, in part or in its entirety, any proposal received if it is in the best interest of Visit Helena. At its discretion, Visit Helena may award one or more contracts to one or more qualified Respondents to achieve the objectives of this RFP if it is in the best interest of Visit Helena. Visit Helena also reserves the right to request additional information or clarification from any Respondent at any stage of the procurement process, to ensure that the proposals meet Visit Helena's requirements and to assist in the evaluation of the proposals.

Respondents are expected to be familiar with the Helena area and conditions.

1.4 TIMELINE

The schedule of events for this RFP is anticipated to proceed as follows:

Event	Date(s)
Release RFP	Monday, August 4, 2025
Request for Information (RFI) Deadline	Friday, August 8, 2025
RFP Deadline	Friday, August 15, 2025, by 5:00 P.M. MST
Committee Bid Opening & Review & Selection	Monday, August 18
Interviews (as needed)	Week of August 25, 2025
Award Notification	Friday, August 29, 2025
Negotiate Final Professional Services Agreement (PSA)	Week of September 1, 2025
PSA Execution / Notice to Proceed	Monday, September 8, 2025
Work Completion Deadline	Friday, November 28, 2025

SECTION 2 | BACKGROUND & SCOPE OF WORK

2.1 BACKGROUND

Notice is hereby given that Visit Helena is seeking proposals from qualified firms specializing in wayfinding and signage systems to enhance navigational experiences, reinforce community identity, support local businesses, and integrate digital components like an online business directory. This project aims to design and implement a comprehensive wayfinding system that is both intuitive and technologically advanced, reflecting our community's unique character and modern needs. Respondents must offer a proposal that will meet the scope of services, requests and general description of work activities identified in this Request for Proposal ("RFP"), while adding what the Respondent would have to offer.

Downtown Helena is strategically located to capitalize on tourism and local business activities, enriched by its proximity to natural attractions, including parks, and recreational areas. The implementation of a comprehensive wayfinding system is poised to transform how visitors and residents interact with the Helena attractions and businesses, significantly enhancing navigability and accessibility.

The primary objective of the new wayfinding system is to simplify the navigation process throughout Helena, particularly in the **Downtown District** and to the **Montana Heritage Center-Montana's Museum**. By integrating clear and consistent highway, local street, pedestrian, and kiosk signage, the initiative aims to make local businesses, attractions, and amenities more visible and accessible.

The wayfinding project for Helena should encompass a comprehensive approach including collaboration to ensure the project aligns with the community's needs and vision. The scope of the project should include, but not be limited to:

PHASE 1

ASSESSMENT

- **Assessment of Existing Signage:** Reviewing and evaluating the current signage to identify its effectiveness, visibility, and any wear or damage. This will also include assessing the coherence of the existing wayfinding elements within the community.
- **Needs Assessment:** Conducting a thorough needs assessment to identify key destinations, decision points, current navigational challenges, and opportunities for digital integration. This phase will also involve gathering input from community stakeholders such as the City of Helena Transportation & Community Planning Division, State of Montana General Services Division, Business Improvement District, and other relevant boards and commissions to ensure comprehensive community involvement.

DESIGN

- **Strategy Development:** Developing a cohesive wayfinding and signage strategy that caters to vehicular, pedestrian, and bicyclist navigation. The strategy will integrate both physical and digital navigation aids to enhance overall accessibility and user experience.
- **Digital Integration:** Incorporating digital components such as QR codes that link to relevant/informative/appropriate websites enabling real-time access to information about local businesses, attractions, and amenities.

COLLABORATION

- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Collaborating closely with the City of Helena, Helena Area Chamber of Commerce and Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB), Business Improvement District (BID) Downtown Helena, Parks & Recreation, and other relevant entities. This collaboration will ensure that the wayfinding system is fully integrated into the broader community plans and meets the specific needs and expectations of all stakeholders involved.

MAINTENANCE PLAN

- **Sustainability and Upkeep:** Providing a maintenance manual and a detailed schedule for the long-term upkeep of both physical and digital signage components. This plan will aim to ensure the durability and continued effectiveness of the wayfinding system.

2.2 PROPOSAL INFORMATION

It is the intent of Visit Helena, after receipt of bids, to review available funding and proceed with awarding of the contract pending approval from the committee.

If multiple respondents meet the evaluation criteria as set forth in Section 2.4 of this RFP, if needed, interviews with the top qualifying respondents will be conducted. These interviews are intended to further assess the capabilities of each respondent and to ensure the best match for Helena's needs. Respondents selected for interviews will be notified accordingly and provided with details on the interview process.

2.3 REQUIREMENTS

Proposals must include:

- **Company Profile:** Brief history, team qualifications, and experience in wayfinding projects, particularly those with digital integrations.
- **Project Approach:** Detailed outline of project methodology and phases, including digital strategies.
- **Previous Work:** Case studies or examples of similar projects completed, especially those that include digital solutions.
- **Project Team:** Bios and roles of key team members. Clearly designate the team leader and primary contact for this project.
- **Timeline:** Detailed project timeline from initiation to completion.
- **Budget:** Itemized budget covering assessment, design, and collaboration management. Include all staffing necessary to complete the project as outlined above and the costs of any additional recommendations submitted in your proposal. All reimbursable expenses should be identified and included.
- **References:** Contact information for at least two (2) to three (3) client references with similar project scope. Include the name, telephone number, and email address for the primary contact. List services provided to each client.

2.4 EVALUATION CRITERIA

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- A. Relevance of Previous Experience (20 points): Demonstrated track record of successfully completing wayfinding or similar design and implementation projects, particularly those that include digital integration components like online directories or digital signage.
- B. Appropriateness of Proposed Process (25 points): How well the solution fits the unique needs and identity of Helena, Montana.
- C. Project Team Qualifications (20 points): The individual and collective experience of team members in wayfinding design, project management, and other relevant skills.
- D. Cost-effectiveness (20 points): The overall cost of the proposed solution relative to the budget and the value it provides.
- E. Innovativeness of Digital Integration (15 points): How digital technologies (like QR codes linking to an online business directory) could be used to enhance the traditional wayfinding system, improve user experience, and support the community's connectivity and accessibility.

SECTION 3 | SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS & GENERAL INFORMATION FOR RESPONDENTS

3.1 SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

The submission requirements for each bid are as follows:

- Each bid submitted in response to this RFP must be signed by an individual who is authorized to represent and bind the Respondent's organization. The signature certifies that the information provided in the bid is accurate and that the individual has the authority to enter into a contract on behalf of the organization.
- If applicable, Respondents are encouraged to bid on this RFP.
- Each bid must be mailed and clearly labeled with the following:

" 1. Helena Area Wayfinding Signage: Design and Implementation"

All Respondent's must submit their bids to the following location prior to the date and time specified below.

TO: **Visit Helena**

Attn:

**Callie Aschim
Andrea Opitz
105 Reeder's
Alley
Helena, MT.
59601**

DATE: **AUGUST 15, 2025**

TIME: **5:00 P.M. MST**

All Bids received will then be opened by the committee. Bids received after such time will not be scored. Bidders submitting Bids will be informed of the results of all the Bid proposals following award of all contracts.

3.2 EXAMINATION AND PROCUREMENT OF DOCUMENTS

Complete and detailed Bidding Documents will be on file and may be examined by prospective Bidders at Visit Helena, 105 Reeder's Alley, Helena, MT. 59601.

3.3 MODIFICATION OR WITHDRAWAL OF BID

Once submitted, a bid may not be modified, withdrawn, or canceled for a period of one hundred twenty (120) calendar days following the designated time and date for the receipt of bids. This ensures the integrity and fairness of the bidding process, maintaining all bids as final and binding during this period.

EXHIBIT B | Capitol Complex Map

