

ANTELOPE VALLEY UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT



Request for Proposals RFP #1/26-27 For PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATIONS AUDIT SERVICES

**RFP Submittal Deadline
September 30, 2026 at 3:00 PM**

Submit to:

Antelope Valley Union High School District
176 Holston Dr. Lancaster CA, 93535
Attn: Jaylene Schaeffer, Human Resources

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

Notice is hereby given that the governing board (“Board”) of the Antelope Valley Union High School District (“District”) will receive sealed submittals for the following project:

RFP #1/26-27 Professional Communications Audit Services (“Project” or “Contract”)

Proposers must submit sealed submittals on or before Wednesday, September 30, 2026, at 3:00 p.m., at the District Administration Office, located at 176 Holston Drive, Lancaster, CA, 93535. Any claim by a Proposer of error in its submittal must be made in compliance with Public Contract Code § 5100, et seq. Any submittal that is submitted after this time shall be non-responsive and returned to the Proposer. The District is not responsible for submittals of RFP’s that are received after the deadline noted above.

The Project consists of: The Antelope Valley Union High School District (“District”) is requesting submission of statements of qualifications and proposals (together, “Response(s)”) from highly qualified firms, partnerships, corporations, associations, persons, or professional organizations (“Firm(s)”) to perform a comprehensive District-wide Communications Audit. The goal of this audit is to evaluate the effectiveness, efficiency, accessibility, and reach of the District’s current internal and external communication strategies, channels, and platforms. The final deliverables will provide a clear baseline of our community's needs and an actionable, multi-year strategic communications blueprint.

All submittals of RFP’s shall be on the form provided by the District. Each submittal of an RFP must conform and be responsive to all pertinent Contract Documents, including, but not limited to, the Request for Qualifications/Proposals.

Contract Documents are available on the District’s website at:

<https://www.avdistrict.org/about/district-departments/business-services/bids-rfps-rfa>

The District’s Board reserves the right to reject any and all submittals of RFQ/P’s and/or waive any irregularity in any RFP’s received. Unless otherwise required by law, no Proposer may withdraw its RFP’s for ninety (90) days after the date of the bid opening.

All proposers’ questions must be submitted in writing via email to Jaylene Schaeffer, Executive Secretary Human Resources, jschaeffer@avhsd.org no later than 5:00 p.m., on Friday, September 11, 2026.

**ANTELOPE VALLEY UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT
176 HOLSTON DRIVE, LANCASTER, CA 93535**

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)
FOR
PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATIONS AUDIT SERVICES**

The Antelope Valley Union High School District (“District”) is requesting submission of statements of qualifications and proposals (together, “Response(s)”) from qualified firms, partnerships, corporations, associations, persons, or professional organizations (“Firm(s)”) to perform a comprehensive District-wide Communications Audit. The goal of this audit is to evaluate the effectiveness, efficiency, accessibility, and reach of the District’s current internal and external communication strategies, channels, and platforms. The final deliverables will provide a clear baseline of our community’s needs and an actionable, multi-year strategic communications blueprint.

Questions - Questions regarding this RFP must be in writing and directed only to Jaylene Schaeffer, Executive Secretary Human Resources, jschaeffer@avhsd.org. All questions must be submitted by 5:00 PM on Friday, September 11, 2026. District may respond to questions presented via addenda to this RFP. **FIRMS MUST NOT CONTACT ANY OTHER DISTRICT PERSONNEL DIRECTLY WITH INQUIRIES REGARDING THIS RFP.**

Responses - Interested Firms are invited to submit a sealed response to the District Administration Office, located at 176 Holston Drive, Lancaster, CA, 93535 in accordance with this RFP no later than 3:00 PM on Wednesday, September 30, 2026. The District will not accept late Responses.

Thank you for your interest in working with the Antelope Valley Union High School District.

1. Background Information.

The Antelope Valley Union High School District (AVUHSD) provides public secondary education across an expansive high-desert territory covering over 1,300 square miles in northern Los Angeles County. Serving approximately 21,500 students primarily in grades 9 through 12, as well as select 6–12 specialized programs, the District operates a robust network of more than 13 school sites. This includes eight comprehensive high schools—such as Antelope Valley, Lancaster, Palmdale, and Quartz Hill—alongside early college high schools, continuation and community day schools, virtual academies, and adult education programs. Together, these campuses serve the vibrant and distinct communities of Lancaster, Palmdale, Quartz Hill, Littlerock, Pearblossom and surrounding rural unincorporated areas.

AVUHSD reflects a richly diverse student body, with approximately 67% identifying as

Hispanic or Latino, 16% as Black or African American, 10% as White, and the remaining population representing multiracial, Asian, Pacific Islander, and Native American backgrounds. Approximately 65% to 70% of students come from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds, and more than 10% are designated as English Learners, with Spanish being the primary non-English language spoken in student households. The District is committed to preparing all learners for post-secondary education, career technical pathways, and civic participation while providing targeted academic and social support across its broad, geographically dispersed region.

2. Timeline and Key Dates (Subject to Change)

<u>MILESTONE</u>	<u>DATE</u>
RFP released	August 21, 2026
Deadline for Vendor Questions/Clarifications	September 11, 2026 5:00PM
District Response to Questions via Addendum	September 18, 2026 3:00PM
Proposals Due	September 30, 2026 3:00PM
Interviews (If Necessary)	October 7 and 8 time TBD
Award of Contract	October 15, 2026
Start of Scope	October 19, 2026

3. Scope of Work

The selected firm will be expected to conduct a multi-phased communication audit consisting of, but not limited to, the following components:

A. Research & Discovery (Information Gathering)

- Materials Review: Audit existing communication materials, including the District website, school sites, social media channels, press releases, crisis communication protocols, parent/staff handbooks, and mass notification systems (e.g., ParentSquare, Blackboard).
- Stakeholder Engagement: Conduct comprehensive qualitative and quantitative research, to include:
 - A minimum of [Number] focus groups representing diverse cross-sections (teachers, classified staff, site administrators, high school students, parent groups, and community partners).
 - Digital and paper-based community-wide surveys, ensuring accessibility for non-English speaking households.
 - One-on-one interviews with District executive leadership.

B. Analysis & Equity Assessment

- Evaluate the effectiveness of emergency and crisis communications.
- Assess the equity and accessibility of communications, ensuring compliance with federal and California language access standards for multilingual families.

- Analyze current internal communication workflows between the District office, school sites, and staff.

C. Final Report & Recommendations

Provide a comprehensive written report and presentation to the Superintendent that includes:

- Key findings, data analyses, and SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) assessment.
- Actionable, prioritized recommendations for a 3-to-5-year Strategic Communications Plan.
- Recommendations for optimal staffing, budgeting, and tool configurations to support the analysis.\

4. Firms' Responses.

Firms shall provide the information requested below (Sections 4.1 through 4.9) in that order. To ensure a uniform review process, proposals must be submitted as a single PDF document formatted to standard 8.5 x 11 inch pages. Any material that a Firm considers confidential but does not meet the disclosure exemption requirements of applicable public disclosure laws, including but not limited to the California Public Records Act, should not be included in the Firm's proposal, as it may be subject to disclosure and made available to the public. By submitting materials in response to this RFP, Firms are (1) consenting to the release of such materials by the District if requested under any applicable public disclosure laws without further notice to them and (2) agreeing to indemnify and hold the District harmless for such release of the materials. **PLEASE NOTE: District will not consider any substantive changes to the form of Agreement if they are not submitted at or before the time Firm's Response is due.**

- 4.1. **Cover Letter / Letter of Interest (Max 2 pages):** Must be signed by an authorized officer of the firm and state the validity of the proposal for 90 days.
- 4.2. **Firm Profile & Qualifications:** Overview of the firm, years in business, and specific expertise working with California Public School Districts (K-12) or educational institutions.
- 4.3. **Project Approach & Methodology:** A detailed narrative explaining how the firm will execute the Scope of Work, including sample stakeholder engagement strategies and a baseline project schedule.
- 4.4. **Project Team & Staffing:** Resumes and roles of the specific personnel who will be assigned to this engagement.
- 4.5. **Client References:** Provide a minimum of three (3) references for similar communication audits conducted within the last five (5) years, preferably for California public school districts.
- 4.6. **Cost Proposal:** An all-inclusive, maximum flat fee for the entire scope of work, broken down by project phase (e.g., Discovery, Analysis, Final Reporting) and inclusive of all travel, translation, and administrative expenses.

5. District's Evaluation / Selection Process.

The District will evaluate all responsive proposals based on a 100-point matrix as detailed below. Awards will not be based solely on the lowest cost option, but on the proposal offering the best overall value and expertise. The following

5.1. Scoring Matrix

- 5.1.1. Experience and qualifications of the firm and specific team members in K-12 public education communications. (30 Points)
- 5.1.2. Quality, thoroughness, and feasibility of the proposed project approach and methodology. (30 Points)
- 5.1.3. Demonstrated ability to execute culturally responsive, multilingual community engagement. (20 Points)
- 5.1.4. Cost effectiveness and clarity of the cost proposal. (20 Points)

5.2. Interviews. From Firms who provide a Response to District, District may, at its discretion, interview some or all of those Firms.

5.3. District Investigations. The District may perform investigations of proposing parties that extend beyond contacting the districts identified in a Firm's Response.

5.4. Final Determination and Award. The District reserves the right to contract with any entity responding to this RFQ, to reject any Response as non-responsive, and not to contract with any Firm for the Services described herein. The District makes no representation that participation in the RFQ process will lead to an award of contract or any consideration whatsoever. The District reserves the right to seek Responses from or to contract with any Firm not participating in this process. District intends to make recommendations to the Board of Trustees and ask the Board to award the contract(s).

6. Terms and Conditions.

6.1. District is not responsible for late delivery of a Response or the cost of preparing any Response. It is the responsibility of the responding Firm to ensure that the Response is submitted on time to District. Responses that are received after the deadline may not be considered.

6.2. The selected Firm(s) and each of its (their) subconsultants and/or co-venture partners, must comply with all applicable federal and California laws, including, but not limited to, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, Executive Orders 11246, 11375, and 12086, the California Fair Employment and Housing Act beginning with Government code section 12900, Labor Code section 1735, and any other applicable federal and state laws and regulations hereinafter enacted, including the Federal Americans with Disabilities Act ("ADA"). Firms must be responsible for establishing and implementing an

ADA program within Firm's workplace. Firms must not discriminate against any prospective or active employee based on race, religious creed, color, national origin, ancestry, physical disability, mental disability, medical condition, genetic information, marital status, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, age, sexual orientation, or military and veteran status. The selected respondent must cause the above provisions to be inserted in all subcontracts for any work covered by this RFQ so that such provisions will be binding upon each subconsultant.

- 6.3. Responses will become the property of District and subject to the California Public Records Act, Government Code sections 7920.000 et seq. Those elements in each Response that are trade secrets as that term is defined in Civil Code section 3426.1(d) or otherwise exempt by law from disclosure and which are prominently marked as "TRADE SECRET," "CONFIDENTIAL," or "PROPRIETARY" may not be subject to disclosure. District must not be liable or responsible for the disclosure of any such records including, without limitation, those so marked if disclosure is deemed to be required by law or by an order of the Court. A Firm that indiscriminately identifies all or most of its response as exempt from disclosure without justification may be deemed non-responsive. In the event District is required to defend an action on a Public Records Act request for any of the contents of a response marked "Confidential," "Proprietary," or "Trade Secret," Firm agrees, by submitting a Response, to defend and indemnify District from all costs and expenses, including attorneys' fees, in any action or liability arising under the Public Records Act.
- 6.4. Failure by the District to object to an error, omission, or deviation in the proposal will in no way modify the RFP or excuse the proposer from full compliance with the specifications of the RFP or any contract awarded pursuant to the RFP.
- 6.5. The District accepts no financial responsibility for any costs incurred by any proposer in responding to this RFP. Submissions of the RFP will become the property of the District and may be used by the District in any way deemed appropriate.
- 6.6. No waiver by the District of any provision of this RFP shall be implied from any failure by the District to recognize or take action on account of any failure by a proposer to observe any provision of this RFP.