

# Request for Proposals Of The National Newspaper Association, Inc.

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[www.nnaweb.org](http://www.nnaweb.org)

The National Newspaper Association, a 130-year-old association for community newspapers in the United States, seeks proposals for a contractor to provide association services. NNA operates as a 501(c)(6) exempt organization under the Internal Revenue Code. The organization has been managed by contracted services for the past 12 years. Previously its management was carried out by employee staff. Current management contractor is retiring from general management and will not bid but will work with successors for a smooth transition. Current management will continue to provide public policy services for foreseeable future.

NNA currently has an 18-22 member board of directors, which meets three times a year; and a 4-6 member Executive Committee that meets by telephone monthly. NNA also operates a vigorous public policy program that is managed separately under contract by a firm chosen by the board of directors in coordination with executive management. Public policy includes a heavy emphasis upon postal affairs, which includes a member hotline for logistical problems, and requires smooth coordination between public policy contractor, Postal Committee, and management. The board appoints 4-6 active committees that consult with staff on various programs and assist the board in oversight. The committees vary in the degree of hands-on participation in programs.

NNA's members are community newspaper companies, eligible under criteria set by NNA bylaws. Its typical member is a small business, often family-owned, with 1-5 newspaper titles that provide essential news and information to a local community. Some members are large national companies, including some that are publicly-traded. For more information see NNA's website at [www.nnaweb.org](http://www.nnaweb.org). Members are situated in regions that are governed by regional directors who may also have appointed chairmen in each state.

The successful bidder will have a proven track record in organizational leadership and non-profit management and a working knowledge of the business of newspaper publishing. NNA's management should firmly believe in the future of printed newspapers and be prepared to promote their well-being. NNA plans for a completed transition before the end of calendar year 2015. Financial records will be provided interested requesters upon execution of a non-disclosure agreement.

Proposals should be sent by electronic mail to Carol Pierce, [carol@nna.org](mailto:carol@nna.org), or in hard copy to the above address by July 17, 2015.

Contractors will be asked to describe:

1. Company history and client load
2. Staffing, including individuals intended to work on the contract
3. Location of offices or offices
4. Background in newspaper publishing or newspaper association management

Contractors may also be asked to demonstrate, under mutual non-disclosure agreements, financial sustainability.

NNA is looking for a contractor to provide the following services:

1. Operation of national headquarters:
  - a. Switchboard, fax and email

- b. Inventory of currently-used supplies (e.g., letterhead, board materials)
- c. Possible meeting space for board of directors (optional)
- d. Teleconferencing services; (video conferencing optional)

## 2. Financial Services

- a. General Accounting: cash and credit card receipts, A/R, A/P, general ledger, invoicing, bill payments, and posting of receipts from separate membership invoicing system
- b. Invoicing of advertising sales and payment of earned commissions to sales consultants
- c. Monthly financial reports (cash basis) to Executive Committee
- d. Oversight of investments managed by professional firm under board policy and governed by audit/investment committee
- e. Annual budget creation and presentation in consultation with treasurer
- f. Annual preparation of financial records for audit and tax payment (handled by independent accountant chosen by directors)
- g. Compliance with federal, state and local licensing fees and forms
- h. General familiarity with IRS and state taxing authority rules for nonprofits
- i. Accounting for small affiliated educational nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization (NNAF) associated with NNA, with periodic financial reports as needed
- j. Informal collection calls following policy set by directors (an independent collection service may be retained, but has rarely been needed by NNA)

## 3. Membership and Marketing Services

- a. Monthly invoicing of membership on due dates through use of a proprietary membership database and invoicing program and following protocol set by directors for follow up reminders
- b. Periodic invoicing of partner state associations that operate as brokers of NNA membership in their states
- c. Management of NNA member database, including such data fields as the directors require
- d. Receiving and reviewing new member applications
- e. Staffing of membership/marketing committee and creation/management of such marketing campaigns as committee designs and budget permits
- f. Provision of accurate membership lists by membership region as requested by directors
- g. Composition and distribution of an annual report highlighting NNA services and achievements
- h. Management of independent contractors engaged to sell memberships by region (currently 2)
- i. Oversight and management of 8-10 affinity membership programs operated by approved vendors (eg. Insurance, travel, office supply sales), including NNA libel insurance offered as a major membership incentive and requiring periodic engagement with outside counsel for state registrations
- j. Maintenance and shipping of portable vendors' exhibit to market membership, which may be used by directors during various travels or by management staff
- k. Providing customer-friendly points of contacts for member requests as needed<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Members and potential members may contact NNA with requests for peer support on business problems, which our staff handles by matching up experts within the organization with the requester; NNA also operates a Legal Hotline through services of outside counsel.

#### 4. Board of Directors' services

- a. Planning and execution of three directors' meetings each year, which require detailed briefing books on current association activities and financial status. The summer board meeting requires some social event planning as past president and spouses are included in tours and dinners. Spouse events are expected at most board meetings.
- b. Execution of annual elections of directors that include regional voting by eligible members;
- c. Monthly teleconferences and such other special meetings as needed by Executive Committee, which generally include financial reviews;
- d. Ongoing communications of association activities to directors
- e. Drafting and circulating minutes of meetings and maintenance of minute books
- f. Producing honoraria, awards and certificates of recognition as needed

#### 5. Committee support

- a. Planning and execution of 3-5 member committees charged by directors with carrying out specific missions, such as membership marketing, publication oversight and audit.
- b. Drafting, circulating and archiving meeting minutes
- c. Supporting such administrative tasks as committees may request

#### 6. Publications and Public Relations

- a. Writing, editing, publishing and distributing monthly Publishers' Auxiliary<sup>2</sup>
- b. Maintaining and replenishing postage accounts and producing postage reports for US Postal Service (which function will likely be carried out by printer under management's supervision.)
- c. Coordination with advertising sales executive of display and classified advertising to ensure timely insertion and quality reproduction;
- d. Monthly monitoring of advertising following reproduction to ensure proper invoicing.
- e. Press releases, social media distribution and media appearances as needed, with deference to board policy that elected leaders take precedence as the public face of NNA, while management staff may fill in when president or other officers are unavailable
- f. Representing organization on various affiliated groups, as needed, including national organization of state association executives

#### 7. Contest Management

- a. Management of annual Better Newspaper, Better Newspaper Advertising and Newspaper in Education contests, including
  - i. Periodic refreshing of rules to maintain currency with industry
  - ii. Annually updating the software and establishing deadlines
  - iii. Promotion and marketing
  - iv. Receipt of entries (physical or through digital vendor contract)
  - v. Assisting participants who are unable to complete the process independently
  - vi. Recruiting about 50 judges and assisting them through the judging process

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<sup>2</sup> This function is generally executed by an employee of current management whose services the directors highly value. This individual as well as others on staff may become an independent contractor or employee of new management.

- vii. Managing the plaque production process
- viii. Organizing and managing the awards ceremony that takes place at the convention

8. Advertising, Exhibit and Sponsorship sales

- a. Sales of display and classified advertising for monthly publication<sup>3</sup>
- b. Sales of exhibition space to industry vendors at annual convention
- c. Sales of sponsorships, allied and partner memberships and other audience-building opportunities to industry vendors
- d. Coordination of invoicing and collection with accounting personnel
- e. Reporting monthly sales for purposes of calculating commissions

9. Convention and Event Services<sup>4</sup>

- a. Work with the Executive Committee to select a site for the convention and trade show and negotiate the best possible contract with the venue.
- b. Program planning with assistance of local host committee;
- c. Invitation and logistics support for speakers sought by committee;
- d. Development of event budget according to Board policies;
- e. Promotion and marketing of event
- f. Organize and manage the production of the convention program
- g. Online registration management and support for members unable to use digital tools
- h. Onsite registration and event management services
- i. Onsite coordination with the hotel staff.
- j. Oversight of such contractors as board may retain for assistance at convention
- k. Planning and execution of periodic webinars called Pub Aux Live in which NNA provides content and marketing and a partnering association manages platform.
- l. Program planning assistance, in support of such contractors or committees as board may create
- m. Financial accounting of registration fees, exhibit and sponsor sales onsite, and reconciliation of all activities with accounting
- n. Reporting financial outcome to directors and committee
- o. Registration support and fee collection for annual Washington DC summit, in which programming is provided by public policy consultant
- p. Logistical, and possibly programming support, for NNA Foundation's annual News Fellows program, involving 6-12 college editors study in Washington. (See NNA Foundation at [www.nnaweb.org/nnaf](http://www.nnaweb.org/nnaf).)

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<sup>3</sup> Advertising and sponsorship sales are currently handled by a contractor who reports to management. NNA anticipates new management may wish to retain the contractor.

<sup>4</sup> Convention planning has variously been handled by outside contractors reporting to board or to management or directly by management staff. Interested parties are welcome to propose any workable approach.