

State of Minnesota

Minnesota Racing Commission



REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

Racing Steward

Date Posted: November 3, 2025

- Responses must be received no later than December 31, 2026, Central Time. Priority for next racing season will be given to responses received by December 31, 2025, by 2:00 PM Central Time.
- Late responses will not be considered
- As of July 1, 2025, certain terms are unenforceable in state contracts. See Session Laws, 2025 Regular Session, [Chapter 39](#), Article 2, Sec. 45.

Minnesota's Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion

The State of Minnesota is committed to diversity and inclusion in its public procurement process. The goal is to ensure that those providing goods and services to the State are representative of our Minnesota communities and include businesses owned by minorities, women, veterans, and those with substantial physical disabilities. Creating broader opportunities for historically under-represented groups provides for additional options and greater competition in the marketplace, creates stronger relationships and engagement within our communities, and fosters economic development and equality.

To further this commitment, the Department of Administration operates a program for Minnesota-based small businesses owned by minorities, women, veterans, and those with substantial physical disabilities. For additional information on this program, or to determine eligibility, please call 651.201.2402 or go to the Office of Equity in Procurement home page, at <https://mn.gov/admin/business/vendor-info/oep/>.

SPECIAL NOTICE: This is a request for proposal. It does not obligate the State of Minnesota to award a contract or complete the proposed program, and the State reserves the right to cancel this solicitation if it is considered in its best interest.

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Solicitation Attachments

- Attachment A: Responder Declarations
- Attachment B: Exceptions to State's Terms and Conditions
- Attachment C: Cost Detail
- Attachment D: Responder Form
 - Veterans Preference Forms
 - Workforce Certification
- Attachment E: Reference Form

Sample Contract

- Exhibit A: Contract Terms
- Exhibit B: Insurance Requirements
- Exhibit C: Specifications, Duties, and Scope of Work
- Exhibit D: Pricing

SECTION 1 – INSTRUCTIONS TO RESPONDERS

Steps for
Completing Your
Response

Follow the steps below to complete your response to this Solicitation:

Step 1: Read the solicitation documents and ask questions, if any

Step 2: Write your response

Step 3: Submit your response

Incomplete
Submittals

A response must be submitted along with any required additional documents. Incomplete responses that materially deviate from the required format and content may be rejected.

STEP 1 – READ THE SOLICITATION DOCUMENT & ASK QUESTIONS, IF ANY

How to Ask
Questions

The contact person for questions is:

Gabby Betzler, Contract Manager

Minnesota Racing Commission

Gabby.Betzler@state.mn.us

Other personnel are not authorized to answer questions regarding this Solicitation.

STEP 2 – WRITE YOUR RESPONSE

The Response Content section is in this link to [Section 4](#). Prepare a written response and supply all requested content. Responses should address the requested information and documents detailed in Section 4. **DO NOT INCLUDE** Non-Public/Trade Secret data (as defined in this link to [Minn. Stat. § 13.37](#)).

Review, sign, and include the Responder Declarations with your response.

STEP 3 –SUBMIT YOUR RESPONSE

Where to Send
Your Response

Submit your response to:

Minnesota Racing Commission

Gabby Betzler, Contract Manager

Gabby.Betzler@state.mn.us

THIS IS AN ONGOING SOLICITATION. Proposals must be received no later than December 31, 2026, at 2:00 PM Central Time. **Late responses will not be considered.**

By submitting a response, responder is making a binding legal offer for the period of time set forth below in Section 6, Conditions of Offer.

SECTION 2 – SUMMARY OF SCOPE

1. Procurement Overview and Goals.

The Minnesota Racing Commission (MRC or State) is requesting proposals from qualified individuals to preside as racing stewards. Minnesota Statutes section 240.16 requires all horse races run at a licensed racetrack to be presided over by a board of three stewards who must be appointed or approved by the Minnesota Racing Commission (MRC). The MRC may authorize Canterbury Park to conduct approximately 55 days of live Thoroughbred and Quarter horse racing in 2025, which will begin in early May 2026 and continuing through late September 2026.

Contractors will be required to work a minimum of five days/evenings per week to coordinate with the live racing and entry schedules. Contractors must be able and willing to work all weekends, evenings and holidays during the racing season unless otherwise specifically agreed to by the MRC.

Racing stewards must be available from at least one week before live racing begins until one week after the meet ends, unless otherwise agreed by the MRC. Any income which may accrue to the contractor, other than salary as a steward under this contract, must be independent of and unrelated to patronage of or employment by any licensee of the MRC so as to avoid the appearance of any conflict of interest or suggestion of preferential treatment of a licensee.

The approximate term of contract would be for one year, with the option to extend an additional four years in increments determined by the State. The MRC may award multiple contracts as a result of this RFP. Responses to this RFP may also be considered for positions on an as-need basis and in future live racing seasons.

Responses to this RFP will be accepted up until 2:00 PM Central Time, December 31, 2026. Priority will be given to responses that are received by December 31, 2025.

This Request for Proposals does not obligate the state to award a contract or complete the project, and the state reserves the right to cancel the solicitation if it is considered to be in its best interest.

2. Sample Tasks and Deliverables.

- Exercising immediate supervision, control, and regulation of licensed race meeting according to MRC statutes and rules.
- Observing racetrack operations during training, qualifying and racing hours.
- Reviewing all allegations of misconduct or rule infractions.
- Initiating investigations and conducting necessary hearings or taking other action to ensure the integrity of racing.
- Issuing warnings, fines and/or suspensions for violations of law or rule.
- Determining all questions, disputes, protests, complaints, or objections concerning racing matters which arise during the race meeting and enforcing such determinations.
- Ensuring that all live racing is conducted fairly and according to MRC rules.
- Documenting all rulings electronically, presenting them to the Minnesota Racing Commission and staff, and uploading them to the Association of Racing Commissions International rulings databases.
- Working effectively with the MRC investigative, licensing, and veterinary staff.
- Reviewing license applications and interviewing new trainers, assistant trainers, jockeys and agents and making approval/denial recommendations regarding licensure.
- Attending Minnesota Racing Commission meetings.
- Creating daily and monthly steward's reports to be presented to Executive and Deputy Director.

- Providing input on rule changes and implementation of new rules.
- The position requires 20/20 vision (corrected) and the ability to distinguish colors. The individuals selected will be required to provide documentation of a satisfactory optical exam within 90 days prior to beginning work.
- Other duties as assigned by the Executive Director or Deputy Director.

3. Minimum Qualifications Required

- Responders must have served as a steward, judge, director of racing, racing secretary, assistant racing secretary, starter, placing judge, patrol judge, paddock judge, identifier, clerk of scales, or other racing official at one or more race meetings recognized by an authority having jurisdiction to license or sanction a race meeting for a period of not less than 40 days per year during at least three of the last five calendar years; or have at least five years' experience as a trainer, jockey, or a driver.
- Responders must be formally accredited by the Racing Officials Accreditation Program or an equivalent accrediting organization.
- A written recommendation from at least 2 officials accredited by the Racing Officials Accreditation Program or an equivalent accrediting organization may substitute for up to 3 years of experience.

SECTION 3 – PROPOSAL INSTRUCTIONS AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

1. Anticipated Contract Term.

The term of this contract is anticipated to be from April 2026 to April 2027, with the option to extend up to an additional four years in increments determined by the State.

2. Question and Answer Instructions.

All questions should be submitted no later than the date and time listed in Section 1, Instructions to Responders. The State is not obligated to answer questions submitted after the question due date and time.

Only personnel listed above are authorized to discuss this solicitation with responders. Contact regarding this solicitation with any personnel not listed above could result in disqualification. This provision is not intended to prevent responders from seeking guidance from state procurement assistance programs regarding general procurement questions.

If a Responder discovers any significant ambiguity, error, conflict, discrepancy, omission, or other deficiency in the solicitation, please immediately notify the contact person detailed above in writing of such error and request modification or clarification of the document.

SECTION 4 – PROPOSAL CONTENT

Please submit the following information:

1. Qualifications and Experience. Responder should provide an outline of background and experience with examples of similar work done by the Responder and a list of personnel who will conduct the project, detailing their training, and work experience. Resumes, certifications, and licenses should all be submitted to show that “Minimum Qualification Requirements” are met; all certifications and licenses will be verified. Resumes or other information about project personnel should not, if possible, contain personal telephone numbers, home addresses, or home email addresses. If it is necessary to include personal contact information, please clearly indicate in the response that personal contact information is being provided.”
2. References. Responder should complete and submit “Attachment E: Reference Form” with their response. Responder should submit three completed reference forms with each reference’s company name and contact information with their response. Once Responder’s response is received, the Solicitation Administrator will send the same form to Responder’s reference(s) for each reference to fill out and return to the Solicitation Administrator.

Responder must complete and submit “Attachment E: Reference Form” with their response. Responder should answer every question and provide all information requested on the reference form. Failure to meet this requirement may result in the rejection of the entire solicitation response as non-responsive.

The State reserves the right to verify the information submitted on Attachment E before an award is made. The State reserves the right to contact the references listed in Attachment E. The solicitation response will be rejected if the State, in its sole discretion, receives information that indicates the responder is non-responsible or non-responsive.

3. Essay. A short essay not to exceed six hundred (600) words describing what you see as the most significant threat to the integrity of horse racing and how that threat can be best addressed.
4. Cost Detail. Complete and submit Attachment C, “Cost Detail,” attached to this solicitation.
5. License Agreements, Maintenance Agreements, or Other Terms and Conditions. Responder must provide any license agreements, maintenance agreements, or any other terms and conditions relevant to the work under a resulting contract. Review and approval by the State will be required prior to contract execution. In the event Responder fails to comply with this provision, Responder agrees that it will not seek to enforce terms and conditions of any such agreement against the State. Further, failure to provide any of the pertinent documents upon request may result in the State not agreeing to sign any additional documents, rejecting your response, or cancelling the award.

Submit all requested documentation, including, but not limited to, the following documents:

1. Attachment A: Responder Declarations
2. Attachment B: Exceptions to State's Standard Terms and Conditions
3. C: Cost Proposal
4. Attachment D: Responder Forms
 - a. Workforce Certification (If Proposal Exceeds \$100,000, including Extension Options)
5. Attachment E: Reference Form

DO NOT INCLUDE Non-Public/Trade Secret data (as defined by Minn. Stat. § 13.37).

SECTION 5 – EVALUATION PROCEDURE AND CRITERIA

The State will conduct an evaluation of responses to this Solicitation. The evaluations will be conducted in three phases:

- Phase 1 - Review responses for responsiveness and pass/fail requirements
- Phase 2 - Evaluate responses
- Phase 3 - Select finalist(s)

1. Phase 1 – Responsiveness and Pass/Fail Requirements

The purpose of this phase is to determine if each response complies with mandatory requirements. The State will first review each proposal for responsiveness to determine if the Responder satisfies all mandatory requirements. The State will evaluate these requirements on a pass/fail basis.

Mandatory Requirements. The following will be considered on a pass/fail basis:

- Responses must be received by the due date and time specified in this RFP.
- Responses will first be reviewed to confirm compliance with the minimum qualifications identified in Section 2, item 3 above:
- Responses that meet the minimum qualifications will be further evaluated.

2. Phase 2 - Evaluate Responses

Only those responses found to have met Phase 1 criteria will be considered in Phase 2.

The factors and weighting on which responses will be evaluated are:

1. Qualifications and Experience	350 points
2. References	100 points
3. Essay	100 points
4. Interview	150 points
5. Cost Detail	<u>300 points</u>
	1000 points
6. Preference Points (if applicable)	120 points (in addition to 1,000 available)

Preference points are described under Solicitation Terms and will be applied to the total score after points have been awarded.

3. Phase 3 - Select Finalist(s)

Only those responses that have been evaluated under Phase 2 shall be eligible for Phase 3.

The State will make its selection based on best value, as determined by this evaluation process. The State reserves the right to pursue negotiations on any exception taken to the State's standard terms and conditions. In the event that negotiated terms cannot be reached, the State reserves the right to terminate negotiations and begin negotiating with the next highest scoring responder or take other actions as the State deems appropriate. If the State anticipates multiple awards, the State reserves the right to negotiate with more than one Responder.

SECTION 6 – UNENFORCEABLE TERMS AND SOLICITATION TERMS

Unenforceable Terms

As of July 1, 2025, certain terms are unenforceable in state contracts. See Session Laws, 2025 Regular Session, [Chapter 39](#), Article 2, Section 45.

Unenforceable terms

- (a) A contract entered into by the state shall not contain a term that:
- (1) requires the state to defend, indemnify, or hold harmless another person or entity, unless specifically authorized by statute;
 - (2) binds a party by terms and conditions that may be unilaterally changed by the other party;
 - (3) requires mandatory arbitration;
 - (4) attempts to extend arbitration obligations to disputes unrelated to the original contract;
 - (5) construes the contract in accordance with the laws of a state other than Minnesota;
 - (6) obligates state funds in subsequent fiscal years in the form of automatic renewal as defined in section 325G.56; or
 - (7) is inconsistent with chapter 13, the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act.
- (b) If a contract is entered into that contains a term prohibited in paragraph (a), that term shall be void and the contract is enforceable as if it did not contain that term.

Solicitation Terms

1. Competition in Responding

The State desires open and fair competition. Questions from responders regarding any of the requirements of the Solicitation must be submitted in writing to the Solicitation Administrator listed in the Solicitation before the due date and time. If changes are made the State will issue an addendum.

Any evidence of collusion among responders in any form designed to defeat competitive responses will be reported to the Minnesota Attorney General for investigation and appropriate action.

2. Addenda to the Solicitation

Changes to the Solicitation will be made by addendum with notification and posted in the same manner as the original Solicitation. Any addenda issued will become part of the Solicitation.

3. Data Security - Foreign Outsourcing of Work is Prohibited

All storage and processing of information shall be performed within the borders of the United States. This provision also applies to work performed by subcontractors at all levels.

4. Joint Ventures

The State allows joint ventures among groups of responders when responding to the solicitation. However, one responder must submit a response on behalf of all the others in the group. The responder that submits the response will be considered legally responsible for the response (and the contract, if awarded).

5. Withdrawing Response

A responder may withdraw its response prior to the due date and time of the Solicitation. For solicitations in the SWIFT Supplier Portal, a responder may withdraw its response from the SWIFT Supplier Portal. For solicitations done any other way, a responder may withdraw its response by notifying the Solicitation Administrator in writing of the desire to withdraw.

After the due date and time of this Solicitation, a responder may withdraw a response only upon showing that an obvious error exists in the response. The showing and request for withdrawal must be made in writing to Solicitation Administrator within a reasonable time and prior to the State's detrimental reliance on the response.

6. Rights Reserved

The State reserves the right to:

- Reject any and all responses received;
- Waive or modify any informalities, irregularities, or inconsistencies in the responses received;
- Negotiate with the highest scoring Responder[s];
- Terminate negotiations and select the next response providing the best value for the State;
- Consider documented past performance resulting from a State contract may be considered in the evaluation process;
- Short list the highest scoring Responders;
- Require Responders to conduct presentations, demonstrations, or submit samples;
- Interview key personnel or references;
- Request a best and final offer from one or more Responders;
- The State reserves the right to request additional information ; and
- The State reserves the right to use estimated usage or scenarios for the purpose of conducting pricing evaluations. The State reserves the right to modify scenarios, and to request or add additional scenarios for the evaluation.

7. Samples and Demonstrations

Upon request, Responders are to provide samples to the State at no charge. Except for those destroyed or mutilated in testing, the State will return samples if requested and at the Responder's expense. All costs to conduct and associated with a demonstration will be the sole responsibility of the Responder.

8. Responses are Nonpublic during Evaluation Process

All materials submitted in response to this Solicitation will become property of the State. During the evaluation process, all information concerning the responses submitted will remain private or nonpublic and will not be disclosed to anyone whose official duties do not require such knowledge. Responses are private or nonpublic data until the completion of the evaluation process as defined by Minn. Stat. § 13.591. The completion of the evaluation process is defined as the State having completed negotiating a contract with the selected responder. The State will notify all responders in writing of the evaluation results.

9. Trade Secret Information

9.1 Responders must not submit as part of their response trade secret material, as defined by Minn. Stat. § 13.37.

9.2 In the event trade secret data are submitted, Responder must defend any action seeking release of data it believes to be trade secret, and indemnify and hold harmless the State, its agents and employees, from any judgments awarded against the State in favor of the party requesting the data, and any and all costs connected with that defense.

9.3 The State does not consider cost or prices to be trade secret material, as defined by Minn. Stat. § 13.37.

9.4 A responder may present and discuss trade secret information during an interview or demonstration with the State, if applicable.

10. Conditions of Offer

Unless otherwise approved in writing by the State, Responder's cost proposal and all terms offered in its response that pertain to the completion of professional and technical services and general services will remain firm for 180 days, until they are accepted or rejected by the State, or they are changed by further negotiations with the State prior to contract execution.

11. Award

Any award that may result from this solicitation will be based upon the total accumulated points as established in the solicitation. The State reserves the right to award this solicitation to a single Responder, or to multiple Responders, whichever is in the best interest of the State, providing each Responder is in compliance with all terms and conditions of the solicitation. The State reserves the right to accept all or part of an offer, to reject all offers, to cancel the solicitation, or to re-issue the solicitation, whichever is in the best interest of the State.

12. Requirements Prior to Contract Execution

Prior to contract execution, a responder receiving a contract award must comply with any submittal requests. A submittal request may include, but is not limited to, a Certificate of Insurance.

13. Targeted Group, Economically Disadvantaged Business, Veteran-Owned and Individual Preference

Unless a greater preference is applicable and allowed by law, in accordance with Minn. Stat. § 16C.16, businesses that are eligible and certified by the State as targeted group (TG) businesses, economically disadvantaged (ED) businesses, and veteran-owned businesses will receive points equal to 12% percent of the total points available as preference.

For TG/ED/VO certification and eligibility information visit the Office of Equity in Procurement website at <https://mn.gov/admin/business/vendor-info/oep/> or call the Division's Helpline at 651.201.2402.

14. Reciprocity

State shall comply with Minn. Stat. § 16C.06, subd. 7, as that applies to a non-resident vendor. This paragraph does not apply for any project in which federal funds are expended.