



1. Introduction

The Wichita Symphony Orchestra (WSO) is soliciting proposals from qualified marketing agencies to provide strategic, creative, and production services that advance WSO’s audience development, earned and contributed revenue, and brand visibility. This RFP is intended to support selection of a partner agency beginning July 1, 2026.

WSO anticipates an annual marketing agency retainer not to exceed \$52,000. Note that paid media spend will be on top of the \$52,000.

Respondents should propose a scope, service levels, and staffing model that can be delivered within this budget, with third-party costs and pass-through expenses itemized separately as applicable.

Respondents are expected to (a) fully inform themselves on the services requested, (b) submit a proposal that addresses all required elements in this RFP, and (c) comply with the process and deadlines outlined herein. Submission of a proposal indicates the agency’s acceptance of these requirements; acceptance of a proposal will occur only upon execution of a written agreement.

2. RFP Schedule

WSO anticipates the following schedule. WSO reserves the right to adjust dates and will communicate any changes to all known respondents.

Event	Target Date
RFP issued	February 20, 2026
Proposal submission deadline	March 18, 2026
Finalists notified / interviews scheduled	March 31, 2026
Interviews	Early April 2026
Selected agency notified	April 20, 2026
Contract negotiation and execution	April-May 2026
Transition / discovery period (as needed)	May-June 2026
Contract start / kickoff	July 1, 2026

To ensure an orderly process, WSO requests that all questions be submitted in writing to tstorhoff@wso.org. WSO intends to share responses to material questions with all known respondents.

3. Organization Mission and Background

The mission of the Wichita Symphony is to enrich, educate, and entertain diverse audiences of all ages in our region through performances of orchestral music, thereby enhancing the vibrancy and vitality of Wichita. The Wichita Symphony Orchestra was founded in 1944 and is one of the oldest and most active arts organizations in Kansas. Throughout its 81 concert seasons, the orchestra's mission has been to provide the state with the highest quality musical presentations for as many different audiences as possible.

Over the years, the Orchestra has performed a wide range of repertoires, including orchestral masterworks, pieces by living composers, popular music, choral works, opera, oratorio, and ballet. Today under the leadership of Music Director Daniel Hege, it is a highly respected and acclaimed ensemble. In the 2025-26 season, the WSO is presenting nine Mainstage concerts at Wichita's Century II Performing Arts & Convention Center. WSO actively works to reach new and diverse audiences by varying its repertoire, engaging guest artists from numerous genres, offering free performances, and exploring new concert formats and collaborations with its *WSO Connect* series. In addition to the professional orchestra, the organization also includes the Wichita Symphony Chorus, a volunteer ensemble that performs with the orchestra on at least one Mainstage concert each season and typically also presents a standalone choral concert.

Education and community engagement are central to WSO's year-round impact. The Wichita Symphony Youth Orchestras (WSYO) program was founded in 1947 and now includes six ensembles serving over 300 students from communities across Kansas. In addition, WSO's Young People's Concerts reach approximately 13,000 students and teachers each year. WSO also offers free performances for youth at libraries and community centers during the summer and presents free family-friendly concerts in Wichita-area parks each year.

The WSO is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors composed of 23 elected directors and 3 honorary directors. The organization has an administrative team of nine full-time and four part-time staff members.

WSO seeks a marketing partner that can help translate artistic ambition into clear, compelling messages and campaigns that convert attention into ticket purchases, renewals, and philanthropic support.

4. Goals and Objectives

The selected agency will work in close partnership with WSO staff to:

- Increase single-ticket and subscription sales through integrated, measurable campaigns.
- Increase awareness of the Wichita Symphony Orchestra and strengthen consideration among priority audience segments across the Wichita region.
- Deliver fundraising-ready creative and design support as needed, and shape brand storytelling across all channels so the WSO's value, outcomes, and momentum are consistently clear to inspire current and future supporters.

- Strengthen consistency and quality across WSO’s creative, messaging, and visual identity.
- Improve marketing performance through data-informed testing, reporting, and continuous optimization.

5. Scope of Services and Deliverables

WSO is seeking a retainer-based relationship for ongoing strategy and production, supplemented as needed by project-based work. Agencies may propose additional services and/or tiered options, but should clearly identify what is included in the base retainer versus out-of-scope work.

The following scope reflects WSO’s anticipated needs and is informed by WSO’s current agency arrangement. WSO expects the selected agency to provide these services at a professional standard and to propose an efficient workflow with clear timelines, review rounds, and file handoff conventions.

A. Strategy and Planning

- Annual marketing and creative campaign strategy that establishes a consistent, compelling, and memorable narrative for WSO across the season.
- Audience development planning, including segmentation and messaging frameworks aligned to subscription, single-ticket, and education priorities.
- Campaign calendar and integrated channel planning (paid, owned, earned where applicable).
- Marketing budget planning support, including recommendations for allocation by channel and by program.
- Media planning and coordination support, including collaboration with a media buying partner if proposed. Agencies should disclose any commissions, fees, or markups.

B. Creative Development, Design and Content

- Concept and design for season and concert campaign creative, including key art systems that can be adapted across channels.
- Design of digital ad creative (static and video) and other paid media creative as needed.
- Design of season collateral and sales materials, such as posters, postcards, brochures, rack cards, and related assets.
- Video content including concert/event promotional videos for use on social channels and WSO-owned platforms and original short-form video content to raise awareness for WSO programs.
- Social media content calendar support, including recommended themes, post concepts, and asset requirements.
- Event and program collateral design as requested (e.g., donor events, education events, community partnership materials).

C. Program Book Production Services

- Develop and maintain an overall program book template system that reflects WSO brand standards and is efficient for recurring use.

- Design, layout, and produce print-ready program books for WSO concerts (frequency to be coordinated annually).
- Coordinate with WSO’s selected printer (or provide printing management if proposed), including deadlines, specifications, and delivery schedules.
- Deliver print-ready files, packaged source files, and accessible digital versions when requested.

D. Account Management and Reporting

- Regular status meetings with WSO staff, plus quarterly strategic reviews.
- Monthly or post-concert event reports summarizing work completed, learnings, and next steps. Reporting should include paid media metrics where applicable and be suitable for internal leadership/board updates.
- Proactive strategic feedback on initiatives WSO is pursuing (e.g., new series concepts, partnership activations, ticketing offers), with a bias toward actionable recommendations.

6. Proposal Guidelines and Requirements

Proposals should be clear, concise, and include the information below. WSO may request additional information or clarifications from respondents.

A. Agency Information

- Agency name, address, and primary point of contact (name, title, phone, email).
- Ownership structure and any relevant certifications (e.g., minority-owned, woman-owned, veteran-owned), if applicable.
- Brief history, core services, and office locations supporting this engagement.

B. Understanding and Approach

- Your understanding of WSO’s context and objectives, and how your approach will advance ticket sales and audience growth.
- Proposed account team structure and workflow.
- How you incorporate audience insights, testing, and optimization into campaign development.

C. Relevant Experience

- Examples of comparable work (arts/culture preferred), including objectives, tactics, results, and your role.
- Three client references with name, title, organization, email, and phone.

D. Measurement and Reporting

- Your reporting framework and sample dashboards or reports (redacted).
- How you collaborate with internal teams on attribution, ticketing conversion, and KPIs.
- Tools you use (e.g., GA4, Meta/Google ad platforms, project management systems) and how you share performance insights.

E. Pricing

- Proposed annual and monthly retainer fee (must not exceed \$52,000 annually) and what is included (explicitly list included deliverables, service levels, and expected cadence).

- Proposed project pricing approach for out-of-scope work.
- Disclosure of any paid media planning/buying fees, commissions, or markups; explain how media planning and buying would be handled.
- Confirmation that paid media spend, printing, postage, and other third-party or pass-through costs are excluded from the retainer unless explicitly stated; describe your approach to estimating and obtaining pre-approval for such costs.
- Any optional service tiers or add-ons (clearly labeled).

F. Legal and Administrative

- Any standard contract terms or required vendor onboarding documents.
- Disclosure of any potential conflicts of interest.

7. Evaluation Criteria

WSO will evaluate proposals using the criteria below:

- Demonstrated understanding of WSO’s objectives and the Wichita market context.
- Quality and relevance of strategic approach, creative capabilities, and production execution.
- Strength of program book/publication design experience and print production rigor.
- Team qualifications, capacity, and proposed account management model.
- Measurement discipline, reporting clarity, and optimization approach.
- Cost, value, transparency of fees, and overall fit for a long-term partnership.

8. Anticipated Contract Terms

WSO anticipates awarding an initial 12-month agreement beginning July 1, 2026, with options for renewal by mutual agreement. The final contract will be negotiated with the selected agency and may include a defined scope, service levels, deliverables calendar, and performance review checkpoints. WSO reserves the right to reject any or all proposals; to waive informalities and minor irregularities; to request additional information; and to negotiate changes to the proposed scope prior to contract execution.

9. Submission Instructions and Contact Information

Proposals must be submitted electronically as a PDF by the deadline listed in Section 2. WSO may invite selected finalists to an interview and may request a presentation of relevant work.

Please submit proposals and questions to:

Tim Storhoff, Executive Director
tstorhoff@wso.org
 (316) 267-5259, ext. 106
 225 W. Douglas, Suite 207
 Wichita, KS 67202

Appendix - Estimated Scope Summary

This summary is provided to: Ground agency proposals in a shared understanding of scale & reduce variance in scope interpretation.

Creative & Content Support (Estimated)

For planning purposes, agencies may assume support for approximately four (4) primary concert campaigns annually, including:

- **Program books**
Editing, layout refinement, and print-ready preparation for up to **four (4)** program books per season.
- **Digital collateral**
Approximately four (4) core pieces of collateral per show, each adapted into three (3) digital sizes for web and paid media use.
- **Video content**
One (1) talking-head style video per show, delivered in three (3) formatted outputs (horizontal, vertical, square).
Scope assumes light editing, captioning, and branding, not full-scale production.
- **2026-2027 Show Calendar**
10 mainstage performances are scheduled.
8 additional events and engagements estimated, agency involvement varies.

Brand Stewardship & Cohesion

WSO is seeking an agency partner to support brand cohesion and extension, with an emphasis on:

- Refinement and application of established brand standards
- Consistency across campaigns, channels, and seasons
- Strategic guidance to ensure new initiatives align with WSO's existing identity

This engagement does not anticipate a full rebrand. Rather, the agency will act as a brand steward and strategic extension of the internal team.

Paid Media Context

WSO's paid media efforts are primarily focused on Google and Meta platforms. Campaigns typically run in short, show-specific flight windows, with an always-on seasonal presence.

Paid media budgets are separate from the agency retainer.

Any media buying fees or commissions must be clearly disclosed.

Media Budget for current 2025-2026 Season: \$71,842.

This budget is separate from the noted retainer budget of \$52,000.

Website Support (Optional)

Experience with website updates, landing page refinement, or light maintenance is considered a **plus**, but not a core requirement of the engagement.