



Crisis Communications Plan and On-Call Crisis Communications Request for Proposals (RFP)

Request for Proposals On-Call Crisis Communications



RFP Issue Date:	August 10, 2026
Issued By:	Meridian Township 5151 Marsh Road Okemos, MI 48864
Inquiries/Contact:	Samantha Diehl, Communications Manager diehl@meridian.mi.us 517.853.4378
RFP Due Date:	Wednesday, September 30, 2026 by 4:00 pm

Section I – Introduction and Purpose

Meridian Township is soliciting proposals from qualified firms to:

1. Update the Township’s Crisis Communications Plan
2. Provide on-call crisis communications services

The purpose of this RFP is to secure a firm to work with the Township to update its Crisis Communications Plan and provide on-call crisis communication services that can be deployed rapidly during high-risk, time-sensitive, or reputationally significant events.

This RFP is not intended to procure ongoing or day-to-day public relations services. Instead, it is designed to ensure the Township has immediate access to experienced crisis communications professionals who can:

- Respond to breaking or emergent situations.
- Manage intense or adversarial media attention.
- Counter misinformation and disinformation.
- Support Township leadership with disciplined, legally sound messaging.
- Assist in de-escalation and transition planning following the crisis period.

Section II – Communications Department Background

The Communications Department aims to increase transparency in governance by providing timely, relevant information to residents. The department coordinates with various departments to inform the public about Township goals, plans, emergency alerts, activities, and events through multimedia platforms, including the web, digital, and print.

The department is staffed by three full-time members and receives additional support from a freelancer and two interns per year.

Key Responsibilities of the Communications Department:

- Update the public during emergency situations
- Maintain the [Meridian Township website](#)
- Manage [20 Township-affiliated social media accounts](#)
 - Facebook (8 pages)
 - Instagram (5 pages)
 - Nextdoor (1 page)
 - X (2 pages; do not actively post)
 - LinkedIn (2 pages)
 - YouTube (2 pages)
- Issue press releases to the media
- Oversee HOMTV, Meridian Township's government access channel

Section III – Scope of Work

The scope of work will be broken into two main categories: Crisis Communications Plan Update and On-Call Services.

1. CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS PLAN UPDATE

- **Crisis Communications Plan Review and Update**
 - Meet with staff and elected leadership to discuss Crisis Communications expectations.
 - Review existing Crisis Communications Plan and related policies.
 - Recommend updates based on current best practices and Township operations.
 - Develop crisis message templates, holding statements, and communication workflows.
 - Define roles, responsibilities, and approval processes.
 - Deliver final updated Crisis Communications Plan in editable format.
- **Training and Preparedness**
 - Conduct media training for designated spokespersons.
 - Facilitate at least one crisis communications tabletop exercise.
 - Provide recommendations for improving response readiness.
 - Develop crisis communications training materials for leadership and staff.

2. ON-CALL SERVICES

Respondents must be capable of providing immediate, high-level crisis communications support upon notice. Services may include but are not limited to:

- **Immediate Crisis Media Response**

- The selected firm must be available 24 hours per day, 7 days a week, 365 days per year. Upon activation by the Township, the firm must acknowledge receipt of the request within one (1) hour and provide initial strategic communications support within two (2) hours.
- **Media Relations and Public Information Management**
 - Work with the Communications Department to coordinate and manage media inquiries, interview requests, press briefings, and news conferences. Develop media strategies that support Township objectives while maintaining transparency and credibility.
- **Misinformation and Narrative Management**
 - Monitor traditional media, social media, and online platforms for misinformation. Develop corrective messaging strategies. Coordinate with legal counsel and subject matter experts, as appropriate.
- **Leadership and Spokesperson Support**
 - Messaging guidance for designated spokespersons. On-call coaching for interviews, press conferences, or public statements.
- **Internal Communications Support**
 - Draft employee communications and leadership updates.
 - Develop internal FAQs and talking points.

Section IV – Desired Qualifications

In addition to general public relations qualifications, respondents must demonstrate specific crisis communications expertise, including:

- Proven experience providing crisis communications support for local governments, public agencies, public safety organizations, or similarly complex organizations.
- Experience supporting elected officials and executive leadership teams.
- Demonstrated understanding of public records, transparency, and governmental communication requirements.
- Ability to coordinate effectively with legal counsel, law enforcement, emergency management personnel, and other governmental stakeholders.
- Demonstrated ability to operate under intense pressure and public scrutiny.
- Experience managing misinformation, disinformation, or hostile media environments.
- Availability for rapid activation, including evenings, weekends, and holidays.

Section V – Proposal Requirements

Submitted proposals should include the following:

- **Cover Letter**
 - State a brief overview of the firm, reason for interest, list of services offered, in accordance with the Scope of Work section, and the contact information for the main point of contact.

- **Relevant Experience**
 - Description of comparable clients and projects.
- **Project and Team Availability**
 - Identify personnel who would be assigned to Meridian Township.
 - Describe roles, responsibilities, and relevant experience.
 - Identify primary and secondary emergency contacts.
 - Describe after-hours activation procedures.
- **Availability and Activation Procedures**
 - 24/7 availability procedures.
 - Emergency contact methods.
 - Expected response times.
 - Staffing redundancy if primary personnel are unavailable.
 - Any limitations affecting emergency deployment.
- **Proposed Approach and Work Plan**
 - Description of how the firm would meet the Scope of Work.
 - Provide proposed communication strategies and methods.
- **Training Plan**
 - Description of media and communications training offerings, including format, duration, and audience.
- **Detailed Cost and Pricing**
 - *Crisis Communication Plan and Related Training Support*
 - Not-to-exceed costs for updating the Township's Crisis Communication Plan.
 - Per-session pricing for media training, spokesperson training, and staff communications training.
 - Pricing for in-person vs. virtual meetings.
 - Pricing for tabletop exercises or crisis simulations.
 - *On-Call Services*
 - Provide monthly or annual retainer rate for crisis communication services, if required.
 - Provide hourly pricing for content development (press releases, media advisories, statements, talking points, briefing materials) and crisis management services.
 - Clear description of services included in the base retainer.
 - After-hours, weekend, and emergency response rates, if different from normal business hours.
 - *Optional Ad-On Services*
 - Clearly identified optional services with separate pricing.
 - Any volume discounts or bundled pricing options.
 - *Billing and Invoice Practices*
 - Description of billing frequency and invoicing details.
 - Sample invoice, if available.

- Identification of reimbursable expenses and required documentation, including travel.
- **References**
 - Provide at least three (3) professional references.
 - Provide digital examples of past work (social media posts, press releases, etc.).

Section VI – Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on, but not limited to, the following criteria:

- Demonstrated understanding of the Township’s needs and objectives.
- Relevant experience and qualifications.
- Quality and feasibility of the proposed approach.
- Experience with governmental crisis communications.
- Proposed cost and overall value.
- Quality of references.

Section VII – Proposed Timeline

The following timeline outlines the anticipated schedule for this RFP process. The Township reserves the right to modify or reschedule milestones as necessary.

- RFP Announced – August 10, 2026
- Questions Due – September 15, 2026
- Proposals Due – September 30, 2026
- Evaluation of Proposals – October 2026
- Interviews (Optional*) – October 2026
- Consultant Selected – October 2026
- Contract Negotiation – November 2026
- Township Board Approval – November to December 2026

**The Township may elect to interview finalists prior to selection.*

Section VIII – Submission Instructions and Requirements

Please submit your proposal electronically to bids@meridian.mi.us by **4:00 pm on Wednesday, September 30, 2026**. Proposals submitted after the deadline will not be considered. See below for information about submitting questions.

All questions should be emailed to Manager Diehl at diehl@meridian.mi.us and submitted by **Wednesday, September 15, 2026**. Responses will be posted on the Township’s website as an addendum to this RFP. If you submit a question and do not receive a response within 24 hours, please call Manager Diehl at 517.853.4378.

For additional questions, please contact Manager Diehl at diehl@meridian.mi.us or 517.853.4378.

Meridian Township reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, waive irregularities in submitted proposals in the best interest of the Township, to reissue RFPs, and to request additional information.

The Township reserves the right to negotiate the terms and conditions of all or any part of the project or to accept any proposals determined by the Township to be in the best interest of the Township and successful completion of the project.