

Executive Summary: TS on-call marketing services contract amendments

In December 2017, Technology Services entered into contractual agreements with four external firms to provide on-call support for marketing, advertising, and graphic design for city agencies and elected offices. These contracts are managed by the Marketing Services division of TS for the purpose of creating a broad bench of marketing resources available to the city. Marketing Services has invested in training each firm in city brand standards and best practices and relies on these firms to help ensure appropriate use of the Denver brand across agencies, departments, and offices, and to create a common look-and-feel that residents recognize as “the city” in public-facing marketing efforts. TS oversees the master contracts and city agencies, departments, and offices utilize the contracts through task orders, drawing from their own budgets.

The city leveraged all four on-call marketing services firms to help create and execute critical public health campaigns during the COVID-19 pandemic, with much higher-than-normal budget infusion coming from the federal government. The unprecedented advertising spend during that time resulted in contract financial thresholds being reached sooner than expected, and the COVID crisis delayed timelines for marketing campaigns related to regular city business that had already been assigned to the contracts. Additionally, the impacts of COVID-19 work on the normal business of Marketing Services prevented TS from conducting a new RFP procurement for these services in 2021 as planned. (The previous procurement period for these services took approximately 18 months to complete due to the broad scope of work, and the need for multiple firms to create an adequate bench for citywide benefit.)

Now that the city has moved into COVID-19 recovery, marketing campaigns for regular city business and new initiatives are back in full swing. If the four on-call marketing services contracts are not extended, public awareness and action-based campaigns on the following in-flight marketing projects will be halted:

- Volume-based waste services initiative to educate and inform residents of coming changes on Jan. 1, 2023
- Excise and Licenses’ residential rental licensing campaign required for residents/businesses to be licensed by Jan. 1, 2023
- Fall/winter COVID-19 public health campaign
- Denver Human Services’ property tax reduction eligibility initiative
- Denver Parks and Recreation’s “Game Plan for a Healthy City” equitable parks initiative
- Denver Parks and Recreation’s “Be a Smart Ash” tree canopy protection initiative
- The Office of Human Resources’ “Where Denver Works” talent acquisition campaign
- HOST homelessness awareness graphic design support
- Any new marketing projects requiring on-call resources that are not yet in the funnel would also be delayed

Having a bench of on-call marketing services contracts available to all city agencies, departments, and offices prevents the city from having to identify and individually contract with vendors for marketing campaign strategy and management, advertising strategy and management, graphic design, culturally-sensitive marketing expertise and trans-creation of campaigns in multiple languages, sponsorship opportunities, and other marketing-related activities every time a need arises, saving the city time and money. Leveraging an on-call bench for these services is efficient and helps the city create consistent, cohesive campaigns across its unique and distinct lines of businesses, eliminating the need for residents to understand and navigate layers of government. This model has proven to be valuable since its inception and TS will ensure the contracts that make up the bench are put out to bid well before the end of the next contract amendment.