Delaware Bankers Association
Delaware Financial Education Alliance

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REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR STRATEGIC PLANNING

The Delaware Bankers Association (DBA) and the Delaware Financial Education Alliance (DFEA and, together with the DBA, the "Association") are nonprofit, member-driven organizations representing financial institutions operating in a highly regulated and rapidly evolving environment. The Association serves its members through advocacy, education, professional and pipeline development support, and industry engagement. Governed by a volunteer Board of Directors and supported by professional staff, the Association is undertaking strategic planning to ensure it remains relevant, responsive, and financially sustainable amid regulatory change, industry consolidation, and evolving member expectations.

PURPOSE

The Association seeks proposals from qualified consultants—preferably boutique firms or independent practitioners—with experience working with trade associations, financial institutions, and non-profit organizations to support the development of a focused, practical strategic plan.

ABOUT US

The Delaware Bankers Association is a 501(c)(6) tax-exempt, not-for-profit private trade association with a diverse membership comprised of tax paying international, national and state-chartered banks, savings banks, non-deposit and limited purpose trust companies, and banks with operations in the State of Delaware.

- The DBA provides members with a forum to exchange valuable industry information to maintain a safe and sustainable financial services industry.
- The DBA serves as the voice of the banking and trust industry to state and federal legislators and regulatory agencies.
- The DBA actively participates in legislative and regulatory affairs at the state level including drafting, monitoring and supporting legislation beneficial to the banking and trust business in Delaware.
- The DBA communicates with and educates legislators, the media, regulatory agencies and the public on issues affecting the financial services industry.

- The DBA also works with other state bankers associations and trade groups like the American Bankers Association to monitor federal legislation and advocate on behalf of its members.

The Delaware Financial Education Alliance is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt entity focused on improving financial well-being, access, and opportunity for all. Formed in 1983, the DFEA is committed to helping consumers become better educated about topics that impact their overall financial capability, of which financial literacy is a fundamental pillar.

- The DFEA provides financial literacy training designed for and targeted to persons of low and moderate income in the State of Delaware through a variety of educational programs. These programs are focused on specific knowledge and concepts that individuals need to know to manage their finances and increase economic security.
- The DFEA provides training programs to employees of member institutions. The DFEA offers numerous quality educational programs, including certified courses, seminars in a variety of banking skill areas, participation in a full range of degree programs, and a variety of bank-related schools.
- The DFEA also provides educational and information-sharing forums to meet the diverse needs of its members.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Association's existing strategic plan is set to conclude at the end of May 2026. The Association seeks a consulting firm to collaborate with staff and key constituents to update its vision, mission, and priorities for the next 3-5 years[1].

At the same time, the Association intends (through a separate engagement) to refresh its visual identity, messaging, and collateral and craft metrics and processes that optimize its ability to engage its members, gain feedback, and maximize its reach with its target audience. The Association is also working to identify an Association Management System that will tie together its updated strategic plan and refreshed brand and communications approach into a seamless foundation for operating through and beyond the end of the decade. The strategic plan consultant will need to work collaboratively and efficiently with other Association providers to achieve this end result.

The strategic plan will center on addressing the following key questions:

- What outcomes is the organization seeking to achieve over the next 3-5 years?
- Which programs, initiatives, and functions should be prioritized, expanded, redesigned, or sunset over the next 3-5 years to best advance the organization's mission?
- What organizational capabilities, staffing, partnerships, and systems will be needed to support this direction?

[1] Our preference is for a three-year plan, but we will discuss with the engaged firm what scope is best, so we reference three-to-five in this RFP.

- What financial model and revenue strategy will be required to support the organization's priorities and ensure long-term financial sustainability? What metrics and other measures of success are most useful to assess the value of outcomes over the next 3-5 years?
- How can the organization build the agility and systems needed to remain relevant and responsive in a rapidly changing external environment and evolving financial services and banking landscape?

SCOPE OF WORK

The selected firm will design and facilitate a comprehensive strategic planning process resulting in a clear, actionable three- to five-year strategic plan that includes:

- Strategies
- Tactics
- Key milestones
- Outcomes

The scope of work should include, at minimum:

- Review of organization's current activities and corresponding impact(s)
- Analysis of key trends in the banking and financial industry field, including work of other banking associations
- Engagement of key constituents such as DBA staff, board, and member organizations
- Summary of findings from document review, stakeholder engagement, and environmental/organizational assessment
- Facilitation of strategic planning sessions with staff and board (number and format to be proposed)
- Delivery of a concise, comprehensive strategic plan suitable for board adoption that includes:
    - Aligned plans for organizational capabilities, staffing, partnerships, and systems that will be needed to carry out the strategic plan
    - Financial model/revenue strategy for long-term financial sustainability that will resource the strategic plan

PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

Responses should provide a straight-forward and concise description of your ability to meet the requirements of this RFP. Emphasis should be on completeness and clarity of content. Please be sure to include the following information:

- Firm and project team overview: Background, mission, and relevant experience and qualifications of the Firm and those who would be staffed on this project.
- Approach: A detailed description of how the work will be completed and carried out, including facilitation of strategic planning sessions with staff and board (number and format to be proposed).

- Workplan and timeline: A timeline that shows major milestones and the process for completing the scope of work and achieving the deliverables within a three-month time frame. The timeline should incorporate the identification of Strategies and Outcomes for the strategic plan being completed by April 30, 2026; however, the full comprehensive strategic plan including tactics and milestones does not to be completed until the end of May.
- Budget: A detailed cost proposal, including a breakdown of fees and expenses.
- Relevant past projects: Two to three examples of similar projects the firm has completed.

SELECTION CRITERIA

We will consider the following criteria when evaluating proposals:

- Demonstrated understanding of project goals and context
- Relevant experience and qualifications
- Soundness of approach and work plan
- Timeline for project milestones and completion
- Cost-effectiveness and value

Please indicate if your business is women-owned, minority-owned, and/or service- or disabled-owned.

BUDGET

The Association has budgeted a range between $25-50k for this project; however, we recognize that proposed costs may vary depending on each firm's approach to the scope of work. While cost will be a consideration in determining who is awarded the RFP, firms are encouraged to submit a budget that accurately reflects the level of effort needed to successfully deliver the project.

DURATION AND TIMING

RFP Released: Tuesday, February 10, 2026
Proposals Due: Monday, February 23, 2026
Selection and Notification: By March 13, 2026
Project Kick-off: March 16, 2026
Strategic Plan Strategies and Outcomes identified: by April 30, 2026
Strategic Plan complete: by May 31, 2026

SUBMISSION DETAILS

Please submit proposals by 5:00 PM EST on Monday, February 23, 2026. The submission email subject line should read *RFP FOR STRATEGIC PLAN*:

- via email to Project Manager Ilana Zafran Walden at iwalden@forestzafran.org
- with a cc to Margaret Cregan at margaret.cregan@debankers.com

RESERVATION OF RIGHTS

All intellectual property developed in the course of this engagement will become the property of the Association. All data remains the sole property of the Association. The consultant shall agree to keep in strict confidence any confidential organizational information or proprietary information learned through its dealings with the Association and/or its stakeholders.

The Association reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, request additional information, and negotiate scope and fees with the selected consultant. Submission of a proposal does not obligate the Association to select a proposer. The Association assumes no responsibility or liability for costs incurred by you prior to the signing of any contract resulting from this bid and/or post-bid interviews. Further, we expect the awarded vendor to have in place liability insurance germane to the scope of its services.

During the selection process, we will consider all proposals received by the deadline. We will contact a selection of finalists for interviews, in person or by teleconference, and will provide feedback on all submissions as soon as possible following the final selection.