


**APPENDIX A - SUBMISSION COVER SHEET
CITY OF DULUTH
RFI# 23-AA08 MARKETING PARTNERS FOR SMALL BUSINESS**

Submitter Information:	
Submitter Name	Creative Arcade, LLC
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Authorized Signature	
Name & Title of Authorized Signer	Jeffrey Ruprecht, Partner/Interactive Director
Email of Authorized Signer	jeff@creativearcade.design

City of Duluth, MN

Marketing Partners for Small Businesses

May 26, 2023



*371 Canal Park Drive
Suite 212
Duluth, MN 55802*

*218-464-6648
creativearcade.design*

Dear City of Duluth,

Our team at Creative Arcade understands that the Duluth Economic Development Authority (DEDA) has a Request for Information for Marketing Partners for Small Businesses.

Creative Arcade is a marketing and web development agency with more than 50 years of combined advertising experience. Our team of writers, designers, and developers come together to find winning solutions to your marketing headaches. We approach every project with the Power of Play, a unique methodology that embraces lateral thinking and restructuring preconceived notions.

We have a wide range of marketing wins but the most relevant is our work on a similar project for The City of Edina. Throughout 2022 and 2023, we've been the go-to marketing partner for 15 small businesses based in Edina, Minnesota. Our time together has resulted in numerous shops adding online platforms, heightened customer numbers, and a structured marketing plan for each business.

We are confident we can provide the same value to DEDA's selected small businesses. If selected, we'll follow our well-developed process established for Edina. This will result in your companies receiving more marketing value for their funds and deliver better results. We are eager to help you and the chosen businesses accomplish their goals. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions about our response.

Thank you for considering us.



Phil Davidson

PARTNER/CREATIVE DIRECTOR



Jeff Ruprecht

PARTNER/INTERACTIVE DIRECTOR

PS - We acknowledge reviewing the Addenda question and answers for this RFI.



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Hi.

We're Creative Arcade.

We're a growth agency. What does that mean? It means our focus is helping you grow. Whether that is growing public awareness or building you a website that accelerates growth, we're here. We want to see you succeed and play a part in that success.

That takes vision and collaboration. Together, we examine your goals and find ways to accomplish them. Using our in-depth knowledge and strategic approach, we make the creative process effective — and enjoyable.

Since the beginning over six years ago, we've been a marketing partner our clients can rely on. Our smaller, but nimble group of five experts have seen it all working for some of the top agencies north of Minneapolis. Bringing over 50 years of collective marketing, branding, and digital experience to the table while working for many different industries.

We are accustomed to working directly with key team members from our client teams and are used to working over email, phone, Slack, Infinity, and Zoom on a regular basis to ensure a collaborative relationship and respond accordingly. Typically this engagement will be conducted by Jeff Ruprecht, Partner at Creative Arcade.

We base our approach to creative problem solving by something we call the Power of Play. Play in being curious and not being afraid to learn something new or try something different to ensure a great outcome. This basis fuels our mindsets that are described in detail in the upcoming pages.

It's all gain, no games.

We're your catalyst for growth. We're Creative Arcade.



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The City of Duluth and DEDA is looking for marketing agencies to work with local businesses through a matching grant program. We believe that Creative Arcade is the studio for the job. Why? Because we recently worked on a similar program with the City of Edina, MN where we worked with 15 small businesses impacted by the pandemic to help them move ahead. You can see the overview at <https://creativearcade.design/work/city-of-edina-mn-taps-project/>

And because we bring the following to the table:

Branding, Website, and Digital Expertise

Our co-owners are both talented designers and brand strategists in their own right. They are especially talented in their knowledge of marketing on the internet. So much so that they joke about “building websites since the 1990s”.

30,000 Foot View

No matter the size of the project, we always come into a it thinking about how it fits within the larger picture of a brand or organization.

Power of Play

We thrive on play. That means we take time to learn and grow our talents and invest time in our interests. It makes our creativity richer and your results better.

Award-winning work

Some of our best work can be seen at <https://creativearcade.design/work>

By working with Creative Arcade, you can look forward to:

Transparency

Swift communication

A team that makes the marketing process enjoyable and easygoing

With us as program partners, you'll come out with a strong plan and sound execution that accomplishes your goals. Let's partner to provide the expertise to area businesses and the broader community.



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The mission, vision, and core mindsets of Creative Arcade are as follows:

Mission

Bring play back into creative problem-solving for all involved.

Vision

We make creative problem-solving feel like play.

Mindset

Have Fun

If we're not enjoying the creative process, we're doing something wrong. If we're doing our jobs correctly, we're on target, on track, and the client is happy. Our partners are not exempt from the fun and should find working with us the highlight of their day. We get to create for a living. Embrace it!

Be an Infinite Player

Our best work is always what's happening right now. This keeps us digging, exploring, and pushing ourselves to do better. We consider the competition but don't fret about them. We're more concerned about solving the problem before us.

Work/Play Balance

When you're able to take a step back from work and explore the other things that interest you, you're energized. You then bring this energy back into your work. This turns into better productivity, better work, and a better overall quality of life.

Play it Forward

Whenever you can, give back to the people and places that surround you.

Don't Be an Asshole

Pretty self-explanatory

Our priority is helping you enhance your resources so you can nurture opportunities for all. It feels like a Minnesota match.



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Marketing

Inbound | Branding | Website Development | Digital

How can we help? Our creative arsenal runs deep.

BRAND

Graphic Design
Illustration
Motion Graphics
Brand Voice
Copywriting
Drone Certified (shoot/edit)
Photography (shoot/edit)
Video (shoot/edit)

WEB

Web Design
Web Development
User Experience (UX)
App Development
SEO (Search Engine Optimization)
Analytics/Data
Shopify
WordPress

INBOUND

Lead Generation
Marketing Automation
Content Development
Social Media
Email Marketing
Workflows



DIGITAL

Digital Marketing
Display Ads (SEM)
Search Marketing (SEM)
Remarketing (SEM)
Geofencing
Reputation Management



**Award winning
creative in many
industries like
government,
healthcare,
and more.**

Minnesota Association of Government Communicators (MAGC)

MAGC Northern Lights Award 2019 - St. Louis County Website
MAGC Northern Lights Award 2020 - City of Edina, MN Extranet
MAGC Northern Lights Award 2021 - St Louis County Covid Ref Campaign

City-County Communications and Marketing Association

3CCCMA Award 2021 - Government Service/Delivery
- St Louis County Covid Ref Campaign

Main team leaders



Phil Davidson

Partner/Creative Director

phil@creativearcade.design

218-390-3452

Phil is an accomplished Creative Director, with a lengthy graphic design and marketing career. He believes that every client deserves a personalized approach. This attitude inspired him to co-create Creative Arcade. Throughout his career, his goal has always remained the same: make marketing, and its process, the bright spot of a client's day.



Talyn Riedesel

Content Specialist

talynr@creativearcade.design

Not only does Talyn have the writing chops suited for agency life, she's also got the creativity. Talyn infuses strategic thinking into everything she writes, including video, blog posts, and branding documents. Her goal is to help clients find their voice and have the footholds to accomplish their goals.

Bachelor of Design & Visual Comm. - Graphic design - Bemidji State

CREATIVE ARCADE, Duluth, MN

Partner/Interactive Director, 2015 - present

DAVIDSON CREATIVE

Owner, 1999 - 2015

THE COLLEGE OF ST SCHOLASTICA

Adjunct Professor, Graphic Design, 2012 - 2013

HTK MARKETING (Hailey Sault), Duluth, MN

Art Director, 2005 - 2012

WESTMORELAND FLINT, Duluth, MN

Graphic Designer, 2002 - 2005

Bachelor of Communications and Journalism (Advertising Emphasis)

University of Wisconsin - Eau Claire

CREATIVE ARCADE, Duluth, MN

Copywriter/Content Specialist, 2019 - present

SWIM CREATIVE

Copywriter, 2013 - 2018



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Jeff Ruprecht

Partner/Interactive Director

jeff@creativearcade.design

218-393-3151

Jeff is a wunderkind. He started as a professional print designer but has shifted his focus to online marketing. Over the years, he's made himself indispensable to clients from government to retail. His specialties these days are web design, social media strategy, and digital placement. He's a tireless creative, always toiling away at some creative endeavor — like our handmade wooden desks.

Bachelor of Fine Arts: Graphic Design – University of MN-Duluth

CREATIVE ARCADE, Duluth, MN

Partner/Interactive Director, 2015 – present

HTK MARKETING (Hailey Sault)., Duluth, MN

Art Director/Interactive Director, 2005 – 2015

WESTMORELAND FLINT/ FLINT INTERACTIVE, Duluth, MN

Web Designer, 2002 – 2005

CP INTERNET WEB SERVICES, Duluth, MN

Web Designer, 1999 – 2002

MAURICES, INC, Duluth, MN

In-house Graphic Designer, 1997 – 1999



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References

Jennifer Bennerotte

Director of Communications
City of Edina, MN
JBennerotte@edinamn.gov
(952) 833-9520

"I could not ask for a better partner in the continued development of our employee extranet, Edinet, than Creative Arcade. The staff at Creative Arcade know just what we want and need to reach our employees in unique and meaningful ways online. With expertise in website development and a commitment to staying on the cutting edge, the development team is often able to start working on custom features for the site the minute I've finished explaining what I'm trying to accomplish. They are responsive, creative, and take pride in all they do!"

Dana Kazel

Communications Manager
St. Louis County MN
kazeld@stlouiscountymn.gov
(218) 725-5049

"Creative Arcade has always met our deadlines, including when we've needed something at the last minute. Over the years, this has ranged from a small print ad, to more recently, a major campaign. Earlier this fall, we came to them with an impossible request - develop a campaign to promote key COVID prevention tips. We literally had just five weeks to develop and run the campaign because of the deadline associated with CARES Act funding. Not only did they get it done, they knocked it out of the park! (I probably should come up with a football line instead of baseball here. Visit covidref.com to view the campaign and see what I mean.) The campaign succeeded beyond our wildest dreams, getting state-wide play - and positive attention! - through news and social media beyond the small amount we spent on traditional TV advertising."

Alicia Randall

Health Educator, Public Health: Family & Community
Carlton County, Minnesota
Alicia.Randall@co.carlton.mn.us
(218) 878-2870

Beth Probst

Director of Marketing & Grants
NorthLakes Community Clinics
Hayward, WI
bprobst@nlccwi.org
(715) 292-4722

"They do a great job taking the time to understand not only the mission of the organization and/or its purpose... but then also understanding business goals. Everyone measures success differently and they don't make any assumptions but rather take the time to learn what exactly the company is trying to achieve. In my field (healthcare), it gets complicated fast. They understood that and definitely took the time to figure things out."

Joe Wicklund

Communications &
Community Engagement Manager
City of Hermantown, MN
jwicklund@hermantownmn.com
(218) 729-3600

Jessica Schuster

Marketing & Public Relations
Fairview Range
jschust2@fairview.org
(218) 362-6771



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Cost

Our rate

As described in the RFI, we are prepared to work within your expectations to provide expected services to the City and the small businesses as described. We also entertain retainer-based billing for a fixed amount of hours per month in an ongoing engagement.

Our hourly rate for all services we provide is calculated at the following:

\$150/hr

What do others say?

“ Creative Arcade’s team is easy and fun to work with. I’ve watched them in meetings involving social workers, traffic engineers, auditors and attorneys, just to name a few. They put people at ease and consistently impress us—both with the quality of work, and the results they achieve. ”

Dana Kazel

Communications Manager
St. Louis County, MN

“ They do great work and made the start of my new position at the city of Hermantown fun, fruitful and positive! ”

Joe Wicklund

Communications & Community Engagement Manager
City of Hermantown, MN

Thank you.