Request for Proposal

826 Digital 3.0: UX/UI and Brand Redesign

Issued: October 2026

Organization	826 National
Engagement type	Pro-bono/low-bono partnership
Say "Hello!" by	October 30, 2026
Target launch	August 1, 2027
Contacts	Anna Griffin, Director of Content & Partnerships, 826 Digital: annagriff@826national.org Abbey Hayward-Fogt, Chief of Staff: abbey@826national.org
Websites	826digital.com | 826national.org

Come Build Something Improbable with Us

826 National, the largest youth writing network in the country, is looking for a design partner to reimagine 826 Digital—a free writing platform that brings 826's joyful, rigorous approach to writing instruction to 25,000 educators and more than 950,000 students each year.

Your mission? Redesign 826 Digital so that it feels like walking into an 826 chapter: playful, immersive, beautiful, a little improbable, and serious about writing instruction. A teacher arriving after a long day should feel a small lift, a spark of inspiration, and find the resources they need without friction.

You'll be in good company. Past 826 brand partners include Target, Cartoon Network, Paramount Pictures, Moleskine, Scout Books, AT&T, and Gensler. Paramount Pictures recently won two Anthem Awards for *The Big Book of IFs*, and Barkley's "Poets in Revolt" campaign was recognized in Ads of the World. Our work with young authors has been featured on *Good Morning America* and CBS.

This is a pro-bono/low-bono engagement with potential to transform what's possible for tens of thousands of educators and nearly one million young writers across the country.

What's in it for you:

- A high-visibility case study on a beloved education and literary brand reaching nearly one million students
- Real creative leeway, and permission to play
- Direct access to 826 leadership, our chapters, and our Educator Leaders cohort
- Co-authored storytelling and conference visibility, including national education conferences like NCTE and NAA
- Reference relationships with our funders and board
- Coverage of reasonable out-of-pocket costs

About 826



"Few organizations have dedicated themselves to unleashing the power of writing like 826 National."
— *Moleskine*

826 comes from a long lineage of pirates, superheroes, time travelers, secret agents, robots, magicians, and community members who believe, fiercely, in the power of writing. Author Dave Eggers and educator Nínive Calegari founded 826 in San Francisco in 2002 on a simple belief: young people, especially those furthest from resources, deserve joyful, rigorous opportunities to grow through writing.

What started as a neighborhood tutoring center became the largest youth writing program in the country. Today, 826 National includes nine chapters and 826 Digital. Of the students we reach, 86% are youth of color, 21% are English language learners, and 84% attend under-resourced schools. All programming is free.

826 Digital launched in 2017 to bring 826's approach to teaching writing to educators, students, and communities that need it most. It features hundreds of writing resources from the 826 Network, including prompts, lessons, educator tools, videos, and a Writing Gallery of student work—all available for free. Currently, 826 Digital serves 25K subscribers and reaches an estimated 950K students, extending the impact of the 826 Network to communities across the globe.

Why Now

Educators who find 826 Digital love it: satisfaction sits at 95% across most measures. The platform has seen two design eras, in 2017 and 2022. Our next era is about helping more educators find us and stay. Since our last redesign, three years of data point to three focus areas:

- **Reach:** Grow beyond a steady base of about 2,000 new accounts each year
- **Discovery:** Design to optimize organic search and drive new users to the platform.
- **Retention:** Build a platform with educators' daily habits and needs in mind, so resources are easy to bring into the classroom.

Our Vision for 826 Digital 3.0

We're inviting a partner to imagine the next era of 826 Digital with us, including a new sub-brand identity, UX optimization, and a UI redesign. Together, we aim to:

- Grow adoption among educators in Title I, public, and urban schools
- Make the platform easier to navigate, explore, and return to
- Create a refreshed 826 Digital sub-brand that complements the 826 National brand and connects clearly to the 826 Network
- Lay the design and IA foundation for a Writing Gallery that can grow into a dynamic space for student publishing
- Strengthen the platform's signals to search engines and partner platforms
- Build pathways for deeper analysis of user journeys

The Adventure Ahead

We anticipate the project unfolding in four phases, which we'll co-scope in detail together during contracting.

Phase	Timing
1. Discovery & research	Fall 2026
2. Brand & IA	Winter 2027
3. Design	Spring 2027
4. Build, launch & handoff	Launch August 2027

We welcome a consortium of partners covering different phases, as long as one contracted partner provides oversight.

Who We Hope to Meet

- A team that genuinely cares about education, literacy, equity, and student voice
- Portfolio strength in brand identity, mission-driven UX/UI, and platform redesigns of similar complexity
- A discovery-led process that puts user research first
- Experience with WCAG accessibility and inclusive design
- Realistic pro-bono capacity, with a named senior team

Let's Start with a Conversation

If this brief sparks something, we'd love to hear from you. By October 30, 2026, send a short note to Anna Griffin at annagriff@826national.org with the subject line "826 Digital 3.0: [Your Firm Name]."

For now, a few paragraphs is plenty:

- Who you are, and why this project speaks to you
- A link to work you're proud of
- Any first impressions of 826 Digital (logins are free if you'd like to look around)

We'll reply to every note and set up a conversation with teams who feel like a good fit. From there, we'll ask for more detail together, such as your approach, team, case studies, and references.

826 Digital exists to put the power and joy of writing into more young people's hands. Thank you for your interest in helping to write its next chapter. We look forward to hearing from you!