

COVER LETTER

May 18, 2026 (Revised May 28, 2026)

Risi Karim
Assistant City Administrator
801 Washington Street
Northfield, MN 55057
Delivered via email: Risi.Karim@northfieldmn.gov

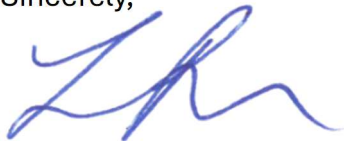
Dear Risi:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this proposal from EverStrive Solutions, LLC, for a facilitated performance review for the city administrator. EverStrive Solutions is a full-service public sector consulting firm that specializes in strategic planning, facilitation, and organizational development. We proudly serve local governments, non-profits, and regional organizations across the country.

EverStrive Solutions was founded by two former city managers who have sat on both sides of this table, both as a city administrator being evaluated and as the staff facilitating the process. We know that a performance review is only as valuable as the consensus it produces. Our work is built around drawing out the full range of perspectives on the City Council and staff leadership team, creating the conditions where every perspective is heard and the final evaluation reflects genuine collective judgment, not just the loudest voices.

Our approach is confidential, structured, and respectful of the time constraints facing both elected officials and senior staff. We will partner with the City of Northfield to keep the process on track and ensure the City Administrator receives meaningful, actionable feedback aligned with the Council's expectations and the City's goals.

Sincerely,



Lauren Palmer
Co-Founder & COO

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Independence, MO 64050
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www.everstrivesolutions.com
FEIN: 99-2319015



MEET EVERSTRIVE SOLUTIONS

Certified Woman-Owned Business Enterprise through the Missouri Office of Equal Employment Opportunity

EverStrive Solutions, LLC is a public sector consulting firm that specializes in supporting local governments, nonprofits, professional associations, and regional agencies. Founded by former local government executives, EverStrive Solutions provides coaching, strategic planning, facilitation, and project management to support the changemakers of the world. We offer a variety of solutions, including providing facilitation and consulting services in one-on-one and group environments that focus on process improvement, policy development, strategy, productivity, team dynamics, management training, and executive leadership.

OUR FACILITATOR



Lauren Palmer, EverStrive Solutions COO and Co-Founder, will serve as the project facilitator. She has held executive local government roles in four cities in three states including city administrator and assistant city manager. She previously served as the director of local government services for Mid-America Regional Council (MARC), the regional council of governments in the greater Kansas City area. Lauren led MARC’s work in economic development, emergency services, housing, workforce development and other shared services. At EverStrive, Lauren frequently works with local government and regional council clients on strategic planning and organizational improvement. Lauren is an ICMA Credentialed Manager who has a strong reputation for getting to the heart of the matter, maintaining high productivity across diverse service lines, and developing talent so teams achieve their best.

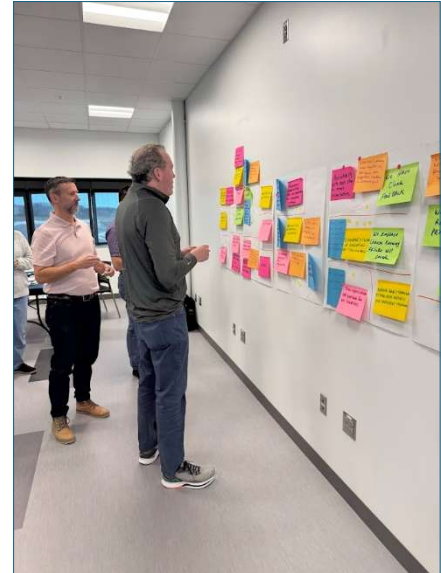
Lauren is based in the Twin Cities region of Minnesota.



EXPERIENCE AND REFERENCES

Below are examples of prior relevant experiences with similar services and organizations. References are available upon request.

- **Child Care Aware of Kansas** – Strategic Planning and Ongoing Strategic Advising (2024 – 2026)
- **City of Chanhassen, Minnesota** – Project Management Training for Staff Leadership (2026)
- **City of Grand Junction, Colorado** – City Council Retreat and Strategic Planning Process (2025)
- **City of Plymouth, Wisconsin** – Strategic Plan (2026 – in progress)
- **City of Springfield, Missouri** – City Council Priority Setting Workshop and Ongoing Advising (2025 – 2026)
- **City of Thornton, Colorado** – Council Strategic Planning Conference (2025 and 2026)
- **Clay County Public Health Center (Liberty, Missouri)** – Strategic Plan (2026 – present)
- **Engaging Local Government Leaders (ELGL)** – Strategic Plan (2025 – present)
- **Metropolitan Area Planning Commission (MAPA) Foundation (Omana, Nebraska)** – Strategic Plan and Organizational Assessment (2026 – in progress)
- **MidSouth Development District (Memphis, Tennessee)** – Community Roundtable Facilitation (2025 – 2026 – in progress)
- **Missouri City/County Managers Association** – Board Retreat & Strategic Plan (2025)
- **Missouri Municipal League** – Board Planning Retreat (2025)
- **Town of Windsor, Colorado** – Strategic Plan (2026 – in progress)
- **Unified Government of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas** – Two-Part Board Retreat (2025 and 2026)
- **Winnebago County, Wisconsin** – Strategic Plan and Governing Body Retreat (2025)



OUR APPROACH

WHY A FACILITATED REVIEW?

Leading a public sector organization means answering to an elected governing body. Multiple decision-makers each bring different priorities and perspectives to a performance review. The challenge for any chief administrative official is to listen carefully enough to find genuine consensus, so they have the guidance and support needed to lead effectively and thrive professionally.

A neutral, skilled facilitator transforms this inherently charged dynamic. Rather than letting emotion or reluctance derail the process, facilitation creates the conditions for candid, constructive dialogue that serves all parties: the administrator, the governing body, and the organization.

Our experience with local government leadership reveals a consistent pattern. Elected policy leaders are often reluctant to engage in performance reviews. Some assume everything is fine and see no urgency. Others do not prioritize the time. Still others lack prior supervisory experience and worry they do not know how to deliver feedback effectively. EverStrive Solutions excels at helping reluctant leaders find their voice in this process, ensuring the evaluation reflects the full range of viewpoints on the governing body, not just the most vocal ones.

OUR COMMITMENT TO CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality is the foundation of our credibility and the prerequisite for an honest process. We hold the following standards on every engagement:

- We never discuss your performance evaluation outside of authorized participants, under any circumstances.
- To the extent possible, feedback gathered through one-on-one interviews is reported in the aggregate and not personally attributed. Where individual attribution is necessary to communicate feedback appropriately, or where individual attribution may be inferred by the nature of the feedback, EverStrive will exercise professional discretion in how that information is conveyed to the City Administrator.
- We follow strict security protocols to ensure all personnel information remains protected throughout and after the engagement.

SCOPE OF WORK

EverStrive Solutions will serve as the independent third party consultant for the city administrator's annual review. Our approach is grounded in partnership. We work alongside clients to design **flexible and adaptable** processes that produce results. We are pleased to modify our standard facilitated performance review engagement to align with the process



and guidelines already established for the City of Northfield (R2018-040). We anticipate a 10-week process that includes the following elements:

Project Kickoff & Planning | Pre-Work

Upon contract execution, EverStrive Solutions will meet with the City of Northfield to discuss the 2026 annual review process. The purpose of this meeting is to affirm the project timeline and approach and to gather direction from the City about desired outcomes. It ensures the City and consulting teams are aligned at the start of the project and sets the stage for a successful process. Following this meeting, EverStrive will prepare draft language for elected and appointed officials with instructions for participation. The City will review, finalize, and distribute instructions to participants.

Input Gathering | September 1 – 30

- Prepare and administer three distinct electronic Performance Evaluation Review surveys: one for City Council members, one for direct reports (Department Coordination Team), and one for the City Administrator as a self-assessment. Each will be tailored to the City Administrator’s job duties and goals. Services include monitoring responses and conducting proactive outreach to maximize participation.
- Distribute the City Council survey with supporting materials (prior year performance review and annual goals) with instructions to complete and return.
- Complete a summary report with aggregated results and high level themes from survey responses and integrating input from the City Administrator’s self-appraisal.

Interviews | October 1 - 21

- Conduct individual virtual meetings (30 minutes each) with each direct report and members of the governing body to gather qualitative feedback to supplement and enhance survey data. EverStrive will prepare an interview guide and distribute it to participants in advance of the interviews.
- Conduct a one-hour virtual meeting with the City Administrator to review the self-assessment, survey summary report, and impressions from individual interviews.

Draft Performance Appraisal and Meeting Facilitation | October 22 – November 9

- Draft a comprehensive performance appraisal report synthesizing all individual responses from City Council members, direct reports, and the City Administrator’s self-assessment. The report will include:
 - Narrative description of the City Administrator’s key strengths, areas of competency, and areas for improvement or reflection.
 - Performance on previous objectives



- Summary of additional themes arising from the appraisal process.
- Electronic survey results, including:
 1. Average and distribution of all ratings.
 2. Anonymous and verbatim comments from surveys.
- Meet with the City Administrator to review the appraisal report before distribution to the Council.
- Distribute the full report and executive summary to City Council, the City Administrator, and appropriate administrative staff prior to the closed meeting.
- Facilitate a performance review dialogue in closed session with the City Council and City Administrator to discuss the results of the performance review and reach consensus among the Council on conclusions and goals for the following year.

Final Performance Appraisal Documents | November 10 - 24

- Revise the performance appraisal report following the closed session to incorporate the consensus direction of the City Council.
- Circulate the revised appraisal report to the Mayor and City Administrator for review and comment; finalize the report with responses to feedback.
- Provide a brief 1-3 page executive summary of the final appraisal report.

Mid-Year Check-In | Supplemental Service

EverStrive Solutions is available to participate in a mid-year performance appraisal check-in as a facilitator, contributor, or passive listener.



PROJECT SCHEDULE



City of Northfield, MN Facilitated Review		WEEKS										
PHASE	PROJECT COMPONENT	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Input Gathering	Project Kickoff	█										
	Develop Survey Tools		█									
	Administer Council and DCT Surveys			█	█							
	Administer Self-Assessment					█						
Interviews	DCT Interviews					█	█					
	City Council Interviews					█	█					
	City Administrator Meeting							█				
Draft Performance Appraisal and Meeting Facilitation	Draft Appraisal Report								█			
	Meet with City Administrator - Review Report									█		
	Facilitate Closed Session Dialogue										█	
	Update Report with Meeting Conclusions											█

All dates are subject to change based on input and availability from City of Northfield

FEE PROPOSAL

EverStrive Solutions proposes the following lump-sum pricing based on estimated hours and expenses to complete the deliverables. We will submit incremental invoices at each milestone as indicated in the table below.

TOTAL FEE: \$7,500	
<i>Milestone #1: Project Kickoff and Acceptance of Project Schedule</i>	\$1,500
<i>Milestone #2: Insight Gathering & Interviews</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Completion of Administration of Surveys (3)• Completion of DCT and Council Interviews• Completion of Meetings with City Administrator (2)	\$3,500
<i>Milestone #3: Facilitated Review in Closed Session</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Delivery of Final Report with Meeting Conclusions	\$2,500
Total	\$7,500

EverStrive Solutions will provide all standard materials needed (standard technology, flip charts, etc.). The client will retain responsibility for any direct expenses associated with the project outside of these standard materials, including securing space, printing, and any desired meals/refreshments. While no additional purchases are anticipated, if needed, EverStrive Solutions will work with the Client to approve any purchases in advance and ensure that all applicable purchasing policies are followed. Pricing is all-inclusive and covers development, preparation, travel, and meetings. EverStrive Solutions charges a \$200.00 hourly rate for supplemental services that constitute a change to the approved scope of work. Supplemental charges will only be applied when approved in writing in advance.

INCLUDED TRAVEL

This proposal includes two trips to Northfield, MN for one consultant:

- Project kickoff or summary report debrief with City Administrator
- Facilitated review in closed session

Travel days are flexible and may be scheduled as needed to support project activities. If additional trips are required, they will be billed at cost with no mark-up, using U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) per diem rates for meals and mileage.

SUPPORTING MATERIALS

The following supporting materials are attached as exhibits to the proposal.

1. Lauren Palmer Resume
2. WBE Certification





RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

- **EverStrive Solutions, LLC** | Public Sector Consultants **2024 - Present**
COO and Co-Founder
- **Mid-America Regional Council** **2018 – 2024**
Director of Local Government Services | 2021 – 2024
Assistant Director of Community Development/Local Government Services Program Director | 2020 – 2021
Local Government Services Program Director | 2018 - 2020
- **City of Independence, Missouri** **2016 - 2018**
Assistant City Manager
- **City of Parkville, Missouri** **2013 – 2016**
City Administrator
- **City of Manhattan, Kansas** **2008 - 2013**
Assistant City Manager
- **City of Des Moines, Iowa** **2004 - 2008**
Management Analyst | 2006 – 2008
Management Assistant | 2005 – 2006
Management Intern | 2004 - 2005

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- **Centurions Leadership Program.** Kansas City Area Chamber of Commerce. Class of 2019.
- **International City-County Management Association Credentialed Manager (ICMA-CM).** Since 2015.
- **Flint Hills Regional Leadership Program,** Class of 2008.
- **Emerging Leaders Development Program,** International City/County Management Association. Class of 2008 (Inaugural Class).

VOLUNTEERISM

- **Engaging Local Government Leaders (ELGL) GovLove Podcast,** Host. 2021 – present.
- **Independence Square Association,** Board Member. 2025.
- **Women’s Employment Network (WEN),** Annual Luncheon Committee. 2025.
- **Truman Library Institute,** Wild About Harry Annual Fundraising Committee. 2022 – 2025.
- **Local Initiative Support Corporation (LISC) Greater Kansas City,** Local Advisory Board. 2020 – 2025.
- **United Way of Greater Kansas City,** Women United Advisory Cabinet. 2016 – 2020.
- **United Way of Riley County,** Board Chair, 2013, and Board Member, 2012.
- **Awards Evaluation Committee,** Vice Chair. International City/County Management Association. 2007 – 2010.

EDUCATION

Master of Public Affairs
Indiana University School of Public and Environmental Affairs

Bachelor of Arts in Political Science
University of Missouri



*Kenneth J. Zellers
Commissioner*

*Claudia Browner
Acting Director*

STATE OF MISSOURI
OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATION
OFFICE OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

THIS CERTIFIES THAT

EverStrive Solutions

Qualifies as a Woman-Owned Business Enterprise which has met the eligibility criteria established by the State of Missouri, Office of Administration.



Claudia Browner, Acting Director, Office of Equal Opportunity

<i>Certification Number: 22737</i>	<i>Date of Issue: 10/17/2025</i>	<i>Date of Expiration: 10/17/2028</i>
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- ❖ *Date of Expiration is only valid with completion of Annual Update / Recertification prior to the anniversary date.*
- ❖ *Current certification status of the above mentioned firm can be verified on the Office of Equal Opportunity Directory's website at: <https://apps1.mo.gov/MWBCertifiedFirms/>*