



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR PUBLIC RELATIONS AGENCY

VISIT OXFORD MS

RFP ISSUE DATE: APRIL 16, 2019

RFP DUE DATE: JUNE 5, 2019

DEADLINE TO SUBMIT QUESTIONS: MAY 10, 2019

CONTACT: Kinney Ferris, Deputy Director, Visit Oxford
kinney@visitoxfordms.com

To All Prospective Bidders:

Visit Oxford is seeking qualified agencies to help promote the Oxford brand. Visit Oxford is responsible for the production of a variety of marketing activities including digital, print, public relations, visitor publications and maps, cooperative programs with in our community, and tradeshow— all designed to promote Oxford to tourists, meeting planners, and the travel trade. For more details please visit www.visitoxfordms.com.

The result of this public relations investment will be to increase the City's tax revenue and benefit Oxford's businesses by increasing overall visitor spending, employment and city vibrancy. The contract period for the Scope of Work contained within this RFP will be October 1, 2019- September 30, 2020, or 12 months.

Attached is an RFP to be filled out by those capable of meeting minimum requirements and carrying out the scope of work. All responses will be carefully reviewed and evaluated based on the criteria noted in the attached document. Any questions you may have to clarify this RFP are due to Visit Oxford no later than 5:00 p.m., May 10, 2019.

Sincerely,

Kinney Ferris
Deputy Director
Visit Oxford MS

Mary Allyn Hedges
Executive Director
Visit Oxford MS

Introduction:

Visit Oxford is the tourism marketing agency for the City of Oxford. The organization is funded by a portion of the Food and Beverage special tax for the City of Oxford and the Lodging Tax. Visit Oxford's budget for FY19 is \$1 million. Visit Oxford have 5 full-time employees to manage the full range of marketing activities including advertising, web, social media, meeting sales, community partnerships and visitor center.

Oxford is a city of about 25,000 citizens and about 23,000 University of Mississippi students. Annual visitor spending is \$176 million, generating \$16.2 million in state and local taxes and supporting 2250 jobs (9.1% of Oxford's employment base).

Mission Statement:

To market Oxford for the economic benefit of the community.

Contract Term:

The successful proposer will enter into a contract for services with Visit Oxford. The duration of the contract between Visit Oxford and the successful proposer is expected to begin October 1, 2019 and terminate on September 30, 2020.

Reviews may be held annually at the completion of the contract. Proposed renewals are also assessed according to program direction, funding, and consistency of price and scope of work continuity.

Timeline:

April 16, 2019 – RFP Issued

May 10, 2019- Deadline to submit RFP questions

June 5, 2019- RFP deadline

Week of June 17th- Finalist notified

Week of July 15th- Finalist interviews/ presentations

August 19, 2019- Agency selected

October 1, 2019- Contract begins

*Visit Oxford retains the right to change the proposed timeline.

Scope of Work:

- Generate national press coverage for Oxford by leveraging media relationships and integrated content strategies.
- Identify story angles that highlight Oxford's assets and unique appeal.
- Work closing with staff to ensure seamless messaging and media relationships.
- Generate press releases for various events upon request.
- Vetting of hosted media visits throughout the year.
- Prepare monthly reports and meet with board one time/year. Provide ongoing input and work collaboratively with staff.

Proposal Requirements:

Proposers and current staff must have significant destination marketing experience on a national level for CVBs or State Tourism Offices. To respond to this RFP, please answer the series of questions in Appendix A. By framing this RFP as a series of questions, our goal is to provide fair comparability between the proposers. Please answer each question thoughtfully, but succinctly. A reasonable

response to most questions should typically be ½ page or less. We are aiming for quality, not quantity. Where tactical questions are asked, please outline techniques to be used in meeting these requirements.

The collective responses to those questions should describe how the proposer intends to perform the scope of work during the 12- month period and shall be subject to negotiation between Visit Oxford and the awardees' for the contract period. The information provided will be used to negotiate the contract scope of work, and to score proposals as described below in the grading criteria. See Appendix B for a Destination Overview and links to additional resources.

References:

Proposals must include a minimum of three references (including the name and address of the organization, contact name and phone number) that can substantiate the quality of the bidder's work to be considered for award of this project.

Grading Criteria:

Proposals will be scored based on written proposals and oral presentation.

Submissions:

Please email an electronic version of proposals to kinney@visitoxfordms.com so that it is received no later than 5:00pm on June 5, 2019. Any creative samples should be submitted with proposal by the deadline.

*All proposals submitted shall become the property of Visit Oxford and shall not be returned to the proposer. Visit Oxford also reserves the right to: reject any and all bids; waive any or all mandatory requirements, if no proposers meet one or more of those requirements; cancel this RFP; revise the amount of funds available under this RFP; amend this RFP as needed; not select a vendor and award a contract from this RFP. All proposers agree that budget costs submitted with their proposals are valid for 180 days from the date Visit Oxford receives your proposal. **Proposals may be rejected if minimum requirements are not met.***

Appendix A- Questions for RFP Proposers

Please answer all questions and number your responses so that they correspond to the questions

1. Planning

Describe your strategic account planning process. What goes into the development of a plan?

What type of research do you do?

2. Staying Current

How do you stay current and test what's new? How do you anticipate and incorporate new trends and technologies?

3. Model of Excellence

What travel destination(s) is doing the best work? What do you like about it?

4. Peer Account

What account have you worked on that's closest to ours? What was the full scope of work that you did for them? Why are you proud of that work? How do you know that it was effective?

5. Unique Value

What is unique about your firm that is the reason we should hire you?

6. Work Scope

Please describe the scope of work you propose and your approach to make it "extraordinary" (can be more than ½ page). Please include a budget and timeline (indicating key milestones and who is responsible) for your scope of work.

7. Pricing

How will you price this work (including any administration and expenses)? If there is a billing schedule for different staff functions, please include it.

8. Team

Who will work on our account? Who will be the lead on our account on a day-to-day basis? Please provide bios. If you intend to use any subcontractors, include them too.

9. PR of Today

It seems like the media world continues to turn upside down. Traditional outlets are bleeding readers/viewers – and staff. New outlets are constantly emerging and any individual can be a publisher. The line between paid and earned media is increasingly blurred. How should Oxford shape its PR strategy in this landscape?

10. Division of Labor

What is the most effective division of labor between agency and client--what should you do, what should we do? How do we ensure smooth handoffs?

11. Oxford's Unique Selling Proposition

What do you think is unique about Oxford that we should bring out in our PR efforts?

12. Social Strategy

How would you recommend that we integrate social media into our overall communications strategy? Visit Oxford currently manages all social profiles through a new full time staff member, but we are interested in hearing your ideas on how you would manage the overarching social strategy and guidance on implementation.

Appendix B – Destination Overview and Resources

Website: www.visitoxfordms.com

Social Media Handles: @VisitOxfordMS (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Pinterest)

Research Study and Marketing Plan can be found on www.visitoxfordms.com/resources

*Visit Oxford will conduct new Market Research in Fiscal Year 2020 which could impact markets for PR reach and show new area for promotion.