

Request for Proposals (RFP) Tourism Promotion Services

Proposal Due Date:

September 30, 2020 (1:00 PM)

Submit Proposals To:

Jen Davis Hayes, City of Issaquah

Economic Development Manager

Email: jenh@issaquahwa.gov

Summary

The City of Issaquah (the "City"), is requesting proposals from qualified organizations or individuals with a successful track record in promotion and visitor attraction services. The City will budget up to \$125,000 in 2021 to contract with one or more organizations or individuals to provide these services. The contract has the potential to renew for future years, based on performance and budget allocation.

Purpose

Close to Seattle, rich in outdoor recreation amenities, home to many artistic, historic, and cultural assets, and host to regional and local events, Issaquah is a popular destination for many in the Puget Sound region and beyond. As the Puget Sound region becomes an increasing draw for both domestic and international visitors, and as the regional economy grows ever stronger through the COVID recovery, Issaquah will build upon existing efforts to take advantage of its unique position to grow its tourism industry and expand its tourism-related revenue.

Scope of Services

The Applicant will provide all information they deem necessary to satisfactorily respond to this RFP. The Applicant will outline their approach for promotion and visitor attraction services, which can include, but is not limited to the following:

- Recruitment of outside conferences, trade shows, and events (including sporting events);
- Assistance in finding appropriate venues for potential conferences and events;
- Coordination with Issaquah hotels, attractions, restaurants, and organizations to create attractive packages for potential events;
- Development of targeted promotions, including curated trips, promotional content, and marketing materials (both electronic and printed).

Furthermore, the Applicant should consider that tourism promotion services for the City will necessarily include:

- Support for existing Issaquah events that have the greatest capacity to produce additional lodging stays (such as the Association of Volleyball Professionals (AVP) tournament in June);
- Coordination with local partners and attractions in order to increase spending opportunities within Issaquah and ensure the retention or expansion of such events;
- Work in furtherance of existing Issaquah brand that highlights the city's assets and appeal;
- Establishment of metrics and benchmarks to track performance;
- Provision of quarterly and annual reports to the City and the City's Lodging Tax Advisory Committee.

Instructions

Proposals should include responses to the following elements:

1. *Applicant Experience*: Applicant should describe their experience in the tourism promotion industry, explain their history as an organization or individual, list the members and titles of the team that will work on Issaquah's tourism promotion, and describe whatever other experience makes them qualified.
2. *Approach*: Applicant should describe how they would go about promoting Issaquah and attracting visitors to the city.
3. *Technique*: Applicant should describe what techniques they would use (e.g. creation of television ads, social media page management) to promote tourism to Issaquah.
4. *Goals & Metrics*: Applicant should describe what goals would be achievable through their approach and technique. These goals should be determined by the Applicant, and success must be measurable through the metric(s) Applicant intends to collect.
5. *Economic Development*: Applicant should describe how their approach and their tourism promotion services would positively impact local area businesses from an economic development perspective.
6. *Visitor Statistics*: According to Washington State law, the City must also collect information on the number of overnight stays, the number of visitors from over 50 miles away, and the number of out-of-state and international visitors a project is both projected to create and actually generate. Applicant must estimate how many of these trips their tourism promotion services could generate, as well as a description of how these trips would be estimated or counted should they enter contract with the City.
7. *Budget*: Applicant must complete the budget worksheet attached to this RFP.

Other elements demonstrating the Applicant's qualifications and plans for tourism promotion can be included as desired by the Applicant. Proposals should not exceed 15 pages. Additional information may be requested by the City any time after receipt of the proposal, but Applicant must include all relevant information in their proposal by the Due Date.

Selection Criteria

Proposals will be ranked based on the selection criteria and points identified in this Section of the RFP. Proposals will be reviewed by staff for completeness and ranked by the Lodging Tax Advisory Committee. Recommendations will be forwarded to the City Council for a final determination. Applicants are hereby informed that the information sought shall be used to score each Applicant's proposal:

- Experience (40%): Specialized experience and technical competence of the Applicant and their team in meeting the identified Purpose of this project. Consideration will be given to past experience, meeting deadlines and references contacted.
- Responsiveness to the RFP (40%): Consideration will be given to the concordance of the Applicant's proposal with the purpose and intent of the RFP, including the quality and completeness of proposed strategies and technology.
- Competitiveness of Fee Structure (20%): The Committee will consider the cost for services and the comprehensiveness of the Applicant's proposal.

Compensation

If successfully approved, compensation will be provided from an allocation of the City's Lodging Tax Fund. Further details are as follows:

- Upon receipt of responses to this RFP, the Lodging Tax Advisory Committee will make a recommendation to the City Council to contract with one or more applicants for tourism promotion services. The total recommendation will not exceed \$125,000 for fiscal year 2021.

- Provide detailed information on the proposed cost for services. Applicants shall indicate whether they would seek a monthly or quarterly payment for services.
- The Applicant shall provide billing rates and expected hours for all members of the project team.
- The City shall pay for the services only after the services have been performed. Payment shall be made within thirty (30) days after receipt of a valid invoice.

Terms & Conditions

1. The City reserves the right to reject any and all applications, to accept incomplete applications, and to delay engagement with selected firms at their sole discretion.
2. The City reserves the right to request clarification of information submitted and to request additional information from any applicant.
3. The City reserves the right to award any contract to the next qualified applicant, if the successful applicant does not execute a contract within three (3) weeks after the applicant is notified of selection.
4. The City shall not be responsible for any costs incurred by the applicant preparing, submitting or presenting their response to the RFP.

Title VI Compliance

The City of Issaquah hereby gives public notice that it is the policy of the City to assure full compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987, Executive Order (E.O.) 12898, and related statutes and regulations in all programs and activities. Title VI requires that no person in the United States of America shall, on the ground of race, color, national origin, or sex be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity for which the City receives Federal financial assistance. Any person who believes they have been aggrieved by an unlawful discriminatory practice under Title VI has a right to file a formal complaint with the City of Issaquah. Any such complaint must be in writing and filed with the office of the City Clerk within one hundred eighty (180) days following the date of the alleged discriminatory occurrence.

Timeline

- Proposals due: September 30, 2020
- Applicant Selection: October 2020
- Scope Finalization and Contracting: by December 31, 2020
- Scope begins: January 2021

Budget Worksheet

Project Expenses	FY 2021
Personnel	
Contracted Services	
Rent/Facility Expense	
Materials and Supplies	
Marketing	
Event Costs	
Grants / Sponsorship	
Other (<i>describe</i>):	
In-Kind <i>(should offset in-kind contributions below)</i>	
TOTAL EXPENSES	

Contributed	FY 2021
Request to City of Issaquah LTAC <i>(may not exceed \$125,000)</i>	
Other Government	
Individual Contributions	
Business / Corporate Contributions	
Foundation Contributions	
Other Grants	
Other (<i>describe</i>)	
In-Kind Contributions	
Total Contributed Income	

Earned	FY 2021
Event-Based Income	
Sponsorship / Ad Revenue	
Product Sales	
Other (<i>describe</i>):	
Total Earned Income	
TOTAL INCOME <i>(Total Contributions + Total Earned Income)</i>	