



Request for Proposals: Marketing Agency
February 28, 2023

Project Name: Agency to develop advertising campaign promoting outdoor/recreation/nature activities and experiences for *Tourism Alive*, the Suburban Cook County Travel, Tourism and Hospitality Economic Initiative.

Timeframe: April 1, 2023 – December 31, 2023, with option to renew for one year.

Introduction: *Tourism Alive*, the Suburban Cook County Travel, Tourism and Hospitality Economic Initiative has received a grant through Cook County’s Bureau of Economic Development to assist in pandemic recovery through their award of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding. This grant was awarded to promote the resiliency of regional travel, tourism and hospitality in the suburban area, and to address bringing back the revenue and related jobs for lodging, dining, retail and small businesses that were lost during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Suburban Cook County has five state-certified convention and visitors bureaus (CVBs) that serve as the destination marketing organizations of their respective regions in suburban Cook County, IL to bring group and leisure travelers to their areas. The CVBs have long worked collaboratively on programs that serve the broader Cook County and Chicagoland travel, tourism, and hospitality community. To maximize the impact of available funds, the five CVBs have come together to develop a coordinated program that works at both regional and specific community levels to support the resurgence of the hospitality sector of Suburban Cook County as it recovers from the damaging effects of the pandemic.

Chicago’s North Shore Convention and Visitors Bureau (CNSCVB) is the grant subrecipient, the fiscal agent, and the administrator of this effort that encompasses the five Suburban Cook County CVBs (Chicago’s North Shore CVB, Chicago Southland CVB, Meet Chicago Northwest, Rosemont CVB, and Visit Oak Park).

Scope Of Services

This RFP is for a specific element of the grant program focused on the following countywide initiative:

- Develop a program to promote outdoor recreation, leisure and nature-related assets in suburban Cook County to visitors planning trips to the area.

Working with the *Tourism Alive* Communication Strategist, Program Director and CNSCVB, services will include:

- Developing the branding and advertising campaign for this initiative.
- Identifying key target audiences and media used (digital, social, print and radio) based on best use of media dollars.
- Developing and presenting general concepts and approaches for a minimum of two creative campaigns and a media strategy for a year-round advertising campaign.
- Securing and purchasing media for two seasonal campaigns from the awarding of this contract through 12/31/23. The media budget will be in the range of \$250,000 for the combined spring/summer campaign and a fall/winter campaign.
- Working in collaboration with the *Tourism Alive* team.
- Providing written monthly updates to *Tourism Alive* Communications Strategist, Program Director and CNSCVB.
- Providing a final campaign wrap-up report detailing performance of campaign elements and key findings.

Quantitative Metrics

To measure the success of the projects and programs and evaluate progress towards accomplishing goals, the Communications Strategist will be required to track, evaluate, and report key data including but not limited to:

- Paid social media performance
- Display advertising performance
- Web site engagement
- Brand awareness

Submission Requirements

Applicants should submit a thoughtful, clear and well-organized proposal that details the Proposed Scope of Services including the methodology to execute the aforementioned deliverables. (Note: there is no set scope so be creative in laying out a plan).

Please provide a description of each deliverable and a proposed timeline, fee schedule and samples of completed projects. Lastly, please provide a resume and a written statement

detailing appropriate experience with projects involving multiple stakeholders and the processes set up to manage multiple projects with competing deadlines. Please include any other assignments known to date that will be managed by your team during the time period of this project.

Technical Proposal Elements

1. Description of the proposed approach, costs and work plan. Activities and timelines should be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-oriented. Include a timeline of major tasks and milestones and fees associated with each component.
2. Person who will be the primary point of contact with the Program Director and Communications Strategist.
3. Qualifications of the Proposer to provide the requested services including capability, capacity, similarly complex projects and related experience and client references.
4. Commitment of qualified and available project team, including names and qualifications of individuals leading this effort.
5. A description of the outcome monitoring and evaluation plan including a list of tools to track process, output and outcome measures for each quantitative metric, as applicable.
6. Three (3) professional references.

Selection Criteria

- A strategic and creative proposal that demonstrates the approach to the work.
- Experience in the travel and tourism industry, with understanding of both business and leisure travel. Examples of previous work are welcome.
- Demonstrated experience in efforts to promote economic development, civic projects and government initiatives.
- Particular attention will be paid to experience that includes managing multiple stakeholders and projects.
- General outline of estimated costs for the scope of services presented with estimated dates they will occur.
- Knowledge of Suburban Cook County's Travel, Tourism and Hospitality assets is preferred.

Point-of-Contact

All questions regarding this RFP should be directed to Program Director Nina Winston at nina@ninabwinston.com. No phone calls please. No questions will be answered after March 14, 2023.

Deadline for Submission

Proposals should be created as PDFs and submitted no later than March 17, 2023 at 5 PM to nina@ninabwinston.com.