

# Request for Proposals

## **Public Relations**

for Visit Estes Park  
April 17, 2026



Dear Prospective Partner,

I would like to thank you for your willingness to review this information and submit a thoughtful proposal for Visit Estes Park as we are seeking a trusted partner or partners to reimagine VisitEstesPark.com. We seek to position Visit Estes Park among our targeted traveler audience as a destination of choice.

The Visit Estes Park team is committed to accountability, transparency, and stewarding our resources in ways that genuinely serve this mountain community. We hold deep pride in Estes Park's character and believe in the power of authentic partnerships to amplify it. We invite prospective bidders to bring bold, imaginative ideas that honor what makes this destination extraordinary. We act with integrity, deliver on our commitments, and measure our success by the vitality of Estes Park's travel, tourism, hospitality, and outdoor recreation economy, and the well-being of the community that calls this place home.

To help us deliver this success, we seek a partner or partners skilled destination public relations efforts. The ideal agency partner or partners will fit well with our organization, must collaborate with other partners, understand our business, embrace our mission, share our values and act as strategic, trusted guides for the Visit Estes Park team.

The Visit Estes Park team values innovative, creative, and outside-the-box approaches to all proposed public relations efforts. We are willing and ready to invest in new ideas and your recommended approach will be fundamental to your proposal. Your proposed direction will guide earned media deliverables and outcomes.

We are seeking all proposals to be submitted to Visit Estes Park (electronically only) by 5:00pm MST, May 8, 2026. A full timeline is included in this RFP document.

On behalf of the Visit Estes Park team, we look forward to receiving your proposals to help us promote the Estes Valley and our community partners effectively. Thank you in advance for considering this opportunity and for your time.

Safe travels always,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sarah Leonard". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sarah Leonard  
Visit Estes Park  
Chief Executive Officer

## MISSION & BRIEF PROJECT BACKGROUND

Visit Estes Park is the official destination marketing and management organization for Estes Park, Colorado - the base camp to Rocky Mountain National Park and one of Colorado's most beloved mountain communities. VEP strives to inspire and manage travel to Estes Park in a way that sustains the local economy year-round, enriches the visitor experience, and preserves the natural and cultural character of our community.

Formed in 2009, Visit Estes Park is the operating name of the Estes Park Local Marketing District. VEP nurtures visitor reverence of this vibrant mountain town for business success, environmental sustainability and community harmony. Our vision is to be a year-round, family-friendly tourism and event destination that supports our vibrant mountain town with a balance of financial success, positive and memorable experiences for guests and a meaningful quality of life for our community. Visit Estes Park works to incrementally increase visitation and its economic benefits while enhancing community well-being. Our approach is strategic, research-driven, and responsive to evolving travel trends.

Public relations is a cornerstone of how VEP tells the Estes Park story and we are ready to take that work to the next level. We are seeking a partner who will bring strategic rigor and creativity to our earned media program. We are seeking a proactive, high-impact PR strategy grounded in data that identifies the traveler audiences most aligned with our destination's goals, targets the media outlets and content creators who reach them, and crafts pitches and story angles that authentically reflect the values of this destination.

We believe the right stories, told in the right places, to the right audiences, drive meaningful visitation - particularly during shoulder seasons and off-peak periods when earned media can move the needle most. We are looking for a partner who shares that belief and is ready to bring fresh, innovative thinking to how Estes Park shows up in the regional and national travel conversation.

## GOALS

Visit Estes Park is not simply seeking *more* coverage, we are seeking the *right* coverage. A successful public relations partnership will deliver strategic, targeted earned media that reaches the audiences most likely to visit, connects with publications and creators that reflect the values of our destination, and positions Estes Park authentically.

Success looks like:

**The right stories in the right places** - Moving beyond volume metrics to pursue meaningful and strategic placements in outlets that align with VEP's target audiences and destination values. We are looking for a partner who understands the coverage that makes an impact.

**A full-service, fully engaged partner** - We are seeking partners that are fully embedded in our work at every level - from strategic planning and pitch development to FAM trip development and execution, influencer engagement, and ongoing media relationship building. The selected agency will function as an extension of the VEP team.

**Leveraging major moments and events** - Estes Park and the broader region are home to events with significant cultural cachet - from Frozen Dead Guy Days to opportunities tied to major national happenings like the Sundance Film Festival. A strategic PR partner will identify how to leverage these moments to generate timely, high-impact coverage putting Estes Park in front of new audiences.

**Balanced coverage across the destination** - We seek earned media reflecting the full breadth of the Estes Park experience - celebrating the iconic alongside the often overlooked. Coverage should span the destination's best-known draws and its lesser-known hidden gems, ensuring that media and their audiences discover a destination with far more depth than they expected.

## AUDIENCES

Visit Estes Park's marketing strategy centers on core audience segments that guide content development, media targeting, and earned media strategy. We know who visits Estes Park today and we have a clear picture of the audiences we are actively pursuing. At the same time, we recognize that travel trends evolve, visitor motivations shift, and new offerings create opportunities to reach audiences that haven't traditionally considered Estes Park. We are looking for a PR partner willing to work alongside us to identify and pursue emerging audience segments, whether that means tapping into wellness travel, the growing pre-tiree market, or communities that have been underrepresented in our media coverage to date. We are open to data-informed thinking about who the next generation of Estes Park visitors could be, and what stories will reach them.

### Leisure Travelers

The primary audience for VEP's PR program is leisure travelers considering Estes Park for a personal or family trip. This includes Estes Park loyalists and lookalike audiences drawn to multi-night mountain stays, as well as drive market visitors seeking a mountain escape. Within this broader group, VEP targets several distinct traveler personas:

- Memory Makers - multigenerational families, including grandparents
- Front Range Weekenders - drive-market audiences seeking a quick mountain getaway
- Wild at Heart Explorers - travelers who prioritize outdoor adventure
- Winter Wonder Seekers - travelers from warm-weather markets drawn to cold-weather activities and seasonal experiences
- Culture Curious - regional visitors motivated by events, arts, and local character

Across all leisure personas, the core demographic skews ages 25–54 with an emphasis on 45+, household incomes of \$100K+, and strong interest in hiking, national parks, wildlife, road trips, craft beverages, and sustainable travel.

## Meeting Planners and Group Organizers

A key secondary audience includes professional meeting planners, corporate retreat organizers, reunion coordinators, wedding and special event planners evaluating Estes Park as a group destination. Earned media strategies for this audience should position Estes Park as a compelling, accessible mountain setting for groups of all kinds, from intimate retreats to conferences and events that fit well in our available venues.

Travelers of all types choose Estes Park and the surrounding area because they have an affinity for:

- Rocky Mountain National Park
- Outdoor Recreation
- Wellness and Relaxation
- Wildlife (especially Elk!)
- Arts & Cultural Experiences
- Special (and often quirky) events

## RESOURCES

### Documents

- Brand Guidelines are in development by the VEP team
- [VisitEstesPark.com](#)
- [2026 Approved Operating Plan](#)
- [2026 Budget](#)
- [Fall/Winter 2025-2026 Marketing Strategy](#)
- [Destination Stewardship Plan](#)
- [Strategic Plan](#)
- [The Economic Impact of Travel in the Estes Park Local Marketing District - 2025](#)

### Social Media

- Facebook: @estespark
- Instagram: @visitestespark
- LinkedIn: @visitestespark
- TikTok: @visitestespark

## SCOPE OF WORK

Potential bidders should address in their proposals how they would approach and execute the following components. The final scope, cadence, and service levels - including hours, response times, number of FAM trips, and in-market activations - will be mutually defined in the final contract.

Potential bidders may submit a proposal for the entire scope of work or for the individual components they are best positioned to deliver.

## **A. Media Relations & Pitching**

- Proactive, ongoing, and creative media outreach targeted to regional and national publications and outlets that align with VEP's audience segments and destination values
- Development of a long- and short-lead pitch editorial calendar tied to seasonal offerings, events, and emerging travel trends
- Pitch development and distribution
- Lead reactive responses to media inquiries
- Media monitoring, coverage tracking, and reporting

## **B. Press & Media Materials**

- Press release writing and distribution for major destination announcements, seasonal news, and signature events
- Development and ongoing maintenance of a media kit, including destination assets, story ideas, and photography resources
- Talking points and messaging support as needed to ensure consistency across all earned media efforts

## **C. Familiarization (FAM) Trip and Event Management**

- Strategic planning and coordination of press trips and group FAM tours
- Media outreach, vetting, and invitation management
- Itinerary development and on-the-ground coordination in collaboration with the VEP team
- Post-trip follow-up and coverage tracking
- Organization of deskside briefings and in-market media events in key target markets

## **D. Influencer & Content Creator Engagement**

- Identification and vetting of relevant travel influencers and content creators whose audiences align with VEP's target personas
- Outreach, negotiation, and ongoing relationship management
- Campaign coordination, deliverable tracking, and performance reporting

## **E. Strategic Consulting**

- Participation in regular strategic planning sessions with the VEP team to align PR efforts with broader marketing and organizational goals
- Proactive counsel on emerging communications opportunities, travel trends, and story angles
- Crisis communications support as needed, with extended response or on-site support to be scoped and approved separately
- Participation in on-site workshop(s) for the Visit Estes Park local partners as requested

## F. Innovative PR Strategies

- Propose at least one bold, strategic event or visionary initiative for Estes Park in 2027 that could meaningfully elevate the destination's national profile
- The concept should align with Visit Estes Park's mission, brand values, and goals around year-round visitation, sustainability, and community well-being
- Concepts should include a brief description of the concept, the strategic rationale, intended audience(s), anticipated PR and media impact, and key partners or stakeholders required for execution

## G. Reporting & Measurement

- Monthly reporting, including pitches sent, active media relationships, placements secured, and estimated earned media value
- Agencies should indicate which monitoring tools and platforms they use to track coverage, reach, and performance
- Quarterly reviews to assess progress against goals and adjust strategy as needed

The selected partner will be responsible for all media relations with the exception of media in the Estes Valley. VEP will manage all hyper-local media relations in-house.

## BUDGET

VEP anticipates a budget that is separated by our fiscal (calendar) year:

July - December 2026: \$70,000

January - December 2027: \$120,000

## CONTRACT TERM

The initial contract term begins July 1, 2026 and runs through December 31, 2026. It is the intent of Visit Estes Park to extend the contract for a full year beginning January 1, 2027 through December 31, 2027, contingent on performance. Following the 2027 contract year, we anticipate annual renewals for up to two additional years.

Proposals should be scoped and priced accordingly, with clear breakdowns for the initial six-month term and the subsequent annual term.

## PROPOSAL SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Potential bidders are encouraged to submit a proposal for the entire scope of work or for separate components of the scope.

All proposals **must** follow the format outlined below, and requested information must be supplied in PDF format via email to Amanda Scherlin, [amanda@visitestespark.com](mailto:amanda@visitestespark.com) **by 5:00pm MST on May 8, 2026**. The proposal **must not exceed 25 pages** in length. Incomplete proposals, proposals over the page limit and proposals arriving after the deadline will automatically be disqualified from consideration.

Please submit written proposal(s) that **briefly** describes and includes:

- a) Cover letter, including your agency's qualifications and experience, project staff and team members' roles and responsibilities, and who will assist on the account.
- b) A description of your strategic approach to the scope of work
- c) Include an estimated budget with breakdown of costs per component. Break out costs by the major milestones and hard cost and service fees with as much detail as possible.
- d) Include a timeline that identifies major milestone dates.
- e) Provide at least two and no more than three case studies that demonstrate success with relevant public relations efforts. Case studies can be included as a URL link (and not in the total page count of your proposal submission).
- f) Please include up to three client references for similar services.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY AND NON-DISCLOSURE**

All designs, drawings, specifications, notes, databases, artwork, and all other work products, including but not limited to feature copy, photography, footage, developed in the performance of this RFP are confidential and remain the property of Visit Estes Park, and may not be copyrighted by potential bidders. Potential bidders agree not to assert any rights and not to establish any claim under trademark, patent, or copyright laws. Potential bidders hereby agree, for a period of three (3) years after proposals are submitted or any subsequent contract signed with VEP, to furnish and provide access to all retained materials at the request of VEP.

## **CONTRACTOR'S COMPENSATION**

Compensation to the Contractor shall be based on the following items listed below.

- *Direct Expenses* - Reimbursement by Visit Estes Park of direct expenses, as identified in the Contractor's proposal, and actually incurred by the Contractor in performance of the contract. There shall be no markup or increase to direct expenses and any discounts received by the Contractor shall be passed on to the issuing agency.
- *Travel Expenses* - Travel expenses are considered direct expenses for purposes of the proposed contract and shall be reimbursed at cost with no markup or increase. Travel to Visit Estes Park meetings and events shall not be included in reimbursements, unless pre-approved by Visit Estes Park.
- *Services Fees* - Payment by Visit Estes Park for time spent by the Contractor in performance of the Contract. This includes but is not limited to all service fees identified in the contractor's proposal. Proposals should use a service fee model with a fixed-fee monthly retainer and a cost-reimbursable basis for hard costs.
- *Other Fees and/or Rates* - Payment by Visit Estes Park for other services based on specific fees and/or rates identified in the contractor's proposal.

- *Indirect Expenses* - Indirect expenses, indirect rates, and/or a markup of direct expenses are not allowable or reimbursable under a proposed contract for the successful bidder(s). Indirect expenses vary, depending on the nature of the proposed contract. Some typical examples of indirect expenses are payroll and travel for administrative personnel, office space, equipment, local telephone, and insurance.

## **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

During the term of a Contract or Contracts, the successful bidder(s) shall not enter into a contractual agreement for any other entity or organization if such service would create a substantial conflict between the interests of Visit Estes Park or the interests of the said other entity. If a successful bidder(s) employee, joint venture, subcontractor, or any individual working on the proposed contract may have a real or perceived conflict of interest that may affect the objectivity, analysis, and/or performance of the contract, the successful bidder(s) will advise, in writing, to Visit Estes Park immediately of any possible said conflicts of interest.

Conflicts may include existing contractual relationships with other tourism destinations and/or including but not limited to, competing tourism destinations or tourism business destinations and organizations. A conflict of interest also may exist when an interested party participates in a matter that has a direct and predictable effect on the interested party's personal or financial interests. A financial interest may include employment, stock ownership, a creditor or debtor relationship, or prospective employment with the organization selected or to be selected for a subaward. A conflict also may exist where there is an appearance that an interested party's objectivity in performing his or her responsibilities under the project is impaired. For example, an appearance of impairment of objectivity may result from an organizational conflict where, because of other activities or relationships with other persons or entities, an interested party is unable to render impartial assistance, services or advice to the recipient, a participant in the project. Additionally, a conflict of interest may result from non-financial gain to an interested party, such as benefit to reputation or prestige in a professional field.

An interested party includes, but is not necessarily limited to, any officer, employee, or member of the board of directors or other governing board of a non-Federal entity, including any other parties that advise, approve, recommend, or otherwise participate in the business decisions of the recipient, such as agents, advisors, consultants, attorneys, accountants, or shareholders. This also includes immediate family and other persons directly connected to the interested party by law or through a business arrangement.

If Visit Estes Park determines a conflict exists, Visit Estes Park may choose to modify the scope of services, or to terminate any contract(s). A significant conflict of interest shall be considered good cause for termination of any contract(s).

## **EVALUATION CRITERIA**

Proposals will be reviewed by a Visit Estes Park appointed selection committee. Committee members may represent board directors, key Visit Estes Park leadership, and community partners. Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

**Experience and Expertise** - The appointed review committee will evaluate the potential bidders' relevant experience and expertise in public relations, destination marketing, and brand execution in earned media.

**Creativity and Innovation** - The appointed review committee will evaluate ideas based on creativity, innovation, diversity, and efficiency. Forward-thinking, out-of-the-box strategies will receive special consideration in a potential bidder's approach to the scope of work.

**Alignment with Objectives** - The appointed review committee will review potential bidder's understanding of the scope requirements, components, proposed timelines, and approach to the work. The review committee will take into consideration collaborative partnerships with other entities and the extent to which the proposal aligns with our destination's goals and objectives.

**Budget and Cost Effectiveness** - The appointed review committee will evaluate the competitiveness and cost-effectiveness of proposed budgets included in potential bidders' proposals.

**Case Studies and References** - The appointed review committee will review case studies for similarities and achievements along with references.

## **REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL(S) TIMELINE**

Visit Estes Park is committed to partnering with potential bidders to answer any questions about the Request for Proposal. Your 25-page maximum written proposal must be received by Friday, May 8, 2026 (electronic only).

April 17, 2026:	RFP RELEASED AND ADVERTISED / Date of issue
April 24, 2026:	DEADLINE from prospective bidders to submit questions
April 30, 2026:	Responses to questions posted to website: <i>VisitEstesPark.com/RFP</i>
May 8, 2026, at 5:00 PM (MST)	DEADLINE TO SUBMIT PROPOSALS (electronic only)
May 11 - 22, 2026:	Proposals reviewed by committee
May 25 - June 5, 2026:	Oral presentations (tentative / as appropriate)
June 12, 2026:	Notification(s) by Visit Estes Park to bidders
June 15-30, 2026:	Transition and onboarding (as appropriate)
July 1, 2026:	Contract(s) begin

## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

For inquiries and clarifications regarding this RFP, please contact Amanda Scherlin at [amanda@visitestespark.com](mailto:amanda@visitestespark.com).