



RFP Q&A | PUBLIC RELATIONS SERVICES

The following is a collection of all questions submitted regarding the RFP. The questions are presented exactly how they were submitted by prospective agencies.

Q: Is Coastal Mississippi interested in hosting travel journalists on press trips? If so, is there an additional budget to host the journalists?

A: **Yes, Coastal Mississippi hosts travel writers and bloggers throughout the year. The budget presented is all-inclusive.**

Q: Does Coastal Mississippi have relationships with local hotels/restaurants?

A: **Yes.**

Q: Is Coastal Mississippi interested in hosting events both within and outside of your market?

A: **Yes.**

Q: Is Coastal Mississippi interested in attending relevant industry events across the US? If so, is there an additional budget for travel, participation, and potential partnerships/sponsorships?

A: **Yes.**

Q: What are Coastal Mississippi's "most wanted" media outlets?



RFP Q&A | PUBLIC RELATIONS SERVICES

A: Reference chart listings below:

National Outlets

AAA
AARP
AFAR
Best Life
Better Homes & Gardens
Bon Appetit
CNN Travel
Coastal Living
Conde Nast Traveler
Country Living
Country Roads
Eater
Family Vacationist
FishingBooker
Fodor's
Food & Wine
Forbes
Frommers
Garden & Gun
Hemispheres
HGTV
Imbibe
Inside Hook
Johnny Jet
Lonely Planet
Men's Journal
My Family Travels
National Geographic
Newsweek
Parents
Southern Living
Tasting Table
The Local Palate
The Manual
The New York Times

Regional Direct Flight Outlets:

AAA
AARP
AFAR
Best Life
Better Homes & Gardens
Bon Appetit
CNN Travel
Coastal Living
Conde Nast Traveler
Country Living
Country Roads
Eater
Family Vacationist
FishingBooker
Fodor's
Food & Wine
Forbes
Frommers
Garden & Gun
Hemispheres
HGTV
Imbibe
Inside Hook
Johnny Jet
Lonely Planet
Men's Journal
My Family Travels
National Geographic
Newsweek
Parents
Southern Living
Tasting Table
The Local Palate
The Manual



RFP Q&A | PUBLIC RELATIONS SERVICES

The Points Guy
Thrillist
Today's Parent
Travel + Leisure
TripSavvy
U.S. News & World Report
USA Today
Veranda Magazine
Wall Street Journal
Yahoo!

The New York Times
The Points Guy
Thrillist
Today's Parent
Travel + Leisure
TripSavvy
U.S. News & World Report
USA Today
Veranda Magazine
Wall Street Journal
Yahoo!

International

Canadian Living Magazine
ZOOMER
Dreamscapes
The Globe and Mail
Escapism
National Geographic Traveler
Go World Travel
The Guardian

Q: What do you consider Coastal Mississippi's key target markets to attract visitors from?

A: Key drive markets encompass a five-hour or less drive radius. Key fly markets include Charlotte, Atlanta, Houston, Dallas-Ft. Worth, Orlando, Minneapolis-St. Paul. + other seasonal routes.

Q: What are the airports that your visitors fly into?

A: Gulfport Biloxi International Airport; Louis Armstrong International Airport, New Orleans, LA; Mobile International Airport, Mobile, AL.



RFP Q&A | PUBLIC RELATIONS SERVICES

Q: Are there articles that have been published that present stories/media angles Coastal Mississippi has in mind for future coverage?

A: **Best Beaches, Best Gaming, Best Seafood, Best Places to Live, Best Places for..., etc.**

Q: Is there an incumbent agency? If so, who does Coastal Mississippi currently work with?

A: **Fahlgren-Mortine is the current PR agency.**

Q: What is the size and structure of your internal communications team look like? Who would we report to and collaborate with on a weekly basis?

A: **Primary contact is Pattye Meagher, Director of Communications & Engagement Department, plus a full-time Digital Media Executive, Public & Media Relations Executive, and Communications & Engagement Coordinator as directed.**

Q: Does Coastal Mississippi have any other existing agency partners? If selected, how would we collaborate with them?

A: **Yes. All agencies and vendors collaborate as needed.**

Q: Who are your top three competitors?

A: **Gulf Shores/Orange Beach, Pensacola, New Orleans, and Lake Charles.**

Q: What earned media barriers do you currently have and how are you hoping a PR agency partner will help relieve these barriers?

A: **There are no barriers. Our goal is to enhance the reputation we have worked hard to build.**



RFP Q&A | PUBLIC RELATIONS SERVICES

Q: What was the average number of overnight visitors in 2022? What is your goal?

A: **Roughly 14 million annual visitors, with a goal of more visitors and an increased length of stay.**

Q: What is the number one destination selling point that consumers should be aware of?

A: **Coastal Mississippi encompasses 62 miles of scenic shoreline, including 26 miles of white-sand beaches. We are a luxury gaming and boutique hotel destination with additional non-gaming family-friendly resorts. Our region is home to fresh Gulf-to-table seafood and two James Beard semi-finalist chef-owned restaurants. Attractions for every age and interest, and eco-tourism opportunities galore.**
>>Expedia spotlight web page: <https://www.expedia.com/spotlight/coastalmississippi>

Q: What are the top five drive markets for Coastal Mississippi?

A: **New Orleans, Baton Rouge, Memphis, Birmingham, Houston, Dallas, and Atlanta, as well as all in-state cities.**

Q: What are the top five target markets for flights?

A: **Charlotte, Atlanta, Houston, Dallas-Ft. Worth, Orlando, Minneapolis-St. Paul. + other seasonal routes**

Q: Should the proposed scope include agency travel for onboarding purposes? What is the expectation cadence of in-person agency meetings?

A: **Onboarding trip to be determined but likely. Weekly status calls with the department director, bi-weekly status calls with the entire department, and others as appropriate.**

Q: What does your current content library (images, videos, etc.) look like for organic social media?

A: **We have a robust library.**



RFP Q&A | PUBLIC RELATIONS SERVICES

Q: Are you looking for an agency partner to help lead/execute social content shoots or is this something you handle internally?

A: **Content shoots will be handled internally.**

Q: If the agency is to handle the content shoot is this something that there would be incremental funds to support?

A: **N/A.**

Q: If you could pick your dream placement in your dream media outlet (print, TV or digital) where would it be and what would the headline read?

A: **BBC/ITV "Coastal Mississippi: The Fabulous Holiday Destination You Need Right Now!"**

Q: What role has UGC played in your overall social media mix to date?

A: **Successful use of UGC over the past fiscal year and growing.**

Q: The RFP mentions Covid-19 and the resulting disruption to the business. How has business rebounded given marketing and communications efforts over the last year? Is recovery for business still a focus?

A: **Yes, recovery is still important to our region, state, and economy.**

Q: Have you selected a marketing theme for FY24/FY25 and, if so, what is the messaging focus for these years?

A: **Not yet determined.**



RFP Q&A | PUBLIC RELATIONS SERVICES

Q: Moving into FY24, what are the most important KPIs that the destinations success should be measured on, from a PR standpoint?

A: **Increased audience in top-tier national, international, and regional publications and television programming that converts to increased first-time visitors. Raising the national and international profile of the destination through positive stories, activations, and pitches.**

Q: The RFP mentions that the selected agency should support the leisure travel market, meetings & conventions market and sports tourism market. Is there a priority on these categories for FY24 and FY25?

A: **Yes.**

Q: Influencer relations is not listed in this RFP – will that be a focus in FY24 and FY25 or will influencers be managed elsewhere?

A: **Undetermined at this time.**

Q: You mention there is an opportunity to diversify your current audience. What research has been conducted, if any, on an expanded and diversified audience and can you share those insights? Or will you need assistance further honing your demographic in the DEI space?

A: **All research is public and can be found on our web page, [Research & Additional Reports \(gulfcoast.org\)](https://www.gulfcoast.org/research). Future research will be conducted and shared with our agencies.**

Q: What are your top drive and fly markets for FY24 and FY25?

A: **Fly markets: Charlotte, Atlanta, Houston, Dallas-Ft. Worth, Orlando, Minneapolis-St. Paul. + other seasonal routes. Drive markets are everything within a five-hour drive radius of Coastal Mississippi.**



RFP Q&A | PUBLIC RELATIONS SERVICES

Q: The RFP mentions that the selected agency's responsibilities will include message and asset creation for promotional materials and a sustainable travel campaign. By sustainable, do you mean efforts will be focused on green/sustainable offerings and responsible travel? What emphasis is being put on this category in FY24 and FY25?

A: **Yes. We work hard to emphasize sustainable travel to protect our shoreline and blueways for future generations and for the seafood industry.**

Q: What keeps you up at night on the future success of Coastal Mississippi?

A: **The future success of Coastal Mississippi is very important, and we need a strategy that builds on current success while promoting and growing future success through visitation.**

Q: Where is the largest growth potential in the next 3-5 years?

A: **Eco-tourism, STEM-tourism, sports and outdoor, DEI, multi-generational travel, and LGBTQ families and couples.**

Q: Are there any specific PR campaigns or activities from other destinations that inspire you?

A: **No.**

Q: Can you share who will be a part of your RFP selection committee?

A: **Regional stakeholders.**

Q: In the timeline, you share that the contract will start for a limited duration, to be decided during contract negotiations. Is there an ideal duration you'd like this contract to run?

A: **Through the end of FY25, September 30, 2025.**



RFP Q&A | PUBLIC RELATIONS SERVICES

Q: The RFP mentions we must include Certification Form (Attachment 2) in our response. Can you please provide a copy of this form?

A: All attachments can be found on the RFP web page: <https://www.gulfcoast.org/rfp/>.

Q: Was an agency of record selected for the first RFP that was due on April 10th? If so, can you generally explain why there is a new RFP? Or is this a subsequent scope of work to support the 4/10 RFP?

A: Yes, a new agency of record was selected following the April RFP for our Marketing Department.

Q: The scope of work indicated "public relations," and a large percentage of the deliverables were categorically "paid advertising." We wanted to confirm that there will be a paid advertising budget outside of the 300K minimum.

A: The July RFP is for a public relations and social media agency to support the Department of Communications & Engagement at Coastal Mississippi with a different scope of work and a separate budget.

Q: Whether companies from Outside USA can apply for this? (like, from India or Canada)

A: So long as the entity is not on the "list" of blocked countries or persons (including companies) from doing business in the United States, the interested entity may submit a proposal, assuming such entity meets and complies with all state and federal laws, rules and regulations. Having said that, any entity selected through the RFP process must comply with the affirmative steps outlined in 2 C.F.R. 200.321 (b) (1-6).

Q: Whether companies from Outside USA, need to come over there for meetings?

A: Regular meetings can be conducted by Zoom, Teams, or other electronic meeting platforms, but there may be times when in-person attendance may be necessary.



RFP Q&A | PUBLIC RELATIONS SERVICES

Q: Can we perform the tasks (related to RFP) outside the USA? (like, from India or Canada)

A: **Some portion or all work may be performed remotely outside of the state or country if allowed by applicable state and federal laws, rules, and regulations.**

Q: Can we submit the proposals via email?

A: **Please refer to the RFP submission requirements.**

Q: Can you please let me know where I can access these documents, or can I receive them from you?

A: **All attachment documents can be found on the RFP web page: <https://www.gulfcoast.org/rfp/>.**