

MONTEREY
Monterey County Convention
& Visitors Bureau

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)
Public Relations Agency Services

The Monterey County Convention & Visitors Bureau (MCCVB) is seeking an agency specializing in media relations to support and assist in the development and execution of effective, integrated marketing communications programs that:

1. Reinforce Monterey County’s standing as one of the world’s premier tourism destinations
2. Grow overnight leisure, group and international visitation, responsibly

The agency will collaborate and work with the MCCVB marketing communications team in planning and executing story ideas, pitches, deskside visits and media/influencer familiarization (FAM) trips to ensure national, regional, meetings, trade and C-suite editorial coverage, in keeping with MCCVB’s strategic business plan.

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MCCVB: About Us

MCCVB is a 501c6 Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) for the County of Monterey. Monterey County consists of 10 jurisdictions and a hospitality industry that includes hundreds of hotels, resorts and unique lodging partners; major attractions including Monterey Bay Aquarium, Cannery Row and Pebble Beach Resorts; hundreds of events; and a variety of additional businesses that fuel the tourism economy. Tourism is the largest industry on the Monterey Peninsula and the second largest in the County.

Monterey County stretches along California's central coast from Moss Landing (North County) to the Monterey Peninsula to Big Sur; and inland to Salinas and Salinas Valley (South County). For a full review of all Monterey County has to offer visit www.SeeMonterey.com.

***Our Vision:** Inspire the world to experience our extraordinary destination, responsibly*

***Our Mission:** Drive business growth through compelling marketing and targeted sales initiatives that maximize the benefits of tourism to our guests, members and community.*

To understand our key priorities, please read our current business plan that can be downloaded at: [2019-20 MCCVB Business Plan.pdf](#)

MCCVB PR-specific links and information:

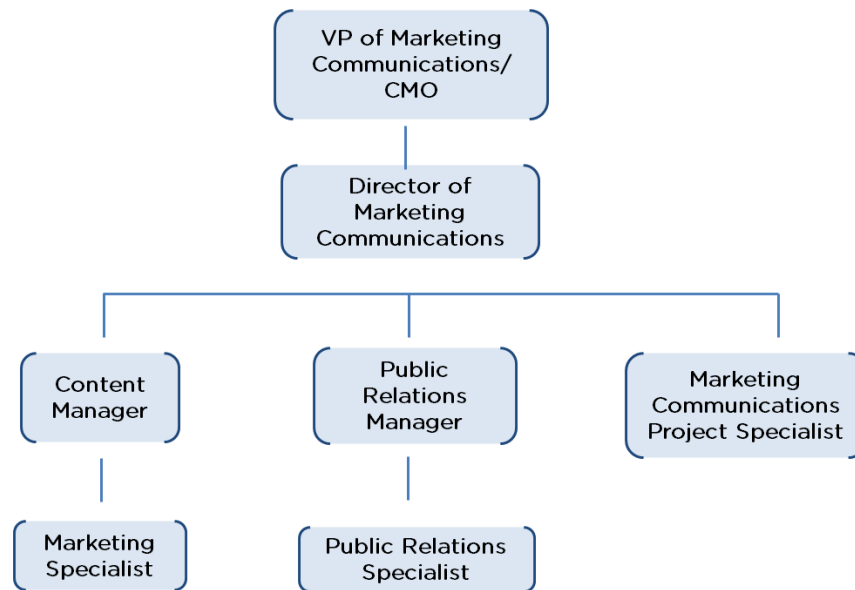
- <https://www.seemonterey.com/media/kit/>
- <https://www.seemonterey.com/media/#>

Our Team

The marketing communications team is structured as one team which is wholly integrated and works seamlessly in creating/curating and distributing content to targeted audiences. The agency's primary points of contact will be the Public Relations Manager and Specialist, who work in tandem with the rest of the team and under the direction of the Director of Marketing Communications and Vice President of Marketing Communications/CMO.

To achieve success, the team must liaise with and support a variety of stakeholders, including MCCVB membership, committees and Board of Directors. The selected agency must understand and support the organization not only in earning media coverage but also in actively suggesting, producing and helping to guide activities designed to showcase Monterey County's wide range of tourism experiences. This should be done by targeting regional, national, group and industry market segments and tracking measurable outcomes from activities with proceeding regular reports. MCCVB is seeking an integrated Public Relations Agency that will be an integral collaborator in these efforts.

Our team also works with Visit California, Visit Carmel and the Central Coast Tourism Council (CCTC) on broader media relations program initiatives. Collaboration may be needed with these partners and other agencies. Currently, the MCCVB maintains agency relationships for Advertising, Digital/Web Development and Research. An overview of our department organization chart can be found below.



Goals & Measurement

MCCVB’s marketing communications strategy relies upon content marketing to successfully engage with prospective visitors through a variety of paid, owned and earned tactics that results in measurable outcomes, primarily intent to visit—as measured biannually through a Communications Effectiveness Study.

The strategic objectives of 2019-20 are outlined in [MCCVB business plan](#), which we request all submitting agencies review carefully.

Some key focus areas for our team in the 2019-20 Fiscal Year include:

- Increase length of stay among drive and target markets, including those adding our destination to their itinerary as part of a larger trip (e.g. road trip from Los Angeles to San Francisco).
- Encourage overnight stays while using responsible travel messaging in sensitive areas, i.e. Big Sur, to help balance the influx of visitors and social message exposure in those regions.
- Increase awareness of lesser-known regions of the county, such as Salinas Valley, North County, Carmel Valley, Marina, Seaside, etc.
- Establish Monterey County as the most transformative meetings destination on the West Coast. Much work has been done to brand the region as an inspirational meeting and events location but there is a need to expand upon this messaging and build upon industry relationships within the group meetings industry.
- Highlight luxury properties and high-end experiences of Monterey County in relevant, targeted publications.
- Develop C-Suite story ideas to showcase thought leaders of Monterey County and further establish the destination as the most transformative meetings

destination, with a legacy of innovation derived from its inherent inspirational assets.

KPIs

We track the following measurements:

- Total Earned Placements, Ad Value and Circulation (Domestic & International)
- Number of Assisted and Hosted FAMs
- Monthly Report Including Media Contacted and Pitched

Target Markets + Audience

The primary goal of marketing communications is to drive intent to visit amongst leisure, group and international travelers. We seek responsible travelers – the quality of traveler over the quantity – and tailor messaging throughout our communications. The key to our success is synergizing advertising, public relations and social media to develop and distribute compelling, targeted content.

MCCVB focuses on two audience groups:

Leisure travelers—primary visitors to Monterey County are from San Francisco and California’s Central Valley with a smaller percentage coming from Los Angeles and Southern California; nearly 90% of visitors drive to the destination. Monterey County is serviced by the Monterey Regional Airport (MRY) that has non-stop flights from San Diego, Phoenix, Las Vegas, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Denver and Dallas. Domestic short haul markets include Washington, Arizona, Colorado, Nevada and Oregon. Long-haul markets include Texas, Illinois and the Northeast including New York, Philadelphia, Boston and Washington, DC.

Group business - corporate and incentive groups, meeting and conference planners, state and regional associations.

Note: International markets, considered outside the scope of work for the purposes of this RFP, are also a focus for the MCCVB. Our team works with Visit California and partners to target FIT individual travelers and group travel from key target markets. These include Canada, UK/West Europe and Australia, with maintenance markets including China and Mexico.

What Matters Most

The agency who works with us must have or be:

1. **Passionate, Knowledgeable & Experienced** in the travel and hospitality industry, and understand MCCVB business objectives, strategies and priorities including expertise with the group/meeting and events industry.

2. **A Collaborative Partner** – we’re seeking an agency who will be an extension of our team. We want them to collaborate with us on creative, new ideas and feel that our success is theirs.
3. **FAM Experience** – experience planning and executing press trips including working with media on what they need for their story, building itineraries and managing FAMs as they take place.
4. **Strong Organizational and Communication Skills**—it is important to be highly organized as the agency may balance several projects at the same time. Excellent communication skills are also needed as the agency will be working with media, MCCVB members and partners.
5. **Media Rock Stars with Proven Success** – we want an agency who has an ear to the ground in the industry and knows what’s going on in the news. An agency that has stellar national connections with the results to back it up. International relationships would be a bonus.
6. **Proximity**—it is preferred that the agency be based in or near major media market(s).

Scope of Work

Primary Focus – to act as an extension of the MCCVB marketing communications team and support the Public Relations team in securing quality, high-profile domestic leisure and group/business media coverage for Monterey County while further building the teams media connections.

- Research information for story ideas/pitches, and provide pitching opportunities to Public Relations Manager.
- Vet and provide detailed backgrounders/briefs on media leads, in-market media guests and coordinated desk side visits for in-house Public Relations Team. Markets can include San Francisco, Los Angeles and New York City if budget allows. Ability to coordinate in-market media opportunities when needed.
- Vet, plan and coordinate an average of 10 to 15 media FAM trips per year, as determined by MCCVB Public Relations Manager.
- Follow-up with...
 - Media via email or phone call after FAM and individual trips for feedback on the visit
 - Media on media coverage run date and final coverage
 - Share coverage with MCCVB in a timely manner
- Create social media coverage reports that extend from influencer FAMs as needed. This includes clipping Instagram and Facebook stories and posts. NOTE: MCCVB strongly discourages paying for influencers. Exceptions can be made on a case-by-case basis with a photography agreement.
- Represent MCCVB at industry/media marketplace events as requested.
- Write and edit press releases and distribute to targeted media lists. Assist in building appropriate media lists as necessary.
- Schedule and participate in regular calls. Attend on-site meetings on a quarterly basis, at agency expense.

- Provide monthly reports that include summaries of media contacted; media FAMs including the outlet, members visited, and any initial results from the media FAMs (initial media coverage and possible social media coverage reports); press coverage; and other project updates when needed. Provide highlight reels/decks.
- Support MCCVB with Crisis Communications when needed.
- Represent MCCVB standards, values and strategic priorities with members and journalists.

What We Would Like to See From You

Please include the following items within your proposal (by the way, we value brevity; hence you'll find suggested word counts below):

- Brief overview of agency history and philosophy and a list of agency core capabilities (300 word max)
- Primary team member(s) who would be working on this account, and their individual roles and personnel bios. List primary agency address and any satellite office locations
- Describe how your agency differentiates itself from competitors (500 word max)
- Current client list and outline any long-term relationships and why they've been successful. Identify any current clients that might be a potential or perceived conflict to managing the MCCVB account
- Provide two to three examples of success stories pertaining to the travel and tourism industry
- Experience with and approach to coordinating media FAM trips and vetting of media inquiries
- Sample of go-to media contacts/outlets
- Provide a pitch about our destination that you think we have a competitive advantage in to have us stand out from others (150 word max)
- Describe an area you think we are lacking awareness in and one way you would begin to address that "area"
- Estimated budget based on expectations provided herein along with hourly rates for out of scope work
- Provide three client references that have used your professional services for similar work with the expectation that MCCVB may contact – agencies understand that by providing references they are giving MCCVB permission to contact

Budget and Term

While our terms are subject to evolve, the MCCVB's budget for the scope of work listed above will be approximately \$8,000-11,000 monthly, depending on final Scope of Work.

Agencies should provide an estimate based on the expectations provided, including proposed agency fees, travel costs and any other associated costs. Please outline your agency terms, conditions, and rate of billing (commission, hourly, etc.) for standard development tasks and out-of-scope expenditures or reimbursable costs. MCCVB will consider proposals that demonstrate the ability to fulfill the requirements of this RFP within this range.

The term of the agreement with the selected agency will commence on or about November 18, 2019 and remain in effect through June 30, 2020. The term may be extended in one year increments for a total of two (2) years (through June 30, 2022) based on an annual review by MCCVB. . Each annual review will allow for consideration of adjustments in agency scope and fees. MCCVB reserves the right to cancel services for any reason with 60-days written notice.

The selected agency will be MCCVB's agency of record. MCCVB has the right to retain other Public Relations agencies for short-term projects.

Timeline

- RFP distribution: August 28, 2019
- Agency questions deadline (submitted via email only): September 6, 2019
- **RFP Submissions Deadline: September 17, 2019**
- Selected agencies notified and invited to present: October 2, 2019
- **Agency presentations (at agency expense): October 28-30, 2019**
- Final Selection and Notification: November 1, 2019
- Agreement Development Complete: November 8, 2019
- **Agency Start Date: November 18, 2019**

Submission Details

All information should be submitted in a PDF format via the [following link](#).

- **Any questions related to this request** must be sent to RFP@SeeMonterey.com and received no later than 5pm Pacific Time, September 6, 2019. Questions will be addressed as quickly as possible and in the order received. We *strongly* encourage interested agencies to review SeeMonterey.com, MeetInMonterey.com and review the [MCCVB business plan](#) before contacting MCCVB with questions. MCCVB is not responsible for the completeness or timeliness of answers. Agencies that are selected for presentations will have the opportunity for verbal Q&A.
- **Due Date – Complete information intended for RFP consideration must be received by 5pm Pacific Time, Tuesday, September 17, 2019.** Any submissions received after will be disqualified and deleted. MCCVB is not responsible for any technical issues related to agency submissions.
- **Notifications** –MCCVB will contact all submitting agencies via email to notify of any revisions or cancellations relative to the RFP content or process.

MCCVB will make best efforts to ensure such emails are received is not responsible if for any reason they are not.

Additional submission information

Agencies are encouraged to review on their own any relevant tourism information through secondary sources to provide additional support for submitted proposals. Agency responses to the RFP can be fashioned however interested agencies choose to respond with the following terms:

- Do not contact any MCCVB Board Member, employee, or members of the evaluation taskforce. Any contact with these will automatically disqualify the agency. All inquiries should be sent to RFP@SeeMonterey.com.
- Conflicts of Interest – MCCVB represents many members in the tourism industry. PR agencies may have some of these members as clients. This is *not* necessarily a conflict of interest so long as the agency pre-identifies in their proposal any *potential* conflicts and their ability to ensure there will not be a conflict (e.g. firewalled account management).
- Beyond the Scope – while this RFP is specific to the detailed Scope of Work and intended only for such work; we wouldn't mind learning a bit more about your capabilities.
- Any information, ideas and concepts shared with MCCVB in this RFP process are submitted in a non-proprietary manner. Presented ideas and concepts are available to use by MCCVB without any liability and do not constitute a formal agreement nor requirement for compensation. Materials submitted through the RFP process will not be returned to submitting agencies.
- MCCVB reserves the right to change any part of this RFP, the process and/or altogether cancel at any point and for any reason without any liability to submitting parties.
- Agencies understand that any information provided that is found to be untruthful or otherwise a misrepresentation will automatically disqualify the submitting agency. In addition, should untruths or misrepresentation be found with the selected agency after contracting, such would be grounds for immediate termination of the contract without any liability from MCCVB.
- All information (written or spoken) shared by MCCVB is deemed confidential and shall not be shared with outside parties.
- Submitting agencies signify understanding and agreement with these terms by responding to the RFP.