

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL**  
**Online Agency and Interactive Services Provider**  
**The Outer Banks of North Carolina®**  
**January 31, 2019**

Description:

The Outer Banks Visitors Bureau, [outerbanks.org](http://outerbanks.org), is seeking proposals from online agencies with expertise in the areas of strategic development, plan execution, trend identification/analytics, creativity and media planning and buying.

- Minimum one-year contract with consideration for multi-year agreements.
- Annual online spending – outreach and services -- approximately \$1.3 million.

About Us:

The Outer Banks Visitors Bureau, a public authority, is the lead marketing and promotional agency for The Outer Banks of North Carolina® and is funded by 1% occupancy and 1% prepared meals tax collected in Dare County.

The Outer Banks is a narrow chain of barrier islands stretching nearly 130 miles. Dare County's portion extends from Duck in the north to Hatteras Village in the south and back to the Roanoke Island and Dare mainland in the west.

The area is truly a different kind of place, with unique ties to history and nature. The Outer Banks is home to three National Park Service sites, commemorating England's first attempted colonization in the New World, the Wright Brothers' historic first powered flight and the Cape Hatteras National Seashore -- America's first National Seashore (e.g., "America's First Beach") and site of America's tallest lighthouse. Three other lighthouses are also found within the vicinity. These three National Parks, along with preserves, wildlife refuges and state park land, means that 80% of Dare County can't be developed, leaving vast open natural areas for recreation and rejuvenation.

Jutting out into the ocean as we do, the Outer Banks are constantly witness to spectacular shows of nature. Hundreds of bird species follow annual migratory patterns in the skies above the OBX. Global currents converge off the shores and produce world-class fishing. The surfing and kiteboarding are also world-renowned. Intensely clear nights and the absence of ambient city lights make the Outer Banks an ideal place for stargazing and views of the Milky Way. We don't just offer a reprieve from city lights, we don't have cities period; the Outer Banks is a combination of six towns and eight seaside villages. Despite miles of unspoiled shoreline, preserves and sanctuaries, the Outer Banks still offers its visitors plenty of shopping, historic and cultural attractions and a coastal cuisine supported by hundreds of independently-owned restaurants.

In terms of marketing, the Visitors Bureau's efforts emphasize growth of shoulder season visitation while continuing to maintain core summer season business. Strategic goals for our online efforts include increasing the number of desired actions, such as, guide requests, email sign-ups, social media audience involvement, and referrals to lodging partner sites. Increasingly, we are interested in how the user is engaging with our ads and emails. Our overall goal is to position the Outer Banks as a premier travel destination nationally and internationally. As a tourism organization, we want to connect people with the destination in deeper, more authentic ways than can easily be found elsewhere online.

The scope of services includes online strategic development based on insightful interpretation of data and analytics, digital media planning and placement, search-engine advertising, and creative development for online ads and emails.

The scope **does not** include social media or influencer marketing, website development, SEO or offline creative or media.

About You/Requested Information:

1. Business basics:
  - a. Physical address
  - b. Years in operation
  - c. Size of staff
  - d. Billings
  - e. Approximate number of accounts
2. Please provide bios/qualifications for key staff likely to be involved in our account.
3. What is your process for beginning work with a new account such as ours? How do you work with clients located in different cities?
4. Please explain your fee structure. Describe your billing approach for outside and in-house expenses, such as commission, retainers, technology and research fees, travel expenses, creative jobs, etc.
5. Describe your company's previous travel industry experience, if any.
6. Do you offer creative services in-house? Please outline your digital creative capabilities.
7. Do you offer media planning and buying services in-house? If so, please indicate the range and types of outreach purchased, as well as the staffing devoted to providing such services.
8. Provide examples, visually and strategically, which highlight your agency's ability to take innovative approaches to media and creative. Describe the challenge addressed and the measurable results achieved.

9. Please outline the technology tools you use for campaign management and how these tools integrate with one another and the entire campaign management process.

10. Please provide references.

Timing:

RFP issued

January 31, 2019

**Proposals received/deadline for response**

**February 25, 2019**

Finalists selected

Week of March 11<sup>th</sup>

Finalist interviews

Late March

Company selected

Early April

This is an intended timeline; actual timing may vary.

Please provide electronic submissions to the following address:

[hall@outerbanks.org](mailto:hall@outerbanks.org)

If you prefer to send a printed submission, please mail to

Outer Banks Visitors Bureau

c/o Stephanie Hall

One Visitors Center Circle

Manteo, NC 27954.

Please forward questions about the RFP to Stephanie Hall at [hall@outerbanks.org](mailto:hall@outerbanks.org). Please note proposal submissions are due by close of business on February 25, 2019. Proposals received after this date will not be reviewed.

Thank you for your consideration.