



Request for Proposal Columbia, South Carolina Insider's Guide

Purpose: The purpose of this RFP is to enter into a contract with a full-service publisher with print, editorial and interactive marketing experience to produce the official Insider's Guide for Columbia, South Carolina. Contract expectations include content development, copy writing, advertising sales, production of printed and digital guide and printing. The relationship between the selected vendor and Experience Columbia SC (ECSC) will be a collaborative partnership with emphasis on creative exchange of ideas.

Background: Experience Columbia SC has produced The Official Visitors Guide to Columbia, South Carolina (now called the Insider's Guide) for over 25 years. For over 16 years, the services of a vendor partner have been used to streamline the editorial, production and printing process. The size, style and layout of the piece has evolved over the years, but the primary purpose of the guide has remained the same:

- Increase the number of overnight visitors to the Columbia region
- Increase the length of stay
- Increase the activities and attractions consumed by the visitor during the stay

The Insider's Guide has a place in Experience Columbia SC's overall marketing strategy of increasing positive awareness of the region's attributes including accommodations, outdoor recreation attractions, shopping, dining and nightlife. The current specifications for the guide are:

Paper

- COVER: 100# TIMES #3 GLOSS TEXT (88 BRITE)
- BODY: 45# TIMES #4 GLOSS TEXT (80 BRITE)
- 4/4(MED INK) + GLOSS UV FC/BC - CTP LEVEL 0
- PERFECT BIND LONG SIDE, CARTON PACK 25# MAX

Distribution includes both out-of-market and in-market points including:

1. Fulfillment by mail to out-of-area consumers seeking information about the Columbia region for travel purposes. Fulfilled by Experience Columbia SC staff. (out-of-market)
2. South Carolina Welcome Centers. Guides may be shipped directly to Welcome Centers by publisher or may be shipped to welcome centers by the Columbia Visitors Center staff. (out-of-market)
3. Columbia, SC hotels, attractions, airport, etc. for on-site visitors. Distribution handled by Columbia CVB staff or alternate vendor. (in-market)
4. Columbia Regional Visitors Center. Distributed by Columbia CVB staff. (in-market)
5. Distribution to conference and event attendees by CVB staff. (in-market)

Project Specifications:

The publishing schedule for the upcoming Insider's Guides is noted in the table below:





Guide	Publisher	Circulation Dates	In Use
2023-Insider's Guide	Existing Publisher	January 1, 2023 – December 31, 2023	12 months
2024 Insider's Guide	New Publisher	January 1, 2024- December 31, 2024	12 months
2025 Insider's Guide	New Publisher	January 1, 2025 - December 31, 2025	12 months
2026 Insider's Guide	New Publisher, if option to renew is granted	January 1, 2026- December 31, 2026	12 months

1. Propose pricing for 100,000, four-color guide measuring 8 x 10 ½ or standard magazine size, with approximately 72 pages of content plus cover. Please note that project specifications regarding page count and size may change slightly during the planning phase with the selected vendor. Experience Columbia SC understands that pricing modifications may apply as changes are made to the specs.
2. Preferred term will be to produce the guide for a term of two consecutive years with an option to renew for a third year. Other term options may be proposed by vendors.
3. Work to understand the Columbia region's brand and marketing campaigns and incorporate the Columbia region's brand into the piece so that it works in conjunction with other marketing pieces.
4. Provide authentic editorial content, preferably working with a local writer(s) familiar with the region.
5. Selected vendor will provide original photography for the guide. Experience Columbia SC will share its photo library with vendor for additional photography. Rights to use vendor's original photography for other ECSC marketing projects may be requested by ECSC during the contract period.
6. Advertising sales will be the responsibility of the vendor, with advertising rates being jointly approved by the vendor and ECSC.
7. The vendor must produce a corresponding digital guide for the ECSC's website, preferably with working URLs and a digital table of contents.
8. The vendor must be equipped to produce a monthly Columbia E-Newsletter showcasing what to see and do in Columbia, Richland and Lexington Counties. This includes:
 1. Taking content proposed by the ECSC team and producing full HTML file to ECSC team for approval
 2. Sending e-newsletter to subscriber lists
 3. Keeping the subscriber lists updated.
9. Provide a strategy for digital website advertising at ExperienceColumbiaSC.com. This includes selling the advertising placements, keeping up with inventory available, gathering assets from partners and producing native ads.





Please answer the following questions in your proposal:

1. Provide a description and history of your company including any experience you have publishing Destination/Visitors/Insider's Guides for DMO/CVB operations.
2. Outline how your company has the staff and capabilities to handle this project. Indicate whether staff or contract employees would handle each component of this project and the geographic location these employees are based.
3. Provide a price quote on full-service production (to include content development, copy writing, advertising sales, photography, printing and any other associated costs) of 100,000 four-color visitors guides measuring 8 x 10 ½ or standard magazine size with approximately 72 pages of content (plus cover). Please note that project specifications regarding page count, quantity and size may change slightly during the planning phase with the selected vendor. The ECSC understands that pricing modifications may apply as changes are made to the specs.
4. Provide a strategy for digital website advertising and production of the monthly Columbia E-Newsletter
5. List other destinations you currently assist or have worked with in the past five years.
6. Include samples of print and digital work.

RFP Timeline

- RFP issue date: Dec. 16, 2022
- Interested Vendors respond to Charlene Slaughter, cslaughter@experiencecolumbiasc.com, with notification of intent to bid by Jan. 3, 2022.
- Any questions regarding the project must be submitted to Charlene Slaughter via email (cslaughter@experiencecolumbiasc.com) by Jan. 10, 2022.
- Proposals must be submitted by Friday Jan. 31, 2022. Proposals will be accepted by email, mail, or hand-delivery.
- Experience Columbia SC may request telephone or in-person interview with vendors to take place between Feb. 6 and 8, 2022.
- A decision will be made on or before Friday Feb. 24, 2020. Upon signing contract, selected vendor may begin work on production of the 2024 guide following a discovery/introductory meeting and agreement on timeline of work. A complete production schedule will be developed during the first meeting with the awarded vendor.

Thank you for your interest!

Proposal Submission Contact Information:

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