

visit
California

Request for Bids

PUBLIC AFFAIRS SERVICES





January 17, 2020

To All Prospective Bidders:

Visit California, a privately funded nonprofit corporation, is seeking a qualified public affairs company that will develop and execute a strategic communications strategy to promote the importance of California's travel industry to key decision makers and the public.

The California Travel and Tourism Commission d.b.a. Visit California is a private non-profit 501(C) 6 funded by assessed businesses that have an interest in promoting tourism to California. California Tourism is marketed exclusively by Visit California. The Tourism Assessment Program was created under the California Tourism Marketing Act in 1995 with the passage of SB 256. The legislation authorized self-imposition of an assessment by businesses that benefit from travel and tourism. It also authorized the establishment of a non-profit, public benefit corporation, Visit California, to oversee the promotion of California as a premier travel destination.

Visit California oversees the production of a variety of marketing activities, that may include television and online advertising, content marketing to include Website, social media, content series, visitor publications and maps, cooperative programs with traditional and non-endemic partners, public relations and travel trade programs – all designed to promote California to consumers, media and the travel trade industry. For more details, please visit <https://industry.visitcalifornia.com>.

The contract period for the Scope of Work contained within this Request for Bids (RFB) will be approximately July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021. The total budget for these services is up to \$200,000. Visit California may renew the contract each subsequent year for a three-year period, at its discretion.

Attached is an RFB for those capable of meeting minimum requirements and carrying out the scope-of-work. All proposals will be carefully reviewed and evaluated based on the criteria noted in the attached document.

Notice of Intent to Bid (a non-binding document), as well as any questions you may have to clarify this RFB, are due to Visit California no later than 4:00 p.m., Pacific Standard Time (PST), February 10, 2020.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Caroline Beteta".

Caroline Beteta
President and Chief Executive Officer
Visit California

Table of Contents

PART I - BACKGROUND

Introduction	5
RFB Purpose.....	5
Contract Term.....	5
Available Funds.....	6
Evaluation Process & Criteria.....	6
Tentative Schedule	6
Minimum Requirements.....	7
Billing & Related Requirements.....	8

PART II – PROPOSAL

Proposal Structure	10
Company Background	10
Company Management & Staff	10
Conflicts of Interest	11
Sub-Contractors	11
Scope of Work	11
Budget	14
Delivery of Proposal	14

PART III – ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A – Notice of Intent to Bid.....	17
Attachment B – Budget Forms	18
Attachment C – Written & Oral Proposal Evaluation Criteria	19



VISIT CALIFORNIA

Request for Bids

Public Affairs Services

PART I

BACKGROUND



1. INTRODUCTION TO VISIT CALIFORNIA

California is the leading visitor destination in the United States with more than \$140 billion in travel and tourism related spending in 2018. This spending directly supported over one million jobs and generated over \$11 billion in state and local tax revenues. Among California's export-oriented industries, tourism is the fourth largest employer. Since 1998, consistent investment in the California Tourism program (a joint marketing venture of Visit California and the California Division of Tourism) has helped to increase market share and put California in a strong competitive position.

About Visit California

Visit California is a not-for-profit, 501(C) (6) corporation formed in 1998 to work jointly with the State of California's Division of Tourism to implement the annual Marketing Plan, which promotes California as a premier travel destination. While these two partners (Visit California and Division of Tourism) are separate legal entities, they are commonly referred to jointly as Visit California.

Visit California's 37-member board of commissioners is composed of individuals from all 12 designated regions of California. Members represent five principal industry sectors: Accommodations, Restaurants and Retail, Attractions and Recreation, Transportation and Travel Services, and the Passenger Car Rental Industry. Twenty-five of the commissioners are elected by the approximately 18,000 assessed California businesses, and the governor appoints 12. The board meets three times a year to help direct Visit California's programs and activities. A 34-member statewide Marketing Advisory Committee also provides input in developing the Marketing Plan.

2. RFB PURPOSE

The purpose of this RFB is to seek and retain a qualified public affairs agency for Visit California that will develop and execute a strategic communications strategy to promote the importance of California's travel industry to key decision makers and the public. The selected agency will strategize and produce materials to assist in illustrating to elected officials why travel matters, and to help position travel and tourism's overall image through the media and other venues, by maintaining California as the premier travel destination.

3. CONTRACT TERM

Your proposal should be based on a full year of activities. The successful proposer will enter into a contract for services with Visit California. The duration of the initial contract between Visit California and the successful proposer is expected to begin upon the date of contract approval, approximately July 1, 2020, and terminate on June 30, 2021. Visit California reserves the right to renew its agreement prior to the end of each contract term for a total



of three years, providing funding to do so is appropriated for this purpose in subsequent budgets. There will be a 6-month oral review in the first contract year and subsequent reviews annually in each year the contract is renewed. Proposed renewals are also assessed according to program direction, funding, and consistency of price and scope of work continuity.

4. AVAILABLE FUNDS

Visit California's total budget for this Scope of Work shall not exceed \$200,000 annually. However, we seek quality, cost-effective services, and as such, we encourage companies to propose a reasonable budget based on this RFB Scope of Work. Visit California reserves the right to adjust both the budget and related services.

5. EVALUATION PROCESS & CRITERIA

Visit California will form a committee to evaluate the written proposals. The criteria for the scoring of the proposals is included as Attachment C. The committee may at any time during the evaluation process seek clarification from Proposers regarding any information contained within their proposal. Final scores for each Proposer will reflect a consensus of the evaluation committee. Any attempt by a Proposer to contact a member of the evaluation committee outside the RFB process, in an attempt to gain knowledge or an advantage may result in disqualification of Proposer.

The top finalists chosen by the evaluation committee will be asked to provide oral presentations to the evaluation committee and allow the committee to conduct in-person office visits. All proposers and key team members working on the account should ensure they are available for the on-site visits during the dates presented in the Tentative Schedule. After the oral presentations, there will be a question and answer period. You will be notified of the total presentation time. In addition to Proposer management, key personnel performing day to day activities will be requested to attend. The criteria for the scoring of the oral presentations is included as Attachment C.

Please note: Upon completing the selection process under this RFB, Visit California will notify the winning Proposer and all other Proposers who were not selected. Visit California's deliberations are confidential. Accordingly, while we understand that non-selected proposers may wish to ascertain reasons for their non-selection, Visit California is unable to respond to any subsequent questions and/or requests for information as to why a company was not selected.

6. TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

This tentative schedule may be altered at any time at the discretion of the Commission.

January 17, 2020	RFB Public Announcement
February 10, 2020 (4:00 pm PST)	Deadline for agency to submit <i>Intent to Bid</i> & questions
February 17, 2020	Q&A provided to proposers
March 2, 2020 (4:00 pm PST)	Deadline for agency to submit proposal
March 16, 2020	Compliance review completed – Committee review begins
March 30, 2020	Finalists selected and notified (actual notification date varies)
April 24, 2020	Management conducts oral interviews in Sacramento
Week of May 11, 2020	Selected proposer announced (actual notification date may vary)
July 1, 2020	Commencement date of new contract

7. MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

Proposals may be rejected if minimum requirements are not met.

Questions

All Proposers wishing clarification of this RFB must submit questions via email to: RFB Submissions rfps@visitcalifornia.com by the date and time referenced in the Tentative Schedule. ***Prior to submitting questions, please review the questions and answers located on our website at: <http://industry.visitcalifornia.com/about/requests-for-proposals>.***

Notice of Intent to Bid

Notice of Intent to Bid, Attachment A, must be received by **February 10, 2020 4:00 pm, PST**. The notice must be submitted via e-mail to rfps@visitcalifornia.com. The Notice of Intent to Bid is non-binding; however, it ensures the receipt of all addenda related to this RFB. Proposals will be accepted only from applicants who submitted a timely Notice of Intent to Bid.

References

Provide three client references. At least two must be current clients. Include client name, contact information, and the engagement start and end dates.



Experience

Your company should have at least five years' experience in the RFB areas, preferably within the tourism industry.

Office Location

Your company must have an office in California, with an office in Sacramento strongly preferred.

Reserved Rights

All proposals submitted shall become the property of Visit California and shall not be returned to the Proposer. Visit California also reserves the right to:

- Reject any and all bids;
- Waive any or all mandatory requirements, if no proposers meet one or more of those requirements;
- Cancel this RFB;
- Revise the amount of funds available under this RFB;
- Amend this RFB as needed; and
- Not select a vendor and award a contract from this RFB.

Contract Award

The Scope of Work and all tasks involved will be subject to negotiation between Visit California and the Awardee for the initial contract period. The details of your proposal will be used to negotiate the contract scope of work, and to evaluate your overall proposal as described in Attachment C, Written & Oral Proposal Evaluation Criteria.

8. BILLING & RELATED REQUIREMENTS

Winner of RFB will be required to abide by Visit California contracting requirements. This includes the conditions and terms contained within our standard Contract Template.

Please review this template prior to submitting a proposal to ensure these terms are acceptable. The standard Contract Template and information on contracting requirements can be found at <http://industry.visitcalifornia.com/About-Visit-California/Requests-for-Proposals/>. You will also be required to submit Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Form W-9.



VISIT CALIFORNIA
Request for Proposals
Public Affairs Services

PART II
PROPOSAL

1. PROPOSAL STRUCTURE

Your proposal shall contain the following sections:

- Company Background;
- Conflict of Interest Requirements;
- Company Management & Staff;
- Sub-Contractor Requirements; and
- Budget Form.

Please ensure your proposal includes the following:

- A detailed table of contents or index which lists each key section of your proposal;
- Page numbers; and
- Tabs or other methods to identify key sections of your proposal.

Please also place sections of your proposal in the order they are presented within this RFB.

2. COMPANY BACKGROUND

Please include the following items:

- A letter of interest;
- A description of your company's primary services;
- The year in which your company was formed;
- Your company's experience;
- The address from which the primary work on the contract would be performed;
- Numbers of total employees and contractors; and
- A current and past client list.

3. COMPANY MANAGEMENT & STAFF

Please include the following items:

- The contract manager for this scope of work; and
- The individuals who will be conducting the day to day work.

For all individuals assigned to this account, please provide:

- Current resumes/biographies demonstrating qualifications related to this RFB; and
- Length of time with your company.

4. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

- List all tourism-related clients for whom you have acted during the past 12 months.
- You must certify that there are no conflicts of interest between any existing contracts. Client relationships that could potentially be a conflict of interest must be listed together with a discussion of how the Proposer will resolve the potential conflict of interest.

5. SUB-CONTRACTORS

Please identify all proposed subcontractors for work that exceeds USD \$5,000 annually. For each sub-contractor:

- Document which portions of service they will perform;
- Describe their ability to perform the work;
- Provide the name and background of their company, if applicable; and
- Provide resumes and/or biographies of staff assigned to your account.

6. SCOPE OF WORK

Reference Materials

To assist with your response, please reference the background and informational resources at the following site: <http://industry.visitcalifornia.com>. There you will find Visit California's mission, planning documents, research, and other useful information. Also please review travelmattersca.com, the site produced by the public affairs team to convey the economic value of tourism.

Work Plan

Your proposal should be based on a full year of activities at \$200,000. (Please note: the actual annual budget may vary). Each proposer must include a complete and detailed discussion, in a narrative format, for each of the items in the sections below. The discussion of these items will be used to evaluate the proposer's qualifications for effectively delivering the requirements outlined within this RFB.

Your discussion should include the details and strategies of:

- How you intend to accomplish the tasks involved;
- Your experience in accomplishing those tasks;
- Estimated timeframes for accomplishing those tasks;
- An implementation schedule; and



- Any deliverables you may provide that will be derived from those tasks.

In addition, include a discussion of:

- Relevant managerial experience;
- Examples of any relevant past projects that demonstrate your skills and qualifications; and
- Any other relevant information and evidence to support your skills and qualifications for successfully executing this scope of work and meeting our objectives.

Strategic Planning and Deliverables

Provide for us an “insider’s look” at your strategic planning and content creation processes. Present Visit California with a comprehensive summary on how you will:

- Position Visit California as the authority and leading resource on California’s travel and tourism industry and highlight the dynamic and significant benefits the industry offers to the state, especially among California’s most influential business, economic, local government and community leaders and media.
- Regularly develop, write, visualize and help distribute content for a variety of platforms, including TravelMattersCA.com and a monthly newsletter.
- Research, draft and place op-eds authored or co-authored by Visit California and draft talking points, social media toolkits, media pitches, press releases, letters and other industry communications as needed.
- Tell the California tourism story to media, industry and political stakeholders. Show examples of content created for other clients and explain how you would leverage content created by others to supplement and enhance the work.
- Produce a strategic public affairs plan and other materials to reinforce the tourism industry’s value to all Californians.
- Support Visit California’s effort to engage California’s emerging leadership in politics, media and government to heighten the relevance of tourism and respond to any issues.
- Build and expand connections with key opinion leaders and decision makers to maintain and grow the broad echo chamber of supporters who widen Visit California’s reach by communicating the importance of tourism to educate, engage and potentially mobilize their networks. Where do strategic partnerships or alliances fit into your overall strategy? Give examples of how you would elevate perceptions of elected officials on the importance of the travel industry. Show how your current client base may open doors for California in the way of cross-promotion or leveraging additional exposure due to partnership opportunities.



- Provide strategic counsel on crises, including natural events, that affect tourism, the tourism industry, Visit California or its partners.
- Deliver guidance and written material for development of [West Coast Travel Facts](#) website that, in partnership with Oregon and Washington, takes a joint approach to wildfire response.

Research & Analytics

Provide an overview of how you determine success. What are your analytics tools or services that you use, and what type of information will you be reporting back to Visit California as it relates to meeting our objectives? Define how your analytics can be converted into research, and how the research will help guide us in making decisions on how we collaborate with our partners and elected officials in the future.

Account Administration

In addition to your account administration fees, you should budget for travel expenses (three Board Meetings and two, one-day workshops per year, all held in California), and any other administrative expenses such as postage/shipping expenses.

As part of your account administration, you will also be required to:

- Develop and achieve "measures of success" for the public affairs program.
- Provide monthly budget re-caps.
- Provide a written monthly report on activities and accomplishments, including details on the substance and success of published content, story pitches and other outreach, and updates about specific efforts in progress.

Other

The Visit California public affairs program must achieve the following:

- Position Visit California as an innovative, thoughtful leader of the tourism industry;
- Collaboratively develop a strategic work plan, setting measurable goals for each year;
- Analyze and monitor the state of the industry and Visit California's position among stakeholders;
- Publicize Visit California's research and marketing programs to establish industry leadership and raise awareness of the travel industry;
- Position and enhance visibility of Visit California's corporate brand;
- Grow Visit California's relationship with assessed travel businesses, associations, and identified key stakeholders;



- Identify Visit California's strengths, weaknesses, and untapped opportunities; develop proactive plans to address each;
- Elevate the perception of key policymakers on why travel matters;
- Reach key decision makers, constituents and media (new and traditional);
- Identify and monitor relevant issues facing the travel and tourism industry;
- Develop and execute compelling messages, press materials and other communications tools;
- Proactively pitch positive Visit California stories, including topics such as economic impact, sustainable tourism, or jobs in the workforce; act as a media liaison for Visit California on economic stories and leads;
- Develop a creative strategy to align with Visit California's global marketing efforts and reinforce the tourism industry's value to California's overall image;
- Provide public awareness of California's \$140.8 billion tourism industry;
- Penetrate new industry and stakeholder audiences;
- Promote Visit California's contribution to national travel promotion efforts;
- Align with and leverage national tourism outreach efforts, such as National Travel and Tourism Week and Project Time Off;
- Protect the reputation of California's travel and tourism industry;
- Assist in the development and execution of public affairs campaigns addressing issues within the industry, including but not limited to sustainable tourism, and tourism jobs and wages;
- Integrate with Visit California's industry relations and marketing efforts;
- Execute successful media relations plans, proactively developing pitches, press releases and op-eds within designated timelines; and
- Ensure availability for regular meetings and calls.

7. BUDGET

Please complete the required budget information in Attachment B.

8. DELIVERY OF PROPOSAL

Each bidder is required to deliver **ten** hard copies in addition to an electronic version of their proposal. Electronic versions of the proposal must be in PDF format and sent to RFB Submissions at rfps@visitcalifornia.com. Hard copies must be sent by courier such as FedEx or UPS to:



Visit California
Request for Proposal: Public Affairs Services
Attn: RFB Submissions
555 Capitol Mall, Suite 1100
Sacramento, CA 95814 USA

Proposals may not be faxed. **Proposals must be received by the date and time referenced in the Tentative Schedule. Late submissions will not be accepted.**



VISIT CALIFORNIA
Request for Proposals
Public Affairs Services

PART III
ATTACHMENTS

- Intent to Bid**
- Budget**
- Evaluation Criteria**



ATTACHMENT A

**NOTICE OF INTENT TO BID
PUBLIC AFFAIRS SERVICES**

Due: February 10, 2020
4:00 PM PST

Send to:

Debi Himovitz
Contracts Manager
rfps@visitcalifornia.com

Name of Proposer:
Contact Person:
Mailing Address:
Agency URL:
Telephone:
Fax Number:
Email Address:
Signed

ATTACHMENT B

**BUDGET
PUBLIC AFFAIRS SERVICES**

FINANCIAL BUDGET				
Budget Line Items	Activities / Description			Program Cost
Strategic Planning				
Content Creation				
Promotional and Added Value Elements				
Research & Analytics				
Account Administration <i>(include only your retainer / fee)</i>				
Other <i>(include any other expenses not included above)</i>				
Total Cost				
STAFFING BUDGET				
Title	Years with Company	Years in RFB Field	Hourly Rate	% Time Assigned to Account
			Total FTE's	



**ATTACHMENT C
WRITTEN & ORAL PRESENTATION / POPOSAL EVALUATION CRITERIA**

Written proposals will be reviewed, evaluated and scored by an evaluation committee. The evaluation committee may, if they deem necessary, select certain proposers for oral interviews. Interviews apply only to the top finalists, as determined by the evaluation committee. Evaluation of written and oral proposals will be based on the following criteria.

	Max. Points	Score
1. OVERALL EXPERIENCE OF FIRM	20	
Our evaluation will include an assessment of such items as the history of your company, your experience as it relates to the requirements within this RFB, evidence of past performance, and related items.		
2. SCOPE OF WORK	20	
Our evaluation will include an assessment of the quality of proposed strategies, creativity, detail of plan, ROI measurement systems, and related items.		
3. FAMILIARITY WITH VISIT CALIFORNIA BRAND & PRODUCT	10	
Our evaluation will include our assessment of your understanding of our organization and how you integrated this knowledge into your proposal, cultural fit, and related items.		
4. QUALIFICATIONS OF PERSONNEL	10	
Our evaluation will include an assessment of the qualifications, experience, and creativity of your managerial team, staff, and subcontractors, and related items.		
5. CAPABILITIES	20	
Our evaluation will include an assessment of your past performance related to developing effective programs in the RFB areas.		
6. COST EFFECTIVENESS	20	
The maximum services are provided in relation to the fees charged and value of overall project. The budget is reasonable and appropriate.		
TOTAL POINTS	100	