

**Sarasota Convention & Visitors Bureau, Inc. dba VISIT SARASOTA COUNTY
Request for Proposal (“RFP”) for Audit and Tax Services**

RFP No. 2018-04

VISIT SARASOTA COUNTY (“VSC”) invites submissions of proposals from qualified CPA firms authorized to do business in the State of Florida for **Audit and Tax Services**.

Section A: General Information for Respondents

1. Background: VSC is a 501 (c) 6 corporation located in Sarasota, FL. VSC contracts with Sarasota County government to provide tourism marketing and promotion services funded by a portion of the Tourism Development Tax collected by all hotel and rental stays in Sarasota County for periods under six months. Under the terms of the contract between Sarasota County and VSC, VSC may enter into contractual agreements with vendors to perform certain duties.
2. VSC Mission: The mission of Visit Sarasota County is to make Sarasota County the must-experience destination on Florida’s Gulf Coast.
3. VSC Ethics Statement: VSC is committed to ethical behavior in its procurement processes and requires all VSC employees’ adherence to VSC Code of Ethics.
4. Reserved rights: VSC reserves, in its sole discretion, the following rights:
 - (a) To exclusively determine whether any aspect of the proposal, or the proposal in its entirety satisfactorily meets the criteria established in this RFP;
 - (b) To seek clarification from any respondent;
 - (c) To solicit subsequent proposals from any respondent or respondents submitting a response;
 - (d) To modify the scope of work to be considered for this project, and determine which respondents will be notified, in order to resubmit a revised proposal meeting the modified scope of work as determined by VSC; and
 - (e) To reject any or all responses with or without cause. In the event that this RFP is withdrawn by VSC, or VSC elects not to proceed for any reason, VSC shall incur no liability to any respondent for any costs for expenses incurred in connection with the preparation and submittal of the respondent’s RFP response or any other submission prepared by respondent.
5. Regulations, Laws, Ordinances & Licenses: The respondent must be authorized to transact business in the State of Florida or be authorized to provide business services in the specific country where said services are to be provided. The respondent shall observe and obey all laws, ordinances, rules, and regulations of the federal, state, and local municipality that may be applicable for its general business operations, and to the provisions of the products and/or services set forth in this RFP. Additionally, the respondent shall have or obtain all necessary permits or licenses required for the operation of said business if performing services for VSC within Sarasota County, Florida.
6. Public Entity Crimes: Any person or affiliate as defined by Florida Statute who has been placed on the convicted vendor list following a conviction for a public entity crime MAY NOT submit a bid or a contract to provide any goods or services to VSC.
7. Indemnification requirements:

- a. The respondent shall pay on behalf of or indemnify and hold harmless VSC and Sarasota County Government from and against any and all claims, actions, damages, fees, fines, penalties, defense costs, suits or liabilities which may arise out of any act, neglect, error, omission or default of the respondent arising out of or in any way connected with the respondents or failure to perform under the terms of any contract resulting from the RFP. Depending upon the nature of the services being provided, additional indemnification requirements may apply.
 - b. If professional services are to be provided, as defined by Section 287.055, Florida Statutes, the following indemnification requirements apply:
Pursuant to Florida Statutes Section 725.08(1), the professional shall indemnify and hold harmless VSC and Sarasota County Government from liabilities, damages, losses, and costs, including but not limited to, reasonable attorneys' fees, to the extent caused by the negligence, recklessness, or intentionally wrongful conduct of the professional and other persons employed or utilized by the professional in the performance of the contract. This provision shall survive the termination or expiration of the contract.
8. Budget: Itemized budget must be submitted with proposal and must be inclusive of all work outlined in the Scope of Services.
 9. Respondents located in Sarasota County must comply with the Local Business Tax ordinance. It shall be the responsibility of the respondent to obtain a current local business tax receipt from the Sarasota County Tax Collector (www.sarasotataxcollector.com).
 10. Due Diligence: Due care and diligence have been exercised in the preparation of this RFP, and all information contained within is believed to be substantially correct. However, the responsibility for determining the full extent of the services or goods being solicited rests solely with the respondent.
 11. By submitting a response to the RFP, the respondent certifies that he/she has not divulged to, discussed or compared his response with any other respondent's submittals and has not colluded with any other respondent or parties to this response whatsoever.
 12. The respondent shall be prohibited from assigning, transferring, conveying, subletting, or otherwise disposing of its responsibilities under the resulting Agreement, or its rights, title or interest therein or its power to execute such Agreement to any person, company, corporation, or partnership without prior written notice and consent and approval of VSC which consent and approval may be withheld at VSC's sole discretion.
 13. The respondent shall be required to execute a contract agreement prepared by VSC, which shall establish the rights and responsibilities of both parties in the final agreement. The contents of the resulting contract may differ from the terms set forth in the RFP.
 14. All documents and plans provided to VSC by respondent as part of the response to said RFP shall become the exclusive property of VSC.
 15. Respondents acknowledge that all documents submitted with their response are subject to disclosure under Florida public records laws. If a respondent wishes to claim exemption from disclosure to the public records law for any of its documents submitted, the respondent must cite the specific statutory exemption being asserted.
 16. Protests: Any firm that has submitted a proposal or a bid, and who believes that they have been aggrieved in connection with the solicitation or award of a contract, may protest the solicitation or the award action by communicating with VSC's centralized

17. point of contact for the procurement process, to request materials necessary for the filing of a formal protest.

Section B: Scope of Services

VSC is soliciting proposals from qualified CPA firms for **Audit and Tax Services**. The contract for services will be with the VSC. The contract will be for work to be performed October 1, 2017 – September 30, 2018, with an option to renew annually through September 30, 2020.

The proposal is for the annual audit and to be completed in compliance with Sarasota County Government Contract. VSC has a September 30 fiscal year end with a requirement to file an audited financial statement with the Sarasota Board of County Commissioners within 120 days from the fiscal year end. It is expected the firm will work with the VSC Board of Directors Audit Committee. The proposal should also include all required tax filings deemed necessary for the Organization.

Section C: Term

The term of the resulting contract will be for work performed October 1, 2017 to September 30, 2018, with an option to renew annually through September 30, 2020.

Section D: Qualification Requirements

1. In order to be considered a qualified provider, all firms to which VSC is considering including in this RFP should be normally engaged in performing the type of work specified by this Request for Proposals. Firms should ideally be engaged in this type of work for a minimum of five (5) years to be considered a qualified provider. Determination of satisfactory evidence of responsibility and satisfactory ability to perform the required services by the respondent shall be made solely by VSC Review Committee.
2. VSC Review Committee reserves the right to reject any or all proposals and to request on-site visits at the offices of any of the firms submitting proposals prior to making final recommendations to VSC management or VSC Board of Directors.
3. Firm should have the size and resources to successfully handle the account the size of VSC.
4. A copy of the firm's most recent peer review report, the related letter of comments and the firm's response to the comments should be included in the RFP.

Section E: Evaluation Criteria and Process

1. VSC may or may not request additional information or clarification of submitted materials, or of additional background information on the proposer, during the evaluation process. VSC may or may not request oral presentations but reserves the right to award the contract based solely on the basis of written proposals.

Section F: Response Format and Deadlines

1. Submission Deadlines: All respondents shall include one (1) original and eleven (11) signed copies of the proposal plus one (1) thumb drive or CD-ROM disk containing a single PDF file which comprise the proposal must be received no later than 4:00 PM

2. EDT on **Thursday, August 23, 2018** at the administrative offices of VSC, 1777 Main Street, Suite 302, Sarasota, FL 34236. Responses received after that time shall be deemed invalid, unqualified responses, shall not be considered, and shall be discarded. It shall be the sole responsibility of the respondent to have their proposal delivered to VSC administrative office for receipt on or before the stated time and date.
3. File Size Restrictions: Every effort should be made by the respondents to ensure that the file size of the proposal does not exceed 10 MB, in order to accommodate electronic distribution and storage of documents.
4. Interpretation/Addenda: No interpretation or clarification of the meaning of the proposal documents will be binding if made to any respondent orally. Every such request for clarification must be by email, addressed to Shantel Norman designated as the centralized point of contact for the specific RFP project. Telephone inquiries or individual meetings are not permitted. VSC shall not be responsible for oral interpretations provided by any VSC employee, representative, or others. As a result of receipt of written submissions to VSC requesting clarification or interpretation, VSC shall, if it deems necessary, provide clarification notices or addenda to said Request for Proposal, and VSC will attempt to notify via email all prospective respondents who have secured an invitation to submit proposals. Written statements issued by VSC shall be the only official method whereby interpretation, clarification or additional information shall be provided to all potential respondents. In all instances, it shall be the responsibility of each respondent, prior to submitting its proposal, to contact Shantel Norman, via email at snorman@visitsarasota.org to determine if addenda have been issued and to make such addenda a part of the respondent's proposal. Any questions regarding clarification or interpretation, etc., must be submitted to VSC prior to 4:00 PM EDT on **Monday, August 6, 2018**. All questions will be answered and distributed via email by 4:00 pm EDT on **Thursday, August 9, 2018**. No additional questions will be entertained after that date. Respondents may not modify nor transfer their proposals to any other companies and/or respondents after the submission of same to VSC.
5. All qualified proposals will be reviewed by a Review Committee made up of Sarasota area tourism industry professionals and VSC staff. The review committee will meet on or around **Thursday, September 6, 2018**, in Sarasota County, Florida. Oral presentations by the respondents may be required at the discretion of the Review Committee. The date for oral presentation, if required, will be on **Tuesday, September 11, 2018** in Sarasota County, Florida. If no oral presentations are requested, the Committee's selection and recommendation shall be based on its assessment of the response that best meets the needs of VSC in the sole discretion of VSC.
6. Determination of satisfactory evidence of responsibility and satisfactory ability to perform the required services by the respondent shall be made solely by VSC Review Committee. The Review Committee reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, and to request on-site visits at the offices of any of the firms submitting proposals prior to making final recommendations to VSC Board of Directors.
7. VSC may or may not request additional information or clarification of submitted materials during the evaluation process. VSC may or may not request oral presentations and may award the contract based solely on the basis of written proposals.
8. VSC Review Committee will submit information pertaining to the respondent with the highest aggregate score to VSC Board of Directors for approval at its **September Board**

9. meeting. The criteria used to evaluate written RFP submissions will include, but not be limited to, the following:

Section G: Rating Points - Descriptions

Following is the description of VSC's evaluation criteria, including the potential maximum number of scoring points that may be awarded in that category:

- 10 Corporate Background – Quality and experience of firm, and its ability to meet the requirements as set forth in this RFP and its ability to provide the full Scope of Services set forth in this RFP. Firm that can demonstrate that it has been engaged in the services described in this RFP for a minimum of five (5) years may be given additional consideration.
- 20 The firm's professional staff – Professional capabilities demonstrated in the services described in this RFP and include professional capabilities of the staff assigned to this project for VSC. Include biographies of the partner, manager and in-charge accountants who would be assigned to the audit and discuss the firm's staff continuity and turnover experience in the last three years.
- 20 The firm's approach to addressing the Scope of Services outlined in this RFP, including the communication process used by the firm to communicate timely to management and the Board to ensure all deadlines are met.
- 20 The firm's demonstrated ability to meet the needs established in the Scope of Services, by providing three (3) non profit client references that have relevance to the type of work outlined in this Scope of Services. Include information on the names and contact information for these similarly sized clients for reference purposes.
- 10 The firm's independence with respect to VSC.
- 10 The firm's ability to demonstrate it is located in Sarasota or a contiguous county (Manatee, Desoto and Charlotte) and maintains a business license in at least one of these counties.
- 10 Pricing.
- 100 Total.

Please provide at least three (3) professional references who can speak to your capabilities regarding the scope of work outlined in this document. A VSC staff member will contact the references and provide a summary to the review committee.

Section H: Response Qualification Format

Proposals submitted must contain, at a minimum, the information listed below. The evaluation of proposals will consist of, but is not restricted to, these points. Answers should be as succinct as possible. Respondent, for purposes of review and evaluation, shall answer all questions. Responses must be tabbed to match the requirements as set forth in the RFP.

Tab A: Corporate Background

- Company legal name, state of incorporation or partnership registration, corporate headquarters address, phone number, fax number, email address(es), and company website.
- Branch office locations, if applicable.
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- Key contact name, address, phone number, email address.
- List firm's ownership and date established.
- Provide firm's Federal Employer's Identification Number
- Corporation must include its Florida Corporate Charter Number, if applicable.
- Total number of full-time employees and total number of part-time employees.
- Statement of willingness to comply with all Sarasota County Government insurance requirements.
- Statement affirmatively establishing that no officer or high ranking official of the Proposer has been convicted of any Public Entity Crimes within the State of Florida.

Tab B: Professional staff

- List the names of all staff to be dedicated to VSC contract.
- Provide information on the firm's organizational structure pertaining to the staff involved in this scope of work.
- Provide resumes for the firm's staff dedicated to VSC project.

Tab C: Experience and Response to Scope of Services

- List all current travel/tourism/hospitality clients the firm serves and year that respondent began providing services for these clients. If your firm does not serve travel/tourism clients, please describe your approach to the industry.
- List all travel/tourism/hospitality clients added and lost by firm in the past three (3) years and give a brief description of how business was added or why lost.
- Provide name, title, phone number and email address for each of respondent's three (3) largest travel/tourism/hospitality clients as references.
- Provide information on the technical capacities of respondent's firm to meet the scope of services for the firm's other major travel/tourism/hospitality clients, if applicable.
- Outline your firm's approach to the Scope of Services.
- Describe respondent's process of management and client communication as provided to the firm's other major clients.

Tab D: References

Provide three (3) references that are related to the type of services required in this Scope of Services. These references should be no more than three (3) written pages in length each.

Tab E: Summary

Provide a summary, not to exceed two (2) pages, on why respondent is uniquely qualified to be the provider of services for VSC.

Tab F: Pricing

Provide annual itemized pricing model and budget allocations for providing the summary of services described in the Scope of Services. Also include billing rates for special projects.

Attachments:

2016 Audited Financial Statements

Form 990

Form 990-T

Form F-1120