

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

RFP No. 2018-03

VISIT SARASOTA COUNTY (“VSC”) invites submissions of proposals from qualified firms authorized to do business in the State of Florida for **Creative 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. **Marketing Overview:** Overarching goals of the marketing program are to increase Sarasota County brand awareness and consumer interactions, which are key demand generators. Benchmarks include increase in the number of visitors and their spending, increase in Tourist Development Tax collections, growth in market share as measured by new visitors and growth in number of visitors influenced by VSC’s advertising campaigns.
4. **VSC Ethics Statement:** VSC is committed to ethical behavior in its procurement processes, and requires all VSC employees’ adherence to VSC Code of Ethics.
5. **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 In the event that this RFP is withdrawn by VSC, or VSC elects not to proceed for any reason, VSC shall incur no liability to any respondent for any costs for expenses incurred in connection with the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.
6. **Insurance:** The respondent selected by VSC shall be required to submit proof of insurance in accordance with Sarasota County Government requirements, as included in the RFP specifications, including naming Sarasota County Government as an additional insured, upon request of VSC. The insurance specifications may be found on the Sarasota County website www.scgov.net.
7. **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.

8. 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.
9. 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 respondent's sub-contractor's performance 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 design 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 design professional and other persons employed or utilized by the design professional in the performance of the contract. This provision shall survive the termination or expiration of the contract.
 - c. The respondent shall pay all royalties and license fees for equipment or processes in conjunction with the equipment and/or services being furnished. Respondent shall defend all suits or claims for infringement of any patent, trademark or copyright, and shall save VSC and Sarasota County harmless from loss on account thereof, including costs and attorney's fees.
10. Budget: Itemized budget must be submitted with proposal and must be inclusive of all work outlined in the Scope of Services.
11. 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).
12. 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.
13. 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.

14. 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.
15. 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.
16. All documents and plans provided to VSC by respondent as part of the response to said RFP shall become the exclusive property of VSC.
17. 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.
18. Protests: Any supplier 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 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 firms for **Creative Campaign Development and Services**. The contract for services will be with the VSC. The contract will be for work to be performed October 1, 2018 – September 30, 2019, with an option to renew annually through September 30, 2021.

In 2016, Visit Sarasota County launched a new print, online and television campaign. As the campaign has been in the marketplace for only two years, VSC is looking for a firm to refresh the campaign and *not* to develop a new campaign. This would also include additional ad creative concepts for niche markets to incorporate, but not limited to; Arts and Culture, Eco/Nature Tourism, Culinary, Sports, Meetings/Groups, GLBT and Shopping/Retail.

Part I – Overall Campaign Refresh

The primary objective in this area is to develop new copy and images for the current ad creative to refresh it.

The secondary objective in this area is to develop additional campaigns for specific niche marketing areas as indicated above.

Part II – Target Messaging

The creative target messaging should be refreshed, and additional messaging created for niche markets as outlined above. Additionally, messaging should be created to better tell the story of all the areas that make up Sarasota County to include the city of Sarasota and the surrounding

islands and towns of Venice, Longboat Key, Siesta Key, Casey Key, Manasota Key, Lido Key, Englewood and North Port.

Finally messaging should be created to counteract the perception that Sarasota County is only for older, Caucasian, retired people. It is important that the ad creative use images and wording that speaks to a diverse population, a younger audience and showcases the fun, active side of Sarasota County.

Visit Sarasota audiences include (but are not limited to):

- General Consumer
- Nature based tourism
- Arts/Cultural
- Culinary
- Savor Sarasota Restaurant Week
- Gay/Lesbian/Bi-Sexual/Transgender (GLBT)
- Shopping/Retail Enthusiasts
- Baseball Spring Training
- Meetings Market (including weddings, vow renewals and honeymoons)
- Sports Market (sports event organizers and to a lesser degree leisure sports travelers)

Part III –Asset Development

The firm will be responsible for the development of assets to support the refreshed campaign. Final electronic formats will include, but are not limited to, layered native files in Adobe software, HD, HD cam and digital. Components will include:

- Plan and oversee all photo and video shoots
- Create all print ads needed for campaigns
- Size and revise all ads for publication as needed according to publication deadlines
- Create new online digital ad campaigns
- Create or refresh all VSC marketing collateral as needed, to include, but are not limited to: brochures, posters, videos, wall art, post cards, invites, etc.
- Develop/produce additional niche market :30-second destination television spots

Part D – Other requirements

- The selected firm will be expected to prepare all VSC print advertisements for publication starting on October 1, 2018. Selected firm agrees to use existing ad creative until the refreshed creative campaign is approved and ready for publication. This may include sizing ads to spec, changing photos, updating copy and any additional modifications as needed.
- Ability to partner and collaborate with current VSC firms

- It is ***mandatory*** that all qualifying firms demonstrate the ability to partner with VSC current vendors and to include references and/or case studies in the formal proposal. The ability to partner and be part of a greater team is critical and expected. VSC currently works with vendors who handle the following services:
 - Destination web site strategy and implementation for www.VisitSarasota.org
 - Digital advertising services
 - Media buying services
 - Market research
- The firm must send a representative to Sarasota County for quarterly in-person meetings for the duration of the contract.

Part E – Budget

All services for the awarded contract will be on a flat monthly retainer fee basis. The exact budget is yet to be determined but the maximum available funding will not exceed \$180,000. VSC does not pay commission. Additional things to note:

- A complete buy-out for all photography/images used for the VSC, including model fees, production fees and delivery of all assets as outlined in part C of this document must be included.
- All photography (retouched and un-retouched) and video footage (raw and final) are the property of the VSC
- VSC does not pay for travel expenses to Sarasota County.

Additional Requirements:

- The successful respondent must agree to work closely with VSC professional staff to ensure coordination with VSC professional staff, other marketing vendors and the successful respondent. Collaboration capabilities as part of a team are critical.
- The successful respondent must provide monthly, quarterly and annual reporting on their outcomes and provide measurements of their progress against the annual business plan.
- The successful respondent must send a representative to the quarterly supplier meetings with VSC staff in Sarasota County. Travel to and from Sarasota County for such meetings are NOT a reimbursable expense.
- The successful respondent must have the ability to follow VSC billing procedures that include:
 - Submitting all invoices promptly at the last day of the month of service, but only after thoroughly checking all invoices for accuracy and completeness.
 - Providing all required back-up documentation, justification, and proof of work for all expenses submitted within the invoice. All expenses must be submitted by successful respondent to VSC for reimbursement within sixty (60) days or they shall not be accepted or honored by the VSC, and they will be returned unpaid to successful respondent.

- Invoicing will be accompanied by VSC-signed estimates, estimate approvals, tear sheets or vendor affidavits for media billing and appropriate copies of vendor invoices, as supporting back-up to charges billed.
- Travel Provisions (if applicable): All travel and entertainment by the successful respondent must be pre-approved by the VSC no later than seven (7) working days prior to the event by submitting to the VSC appropriate paperwork. All travel and per diem expenditures will be reimbursed in accordance with the U.S. General Services Administrations.
- From time to time, the successful respondent will be asked to prepare reports or make presentations on topics selected by VSC to (but not limited solely to) the following: VSC Board of Directors, Advisory Committees and the Tourist Development Council.
- The successful respondent's principals must be available for consultation and to advise VSC staff upon reasonable oral or written advance notice.
- The successful respondent agrees to provide and perform all services pursuant to the contract, and in accordance with generally accepted standards of professional and ethical practices as outlined in the codes of conduct established by industry associations such as Destination Marketing Association International or the American Marketing Association.
- Budgets may be increased or decreased, as needed, depending upon available funding. The budget for this project is subject to the availability of funds approved by the Sarasota County Board of County Commissioners. The successful respondent should be aware that specific compensation for the contract will be negotiated in the event that budgets are decreased.

Section C: Term

The term of the resulting contract will be for work performed October 1, 2018 to September 30, 2019, with an option to renew annually through September 30, 2021.

Section D: Qualification Requirements

1. In order to be considered a qualified supplier, 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 supplier. 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 be experienced in tourism destination clients. Interested firms must be able to demonstrate measurable success in projects on behalf of tourist destinations or tourism businesses.
4. Firm should have the size and resources to successfully handle the account the size of VSC as documented by minimum billings of \$500,000.

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 EDT on **Tuesday, June 26, 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.
2. 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.
3. 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 Enriqueta Balandra 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 Enriqueta Balandra, via email at ebalandra@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 **Tuesday, June 12, 2018. All questions will be answered and distributed via email by 4:00 pm EDT on Friday, June 15, 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.
4. 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 **Thursday, July 19, 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, July 31, 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.

5. 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.
6. 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.
7. 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** 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.
- 10 The firm's professional staff & subcontracted services – Professional capabilities demonstrated in the services described in this RFP, and include professional capabilities of the staff and/or subcontractors assigned to this project for VSC. The VSC is only interested in the professional capabilities of the professional staff during their employment with the applicant firm. If previous work is cited, please specify the staff's exact role in that work.
- 20 The firm's demonstrated experience in the area of travel and tourism, which should include firm's demonstrated ability to meet changing landscapes for clients in the travel and tourism industry. Please demonstrate the ways that the professional staff who would be working on the VSC account were involved in the firm's travel and tourism accounts.
- 20 The firm's approach to addressing the Scope of Services outlined in this RFP, including suggested strategies, methodologies for execution of the strategies, and benchmarks for success. VSC is not requesting "spec" work but a description of your approach on the account.
- 10 The firm's project/account management process, including availability of professional staff, management of project timelines, and client communications.
- 10 The firm's demonstrated ability to meet the needs established in the Scope of Services, by providing three (3) case histories that have relevance to the type of work outlined in this Scope of Services. Case histories must be in the field of travel and tourism. Include information on how the employees who would be assigned to this account were involved in the case histories.
- 5 The firm's demonstrated ability to integrate services as part of a greater team effort to deliver the scope of services required from a previous project.

- 5 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

Please note: VSC does not expect nor wish to receive creative concepts for our destination as part of the Firm's response.

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.
- 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.
- Total billings related to creative services for each of the last five (5) years.
- 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.
- If firm wishes to be awarded five (5) additional local preference points in the scoring matrix, the firm must document that they have paid a local business tax prior to submitting this bid in Sarasota, Manatee, Charlotte or Desoto Counties.

Tab B: Professional staff and subcontracted services

- List the names of and the percentage of time for 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.
- Provide information on any subcontractors to be utilized in performing this scope of work for VSC, and the percentage of work to be completed by each of the subcontractors.

- If using subcontractors, include information on the subcontractor(s) background, resumes for subcontractor staff involved in performing this scope of work, the reasons for using the subcontractor, and respondent's method of quality control and management of the subcontractor(s).

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 five (5) largest travel/tourism/hospitality clients as references.
- If your firm does not serve travel/tourism clients, please describe your approach to the industry.
- 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.
- Outline your firm's approach to the Scope of Services.
- Describe respondent's process of project management and client communication as provided to the firm's other major clients.
- Describe the firm's ability to work as part of a team on a project.

Tab D: Case Histories

Provide three (3) case histories that are related to the type of services required in this Scope of Services. These case histories should be no more than three (3) written pages in length each and should contain the following information:

- Program synopsis and situational overview.
- Objective.
- Methodologies.
- Insights/program interpretation/recommendations/actions.
- Where appropriate, demonstrate how your Firm worked with others as part of the project.
- Where appropriate, demonstrate how your Firm worked with others as part of the project. In addition, be sure to indicate how your Firm representatives worked with the client team (staff, or other vendors of the client) directly to achieve the outcomes.
- Results/Outcomes.
- Budget.

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. If

firm is bidding on other VSC RFPs listed in the opening section of this document, describe how this might impact the pricing.

Attachments:

Current Brand guidelines.

Samples of current advertising campaign.

FY 2017 Visitor Profile