

City of Clearwater, Florida

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

RFP #19-13

FOR

**Tourism Marketing Services For The
City of Clearwater**



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR TOURISM MARKETING SERVICES FOR THE CITY OF CLEARWATER, FLORIDA

I. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

The City of Clearwater is a coastal community in west central Florida. The City is the third largest in the Tampa Bay region, with an estimated population of 108,000. The City's 25.9-square mile incorporated area spans the Pinellas County peninsula between the Gulf of Mexico and Tampa Bay. Clearwater is home to a wide range of industries including software, computer components, aircraft technology, surgical instruments, data communication and health care. Tourism is a main economic generator for the City.

As a year-round top vacation spot, Clearwater offers a mild and temperate climate. The area offers extensive water recreation and nature-based and land-based attractions as well as a wide array of special events. Numerous opportunities exist to watch or participate in a sporting activity. The rich history and heritage of this area along with the outstanding performing and visual arts make Clearwater the perfect place to spend time in and out of the sun. With a wide variety of choices for activities, accommodations, dining and shopping, Clearwater is a premiere vacation destination.

Clearwater Beach is an international tourist destination that brings millions of people to Pinellas County annually. Most recently, *USA Today* named Clearwater as "Florida's Best Beach Town 2013" and was on the "Top Ten List of Best Beaches from Maine to Hawaii." Clearwater also has been named "Best Beach City" by *Conde Nast Traveler* and has been designated a "Blue Wave Beach" by the Clean Beaches Council. Clearwater Beach appeals to people of all ages and interests as shown by its mention in Fodor's travel publications as one of the top family beaches and also as being second only to Miami's South Beach as the place to go if you are single. Visitors especially enjoy Beach Walk, a broad, winding promenade surrounded by resorts, beautiful white sand, entertainment and artwork, offering a unique environment for everyone.

Clearwater is also a top location for national tournament play and training activities for youth, collegiate and adult sports. Most notable of these is the City's partnership with Major League Baseball's Philadelphia Phillies, who have spring training and a minor league team in the City. The Phillies are the oldest, continuous, one-name, one-city franchise in all of professional sports and have been in Clearwater since 1947.

Clearwater is home to Winter the Dolphin, an inspiring example of the meaningful work done at the Clearwater Marine Aquarium. CMA staff rescued Winter after she was caught in a crab trap, nursed her back to health after she lost her tail, and created a prosthetic tail to allow her to swim once again. Since then, Winter's story of survival and

perseverance has been inspiring children, especially those with disabilities, around the world. Winter's life is the inspiration for the major motion picture, *Dolphin Tale*. Entirely filmed on location in Clearwater, the CMA, and Pinellas County, the 3D Warner Brothers' film stars Winter alongside Ashley Judd, Morgan Freeman, and Harry Connick Jr.

Downtown Clearwater is experiencing a renaissance in terms of art and culture, commerce and residential development. Several large and small-scale events are held in downtown throughout the year which draws tens of thousands of visitors. Coachman Park is an outdoor, waterfront venue that hosts several concerts including the four-day internationally acclaimed Clearwater Jazz Holiday.

The undisputed crown jewel of Clearwater's entertainment scene is the 2,200-seat Ruth Eckerd Hall, where the hottest names in show business grace the stage, including jazz greats, rock musicians, the Florida Orchestra, stage plays, ballets and more. The Capitol Theatre, located in the Cleveland Street District in Downtown Clearwater, is closed for renovations and is expected to open in the fall of 2013. The renovated historic theatre will have 655 seats and host national musicians in a more intimate setting.

More casual entertainment appears nightly at Pier 60 on Clearwater Beach where artisans, jugglers, crafters, street performers and live musical entertainment celebrate amidst the spectacular sunset.

The Clearwater Marina plays host to a variety of activities such as fishing, sightseeing, sailing, speedboats, "hands-on" marine life adventures, dining, dancing, parasailing and more. Clearwater is home to the largest fishing fleet on Florida's west coast. The Gulf of Mexico's calm waters are well-known for excellent year-round fishing, and Clearwater offers the perfect starting point for half and full-day excursions. For those visitors who haven't quite gotten their sea legs, Pier 60 is an ideal spot to sink a line and enjoy without ever having to get wet.

With predictably great weather, friendly people, and beautiful beaches, Clearwater is also full of surprises that delight and inspire all who are open to a great experience.

Purpose

The City of Clearwater is seeking assistance from an experienced Marketing and Public Relations partner in directing future marketing and public relations efforts (including web and social media), in an aggressive and comprehensive manner to strengthen awareness nationally and statewide of the City's attributes and offerings as a top vacation destination with an ultimate goal to attract more visitors. It is the City's intent to "drill-down" in key visitor markets with a well-coordinated marketing and public relations plan that will leverage partner efforts and best maximize exposure across all media platforms. It is imperative to determine the most effective use of designated public dollars while achieving these goals.

The prospective proposer will coordinate efforts with the City's Economic Development and Housing Department and also liaise, as directed, with the St. Petersburg / Clearwater Area Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB), the Clearwater Regional Chamber of Commerce, the Clearwater Beach Chamber of Commerce, and the City's Public Communications and Parks & Recreation Departments on a variety of events and activities.

The City will negotiate an agreement with the applicant whose proposal is most responsive to this Request for Proposals (RFP) and is in the best interest of promoting tourism in and attracting visitors to the City of Clearwater. To be considered responsive to this RFP, the instructions must be followed precisely. The City reserves the right to decline any or all responses.

II. Scope of Work

In conjunction with, and at the direction of the City's staff, the successful proposer will plan and carry out programs and activities designed to increase awareness of Clearwater as one of Florida's premiere leisure, business, and event destinations. Promotions will be designed for both consumer and trade media with a keenly-focused action plan that incorporates public relations, marketing and advertising that serves to better showcase our community nationally and statewide.

Specifically, the successful proposer will conduct the following:

- Prepare an annual marketing plan that outlines a list of targeted media for public relations outreach, appropriate press trips / individual writer visits, special event marketing, internet marketing and social media marketing efforts within a total budget of \$164,000. Recommendations on how to best segment this budget (public relations, event marketing, etc.) to achieve maximum exposure will be immediately required.
- Maintain a proactive, on-going relationship with appropriate consumer and trade media to develop coverage for the City's leisure, business and recreational offerings.
- Coordinate promotional and public relations efforts for other marketing activities including signature special events that have a high return on investment (ROI) for bringing visitors to Clearwater such as, but not limited to, the Outback Bowl, Powerboat Races, Clearwater Jazz Holiday, etc.
- Manage and maintain the newly updated City's tourism website at www.visitclearwaterflorida.com and the @MyClearwater Twitter account.
- Maintain a close relationship with the marketing / public relations staff of the St. Petersburg / Clearwater CVB, and Visit Florida (as necessary) in order to maximize all opportunities for joint promotion / press trips / individual writer visits, social media efforts, etc.

- Maintain a close relationship with the City's Public Communications and Parks & Recreation Departments, and the Clearwater Regional and Clearwater Beach Chambers of Commerce to include any assistance that may be required with the City's sports marketing collateral or other promotional efforts as needed.
- Prepare a monthly activity report to be presented either by conference call or in-person presentation, as determined by the City, in addition to maintaining an open line of communication. The report shall include clippings of all media placements with the ad value derived from the story, including circulation.
- Establish and maintain regular communications with industry partners – hotels, restaurants, etc.
- Prepare an annual performance report targeting specific marketing and public relations initiatives and their ROI.
- Other responsibilities as designated by the City Manager or his designee and the Director of Economic Development & Housing. Such responsibilities may include working with Visit St. Pete Clearwater or Visit Florida in the event of a hurricane or any other detriment to local tourism.

III. Proposed Schedule

The City of Clearwater will use the following timetable with the goal of selecting the most qualified proposer. This schedule may be changed solely at the City's discretion:

Release Date of the RFP	May 6, 2013
Responses Due	June 6, 2013
Selection Committee Review and Ranking	By June 28, 2013
Oral Presentations	July 2013
Agreement Finalized	August 2013
City Council Approval	September 5, 2013
Contract Start Date	October 1, 2013

IV. INSTRUCTIONS FOR PREPARATION OF PROPOSALS

General

All prospective proposers shall provide sufficient information and data to fully allow a complete evaluation of the information presented. Information and data submitted by each applicant will become part of the proposal. The proposer shall not have as a current client any Florida cities or Destination Marketing Organization of a competitive beach destination.

The consultant interested in responding to this RFP must provide the information on the firm's qualifications and experience, length of time in business, qualifications of the project team, project manager's experience, previous similar projects and references and approach to services. Submittals that do not respond completely to all requirements specified herein may be considered non-responsive and eliminated from the process.

Proposers must have a minimum of four years experience in destination marketing and public relations and must provide references that will satisfy the City of Clearwater. Proposers must furnish a reference list of at least four customers for whom they have performed similar services. Non-profit entities may provide a detailed listing of field experience to fulfill this requirement and four references with whom they have partnered for the provision of these types of services.

The Proposer shall submit the following information with their proposal:

- **Travel Media Relationships**—Experience record showing the Proposer's access to and relationships with representatives from top travel and lifestyle media outlets, including magazines, newspapers, websites, blogs, television, etc. Proposer needs to demonstrate the successful results of these relationships by providing evidence of past coverage / placements including print clippings, media clips or screenshots.
- **Similar Work**—Proposer shall demonstrate understanding of current trends in travel media and journalism as they relate to the needs of the City as a potential client by providing a list of tourism clients and examples of successful projects completed for them including return on investment. This should include locations, dates of contracts, names and addresses of principals or owners. Client list should include total annual billings with an indication of where the City of Clearwater would fall in terms of largest and smallest clients. (This list should be confined to work directly conducted by the Proposer and not include work done by proposer's current staff members for previous employers.)
- **Personnel / Resources**—List and provide background of personnel and other resources available to support the work to be performed by Proposer, including number of hours per week. If staffing changes occur during the contract term, a senior team member on this account will be expected to be replaced with a new senior team member of equal qualifications to be approved by the City.
- **Creativity**—List of ways the Proposer is creative and how it supports creativity in its staff. Examples of how Proposer can partner with own travel industry contacts to minimize costs while maximizing exposure to the City would strengthen submittal. (i.e. airlines, car rental agencies, etc.)
- **Cost**—Proposer shall submit a lump sum cost for the entire contract. The proposed annual budget for the first year of the contract is not to exceed \$164,000. It is anticipated that of this total budget, \$4,000 shall be for approved reimbursable expenses and the remaining \$160,000 will be paid as a flat-fee retainer in equal monthly installments with a set-aside portion for promotional/marketing projects. However, the City will consider any alternative payment proposal. Proposer shall submit invoices to the City of Clearwater, Economic Development and Housing Department, along with reports and itemized monthly expenses as needed. This contract expenditure may not be increased throughout the term.

Proposal Submittal Requirements

The following information in tabbed sections will be required as part of the response to this RFP:

1. Respondent Information
 - a. Name of firm
 - b. Location of office or offices
 - c. Phone and email
 - d. Person(s) authorized to represent the firm in negotiations
 - e. Length of time in business
2. Letter of Interest and Approach
 - a. Letter should demonstrate respondent's approach to providing tourism marketing and public relations services to the City of Clearwater as well as an understanding of the project scope of work and purpose
 - b. Describe initial approach/philosophy to scope of work
 - c. Describe areas for creativity
 - d. Identify number of hours per week on account
 - e. Describe the benefits the City could expect should the respondent be awarded the agreement
 - f. Describe goals and measures of performance to be used
3. Experience
 - a. Describe marketing, advertising, and public relations experience
 - b. Describe travel media relationships, including examples
 - c. Describe ability to leverage relationships
4. Personnel/Resources
 - a. Background/qualifications/hours of personnel assigned to this account
 - b. Resources available to conduct work; ability to leverage outside resources
5. Similar Work/References
 - a. List of current/previous clients and type and examples of work performed
 - b. Describe proven performance
 - c. Minimum of 4 references
6. Cost
 - a. Breakdown of costs including amount for administration of contract

Submittal Deadline and Instructions

The delivery of proposals to the City of Clearwater Purchasing Office prior to the specified date and time is solely and strictly the responsibility of the applicant. The City shall not, under any circumstances, be responsible for delays caused by the United States Postal Service or any private delivery service, or for delays caused by any other occurrence. All responses must be manually and duly signed by an authorized corporate officer, principal or partner with the authority to bind said applicant.

The deadline for response to the RFP is **4:00 PM, June 6, 2013**. One (1) electronic copy is requested and one (1) original and five (5) copies of responses should be submitted in a sealed envelope marked:

“PROPOSAL FOR TOURISM MARKETING SERVICES FOR THE CITY OF CLEARWATER”

To:

Michael Murray
Purchasing Manager
City of Clearwater
P.O. Box 4748
Clearwater, FL 33758-4748
michael.murray@myclearwater.com

Or, Deliver to:

Michael Murray
Purchasing Manager
City of Clearwater
Municipal Services Building
Purchasing Office
100 South Myrtle Avenue
3rd Floor; Rm. 310
Clearwater, FL 33756

Questions regarding this request for proposals should be submitted in writing no later than May 28, 2013 to:

Michael Murray
Purchasing Manager
City of Clearwater
P.O. Box 4748
Clearwater, FL 33758-4748
Michael.murray@myclearwater.com

Answers to questions received will be posted on the City's website, www.myclearwater.com/econdev one week prior to proposal due date.

V. SELECTION CRITERIA AND RANKING PROCESS

General

All proposals will be evaluated by a Selection Committee to be established by the City of Clearwater made up of three representatives from City staff and two industry

partners. The successful respondent must demonstrate an understanding of the project scope and purpose. This refers to the proposer's understanding of the needs that generated the RFP, of the objectives in asking for the services and to the nature and scope of the work involved.

The evaluation of the proposals shall be accomplished using the criteria described in this section. Information and data included in the proposal shall be considered in the evaluation process.

Completeness of Proposal

Following receipt of proposals, the Selection Committee shall review all proposals with respect to completeness and conformance with the instructions and requirements specifically indicated in this RFP. Responses, which are deemed incomplete or nonconforming with instruction and requirements of this RFP, may not be given further evaluation. The City of Clearwater reserves the right to reject any and all responses and to waive any irregularity, variance, or informality, whether technical or substantial in nature, in keeping with the best interest of the City.

Selection Criteria

All proposals will be evaluated with respect to the completeness of the data provided, support for all claims made and the overall approach taken. A total of 100 points will be awarded as part of the evaluation.

The following criteria will be used in the evaluation and ranking process:

Criteria	Points
Approach to Scope of Work	10
Experience	35
Travel Media Relationships	
Proven Performance/Similar Work/References	25
Personnel/Resources/Hours Per Week	15
Creativity	10
Proposed Plan for Costs	5
Total Points	100

Oral Presentations

Top ranked firms will be asked to present their proposals to the Selection Committee. Final candidates chosen for consideration will be contacted by June 28, 2013 and may be expected to present their qualifications in person in July 2013. This presentation should include a recommended approach to achieving the goals set forth in the Scope of Work within the confines of the budget to include recommended emphasis on the

following areas: public relations, event marketing, social media, website maintenance, advertising, etc., plus any additional avenues deemed appropriate.

References

References may be called regarding the satisfaction of services rendered by the proposing applicant.

Proposers must furnish a reference list of at least four customers for whom they have performed similar services. Non-profit entities may provide a detailed listing of field experience to fulfill this requirement and four references with whom they have partnered for the provision of these types of services.

VI. CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS AND FINAL AGREEMENT

In order to create a manageable contract for promotion, the tourism marketing services contract will be a two-year agreement (based on yearly funding appropriations by the City Council estimated at \$164,000 per year) with an annual performance review and an option for a 1-year extension (for a three-year maximum agreement). At the end of the three-year period, a new RFP will be issued.

The contract start date will be the beginning of the fiscal year, October 1, 2013. Given the short timeframe from selection until estimated contract start, once a responder is selected, the agreement including Scope of Work, payment terms, etc. will need to be negotiated expeditiously.

VII. MISCELLANEOUS

- a. Please refer to Appendix A for standard requirements.
- b. Please refer to Appendix B for insurance requirements.

APPENDIX A

Standard Requirements for “Request for Proposals”

1. Right to Protest

Any actual or prospective bidder who is affirmed in connection with the solicitation of award of a contract may seek resolution of his/her complaints by contacting the Purchasing Manager.

2. No Corrections

Once a competitive proposal is submitted, the City shall not accept any request by any proposer to correct errors or omissions in any calculations or competitive price submitted.

3. Openness of Procurement Process

Written competitive proposals, other submissions, correspondence, and all records made thereof, as well as negotiations conducted pursuant to this RFP, shall be handled in compliance with Chapters 119 and 285 Florida Statutes. The City gives no assurance as to the confidentiality of any portion of any proposal once submitted.

4. No Collusion

By offering a submission to the RFP, the proposer certifies the proposer has not divulged to, discussed or compared his/her competitive proposal with other proposers and has not colluded with any other proposers or parties to this competitive proposal whatsoever.

5. Informality Waiver/Rejection of Bids

The City reserves the right to reject any responses and to waive any irregularity, variance or informality whether technical or substantial in nature, in keeping with the best interest of the City.

6. Appropriations Clause

The City, as an entity of government, is subject to the appropriation of funds by its legislative body in an amount sufficient to allow continuation of its performance in accordance with the terms and conditions of this contract for each and every fiscal year following the fiscal year in which this contract is executed and entered into and for which this contract shall remain in effect. Upon notice that sufficient funds are not available in the subsequent fiscal years, the City shall thereafter be released of all terms and other conditions.

7. **Public Entity Crime**

Pursuant to Florida Statute 287-132-133, effective July 1, 1989, the City of Clearwater, as a public entity, may not accept any proposal from, award any contract to, or transact any business in excess of the threshold amount provided in Section 287.017, F.S., for Category Two (currently \$35,000) with any person or affiliate on the convicted vendor list for a period of 36 months from the date that person or affiliate was placed on the convicted vendor list unless that person or affiliate has been removed from the list pursuant to Section 287.133 (3)(f), F.S. If you submit a proposal in response to this request, you are certifying that Florida Statute 287.132 and 287.133 does not restrict your submission.

APPENDIX B

Insurance Requirements

The proposer shall, at its own cost and expense, acquire and maintain (and cause any contractors and subcontractors, if applicable, to acquire and maintain) during the term with the City, sufficient insurance to adequately protect the respective interest of the parties. Coverage shall be obtained with a carrier having an AM Best Rating of A-VII or better. Specifically the Proposer must carry the following minimum types and amounts of insurance on an occurrence basis or in the case of coverage that cannot be obtained on an occurrence basis, then coverage can be obtained on a claims-made basis with a minimum three (3) year tail following the termination or expiration of this Agreement:

- 1) **Comprehensive General Liability** Insurance on an “occurrence” basis in an amount not less than \$1,000,000 combined single-limit Bodily Injury Liability and Property Damage Liability. If Commercial General Liability Insurance or other form with a general aggregate limit is used, either the general aggregate limit shall apply separately to this Agreement or the general aggregate limit shall be twice the required occurrence limit.
- 2) **Business Automobile Liability** insurance in the amount of at least **\$1,000,000** per accident combined single limit, for bodily injury and property damage for any owned, non-owned, hired, or borrowed automobile.
- 3) **Workers’ Compensation** Insurance will obtained and maintained during the life of this contract in accordance with the laws of the State for all of the Proposer’s employees employed within the scope of this Agreement. Coverage should include Voluntary Compensation and U.S. Longshoremen’s and Harbor Worker’s Act coverage where applicable.
- 4) **Employer’s Liability** in the amount of \$100,000 each employee, each accident, and \$100,000 each employee/\$500,000 policy limit for disease, and which meets all state and federal laws. Coverage must be applicable to employees, contractors, and subcontractors, if any.
- 5) **Professional Liability/Malpractice/Errors or Omissions** insurance, as appropriate for the type of business engaged in by the Proposer, shall be purchased and maintained by the Proposer with minimum limits of \$1,000,000 per occurrence.

Additional Insured:

The City is to be specifically included as an additional insured on all liability coverage described above except for the Workers' Compensation and Employer's Liability coverage's.

Notice of Cancellation or Restriction:

All policies of insurance must be endorsed to provide the City of Clearwater with a thirty-day (30) notice of cancellation or restriction.

Certificates of Insurance/Certified Copies of Policies:

The Proposer, if selected, will provide the City with a Certificate or Certificates of Insurance showing the existence of coverage as required by the Agreement. In addition, the Proposer will provide to the City, if asked in writing, certified copies of all policies of insurance. The Proposer will maintain the required coverage with a current Certificate or Certificates of Insurance throughout the term of the Agreement with the City. New certificates and new certified copies of policies shall be provided to the City whenever any policy is renewed, revised, or obtained from other insurers.

The address where such certificates and certified policies shall be sent or delivered is as follows:

**City of Clearwater
Attention: City Clerk
P.O. Box 4748
Clearwater, FL 33758-4748**

Hold Harmless:

The Proposer shall defend, indemnify, save and hold the City harmless from any and all claims, suits, judgments and liability for death, personal injury, bodily injury, or property damage arising directly or indirectly from any performance under the Agreement, including legal fees, court costs, or other legal expenses. Proposer acknowledges that it is solely responsible for complying with the terms of the Agreement or a purchase order or contract arising out of the Agreement.

Written Agreement/Contract:

Any party providing services or products to the City will be expected to enter into a written agreement, contract or purchase order with the City that incorporates, either in writing or by reference, all of the pertinent provisions relating to insurance and insurance requirements as contained herein. A failure to do so may, at the sole discretion of the City, disqualify any Party from performing services or selling products to the City provided, however, the City reserves the right to waive any such requirements.