

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS,
WALTON COUNTY, FLORIDA
REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
For
Public Relations for the Walton County
Tourism Department**

RFP NO: 22-034

The Board of County Commissioners, Walton County, Florida (the “County”) through the Walton County Tourist Development Council is seeking proposals from experienced and qualified public relations firms to develop and execute a national public relations strategy that would support the marketing of Walton County in Northwest Florida to the consumer and travel trade in key markets throughout the United States.

RFP DEADLINE: AUGUST 18, 2022, NO LATER THAN 3:30 PM LOCAL TIME AND WILL OPEN IMMEDIATELY THEREAFTER.

LATE SUBMITTALS RECEIVED AFTER THE FOREMENTIONED DEADLINE DATE, EITHER BY MAIL, OR OTHERWISE, WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED. THE TIME OF RECEIPT WILL BE DETERMINED BY THE TIME RECEIVED IN THE PURCHASING AGENT’S OFFICE. IT IS THE SOLE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE FIRM FOR ASSURING THAT THE RFP IS RECEIVED IN THE PURCHASING OFFICE BY THE DESIGNATED DATE AND TIME. NO FAXED, ELECTRONIC OR ORAL RFP WILL BE ACCEPTED.

OUR AREA IS NOT A DESIGNATED OVERNIGHT FED EX DELIVERY LOCATION. OUR OFFICE IS CLOSED ON FRIDAYS AND ON JULY 4TH, 2022. PROPOSER IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DELIVERY OF ITS SUBMITTAL TO OUR OFFICE.

To be considered, Firm/Team must submit original on thumb drive along with one (1) hard copy of proposal in a sealed envelope or package, clearly marked with the Firm/Team’s name and address, and the words “**RFP 22-034 PUBLIC RELATIONS FOR WALTON COUNTY TOURISM DEPARTMENT**” addressed to:

Office of Central Purchasing
176 Montgomery Circle
DeFuniak Springs, Florida 32435
850-892-8176

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SECTION 1 – INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background:

Walton County

Located along Northwest Florida’s Gulf Coast, Walton County is renowned for its sugar-white sand beaches and turquoise waters. The Choctawhatchee Bay bisects the county, creating two unique, yet charming destinations. The Gulf front, south of the bay, is comprised of 16 beach neighborhoods stretching over 26 miles of pristine coastline. These neighborhoods include: Seascape, Miramar, Sandestin, Dune Allen, Gulf Place, Santa Rosa, Blue Mountain, Grayton Beach, WaterColor, Seaside, Seagrove, WaterSound, Alys Beach, Seacrest, Rosemary Beach, and Inlet Beach. Northern Walton County is known for its rich history and small-town charm. Municipalities include Freeport, DeFuniak Springs and Paxton.

More than 40 percent of the land in South Walton is preserved through four state parks and the 15,000-acre Point Washington State Forest. The area is also home to the largest concentration of rare coastal dune lakes in the world. Hiking, biking, kayaking, paddle boarding and fishing are popular pastimes. Visitors to the area enjoy world-class accommodations, challenging golf, eclectic shops, trendy art galleries, live music and award-winning dining.

South Walton’s Brand Promise:

South Walton provides visitors with a relaxing escape: an upscale yet casual place to unwind and rejuvenate. Charm and scenic beauty define our stretch of Northwest Florida’s Gulf Coast, and our white sand beaches and turquoise waters offer a natural setting, where visitors feel comfortable. We deliver an unforgettable experience, filled with lasting memories.

For more information on South Walton, visit our website: www.visitsouthwalton.com

Beyond the Beach

In November 2020, voters in Walton County passed a referendum that added the northern portion of Walton County as a taxing district, creating additional opportunities to expand the county’s tourism outreach.

The “Beyond the Beach” experiences north of the Choctawhatchee Bay are diverse, ranging from historic walking tours around Lake DeFuniak to exploring the backwaters, rivers and lakes that challenge the most seasoned angler. Divers can even experience

Morrison Springs, a natural spring that attracts thousands of divers annually due to its cool waters and breathtaking vistas.

The expansion of the tourism footprint calls for careful, and well-thought-out public relations efforts and strategies.

1.2 Campaign Parameters:

Services: The Walton County Tourism Department is looking for a firm to develop a strategy that utilizes public relations tactics to secure earned media in appropriate print, broadcast, and interactive outlets. This strategy should not cover advertising, direct marketing, or other forms of direct-to-consumer outreach mechanisms including social campaigns. The Tourism Department has a national advertising campaign; this national PR campaign should complement that effort, and focus heavily on promoting non-peak seasons (September – February visitation).

Focus: During the next year, the public relations missions should promote South Walton, and Walton County as a whole, as a premier tourist destination within its target markets, nationally including but not limited to **Atlanta, Houston, Dallas/Ft. Worth, Nashville, Birmingham, and New Orleans. Emerging markets also shall receive attention including Chicago, Charlotte, Denver, St. Louis and New York.** (See Attachment A)

Compensation Structure:

Monthly service hours are expected to be at a minimum of 80 hours. Compensation will be negotiated by advance agreement at a flat monthly amount provided that sufficient, approved service hours are documented. Some allowances can be made for out-of-pocket expenses and limited travel expenses if an inclusive amount is not agreed upon. An existing contingency budget of approximately 160 hours is planned beyond the monthly service hours and is subject to the Tourism Department Director's discretion.

Timeframe: The contract for this initial campaign will be for October 2022 – September 2023 with the option to be extended for up to two additional years, through one-year renewals at the discretion of the County and based on the performance of the firm selected.

1.3 Target Audiences:

The target market for South Walton is predominantly upscale households with an average annual HHI of \$175K and age 35-64; and age 65%+ with net worth exceeding \$1MM. Efforts will relate to households in these demographic groups who currently live outside the tri-county region centered around Walton County in Florida.

Other targets are comprised of niche audiences including culinary, weddings/anniversaries, families, eco-tourism, girlfriend getaways, cultural events and entertainment and travel trade (incentive travel, meeting planners, travel agents and AAA).

1.4 Media:

Proposals should be presented for securing earned media in outlets that include (but should not be limited to) travel, eco-adventure, lifestyle, culinary, architectural, golf and other leisure publications serving national markets. Qualifications and previous experience that utilize broadcast and online outlets should also be included in the response.

SECTION 2 – SCOPE OF WORK

2.1 Primary Objectives:

The Walton County Tourism Department has established the following objectives for its public relations campaign. All applicants are asked to provide a detailed outline including strategies and tactics as to how these goals will be accomplished. Strategies must be based on public relations principles and practices and should NOT include advertising and other paid promotions. (See Attachment C)

- Position South Walton, and Walton County as a whole, as a premier brand for this tourist destination with consumer audiences both nationally and in our top markets.
- Heighten awareness for South Walton’s amenities with niche audiences including bridal, couples, culinary, eco-tourists, families, business travel and art enthusiasts.
- Heighten general consumer awareness of South Walton, and Walton County as a whole, as a premier location for leisure trips.
- Heighten general travel trade appreciation of South Walton as a collection of choice locations for signature meetings, groups and incentives.
- Position South Walton as an ideal vacation destination for non-peak travel times leading to increased visitation during shoulder season months (September-February).
- Reinforce the brand of South Walton and its 16 neighborhoods in Northwest Florida.

- Specifically accomplish phone outreach and pitching, distribute releases and secure coverage by targeted media.
- Directly contribute to Tourism Department communication, emergency, stakeholder and strategic plans, as requested.
- Support the Tourism Department 24/7 with counsel and assistance. Produce regular reports to document and measure success including Advertising Value Equivalency (AVE) for key coverage.

2.2 Requirements:

All applicants must meet the following requirements and criteria in order to submit a proposal.

- Firms must be recognized by an independent source as a firm specializing in public relations, especially the travel and tourism sector. There are numerous independent sources, including O’Dwyers, PR Week, World Travel & Tourism Council, and Hospitality Sales among others that rate/recognize PR firms for their expertise.
- Firms must be a full-service public relations company with experience representing national destinations, hotels & resorts, amenities and/or attractions.
- Firms must have strong media relationships with travel writers and editors.
- Firms must have experience working with a variety of media including broadcast, print, online and social media. The Tourism Department is not looking for media lists but would like interested firms to outline some of their media relationships. The Tourism Department also asks that interested firm’s highlight any articles generated that resulted in increased visitation for the destination as well as any experience in using social media to build loyalty and visitation.
- Firms must have experience collaborating and creating synergized campaigns with other marketing partners including research firms, ad agencies and internet firms.
- Firms must have experience in the following areas: crisis communications and branding.
- Firms will be evaluated based on the overall quality of the submitted proposal and how well it addresses the scope of services.

- Firms must demonstrate and document accomplishments through past and current efforts, to include case studies, current campaigns, media equivalences, and crisis messaging.
- Firms must include experience levels and abilities of individuals that will comprise the team responsible for scope and account service.
- Firms demonstrating familiarity with/success in earning coverage for South Walton/Walton County and/or South Walton/Walton County based businesses will be given preference. Please highlight any familiarity that team members who will be assigned to the account have with the area.

2.3 Proposal Format:

Firms who meet the above requirements and are interested in pursuing this work are asked to present their recommended plan in a single 3-ring binder. In order to ensure sufficient and comparable information on the four criteria that will be used to select a firm, the Walton County Tourism Department requires that all proposals adhere to the following format:

Part I. General description of the firm:

The description of the firm shall include each of the requirements outlined above and how the firm meets/exceeds these standards.

Part II. Strategic Overview:

The firm shall present the general methods and tactics it would implement to accomplish the objectives of this campaign.

Part III. Creative Approach:

The firm shall present specific ideas on how it would approach the following PR challenges that would be part of the South Walton/Walton County campaign: (1) maintain visibility of South Walton and Walton County as a premier tourist destination within targeted markets; (2) promote the shoulder season program to increase visitation from September through May; (3) introduce South Walton as a premier beach vacation destination and Walton County as a cultural, historical, and architectural destination to new markets, fast-growing markets, and audiences that may not be familiar with this region of Florida, such as locations with new air service. This presentation is meant to illustrate the capacity of submitting firms to generate strategy and creative ideas to promote the area's collection of

16 beach neighborhoods and historical communities as one premier destination. It will not be viewed as a specific binding tactical approach.

Part IV. Costs and Anticipated Results:

The firm shall propose an annual budget and describe its approach to account serving. Firms shall outline how they will evaluate Return on Investment (ROI) and the specific results they anticipate will be achieved under all budgets. Firms are encouraged to propose a fee arrangement that is tied to meeting or exceeding goals. Reference Attachment B “*Consultant Reimbursement Guidelines*” for relative information.

Part V. Account Team: The firm shall present information on the background of the proposed account team members for the destination, including a list of similar accounts that each team member services currently and relevant past clients. This will include a breakdown of the estimated hours each team member would dedicate to the account. The proposal shall include information about only those individuals who will be directly responsible for servicing the account; do not include individuals who will be involved only slightly (if at all) on the account.

SECTION 3 PROCUREMENT RULES AND INFORMATION:

3.1 Contact Person:

James Walters
Purchasing Manager
176 Montgomery Circle
DeFuniak Springs, FL 32435
850-892-8176
email: waljames@co.walton.fl.us

All technical questions regarding this Request should be directed in writing, preferably by email to the Purchasing Manager. Questions shall be submitted no later than 12:00 noon local time on August 11th, 2022. Questions submitted after that date and time will not be answered. **DIRECTING QUESTIONS TO ANY OTHER COUNTY STAFF, OR ANY OTHER PERSON IS PROHIBITED AND WILL RESULT IN SUBMITTAL BEING DISQUALIFIED.** The Purchasing Manager and County staff will review and answer questions. If applicable, answers citing the question(s) asked but not identifying the questioner will be published on the County’s website. Failure to submit requests in writing by the specified time shall not be grounds for a protest. Note: Written requirements in the

Request or its amendments are binding, but any oral communications between you and us are not.

3.2 Calendar of Events:

Listed below are the important actions and dates/times by which the actions must be taken or completed. If the County finds it necessary to change any of these dates/times, it will be accomplished by addendum. All listed times are local time in DeFuniak Springs, Florida.

<u>DATE/TIME</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
July 20th, 2022,	Advertised
August 11th, 2022, no later than 12:00 Noon	Last Day for Questions
August 11th, 2022,	Q&A Posted Online
August 18th, 2022, no later than 3:30 PM local time	RFP Close Date
August 29th, 2022 (tentative) 9:00 AM local time	Review Committee
September 13 th , 2022 (tentative)	BCC Award

3.3 Submission of Proposals:

Each Proposal response should be prepared simply and economically, providing straight forward, concise delineations of firm’s capabilities to satisfy the requirements of this Request for Proposals. Fancy bindings, colored displays, and promotional material are not required. Emphasis is on completeness and clarity of content.

3.4 RFP Opening:

Proposals are due at the time and date specified in the paragraph entitled “Calendar of Events.” The name of all firms submitting their qualifications shall be posted in the RFP package at the Office of Central Purchasing. Proposals received late will not be considered.

3.5 Disposals of RFP:

All RFP submittals become the property of the County and will be a matter of record.

3.6 Rules for Withdrawal:

Submittals may be modified or withdrawn by an appropriate document duly executed (in the manner that an RFP must be executed) and delivered to the place where proposals are to be submitted at any time prior to the opening of RFP.

Any submitted proposal shall remain open and subject to acceptance for a period of sixty

(60) calendar days after the date of the opening, but the County at its sole discretion may release any RFP.

3.7 Rejection of Proposals:

The County reserves the right to accept or reject any proposals as may be deemed necessary by the County to be in its best interest. The County further reserves the right to waive any and all formalities, and reserves the right to reject all nonconforming, unresponsive proposals. The County reserves the right to reject the proposal of any firm or individual if the County believes that it would not be in the best interest of the County to make an award to that firm or individual, because the proposal is not responsive or responsible, or firm or individual is unqualified or of doubtful financial ability, or fails to meet any other pertinent standard or criteria established by the County.

3.8 Verbal Instructions:

No negotiations, decisions, or actions shall be initiated or executed by the firm as a result of any discussions with any County employee. Only those communications from firms, which are signed, and in writing will be recognized by the County as duly, authorized expressions on behalf of the firm. *Any and all communication with County Commissioners or County staff other than the Office of Central Purchasing is prohibited.*

3.9 Indemnification:

Consultant shall indemnify and hold harmless the County and its officers and employees 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 Consultant and other persons employed or utilized by the Consultant, in the performance of the contract, or the failure of Consultant to comply with public records requests made pursuant to Section 3.17 herein. The Consultant shall not indemnify or hold harmless the County for any liabilities, damages, losses, or costs caused solely by the negligence of the County, its employees, officers, directors, or agents. Nothing herein is intended to serve as a waiver of sovereign immunity by County to which sovereign immunity applies. Nothing herein shall be construed as consent by County to be sued by third parties in any matter arising out of any contract.

3.10 Notices:

Any notices to be given under a Contract shall be given by United States Mail, addressed

to Firm at its address stated therein, and to the County at its address stated therein. Additional notice may also be given by email in which case it shall be deemed that notice was provided on the date said email was received. The party providing notice by email shall confirm that the email was received by the other party.

3.11 Public Entity Crimes:

Firms must sign and complete a Public Entity Crime Sworn Statement as defined under Section 287.133(3) (a), F.S. A person or affiliate who has been placed on the convicted vendor list following a conviction of a public entity crime may not submit a proposal on a contract to provide any goods or services to a public entity, may not submit a proposal on a contract with a public entity for the construction or repair of a public building or public work, may not submit proposals on leases of real property to a public entity, may not be awarded or perform work as a consultant, supplier, or subcontractor, under a contract with any public entity, and may not transact business with any public entity in excess of the threshold amount provided in Section 287.017, for Category Two for a period of 36 months from the date of being placed on the convicted vendor list.

3.12 Drug Free Workplace:

Firms must complete the County's Drug Free Workplace Certification form, attached and made a part of the RFP. According to Walton County policy, preference shall be given to businesses with drug-free workplace programs. Whenever two or more proposals, which are equal with respect to price, quality, and service, are received by the state or by any political subdivision for the procurement of commodities or contractual services, a proposal received from a business that certified that it has implemented a drug-free workplace program shall be given preference in the award process. Established procedures for processing tie proposals will be followed if none of the tied vendors have a drug-free workplace program.

3.13 Insurance Requirements:

The selected firm shall purchase and maintain through the Contract period workers compensation, comprehensive general liability (occurrence form), comprehensive automobile liability, professional liability, including errors and omissions coverage if applicable, and other insurance as is appropriate for the Project being performed hereunder by firm, its employees, subcontractors or agents. The amounts and types of workers compensation, comprehensive general liability (occurrence form), and comprehensive automobile liability insurance shall conform to the following minimum requirements:

1. Worker's Compensation Coverage must apply for all employees

and statutory limits in compliance with the applicable state and federal laws unless Contractor provides a current Florida Workers Compensation exemption certificate. In addition, the policy must include the following:

- a. Employer's Liability with a minimum limit per accident in accordance with statutory requirements.
 - b. Notice of Cancellation and/or Restriction. The endorsed to provide the County with thirty (30) days' written notice of cancellation and/or restriction.
2. Comprehensive General Liability Coverage must include:
- a. \$1,000,000 combined limit per occurrence for bodily injury, personal injury and property damage. If contract is less than \$100,000.00, then general liability insurance requirement is \$300,000.00.
 - b. Contractual coverage applicable to this specific contract, including any hold harmless and/or indemnification agreement.
 - c. County is to be specifically included as an additional insured.
 - d. Notice of Cancellation and/or Restriction. The policy must be endorsed to provide the County with thirty (30) days' written notice of cancellation and/or restriction.
3. Comprehensive Automobile Liability Coverage must be afforded on a form no more restricted than the latest edition of the Comprehensive Automobile Liability Policy filed by the Insurance Services Office and must include:
- a. \$300,000 combined single limit per accident for bodily injury and property damage.
 - b. Owned Vehicles.
 - c. Hired and Non-Owned Vehicles.
 - d. Employee Non-Ownership.
 - e. County is to be specifically included as an additional insured.
 - f. Notice of Cancellation and/or Restriction. The policy must be endorsed to provide the County with thirty (30) days' written notice of cancellation and/or restriction.
4. Professional Liability Coverage must include:
- a. Minimum limits of \$1,000,000 per occurrence

- and in the aggregate for claims of malpractice, negligence, error and omissions.
- b. Notice of Cancellation and/or Restriction. The Policy must be endorsed to provide County with thirty (30) days' prior notice of cancellation and/or restriction of coverage by changed exclusion.

Certificates of Insurance evidencing the insurance coverage specified in this Article shall be submitted to the County with the executed Contract. The Certificates of Insurance shall be filed with the County before this Contract is deemed approved by the County. The required Certificates of Insurance not only shall name types of policies provided, but also shall refer specifically to this Contract. All the policies of insurance so required of Vendor shall be endorsed to include as additional insured the County, its officers, employees, and agents, except for Worker's Compensation. If the initial insurance policy expires prior to completion of the Project, renewal Certificates of Insurance shall be furnished thirty (30) days prior to the date of the policy expiration.

The purchase of any of the above-referenced insurance policies shall not release the Vendor or any Surety created by this Contract from any obligation, warranty or guarantee provided in this Contract.

The Insurance Company(ies) shall be authorized to conduct business in the State of Florida.

Any risk of loss of completed work on the Project, or work in progress on the Project, equipment and material stored on or off the Project Site, or in transit, shall be borne by the Firm through the date of final completion for the Project.

3.14 Protest:

Any person or entity whose proposal is rejected, in whole or in part, or who submits a proposal but is not awarded the contract, may protest such decision. Written notice of intent to file a protest must be submitted with the Purchasing Manager or Chief Financial Officer within twenty-four (24) hours after the Board's declaration of its intention with regard to an award. Written protest must be submitted to the Purchasing Manager or Chief Financial Officer within ten calendar days after filing written notice of intent. Each written protest must be accompanied by a protest bond in the form of a certified check, cashier's check or money order made payable to the Board of County Commissioners, in an amount equal to 1% of the protestor's proposal received by the County, but in no case less than \$500.00.

3.15 Blackout Period:

The period between the end of the advertisement for the Invitations to Bid, Request for Proposal, and Request for Qualifications, or any other competitive solicitation and the contract award, or any resulting bid protest is resolved, or the solicitation is otherwise canceled is referred to as the blackout period. During the blackout period any communication regarding The forementioned solicitations are prohibited between the bidder (or its agents or representatives) or other entity with the potential for a financial interest in the award (of their respective agents or representatives) regarding such competitive solicitation, and any County Commissioner or County employee selection committee member or other persons authorized to act on behalf of the Board including the County's architect, engineer, or their subconsultants, or anyone designated to provide a recommendation to award a particular contract, other than Purchasing Division staff. Each competitive solicitation shall provide notice of the blackout period.

Exception to the blackout period;

The blackout period shall not apply to:

- a. Communications at any public proceeding or meeting, including pre-bid conferences, selection committee presentations or pre-award meetings.
- b. Communications during contract negotiations between designated County employees and the intended contract awardee.
- c. Communication with a vendor by a Purchasing Division employee following the bid opening to clarify the vendor's bid or intended scope of services.
- d. Communication following the filing of a protest between the protesting party and the Purchasing Division, County Administrator's Office and County Attorney's Office, during the dispute resolution process.
- e. Purchases exempt from competitive selection, sole source procurements, and single sources, procurements, and emergency procurements, as defined in Walton County Board of County Commissioners Purchasing Policy and Procedure manual.
- f. Communications with existing vendors in the performance of an existing contract.

3.16 Cost of Preparing RFP:

The County is not liable for any costs incurred by a firm in responding to this RFP.

3.17 Public Access

- A. A request to inspect or copy public records relating to this Contract must be made directly to the County. If the County does not possess the requested records, it shall

immediately notify the Consultant of the request, and the Consultant must provide the records to the County or allow the records to be inspected or copied within a reasonable time (§119.0701(3)). If Consultant fails to provide the public records within a reasonable time, Consultant may be subject to penalties under §119.10, F.S.

- B. Consultant shall comply with the requirements of Florida's Public Records law in accordance with Section 119.0701, Florida Statutes, the Consultant shall (1) Keep and maintain public records required by the public agency to perform the service; (2) Upon request from the public agency's custodian of public records, provide the public agency with a copy of the requested records or allow the records to be inspected or copied within a reasonable time at a cost that does not exceed the cost provided under Florida's Public Records law or as otherwise provided by law; (3) Ensure that public records that are exempt or confidential and exempt from public records disclosure requirements are not disclosed except as authorized by law for the duration of the contract term and following completion of this contract if the Consultant does not transfer the records to the public agency; and (4) Upon completion of the contract, transfer, at no cost, to the public agency all public records in possession of the Consultant or keep and maintain public records required by the public agency to perform the service. If the Consultant transfers all public records to the public agency upon completion of the contract, the consultant shall destroy any duplicate public records that are exempt or confidential and exempt from public records disclosure requirements. If the Consultant keeps and maintains public records upon completion of this contract, the Consultant shall meet all applicable requirements for retaining public records. All records stored electronically must be provided to the public agency, upon request from public agency's custodian of public records, in a format that is compatible with the information technology system of the public agency.

C. IF CONSULTANT HAS QUESTIONS REGARDING THE APPLICATION OF CHAPTER 119, FLORIDA STATUTES, TO CONSULTANT'S DUTY TO PROVIDE PUBLIC RECORDS RELATING TO THIS AGREEMENT, CONSULTANT SHALL CONTACT THE CUSTODIAN OF PUBLIC RECORDS AT:

Genara Roop, Records Management Liaison Officer
161 E. Sloss Avenue
DeFuniak Springs, Florida
32433 850-892-8110
publicrecords@co.walton.fl.us

3.18 Sales and Use Tax

The firm agrees that any and all applicable federal, state, and local sales and use taxes that are incurred by the firm are included in the stated bid price for the Project. The County is tax exempt from federal excise and state sales tax.

3.19 Addendums

The County may issue Addendums to modify the RFP as deemed appropriate. Addendums and clarification to this RFP along with an Addendum Acknowledgement Form will be posted online on the County's website. The Addendum Acknowledgement Form shall be signed by an authorized company representative, dated, and returned with each firm's submittal responsive to this RFP.

3.20 Representation

The firm represents to the County that:

- A. The firm is properly certified and licensed; is solvent financially; is experienced in and competent to provide the services.
- B. The firm is familiar with all Federal, State, Local or other regulatory laws, ordinances, and regulations, which in any manner whatsoever, may affect the provision of services.

3.21 E-Verify

Firm shall utilize the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's E-Verify system to verify the employment eligibility of; (a) all persons employed by the Consultant during the term of the Agreement to perform employment duties within Florida; and (b) all persons (including subcontractors) assigned by the Consultant to perform work pursuant to the Agreement.

3.22 Lobbying Prohibition

No funds received pursuant to this Agreement may be expended for lobbying the Florida Legislature, judicial branch, or any state agency, in accordance with Section 216.347 Florida Statutes.

3.23 Unauthorized Aliens

The County shall consider the employment by any contractor of unauthorized aliens a violation of Section 274A of the Immigration and Nationality Act. If the Consultant knowingly employs unauthorized aliens, such violation will be cause for unilateral cancellation of any agreement resulting from this RFP.

3.24 Bonds:

All proposals shall be accompanied by a bid security in an amount of ONE THOUSAND AND 00/100THS DOLLARS (\$1,000.00) made payable to Board of County Commissioners, Walton County, and in the form of a certified bank check or bid bond, issued by a surety authorized to conduct business in the State of Florida and having an A.M. Best rating of V-A or better and who is listed on the United States Treasury Department's T-list as acceptable to issue bonds for the applicable dollar amount.

The bid security of the Successful Proposer will be retained until such Proposer has executed the Contract, and has furnished the required Certificates of Insurance. If the Successful Proposer fails to execute and deliver the Contract, or furnish Certificate of Insurance, within five (5) business days after the Notice of Award, the County may annul the Notice of Award and the bid security of that Proposer will be forfeited. The proposal security of other proposers may be retained by the County until ten (10) calendar days after the Notice of Award, whereupon proposal security furnished by such proposers will be returned.

Failure to submit an appropriate proposal security shall result in the proposal being declared unresponsive.

SECTION 4 – EVALUATION OF PROPOSALS:

4.1 Evaluation Criteria:

The Walton County Tourist Development Council will select a firm to execute its PR campaign based on the following factors:

- 1. Practice Group that specializes in travel & tourism – 25 Pts**
 - Strategic thinking & concepts to service the organization and achieve stated scope (includes how well the proposal was produced and how well it addresses the scope)
- 2. Recent Experience – 20 Pts**
 - Demonstrated and documented accomplishments through past and current efforts (includes case studies, current campaigns, media equivalencies, crisis messaging)
- 3. Capacity and Capability – 20 Pts**
 - Experience levels and abilities of individuals that will comprise the team responsible for scope and account service, past accomplishment.
- 4. Familiarity and Value – 35 Pts**
 - Resources with established relevance to this tourism product (15 pts) (considers direct connections to Florida, coastal destinations, South Walton, Walton County, national tourism, etc.)

- Creative and added value approaches proposed (10 Pts)
(considers dynamic, new, unpaid, proven and collaborative efforts)
- Potential ROI based on general proposal and stated fees (10 Pts)
(considers overall value, feasibility of proposal and affordability of charges)

Selected firms will be notified if interviews are required. If interviews are required, selected firms will be invited to an interview before an appointed review committee. The committee will then present their recommendation to the Walton County Tourist Development Council. Once approved by the TDC Council, a recommendation will be made to the Walton County Board of County Commissioners.

SECTION 5 - AWARD OF CONTRACT:

The Board will award this RFP to the MOST responsible responsive Proposer with the best cumulative price that meets the County’s needs. In the event the best cumulative Proposer is found to be non-responsive, the County may proceed to the next best cumulative responsive Proposer and continue the award process.

5.1 Identical Tie Proposals:

In the event of a tie between identical proposals from this Request for Proposal, the Board of County Commissioners shall select the winning proposal in accordance with Florida law and in the best interest of the County.

SECTION 6 – TERM OF CONTRACT

6.1 Terms:

The term of this contract shall be for one (1) year, beginning on the date of its complete execution with an option to renew for two (2) additional terms of one (1) year each at the sole discretion of the County, unless earlier terminated by the Board of the County Commissioners.

6.2 Termination of Contract:

The County may terminate this Agreement at any time with or without cause, or with or without prior notice.

SECTION 7 – CONTENTS OF RFP

7.1 Contact for Contract Administration:

Firms shall return the Contact for Contract Administration Form. This shall be the firm's representative for the day-to-day activities of this contract.

7.2 Forms:

It is MANDATORY that vendor's return the Request for Qualification cover sheet with their submittal.

A representative who is authorized to contractually bind the vendor shall sign the attached forms.

It is MANDATORY that vendors return the Drug-Free Workplace Certification Form, Questionnaire Form, Unauthorized Aliens Form, Conflict of Interest Form, along with the Public Entity Crime Form

EXHIBIT A

SOUTH WALTON'S TOP MARKETS

Atlanta, GA
Birmingham, AL
Mobile, AL & Surrounding Gulf Coast
New Orleans, LA
Nashville, TN
Dallas, TX
Memphis, TN
Houston, TX
Baltimore/D.C.
St. Louis, MO
Chicago, IL
New York, NY
Indianapolis, IN

... and domestic markets with valued outlets seeking information on South Walton and Walton County, Florida.

The list of top markets maybe revised annually.

EXHIBIT B

WALTON COUNTY TOURIST DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL CONSULTANT REIMBURSEMENT GUIDELINES

1. Air Travel Standards. Consultants representing the Walton County Tourism Department should travel economy/tourist or full fare coach class when engaged in work-related travel on behalf of the tourism department. In order to keep reimbursement reasonable, air travel should be booked within two days of being notified by the tourism department of the need to travel to the destination.
2. Lodging. Consultants representing the Tourism Department should secure accommodations in business class hotels, or in other appropriate accommodations based on party size and purpose of travel (with approval of Tourism Department/Deputy Director of Communications).
3. Vehicle Rentals. The Tourism Department will reimburse rental of full-size vehicle, van or SUV, but not luxury-class vehicles.
4. Computer Research. Tourism Department will reimburse for actual cost.
5. Billed Hours. All invoices for work shall state the specific number of hours spent and the hourly rate of consultants and the task performed in sufficient detail to permit review of the time charged.
6. Incidental Charges. Tourism Department will reimburse for actual cost of reasonable incidental charges exclusive of markup for delivery charges, fax, reproduction, long distance telephone calls, postage and similar charges. However, backup documentation must be provided. A disbursement for regular intra-office copying is not considered compensable.
7. Travel to and from South Walton/Walton County. There will be no reimbursement for the consultant's local travel if consultant's offices are located in or within 50 miles of the Tourism Department office. Auto travel will be reimbursed at Walton County prevailing reimbursement rate at the time of travel.
8. Meals. Tourism Department will reimburse for reasonable meal expense while doing business on behalf of the destination as outlined in the Walton County [Board of County Commissioners Travel Policy](#), Part VIII - Meals. Reimbursement for meals must include an itemized receipt from the establishment as back-up documentation.
9. Miscellaneous. Tourism department will not reimburse for charges listed as

miscellaneous. All expenses must be identified, and backup documentation must be provided.

10. Invoices. Invoices for services rendered shall include all backup documentation in sufficient detail to permit review. Expenses exceeding these guidelines will not be considered compensable. Invoices are to be addressed as follows:

Walton County Tourism Department
Attention Finance Department
25777 U S Hwy 331 S.
Santa Rosa Beach, FL 32459

11. Billing Time. Tourism department will not pay for hourly time worked by consultants for preparing invoices, gathering receipts or documentation, or researching questions regarding invoices sent to Tourism Department.

Notes to Consultant/Vendor:

1. Visiting PR reps not hosting a journalist FAM trip should work directly with the Deputy Director of Communications to book/select appropriate accommodations.
2. Payment for incidental charges is the responsibility of the consultant/vendor.
3. Tourism Department will not reimburse long-distance calls made from hotel system.
4. Penalties may be incurred for not following hotel's Cancellation/No Show Policy, and Early Departure Fee Policy (if applicable), and will not be reimbursed.

If you have questions concerning these Guidelines, please contact:

Walton County Tourism Department
PO Box 25777
Santa Rosa Beach, FL 32459
Phone: 850-267-1216
Fax: 850-267-3943

EXHIBIT C

PROPOSED DATES 10/1/22 TO 9/30/23 ***PUBLIC RELATIONS SERVICES FOR THE WALTON COUNTY TOURISM*** ***DEPARTMENT***

Scope of Services

The account team will target identified key markets and identified regional and national media. There shall be regular media pitches, news release development and distribution, industry news monitoring, hosted in-destination journalist FAM trips and journalist deskside visits. The creation of crisis communication plans and media training will also be implemented. Regular reporting shall be accomplished including earned media and the related AVE.

The scope of work shall support positive awareness and favorably position South Walton and Walton County as upscale and diverse destinations, through:

Media Pitching Program

- Targeted media pitching, exploiting brand-centric appeal and newsworthy topics.
- Direct effort in select (core and emerging) markets to connect with representative media members and outlets (including, but not limited to, deskside visits);
 - Approximately three markets a year with 9+ direct engagements with qualifying outlets (level A, B or C).
- Trophy media placement pursuit;
 - Two nationally significant outlets will be agreed upon and targeted for major brand awareness coverage.
- Coordination of media for two to three group FAMs and multiple individual media tours annually.

Media Outreach & Maintenance

- Any media contacted on behalf of the Tourism Department must be included in regular reporting, including pitched, converted, qualified and even declined contacts.
- Manage media clippings to include AVE tracking, tagging the featured local businesses and preparing for distribution to those local partners.
- Correcting editorial for brand awareness, locational accuracy, factual statements, etc.

Qualifying Media

- Timely third-party evaluation and vetting of all editorial inquiries and related offers:
 - A. Trophy media – Maximum effort provided to accommodate national reach;
 - B. High value media - Consider for full effort to include custom/FAM media visit;
 - C. Core and emerging market value – Facilitate local hosts potentially;
 - D. Not currently budgeted for mission – Update information. Potentially notify local partners, no internal involvement;
- Other: Doesn't align with currently approved strategic plan – Graciously decline.

Crisis Communication

- Create a comprehensive crisis communication plan for the destination to ensure Visit South Walton/Walton County is prepared for, and responds effectively to, any emerging crisis, specifically natural disasters.
- Act as contingency, out-of-market satellite response team should local activities be significantly limited.
- Public relations crisis contingency support to include messaging, in-market personnel, media relations and media training for County or local industry staff;
 - Expenses related to any lasting crisis would be covered under special budget, outside basic scope.

Expectations and Strategy

- Proficiently demonstrate that firm resources can be effective in key markets (core and emerging) to include, but not limited to:
 - Atlanta
 - Dallas/Ft. Worth
 - Nashville
 - Birmingham
 - Houston
 - New Orleans
 - Memphis
 - Chicago
 - Montgomery
 - St. Louis
 - Indianapolis
 - Baltimore/D.C.
 - New York City
 - Louisville
- Provide competencies and experiences successfully conveying lifestyles including culinary, ecotourism, family, beach and special events.

- Align efforts with tactical demographic goals currently including:
 - Primary:
 - Household Income: \$175K+
 - Age: 35 to 64 years of age
 - Secondary:
 - Household Net worth: \$1M+
 - Age: 65+
 - Spring/Summer: Families
 - Remainder of the Year: Couples and Escapes
- Scope to include successes in niche markets including wedding and group meeting markets.
- Compliment official brand activations for maximum public reach and additional media involvement.
- In-person orientation each year for staff with scope responsibilities.
- Compose releases and contribute to Walton County Tourism Department, in-house produced communications and messaging.
- Support community relations and initiatives through collaborative work and support of Tourism Department staff.

Reporting

- Contribute to weekly agencies call with status updates.
- Comprehensive report with monthly invoices to include detailed service hours, expenses and activities.
- After-action ROI reports for special media events and strategies.
- Detailed monthly and annual activity reports.
- Annual strategic planning to include possible attendance but at minimum recommendation of goals and opportunities for short-term and long-term strategies to further the brand and economy of the destination.

PROPOSAL FEE

FIRM: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____

PHONE NUMBER: _____

EMAIL: _____

AUTHORIZED SIGNATURE:

FEE \$ _____

**INFORMATION SHEET
FOR TRANSACTIONS AND CONVEYANCES CORPORATE IDENTIFICATION**

The following information will be provided to the Walton County Legal Services for incorporation in legal **documents. It is, therefore, vital all information is accurate and complete. Please be certain all spelling, capitalization, etc. is exactly as registered with the state of federal government,**

(Please circle one)

Is this a Florida Corporation: Yes or No
If not a Florida Corporation,

In what state created: _____
Name as spelled in that State: _____

What Kind of corporation is it: “For Profit” or “Not for Profit”

Is it in good standing: Yes or No

Authorized to transact business In Florida: Yes or No

State of Florida Department of State of Certificate of Authority Document No: _____

Does it use a registered fictitious name: Yes or No

Name of Officers:

President: _____ Secretary: _____
Vice President: _____ Treasurer: _____
Director: _____ Director: _____
Other: _____ Other: _____

Name of Corporation (As used in Florida): (spelled exactly as it is registered with the state or federal government)

Corporate Address:

Post Office Box: _____
City, State, Zip _____
Street Address: _____
City, State, Zip: _____

(Please provide post office box and street address for mail and/or express delivery; also for recorded instruments involving land)

Federal Identification Number: (For all instruments to be recorded, taxpayer’s identification is needed) _____

Name of individual who will sign the instrument on behalf of the company:

(Upon Certification of Award, Contract shall be signed by the President or Vice-President. Any other officer shall have permission to sign via a resolution approved by the Board of Directors on behalf of the company. Awarded contractor shall submit a copy of the resolution together with the executed contract to the Office of Purchasing)

Title of the individual named above who will sign on behalf of the company: (Spelled exactly as it would appear on the instrument)

CONTACT FOR CONTRACT ADMINISTRATION

Designate one person authorized to conduct contract administration.

NAME: _____

TITLE: _____

COMPANY NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

TELEPHONE NUMBER: _____

FAX NUMBER: _____

SIGNATURE: _____

EMAIL: _____

PUBLIC ENTITY CRIMES

**Sworn Statement Under Section 287.133(3)(a),
Florida Statutes, on Public Entity Crimes**

This form must be signed in the presence of a Notary Public or other officer authorized to administer oaths:

This sworn statement is submitted to The Board of County Commissioners,

Walton County, Florida by _____
(print individual's name and title)

for _____
(print name of entity submitting sworn statement)

Whose business address is _____

and (if applicable) its Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN) is
_____ ; (if the entity has no FEIN, include the Social Security Number
of individual signing this sworn statement: _____).

I understand that a “public entity crime” as defined in Paragraph 287.133(l ((g), Florida Statutes, means a violation of any state or Federal law by a person with respect to an directly related to the transaction of business with any public entity or with an agency or political; subdivision of any other state or of the United States, including, but not limited to, any bid or contract for good or services to be provided to any public entity or an agency or political subdivision of any other state or of the United States and involving antitrust, fraud, theft, bribery, collusion, racketeering, Conspiracy, or material misrepresentation.

I understand that “convicted” or “conviction” as defined in Paragraph 287.133(l)(b), Florida Statutes, means a finding of guilt or a conviction of a public entity crime, with or without adjudication of guilt, in any federal or state trial court of record relating to charges brought by indictment or information after July 1, 1989, as a result of a jury verdict, non-jury trial, or entry of a plea of guilty or nolo contendere.

I understand that an “affiliate” as defined in Paragraph 287.133(l)(a) Florida Statutes, means:

A predecessor or successor of a person convicted of a public crime; or; an entity under the control of any natural person who is active in the management of the entity and who has been convicted of a public entity crime. The term “affiliate” includes those officers, directors, executives, partners, shareholders, employees, members, and agents who are active in the management of an affiliate. The ownership by one person of shares constituting a controlling interest in another person, or a pooling of equipment or income among persons when not for fair market value under an arm’s length agreement, shall be a prima facie case that one person controls another person. A person who knowingly enters into a joint venture with a person who has been convicted of a public entity crime in Florida during the preceding 36 months shall be considered an affiliate.

I understand that “person” as defined in Paragraph 287.133(l)(e), Florida Statutes, means any natural person or entity organized under the laws of any state or have the United States with the legal power to enter into binding contract and which bids or applies to bid on contracts for the provision of goods or services let by a public entity, or which otherwise transacts or applies to transact business with a public entity. The term “person” includes those officers, directors, executives, partners, shareholders, employees, members, and agents who are active in management of an entity.

Based on information and belief, the statement which I have marked below is true in relation to the entity submitting this sworn statement. [Indicate which statement applies.]

_____Neither the entity submitting this sworn statement, nor any of its officers, directors, executives, partners, shareholders, employees, members, or agents who are active in the management of the entity, nor any affiliate of the entity has been charged with and convicted of a public entity crime subsequent to July 1, 1989.

_____The entity submitting this sworn statement, or one or more of its officers, directors, executives, partners, shareholders, employees, members, or agents who are active in the management of the entity or an affiliate of the entity has been charged with and convicted of a public entity crime subsequent to July 1, 1989.

_____The entity submitting this sworn statement, or one or more of its officers, directors, executives, partners, shareholders, employees, members, or agents who are active in the management of the entity or an affiliate of the entity has been charged with and convicted of

a public entity crime subsequent to July 1, 1989. However, there has been a subsequent proceeding before a Hearing Officer of the State of Florida, Division of Administration Hearings and the Final Order entered by the Hearing Officer determined that it was not in the public interest to place the entity submitting this sworn statement on the convicted vendor list. [Attach a copy of the final order.]

I understand that the submission of this form to the contracting officer for the Public Entity identified in Paragraph ONE (#1) above is for that Public Entity only, and that this form is valid through December 31 of the calendar year in which it is filed. I also understand that I am required to inform the Public Entity prior to entering into a contract in excess of the threshold amount provided in Section 287.017, Florida Statutes, for category two of any change in the information contained in this form.

Name of Bidder

By: _____

Title: _____

STATE OF _____
COUNTY OF _____

Sworn to and subscribed before me the undersigned notary by means of physical presence or online notarization, this ___ day of _____, 20___, by _____, the _____ (insert title) of _____ (insert company name) with legal corporate authority, and who is personally known to me ____, or has produced the following identification as proof of identity: _____.

My Commission Expires:

Notary Public

Printed Notary Name
Commission Expires: _____

DRUG FREE WORKPLACE CERTIFICATION
(This form must be completed and attached to proposal)

Identical tie bids: preference shall be given to businesses with drug-free workplace programs. Whenever two or more bids which are equal with respect price, quality, and service are received by the state or by any political subdivision for the procurement of commodities or contractual services, a bid received from a business that certified that it has implemented a drug-free workplace program shall be given preference in the award process. Established procedures for processing tie bids will be followed in none of the tied vendors have a drug-free workplace program. In order to have a drug-free workplace program, a business shall:

- 1. Publish a statement notifying employees that the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession or use of a controlled substance is prohibited in the workplace specifying the actions that will be taken against employees for violations of such prohibition.**
- 2. Inform employees about the dangers of drug abuse in the workplace, the business's policy of maintaining a drug-free workplace, available drug counseling, rehabilitation providing employee assistance programs, and the penalties that may be imposed upon employees for drug abuse violations.**
- 3. Give each employee engaged in providing the commodities of contractual services that are under bid a copy of the statement specified in paragraph #1.**
- 4. In the statement specified in paragraph #1, notify the employees that, as a condition of working on the commodities or contractual services that are under bid, the employee will abide by the terms of the statement and will notify the employer of any conviction of or pleas of guilty or no contest to, and violation of Chapter 893 or of any controlled substance law of the United States or any state, for a violation occurring in the work place no later than five (5) days after such conviction.**
- 5. Impose a sanction on, or require the satisfactory participation in a drug abuse assistance or rehabilitation program if such is available in the employee's community, by any employee who is so convicted.**
- 6. Make a good faith effort to continue to maintain a drug-free workplace through implementation of this section.**

As the person authorized to sign this statement, I certify that this firm complies fully with the above requirements.

Company Name

Authorized Signature

Federal I.D. Number or SSN

Printed Name

**WALTON COUNTY
LOCAL PREFERENCE APPLICATION**

PROJECT NAME:	Public Relations for Walton County Tourism Department
RFP NO:	22-034

Name of Business: _____

Address: _____

City, State: _____ Zip code: _____

I hereby certify under penalty of perjury that my business qualifies as a local vendor/contractor in accordance with Walton County Purchasing Policies and Procedures, Procedure No: PP017.

- My business maintains its principal place of business within Walton County; OR

- My business has maintained a permanent place or places of business within Walton County and has employed people who live in Walton County on a regular and continuing basis for at least six (6) months prior to the advertising of this Request for Proposal.

Signature

Date: _____

Board of County Commissioners

Walton County, Florida

UNAUTHORIZED ALIENS

Inasmuch as the employment of unauthorized aliens is prohibited by §448.09, Florida Statutes. The County prohibits contracting with firms that knowingly utilize services of unauthorized aliens in the performance of contracts for goods or services with the County. Additionally, such firms may not knowingly contract with sub-contractors who utilize the services of unauthorized aliens.

By signing below the bidder swears or affirms that:

His/her company does not knowingly utilize the services of unauthorized aliens in the performance of contracts. The company agrees that the County may conduct random checks of personnel records as they pertain to this issue.

Violation of this requirement may result in immediate termination of the contract. Additionally, violation of this requirement may result in the company being prohibited from submitting bids/proposals for County contracts for a period of five years. (See Procedure PP-022, Walton County Purchasing Policies and Procedures Manual.)

Signature

Printed Name

Title

Date

STATE OF __ COUNTY OF _____

Sworn to and subscribed before me by means of _____ physical presence or _____ online notarization on this

_____ day of _____ 20_____.

Notary Public

My commission expires _____

CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURE FORM

For purposes of determining any possible conflict of interest, all bidders must disclose if any Walton County employee(s), elected official(s), or if any of its agencies is also an owner, corporate officer, agency, employee, etc., of their business.

Indicate either "YES" (a county employee, elected official, or agency is also associated with your business), or "NO". If yes, give person(s) name(s) and position(s) with your business.

YES _____ NO _____

NAME(S)	POSITION(S)

FIRM NAME:

BY (printed): _____

BY (signature): _____

TITLE: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE #: _____

E-MAIL: _____

DATE: _____

