



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP):

Public Relations Agency

August 2022

VISIT BELLEVUE WASHINGTON PUBLIC RELATIONS AGENCY

PURPOSE & BACKGROUND

Visit Bellevue serves as the official destination management organization for the City of Bellevue located in Washington State. Visit Bellevue is an operating division of the Bellevue Convention Center Authority (BCCA), a public corporation chartered by the City of Bellevue (the "City") and has been duly constituted pursuant to RCW 35.21.730 et seq. and Ordinance No. 4092 of the City OF Bellevue, Visit Bellevue's mission is to stimulate economic growth and development by increasing visitor and convention business while inspiring memorable visitor experiences. Visit Bellevue has issued this Request for Proposals (RFP) to solicit responses from service providers interested in and qualified to provide public relations agency services for Visit Bellevue for the period of 2023 & 2024.

OBJECTIVE

The objective of this program is to find a public relations agency that will partner with Visit Bellevue in providing agency services to build awareness and position Bellevue Washington as a premier visitor destination achieving the desired results and key performance indicators.

SPECIFICATIONS

Visit Bellevue is seeking a qualified partner agency with the required capabilities who has demonstrated experience and success within the tourism sector for destination management organizations.

SCOPE OF WORK

The scope of work will include the following services inclusive:

1. **Public Relations Plan & Strategy:** Work with Visit Bellevue to develop comprehensive public relations strategy and plan based on destination development plan, destination brand/position, marketing plan, and market share growth goals. Public relations strategy and plan should be based on destination research, data, competitive analysis, social listening, benchmarking, stakeholder, and staff input and should work in tandem to compliment the Bellevue destination development Plan and together with other Visit Bellevue vendors work, strategies, and programs. Public relations plan and strategy should

establish benchmarks, ongoing reporting, monitoring, competitive metrics, and competitive analysis and focus on awareness and generating overnight visitation.

2. **Media Pitching:** Perform ongoing media pitching to identify qualified earned media opportunities and strategic media partnerships within travel sector (leisure, business, meetings & conventions, cruise, lifestyle, events, health & wellness). Continued and ongoing strategic evolution of the Bellevue destination brand and content with all associated earned media and partnership opportunities. Partner with Visit Bellevue staff in the development, fulfillment, follow up, and refinement of all earned media leads and opportunities.
3. **Influencer Strategy and Content Creator Pitching:** As part of the public relations strategy and plan, agency shall identify and create a strategy and plan for obtaining awareness, visibility, and content through targeted influencers and content creators. The agency shall perform ongoing pitching and outreach to influencers and content creators within travel sector (leisure, business, meetings & conventions, cruise, lifestyle, events, health & wellness). Continued and ongoing strategic evolution of the Bellevue destination brand and content with all associated influencer and content creator partnership opportunities. Partner with Visit Bellevue staff in the development, fulfillment, follow up, and refinement of all earned influencer coverage and content creator leads and opportunities.
4. **Familiarization Tours:** Work with Visit Bellevue staff to develop and execute one annual organized Bellevue familiarization tour for qualified journalists, influencers, and content creators. Specifically focused on developing relationships and gaining earned media coverage. Also develop an ongoing familiarization and site-visit program designed for needed one off opportunity or for those that require specialized experiences.
5. **Content Strategy & Development:** Act as an ongoing content development partner to and with Visit Bellevue, providing ongoing support, advise, input, stewardship, competitive intelligence, campaign evolution and thought leadership with our content calendar, plan, and strategy. This content must have heavy focus on analytics, ROI, attribution reporting, ongoing analysis, optimization, testing, industry insights, trends, and tools/resources that will contribute to informed decision making and will focus on our primary objective of overnight visitor development. Content development includes: long and short form editorial features, social media, blog, organizational presentations, meetings & conventions collateral, video, photos and related images, Selected agency will also work to develop and disseminate the Visit Bellevue quarterly media e-newsletter.
6. **In-Market Public Relations Missions:** Selected agency will provide vision, planning, organization, and execution services (together with Visit Bellevue staff and partners) for two in-market (within a geographic target market) public relations and marketing missions per year. These events should be creative and

capture media attention, create visibility, and activations designed to promote Bellevue as an overnight visitor destination.

7. **Promotion of Visit Bellevue Owned Media:** Selected agency will assist in the development and growth of Visit Bellevue owned media assets and work to grow our subscription databases. Included owned media include weekly [Insiders Edge](#) content, along with quarterly [Aspire by Visit Bellevue](#), [The Vue](#) and [Planners Edge](#), seasonal visitors guide(s) and website to grow our subscriptions and engagement metrics. Work to build the Visit Bellevue Media database and subscription to our quarterly media alerts e-newsletter.
8. **Visit Bellevue KPI and Public Relations Dashboard:** Agency shall provide and integrate all public relations KPI's, measurement, monitoring, and associated reporting data and insights into the Visit Bellevue KPI dashboard.
9. **Visit Bellevue Public Relations Budget:** Visit Bellevue 2023 public relations budget of \$125k inclusive, and must include agency fees, all ongoing agency services, all research, planning, project, and strategic work. Public relations efforts shall be allocated approximately equal on a year around basis and reflective of need seasons and opportunities. Visit Bellevue may increase or decrease 2024 budget based on timing of anticipated future funding and revenue.
10. **Crisis Management & Emergency Management:** Visit Bellevue planning and assistance with planning and execution of public relations for crisis and emergency management.
11. **Administration:** Selected agency will conduct weekly update status meetings with Visit Bellevue staff regarding scope of work. Agency will participate and provide reports and updates to the Visit Bellevue Advisory Board, Visit Bellevue bi-monthly Marketing Subcommittee. Agency will participate in quarterly vendor sync up sessions (with other Visit Bellevue agencies and strategic partners). Agency will participate and present in the Visit Bellevue annual marketing and research forum event.

Please note: Website management and development, marketing, advertising, visitor guide production, and day-to-day social media management are NOT within the scope of this contract.

If agency does not have proficiency or expertise in particular areas of RFP scope, we encourage strategic partnerships with other agencies or partners to increase effectiveness and focus. If such partnerships are being used, the lead agency shall identify and disclose this as part of the proposal.

PROPOSAL DEADLINE:

Proposals due: October 14, 2022 3pm Pacific (local time) in Bellevue Washington

Service begins: January 1, 2023

Service development: November 2022 – December 2022

Service period: January 2023 – December 2024

PROPOSAL DELIVERY ADDRESS:

Visit Bellevue
Brad Jones, Executive Director
Level 3 Administration Offices – Meydenbauer Center
11100 NE 6th Street
Bellevue, WA 98004

PROPOSAL DELIVERY EMAIL ADDRESS:

bjones@visitbellevuewa.com

EXPECTED PERFORMANCE PERIOD:

The period of performance for any contract resulting from this solicitation is expected to begin on or about January 1, 2023, ending on or around December 31, 2024. Visit Bellevue and the contracting agency reserves the right at its discretion to extend the contract for a period to be specified, in accordance with the contract.

CONTRACTOR ELIGIBILITY:

This procurement is open to all service providers who satisfy the minimum qualifications stated herein and that are available for work in Washington State.

RFP COORDINATOR

All communication between potential Proposers and the BCCA shall be with the RFP Coordinator, as follows:

Name	Brad Jones, Executive Director, Visit Bellevue Washington
Address	11100 NE 6 th Street Bellevue, WA 98004
Phone Number	1-877-425-2075 ext.700
E-mail Address	bjones@visitbellevuewa.com

Proposers are to rely on written statements issued by the RFP Coordinator; any other information will be considered unofficial and non-binding on Visit Bellevue and the BCCA. Visit Bellevue and the BCCA reserves the right to appoint an alternate RFP Coordinator during the solicitation process, as may be necessary and convenient.

PROPRIETARY INFORMATION & PUBLIC DISCLOSURE

All proposals received under this RFP shall remain confidential until the contract, if any, resulting from this solicitation is executed by visit Bellevue and the BCCA and the apparent successful Contractor; thereafter, the proposals shall be deemed public records as defined in Chapter 42.56 RCW.

Any information in the proposal that the Proposer desires to claim as proprietary and exempt from disclosure under the provisions of RCW 42.56 must be clearly designated.

The page must be identified, as must the exception from disclosure upon which the Proposer is making the claim. Each page claimed to be exempt from disclosure must be clearly identified by the word "Confidential" printed on the lower right-hand corner of the page. The Proposer must be reasonable in designating information as confidential; marking the entire proposal as exempt from disclosure will not be honored.

Visit Bellevue and the BCCA will consider a Proposer's request for exemption from disclosure; however, Visit Bellevue and the BCCA will make a decision predicated upon Chapter 42.56 RCW and Chapter 143-06 WAC. If any information is marked as proprietary in the proposal, such information will not be made available until the affected proposer has been given an opportunity to seek a court injunction against the requested disclosure.

All requests for public records should be directed to the BCCA Administrative Services at the address on the face page of this RFP. A charge is made to the requestor for copying and shipping of disclosed public documents, as outlined in RCW 42.56.120. No fee shall be charged for inspection of contract files.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY REQUIREMENTS

The successful vendor must comply with BCCA equal opportunity requirements. The BCCA is an Equal Opportunity Employer. It does not discriminate and does not do business with others who discriminate based on race, color, creed, sex, age, nationality or disability.

COMPLIANCE WITH LAWS AND REGULATIONS

In addition to nondiscrimination and affirmative action compliance requirements previously listed, the vendor awarded the contract shall comply with federal, state and local laws, statutes and ordinances relative to the execution of the work. This requirement includes, but is not limited to, protection of public and employee safety and health; environmental protection; waste reduction and recycling; the protection of natural resources; permits; fees; taxes; and similar subjects.

INDEMNIFICATION

The vendor shall hold harmless, defend, and indemnify Visit Bellevue and the BCCA and all of the BCCA's officers, agents, and employees against any liability that may be imposed upon them by reason of the vendor's failure to provide compensation coverage or liability coverage.

EXPERIENCE OF PROPOSER

Indicate the experience and success the Proposer in delivering for the services to and for destination marketing organizations in North America and include any international marketing experience. Please include and any and all other relevant experience that indicates the qualifications of the Proposer, for the performance of the scope of services and ability to deliver the potential contract. The proposer is welcome to include sample or suggested concepts relative to Visit Bellevue.

Include a list of contracts the Proposer has had during the last five (5) years that relate to the Proposer's ability to perform the services needed under this RFP. List any contract references, contract period of performance, contact persons, telephone numbers, and e-mail addresses, and briefly describe the type of service provided. The Proposer and staff proposed to provide the services must grant permission to Visit Bellevue and the BCCA to contact references, and others for whom services have been provided.

Please provide a description of the proposed project team / structure to be used during the course of the contract, including any subcontractors. Provide an organizational chart of the company/firm indicating lines of authority for personnel involved in performance of this potential contract and relationships of this staff to other programs or functions of the company/firm.

SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

Proposals may be submitted in hardcopy or electronically via email.

If submitting the Proposal in hard copy, the following information is applicable.

Proposers are required to submit three (3) copies of their Proposal. One (1) copy must have original signatures and the additional copies may have photocopied signatures. The Proposal, whether mailed or hand-delivered, must be received by the Visit Bellevue no later than 3:00 p.m. local time in Bellevue Friday, October 14, 2022.

CONTRACT AWARD AND EXECUTION

Visit Bellevue and the BCCA shall not be bound or in any way obligated until both parties have executed a vendor contract. The general conditions and specification of the RFP and the successful vendor's response, as amended by contract between the BCCA (Visit Bellevue) and the successful vendor, including e-mail or written correspondence relative to the RFP, will become part of the contract documents. Additionally, Visit Bellevue and the BCCA will verify vendor representations that appear in the proposal. Failure of a vendor to perform services as represented may result in elimination of the vendor from further competition or in contract cancellation or termination.

The vendor selected as the apparently successful vendor will be expected to enter into a contract with the Visit Bellevue. The foregoing should not be interpreted to prohibit either party from proposing additional contract terms and conditions during negotiations of the final contract. If the selected vendor fails to sign the contract within five (5) business days of delivery of the final contract, Visit Bellevue may elect to cancel the award and award the contract to the next-highest ranked vendor. All parties may incur no cost chargeable to the proposed contract before the date of execution of the contract.