



P.O. Box 8005 • Biloxi, MS 39535 • 228-896-6699 • coastalmississippi.com

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL: SOCIAL MEDIA SERVICES

Purpose – General Scope

The Coastal Mississippi Destination Marketing Organization (DMO), Coastal Mississippi seeks to contract with a vendor that will seamlessly integrate with Coastal Mississippi’s current team, partners and brand, Coastal Mississippi: The Secret Coast, by providing strategic leadership that maximizes the effectiveness of Coastal Mississippi’s organic and paid social media efforts.

About Coastal Mississippi

Established through forward-thinking legislation as a regional entity in 2014, Coastal Mississippi serves as the official tourism organization for the Mississippi Gulf Coast, comprised of three coastal counties including Hancock, Harrison, and Jackson. The purpose of our organization is to have a positive impact on the quality of life for residents through advancement of the tourism industry. Coastal Mississippi employs a variety of strategies that include convention and group sales efforts, as well as leisure marketing campaigns that include various media, digital and social media strategies, communications, and tourism efforts. Tourism is one of the key economic drivers that supports Coastal Mississippi’s \$1.816 Billion visitor industry and 14.2 Million visitors annually.

The social media budget (including fees) over the past three-year period falls in the \$150,000-\$350,000 range annually. Budget varies based on available sources of revenue.

- To review our recent research, please click [here](#).
- To review our 2020-2021 Marketing Plan, please click [here](#).
- To review our 2019 Annual Report, please click [here](#).
- To view our website, please click [here](#).

Social Media Presence

Coastal Mississippi’s social communities combined, consists of nearly 2 million followers with social media presence in two verticals: leisure and travel trade.

Leisure channels are as follows:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Facebook handle: @seecoastalms | URL: https://www.facebook.com/seecoastalms |
| Instagram handle: @coastalms | URL: https://www.instagram.com/coastalms/ |
| Twitter handle: @seecoastalms | URL: https://twitter.com/SeeCoastalMS |
| Pinterest handle: @seecoastalms | URL: https://www.pinterest.com/seecoastalms/ created/ |
| YouTube handle: visitmscoast | URL: https://www.youtube.com/user/VisitMSCoast/videos |

Spotify: Coastal Mississippi

URL: <https://open.spotify.com/user/owkcxfo9y3xnrixpde98d4os>

Travel Trade channel is as follows:

Twitter handle: @meetcoastalms

URL: <https://twitter.com/MeetCoastalMS>

Project Scope

Coastal Mississippi seeks to contract social media advertising and marketing services to showcase and promote the three Coastal Counties and their tourism products as one Mississippi Gulf Coast product, from a qualified agency with expertise in developing and implementing comprehensive social media campaigns that strengthen and enhance brand strategy and meet stated goals and objectives. Agencies that provide other advertising and marketing services are eligible, however, an in-house team dedicated to developing and implementing social media marketing and advertising services is required.

Services will include, but are not limited to:

- Social media strategic planning, development, and support including content development
- Social media research and sentiment reporting
- Development of social media creative concepts and production
- Paid social media planning, paid social media buying
- Social media management, organic and paid reporting and analysis
- Account and project management
 - General account oversight and project management services
 - Lead project kick-off meetings and communication efforts
 - Coordinate resources and manage budgets
 - Participate in conference calls, planning and status meetings

Schedule of Events

ACTION ITEM	Date	Time
RFQ/RFP Issued	May 3	
Proposal Questions Due to Coastal Mississippi	May 21	5:00 PM
Answers Posted	May 25	5:00 PM
Proposals Due to Coastal Mississippi	June 14	5:00 PM
Notification to Respondents Selected for Oral Presentations	June 16	5:00 PM
Finalists Oral Presentations to Coastal Mississippi Board of Commissioners	June 30	To Be Scheduled
Notification to Successful Proposer	July 1	
Contract Negotiation Period	July 2 – July 28	
Transition Period	Aug 1 – Sept 30	
Contract Term Commencement	October 1, 2021	

Responses

Interested parties should respond to this RFQ/RFP providing:

1. Name and address of entity, primary contact information, years in business, number of employees, organizational chart, documented capitalized billings for the past 3 years.
2. 4 credit references, 4 professional references, 4 media references.
3. Briefly describe your knowledge and experience of the Coastal Mississippi travel and tourism market.
4. Describe your firm's experience in developing comprehensive social media strategies and plans to promote tourism.
5. Describe at least three documented successes in designing and implementing a social media advertising/marketing plan in the areas of tourism and/or for a commercial gaming entity to include examples of work and method and processes utilized to track, measure and report results. All examples must be work performed by your firm.
6. Describe the overall comprehensive resources of your firm in the areas of social media creative development, production, strategic planning, media planning and research.
7. Briefly detail the experience of the specific personnel who will perform the work for Coastal MS.
8. Please provide a list of the firm's current top five clients for whom you provide social media marketing and advertising services in terms of annual billing (social media services only), as well as any current clients in the travel and tourism and gaming industry.
9. Describe the account management, creative and billing processes, and procedures your agency has in place to manage an account of this size and complexity.

Agencies may submit questions by **5:00 PM, May 21, 2021** to a private landing page [here](#). Answers will be posted in same location by **5:00 PM, May 25, 2021**.

Proposal Format

This document should be prepared in a simple to follow organized format that includes a table of contents. The document shall not exceed a total of 25 pages (8.5" x 11") or be larger than 10 MB in size. Please provide links to video files if you want to include them. Presentation materials will not be returned.

Proposal Submittal

Proposals must be submitted via email as either Word or PDF documents and sent to the following email address: karen@coastalmississippi.com. When submitting your proposal, the email subject line should read: Coastal Mississippi Social Media Agency. Proposals can be submitted by mail to Karen Conner, Director of Marketing, Coastal Mississippi, PO Box 8005, Biloxi, MS 39535.

Evaluation Process and Selection Criteria

Coastal Mississippi Selection Committee will conduct a comprehensive, fair, and impartial evaluation of all proposals received in response to this RFQ/RFP. Each proposal will be analyzed to determine overall responsiveness and qualifications under the RFQ/RFP. Coastal Mississippi reserves the right to select one, or more, or none of the Respondents to conduct an Oral Presentation to the Coastal Mississippi Board of Commissioners.

The Selection Committee will evaluate responses received to this RFQ/RFP. Selection criteria will include but not be limited to the following:

- Successful demonstrated experience in developing and implementing social media marketing and advertising plans/campaigns for a destination comprised of a multitude of market segments (leisure, gaming, outdoors, meetings & conventions, sports, groups) **(20 points)**
- Overall quality of work (creativity, execution) **(15 points)**

- Overall capacity of firm to meet the timeline and tasks required for this project including financial stability and qualifications of staff **(15 points)**
- Demonstrated understanding of the product and its competition **(15 points)**
- Sound measurement and results oriented skills and processes **(15 points)**
- Demonstrated ability to identify, gather and utilize tourism data, trends, and research to develop targeted social media strategic plans **(10 points)**
- Technical and specialty expertise in social media marketing **(10 points)**

The Selection Committee will give additional weight to applicants who meet the selection criteria guidelines and that also meet one or more of the following *preferred* criteria:

- Experience working with multiple agencies **(10 points)**
- Experience working with multiple groups/clients (regional) on one account **(10 points)**
- Successful demonstrated experience in developing and implementing Coastal destination social media marketing/advertising plans **(5 points)**
- Successful demonstrated experience in developing and implementing gaming destination social media marketing/advertising plans **(5 points)**

Presentations

Responding parties will be notified on **Wednesday, June 16, 2021**, if they have been selected to proceed to the presentation process. Presentation will be to the entire Coastal Mississippi Commission. Those invited will be provided with additional information including goals, objectives and challenges identified by Coastal Mississippi. Presentations will be scheduled for **Wednesday, June 30, 2021**. Selected parties will be required to submit a written document (20 copies) and give a 45-minute presentation (plus 15 minutes for Q&A following the presentation) that includes:

- Presentations should showcase the agency's social media creative abilities and how such abilities will benefit Coastal Mississippi in promoting and marketing the destination
- A summary of the Agency's qualifications, experience and strategic planning and creative abilities in social media marketing and advertising
- A summary of the Agency's understanding of the scope of work to be accomplished, how the agency proposes to accomplish and perform these services and a description of the agency's strategic process on how they plan to utilize social media to market Coastal Mississippi as a destination
- Agency's understanding of Coastal Mississippi challenges, objectives, and needs
- Agency's preliminary thoughts on developing a social media marketing/advertising campaign that supports and enhances the brand to meet stated goals and objectives
- Identification of any information gaps and recommendations for resolving them
- Agency shall demonstrate an understanding of Coastal Mississippi target markets and develop a preliminary social media marketing and advertising plan with a recommended year one budget by media/channel

At this time, you would also be required to submit a pricing proposal as part of your written submittal. Following is the requested format:

- Retainer fee: Monthly fee to cover the consultative portion of the plan including strategy, creative concepts and ideas, business building ideas, account management/services/analysis/reporting/estimating/billing. This fee must be inclusive of administrative costs associated with the day-to-day management of the account.
- Production fees: Provide rates associated with all in-house agency production services, including hourly rates to be charged for the execution of approved social media concepts and strategies
- Media buying commission rates
- Please provide a comprehensive list of all services that your agency would usually outsource (i.e. photography, video production) and indicate a mark-up

Final Selection

Evaluation at this stage will be by the entire Coastal Mississippi Commission and will include but not be limited to:

- Creative ability, quality, and innovation **(15 points)**
- Cost/Pricing **(15 points)**
- Quality and viability of measurement and results oriented skills and processes **(15 points)**
- Ability to formulate a cohesive social media plan and strategy **(15 points)**

Contract

Coastal Mississippi reserves the right to award one or no contract in response to this RFQ/RFP. Upon completion of the presentations, selected agency will be requested to enter into contract negotiations. In addition to the scope of work, pricing and approval processes, the contract will require a mutual 90-day cancellation clause with no retrieval fees. Final approval of a selected agency is subject to the action of Coastal Mississippi Board of Commissioners. The contract may require coordination of work product with other agencies and/or entities.

Restrictions on Communications

Respondents, and/or individuals acting on behalf of Respondents, are prohibited from communicating with: 1) Coastal Mississippi Commissioners; 2) Coastal Mississippi employees; regarding the RFP or proposals from the time the RFP has been released until the contract is awarded. These restrictions extend to “thank you” letters, phone calls, emails, gifts and any contact that results in the direct or indirect discussion of the RFP and/or proposal submitted by Respondent. Violation of this provision by Respondent and/or individuals acting on Respondent’s behalf may lead to disqualification of Respondent’s proposal from consideration.

Respondents may submit written questions concerning this RFP to a private landing page [here](#).

Questions received after the stated deadline will not be answered. Answers to all questions shall be posted by the stated deadline to a private landing page [here](#).

A Respondent that has an ongoing business relationship with Coastal Mississippi may communicate to the extent necessary to perform the Respondent’s duties and obligations related to that business relationship. Questions submitted and Coastal Mississippi responses will be posted with this solicitation.

Coastal Mississippi reserves the right to contact any Respondent to negotiate if such is deemed desirable by Coastal Mississippi. Such negotiations, initiated by Coastal Mississippi staff persons, shall not be considered a violation by Respondent of this section.

All expenses for participating in the RFP processes are the responsibility of the agency.