

Jefferson County Tourism Commission



Request for Proposals

Tourism Marketing, Advertising, & Promotion Services

PURPOSE

The Jefferson County Tourism Commission, "JCTC," invites all interested, qualified companies or firms to submit responses to this Request for Proposal (RFP) seeking professional marketing services. JCTC is committed to creating a new & implementable marketing plan that will promote responsible tourism and travel to Jefferson County. The successful applicant must demonstrate extensive knowledge and understanding of how to create and implement a comprehensive marketing program strategy to fulfill the objectives of JCTC. JCTC is encouraging applicants to bid on the RFP as a whole and/or subparts where the applicant may have specialized expertise. JCTC reserves the right to accept or reject applications in entirety or in partial.

Responses to this Request for Proposals will be accepted until January 31, 2023, at 6 p.m. CST. Proposals must be submitted via email to tourjctc@gmail.com. It is the sole responsibility of the applicant to ensure the proposal is submitted complete and on time.

Any requests for clarification or additional information may contact Sharon Floyd, Executive Director at tourjctc@gmail.com or call 314-398-9487.

JCTC reserves the right to negotiate all elements of this proposal.

GENERAL BACKGROUND

The Jefferson County Tourism Commission was formed October, 2020 and is seeking the Designated Marketing Organization status to become eligible for the State of Missouri's tourism grant opportunities. JCTC envisions making Jefferson County the place of choice to dine, explore and stay in Eastern Missouri. JCTC is here to strengthen and grow Jefferson County's economy through travel and tourism which will bring more revenue to the county all while supporting our local businesses.

Creating value in the local tourism sector of Jefferson County means supporting a wide variety of community-led investments that enhance our local quality of life. These investments historically have been made possible due to local chamber fundraising and promotion of events and revenues generated by the hotel room occupancy tax in the cities of Arnold, Festus, and Pevely. The room tax is paid by visitors who stay in hotels, motels, and beds in the previously named cities.

JCTC looks to expand on this availability of funds by tapping into other public & private resources such as grants, endowments, and contributions. Our intent is to create a virtuous cycle where growing visitation drives sustainable and resilient economic growth that supports the County-wide Tourism Program's various initiatives.

The selected applicant(s) will work closely with the Staff and Marketing Committee of JCTC to responsibly market Jefferson County to target audiences and key demographics. The general marketing objective is to create and implement a marketing program that identifies target market(s), informs and promotes responsible tourism for these identified target markets, promotes outdoor recreation activities, civic and county sponsored festivals, retail opportunities, and wine, brewery and other unique dining experiences. The following outline of focus areas are:

- I. Priority: primary tourism motivations and issues facing our destination
 - a. Specialty venues, such as wineries, breweries, Federated Auto Parts I-55 Raceway, and Jefferson County Fairgrounds
 - b. Outdoor Recreation
 - c. Transportation & Connectivity
 - d. Waterfront along the Mississippi River
- II. Foundation: persistent and strong influences on the tourism sector

- a. Bicycling
- b. Riverfront heritage
- c. City of Arnold, Festus, Kimmswick, Pevely, De Soto, and Hillsboro Festivals
- d. Wineries, breweries, and unique dining
- III. Emerging: long-range opportunity to increase travel demand
 - a. Mississippi River
- IV. Destination Services: efforts to grow our local tourism economy
 - a. Beautification & Placemaking
 - b. River traffic and Groups
 - c. Visitor Experience

Marketing, advertising, & promotional products will include billboards, print ads in various channels, promotional materials, including but not limited to videos, photos, maps, blogs, social media (organic exposure, ads, content) brochures, and more.

JCTC may enter into a multi-year agreement with the selected applicant(s) to carry out these services and more, as identified below.

SCOPE OF SERVICES

The successful applicant(s) will be expected to complete the following scope of work, including but not limited to:

- I. Develop a strategic marketing plan that includes identification of target markets; specific strategies with measurable objectives for each target market; and tactics to achieve those objectives.
- II. Analyze and recommend specific marketing mediums to include, but not limited to, print design, website content, billboards, videos, photos, etc. Monitor placement to ensure accuracy and completion of all media schedules.
- III. Develop strategies that maximize the availability of both public and private funds to establish an on-going marketing program. Program should identify potential marketing and advertising partners to develop tactics for generating new funding opportunities and leverage JCTC funds to extend a comprehensive marketing program for all of Jefferson county.
- IV. Develop a comprehensive reporting strategy that will allow JCTC, in a timely manner, to be informed of the successes and failures of the marketing program and corrective action measures to address failures or intensify successes.

DELIVERABLE #1 (MARKETING PLAN)

The applicant will provide all services necessary to successfully complete the SCOPE OF SERVICES described above. Activities should include, but may not be limited to:

Develop a marketing plan that enables JCTC's promotion of tourism activities in Jefferson County. Promotion includes strategic messaging to educate visitors on responsible tourism, how

visitors can be encouraged to travel during both on & off-peak time periods and be in line with JCTC's Strategic Plan and the future Comprehensive Plan being created by Jefferson County. The marketing plan will promote, but may not be limited to:

1. Natural resources for biking, hiking, photography, and wildlife viewing.
2. Jefferson County festivals promoted collectively and individually by JCTC, civic organizations, and municipalities.
3. Wineries, breweries, and unique dining establishments.
4. The access, viewing, and activities in and along the Mississippi River.

DELIVERABLE #2 (MARKETING PLAN IMPLEMENTATION)

The applicant will provide all services necessary to successfully complete the SCOPE OF SERVICES described above. Activities should include, but may not be limited to:

Implementation of the Marketing Plan will specify the following issues and provide a cost estimate where appropriate:

1. Specifically outline where marketing efforts will occur
2. What priority/concept will be marketed
3. Identified target market(s)
4. Timing strategies
5. Identify, prioritize, and categorize ALL tourism funding resources
6. Identify the strategy to utilize free advertising, sponsorships, and media partnerships.
7. Leverage existing Civic Tourism Commission resources at Arnold, Festus, and Pevely.

PROPOSAL CONSIDERATIONS

1. Prepare a detailed process for creating an implementable marketing plan for Jefferson County Tourism Commission as outlined which must include a thoroughly researched and feasible budget.
2. The marketing plan will address short (immediate through end of year 1) and long-term strategies (Years 2-5, and longer)
3. Applicants will prepare an implementation plan which will include a timeline, recommended strategies, and reporting schedule.
4. Presentation of a verbal report to JCTC summarizing the applicant's submittal will be required.
5. Applicants who submit samples of work pertinent to this application will be given priority.

REQUIRED SUBMITTALS AND PROPOSAL

Interested companies or firms shall submit deliverables that clearly demonstrate their ability to provide services as outlined in this Request for Proposals. The following submittals shall be organized in the order listed below to facilitate fair and equitable evaluation of the responses:

1. Cover Letter - A cover letter shall be provided which explains the applicant's interest in the project. The letter shall contain the name, address, and phone number of the person

who will serve as the contact for the project and who will be authorized to make a presentation on behalf of the firm.

2. Company Qualifications and References – Please submit a brief list of references, experiences with similar projects, agency background, and familiarity with Jefferson County Tourism Commission and/or Jefferson County.
3. Marketing Campaigns – Please submit a brief summary of previous marketing campaigns, proposed ideas for JCTC that addresses the Scope of Services, Deliverable #1 and/or Deliverable #2, the effectiveness of previous messages created by the applicant, and how the applicant proposes to measure the results of the campaign during the period of the proposal.
4. Cost of Services – Please provide a summary of the following:
 - a. Billable rates, including travel
 - b. Non-billable services
 - c. Commission rate for media
 - d. Ability to leverage and extend funding opportunities
 - e. Total & itemized anticipated costs for Deliverable #1
 - f. Total & itemized anticipated costs for Deliverable #2

JCTC reserves the right to reject any portion or all proposals and further reserves the right to award the project to any bidder even though the successful contractor may not be the lowest bidder.

PROPOSED TIMELINE FOR MARKETING AND ADVERTISING CONTRACT

RFP Process – DATE: 1/31/23

Notice of Interviews – DATE: February 15, 2023

Interviews with JCTC Marketing Committee – DATE: Week of February 20, 2023

Notice of Award - DATE: March 6, 2023

Presentation to JCTC Board of Directors on 2023 JCTC Marketing Plan – DATE: Week of March 13, 2023

CONFIDENTIAL AND PROPRIETARY INFORMATION

If an applicant believes that parts of an offer are confidential, then the applicant must so specify. The applicant must include in bold letters the term “CONFIDENTIAL” on that part of the offer which the applicant believes to be confidential. The applicant must submit in writing specific detailed reasons, including any relevant legal authority, stating why the applicant believes the material to be confidential. Vague and general claims as to confidentiality will not be accepted. JCTC will be the sole judge as to whether a claim is acceptable. Decisions regarding the confidentiality of information will be made when requests are made to make the information public. All offers and parts of offers, which are not marked as confidential, will automatically be considered public information after the contract is awarded. The successful offer may be considered public information even though parts are marked confidential.

WITHDRAWAL OR MODIFICATIONS OR OFFERS

Any applicant may modify or withdraw an offer in writing at any time prior to the deadline for a submission of an offer.

ACCEPTANCE

Any offer received and not withdrawn shall be considered an offer, which may be accepted by JCTC based on initial submission without discussions or negotiations. By submitting an offer in response to this solicitation, the applicant agrees that any offer it submits may be accepted by JCTC at any time within 90 calendar days from the date of submission deadline. JCTC reserves the right (a) to reject any or all offers, (b) to waive informalities and minor irregularities in offers received, and/or (c) to accept any portion of an offer if deemed in the best interest of JCTC. Failure of the contractor to provide in its offer any information requested in the RFP may result in rejection of the offer for non-responsiveness.

PROPOSAL PREPARATION COST

The cost of proposal preparation is not a reimbursable cost. Proposal preparation and presentation shall be at the contractor's sole expense and is the applicant's total and sole responsibility.

AWARD

JCTC intends to make an award using the evaluation criteria listed in this RFP to determine the best value, considering all factors and criteria in the proposals submitted. Best value means the expected outcome of an acquisition that, in JCTC's estimation, provides the greatest overall benefit in response to the requirements detailed in the RFP. JCTC reserves the right to reject any or all offers and to not make an award.

SUBSTANTIVE PROPOSALS

By responding to this RFP, the applicant certifies (a) that applicant's proposal is genuine and is not made in the interest of, or on behalf of, an undisclosed person, firm, or corporation; (b) that applicant has not directly or indirectly induced or solicited any other contractors to put in a false or sham proposal; (c) that applicant has not solicited or induced any other person, firm, or corporation to refrain or abstain from proposing an offer or proposal; and, (d) that applicant has not sought by collusion to obtain for themselves any advantage over any other applicant's or over JCTC.