



**STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE  
DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS  
Domestic Public Relations Services RFP  
RFP DBEA 2023-14**

## **Section 1 – Overview and Schedule**

### **A. Executive Summary**

The purpose and intent of this Request for Proposals (RFP) is to enter into a contract for a period of two years (July 1, 2023-June 30, 2025) with an option to renew through June 30, 2027, upon the agreement of both parties and the Governor and Executive Council.

The qualified firm will serve as the NH Department of Business and Economic Affairs (Agency), Division of Travel and Tourism Development’s (DTTD) public relations representative in the U.S. market, increasing brand awareness among consumer audiences. DTTD seeks a company to develop and execute an innovative, brand-aligned public relations program, targeting a variety of channels and complementing DTTD’s advertising/marketing program.

The selected vendor will coordinate DTTD’s domestic public relations program. The program will include development of a communications strategy that fits within New Hampshire’s overall brand platform and marketing program. The earned media program must achieve the following:

- Serve as DTTD’s key partner and media relations expert;
- Create and execute innovative consumer –driven PR campaigns within Boston, New York and other predetermined Designated Marketing Areas (DMA);
- Support in-state media needs;
- Generate press trips;
- Plan and execute media events;
- Build relationships with local and national media; and
- Target key digital influencers.

Travel and tourism is New Hampshire’s second largest industry, producing \$5.6 billion in visitor spending, employing approximately 49,000 full- and part-time jobs.

### **B. Schedule**

The following table provides a Schedule of Events for this RFP through contract finalization and approval. The Agency reserves the right to amend this Schedule at its sole discretion and at any time through a published Addendum.

EVENT	DATE	LOCAL TIME
RFP Released to Proposers	March 22, 2023	
Proposer Inquiry Period Ends	March 27, 2023	5:00 PM
Final Agency Responses to Proposer Inquiries	March 30, 2023	5:00 PM
Proposers Submit Proposals	April 12, 2023	4:00 PM
Proposer Oral Presentations and Interviews (if applicable)	April 27, 2023	TBD
Estimated Notification of Selection and Begin Contract Negotiations	May 1, 2023	5:00 PM

## **SECTION 2 - Description of Agency/Program Issuing the Request for Proposals**

The Department of Business and Economic Affairs, Division of Travel and Tourism’s mission is to promote New Hampshire as a domestic and international travel destination in order to increase visitation and travel expenditures, business activity, and employment throughout the state. DTTD oversees a variety of marketing activities, including advertising, publication development, cooperative marketing initiatives, public relations, tradeshow, and consumer events.

## **SECTION 3 – Proposed Scope of Work**

The selected vendor will complete the following:

- Creation, implementation and management of a 12-month regional and national media relations outreach strategy and hosting program that supports New Hampshire’s campaigns and initiatives that results in trackable media coverage. This plan will:
  - Generate positive exposure for New Hampshire through consumer and industry mediums with direct tiebacks to ROI and qualitative measurement results.
  - Include a robust and creative activation or program to support a seasonal and/or a niche consumer advertising campaign initiative.
- Plan and execute media receptions for DTTD staff in key markets, including but not limited to Boston and New York City.
- Creation of recommended media target lists for print, online and broadcast that aligns with New Hampshire’s brand, quality, and strategic objectives. Included in this list should be the rationale and timing.
- Facilitate visiting journalist program, securing a minimum of six individual press trips annually.
- Coordination of, and possible participation in, key market media tours and in-market desk-side briefing appointments at least twice a year.
- Assistance in creating media outreach strategies to garner coverage around New Hampshire programming and/or matters impacting or related to New Hampshire’s tourism industry.
- Work in tandem with DTTD’s Agency of Record to develop and execute a digital influencer strategy.
- Hold bi-monthly team meetings, quarterly editorial brainstorm meetings, providing notes from meetings and tracking of follow ups.

- Tracking of media coverage, which will be reported to DTTD on a monthly basis including, when appropriate, visuals and broadcast clips.
- Prepare monthly, campaign and annual reports.
- Participate in New Hampshire-based conferences and events.

## **SECTION 4 – Process for Submitting a Proposal**

### **A. Proposal Submission, Deadline, and Location Instructions**

Proposals submitted in response to this RFP must be received by DTTD, no later than the time and date specified in the Schedule section, herein. Proposals must be submitted electronically. Proposals must be addressed to:

**Brittany Littlefield, Business & Grant Administrator**

**[Brittany.L.Littlefield@livefree.nh.gov](mailto:Brittany.L.Littlefield@livefree.nh.gov)**

Proposal email subject line must be: **Domestic Public Relations Services Response**

Unless waived as a non-material deviation in accordance with Section 6C, late submissions will not be accepted and will be returned to the proposers unopened. Delivery of the Proposals shall be at the Proposer's expense. The time of receipt shall be considered when a Proposal has been officially documented by the Agency, in accordance with its established policies, as having been received at the location designated above. The Agency accepts no responsibility for mislabeled mail or mail that is not delivered or undeliverable for whatever reason. Any damage that may occur due to shipping shall be the Proposer's responsibility.

All Proposals submitted in response to this RFP must consist of at least:

- a) One electronic copy of the full proposal.
- b) One electronic copy of the Proposal with all Confidential Information fully redacted, as provided for in Section 7E of this RFP.

Proposers who are ineligible to bid on proposals, bids or quotes issued by the Department of Administrative Services, Division of Procurement and Support Services pursuant to the provisions of RSA 21-I:11-c shall not be considered eligible for an award under this proposal.

### **B. Proposal Inquiries**

All inquiries concerning this RFP, including but not limited to, requests for clarifications, questions, and any changes to the RFP, shall be submitted via email to the following RFP designated Points of Contact:

TO: Brittany Littlefield, [Brittany.L.Littlefield@livefree.nh.gov](mailto:Brittany.L.Littlefield@livefree.nh.gov)

CC: Amy Bassett, [Amy.O.Bassett@livefree.nh.gov](mailto:Amy.O.Bassett@livefree.nh.gov)

Inquiries must be received by the Agency's RFP Points of Contact no later than the conclusion of the Proposer Inquiry Period (see Schedule of Events section, herein). Inquiries received later than the conclusion of the Proposer Inquiry Period shall not be considered properly submitted and may not be considered.

The Agency intends to issue official responses to properly submitted inquiries on or before the date specified in the Schedule section, herein; however, this date is subject to change at the Agency's discretion. The Agency may consolidate and/or paraphrase questions for sufficiency and clarity. The Agency may, at its discretion, amend this RFP on its own initiative or in response to issues raised by inquiries, as it deems appropriate. Oral statements, representations, clarifications, or modifications concerning the RFP shall not be binding upon the Agency. Official responses by the Agency will be made only in writing by the process described above. Vendors shall be responsible for reviewing the most updated information related to this RFP before submitting a proposal.

### **C. Restriction of Contact with Agency Employees**

From the date of release of this RFP until an award is made and announced regarding the selection of a Proposer, all communication with personnel employed by or under contract with the Agency regarding this RFP is forbidden unless first approved by the RFP Points of Contact listed in the Proposal Inquiries section, herein. Agency employees have been directed not to hold conferences and/or discussions concerning this RFP with any potential contractor during the selection process, unless otherwise authorized by the RFP Points of Contact. Proposers may be disqualified for violating this restriction on communications.

### **D. Validity of Proposal**

Proposals must be valid for one hundred and eighty (180) days following the deadline for submission of Proposals in Schedule of Events, or until the Effective Date of any resulting Contract, whichever is later.

## **SECTION 5 - Content and Requirements for a Proposal**

Proposals shall follow the below format and provide the required information set forth below:

- Complete "Contractor Data Sheet" (Attachment A).
- A written one-page introductory statement including:
  - Experience in providing services as described in Section 3.
  - Expertise of participating personnel including, but not limited to, those identified in Attachment A and a description of training and development programs that ensure all personnel assigned to contract are capable and qualified.

- Demonstrate the Offeror’s financial capability to provide the work described in Section 3: Scope of Work.
- Provide resumes/portfolios of individuals or subcontractors performing major duties and functions under the proposed contract; include role, responsibility, and qualifications.
- Demonstrate experience within the travel sector.
- Provide relevant case studies.
- Financial Terms - Complete “Rates and Fees Schedule” (Attachment B).
- A written description of research capabilities.
- An oral presentation of proposed strategy, methodologies, and execution (if requested).
- Provide at least four recent client references, of which at least two (2) shall be tourism-related public relations. Include contract/service dates and contact information.

Using a \$200,000 funding level, proposals must be based on a 12-month period of time and address each bullet point in Section 3.

## **SECTION 6 – Evaluation of Proposals**

### **A. Criteria for Evaluation and Scoring**

Each responsive Proposal will be evaluated and considered with regard to the following criteria:

- Experience and Qualifications of key staff and subcontractors (30 points)
- Strategy/Approach for Scope of Work (40 points)
- Creativity/Innovation (15 points)
- Budget Approach/Cost Effectiveness (15 points)

### **B. Planned Evaluations**

The Agency plans to use the following process:

- Initial screening to ensure that the Proposals are in compliance with submission requirements;
- Preliminary evaluation of the Proposals;
- Oral interviews and Product Demonstrations (if necessary);
- Final Evaluation of Proposals and scoring; and
- Select the highest scoring Proposer (s) and begin contract negotiation.

### **C. Initial Screening**

The Agency will conduct an initial screening step to verify Proposer compliance with the technical submission requirements set forth in the RFP and the minimum content set forth in Section 5 of this RFP. The Agency may waive or offer a limited opportunity to cure immaterial deviations from the RFP requirements if it is determined to be in the best interest of the State.

## **D. Preliminary Scoring of Proposals**

The Agency will establish an evaluation team to initially score the Proposals. This evaluation team will review the technical proposals and give a preliminary score to the proposals under the guidelines set forth in Section 6. Should a Proposer fail to achieve 70 Points in the preliminary scoring, it will receive no further consideration from the evaluation team.

## **E. Oral Interviews and Product Demonstrations**

If the Agency determines that it is appropriate, proposers may be invited to oral interviews and/or product demonstrations including demonstrations of any proposed automated systems or technology components. The Agency retains the sole discretion to determine whether to conduct oral interviews, with which proposers; and the number of interviews. Proposers are advised that the Agency may decide to conduct interviews with less than all responsive proposers.

The purpose of oral interviews and product demonstrations is to clarify and expound upon information provided in the written Proposals. Proposers are prohibited from altering the basic substance of their Proposals during the oral interviews and product demonstrations. The Agency may ask the Proposer to provide written clarifications of elements in their Proposal regardless of whether it intends to conduct Oral Interviews.

Information gained from oral interviews and product demonstrations will be used to refine preliminary scores.

## **F. Final Scoring of Proposals**

Following Oral Interviews, Product Demonstrations, Reference Checks (if appropriate) and/or review of written clarifications of proposals requested by the Agency, the evaluation team will determine a final score for each Proposal.

## **G. Rights of the Agency in Accepting and Evaluating Proposals**

The Agency reserves the right to:

- Make independent investigations in evaluating Proposals;
- Request additional information to clarify elements of a Proposal;
- Waive minor or immaterial deviations from the RFP requirements, if determined to be in the best interest of the State;
- Omit any planned evaluation step if, in the Agency's view, the step is not needed;
- At its sole discretion, reject any and all Proposals at any time; and
- Open contract discussions with the second highest scoring Proposer and so on, if the Agency is unable to reach an agreement on Contract terms with the higher scoring Proposer(s).

## **SECTION 7 – Terms and Conditions Related To The RFP Process**

## **A. RFP Addendum**

The Agency reserves the right to amend this RFP at its discretion, prior to the Proposal submission deadline. In the event of an addendum to this RFP, the Agency, at its sole discretion, may extend the Proposal submission deadline, as it deems appropriate.

## **B. Non-Collusion**

The Proposer's signature on a Proposal submitted in response to this RFP guarantees that the prices, terms and conditions, and Work quoted have been established without collusion with other Proposers and without effort to preclude the Agency from obtaining the best possible competitive Proposal.

## **C. Property of the Agency**

All material received in response to this RFP shall become the property of the State and will not be returned to the proposer. Upon Contract award, the State reserves the right to use any information presented in any Proposal.

## **D. Confidentiality of a Proposal**

Unless necessary for the approval of a contract, the substance of a proposal must remain confidential until the Effective Date of any Contract resulting from this RFP. A Proposer's disclosure or distribution of Proposals other than to the Agency will be grounds for disqualification.

## **E. Public Disclosure**

Pursuant to RSA 21-G:37, all responses to this RFP shall be considered confidential until the award of a contract. At the time of receipt of proposals, the Agency will post the number of responses received with no further information. No later than five (5) business days prior to submission of a contract to the Department of Administrative Services pursuant to this RFP, the Agency will post the name, rank or score of each proposer. In the event that the contract does not require Governor & Executive Council approval, the Agency shall disclose the rank or score of the Proposals at least 5 business days before final approval of the contract.

The content of each Proposer's Proposal shall become public information upon the award of any resulting Contract. Any information submitted as part of a response to this request for proposal (RFP) may be subject to public disclosure under RSA 91-A. In addition, in accordance with RSA 9-F:1, any contract entered into as a result of this RFP will be made accessible to the public online via the website Transparent NH (<http://www.nh.gov/transparentnh/>). However, business financial information and proprietary information such as trade secrets, business and financials models and forecasts, and proprietary formulas may be exempt from public disclosure under RSA 91-A:5, IV. If you believe any information being submitted in response to this request for proposal, bid or information should be kept confidential as financial or proprietary information; you must specifically

identify that information in a letter to the agency, and must mark/stamp each page of the materials that you claim must be exempt from disclosure as "CONFIDENTIAL". A designation by the Proposer of information it believes exempt does not have the effect of making such information exempt. The Agency will determine the information it believes is properly exempted from disclosure. Marking of the entire Proposal or entire sections of the Proposal (e.g. pricing) as confidential will neither be accepted nor honored. Notwithstanding any provision of this RFP to the contrary, Proposer pricing will be subject to disclosure upon approval of the contract. The Agency will endeavor to maintain the confidentiality of portions of the Proposal that are clearly and properly marked confidential.

If a request is made to the Agency to view portions of a Proposal that the Proposer has properly and clearly marked confidential, the Agency will notify the Proposer of the request and of the date the Agency plans to release the records. By submitting a Proposal, Proposers agree that unless the Proposer obtains a court order, at its sole expense, enjoining the release of the requested information, the Agency may release the requested information on the date specified in the Agency's notice without any liability to the Proposers.

## **F. Non-Commitment**

Notwithstanding any other provision of this RFP, this RFP does not commit the Agency to award a Contract. The Agency reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to reject any and all Proposals, or any portions thereof, at any time; to cancel this RFP; and to solicit new Proposals under a new acquisition process.

## **G. Proposal Preparation Cost**

By submitting a Proposal, a Proposer agrees that in no event shall the Agency be either responsible for or held liable for any costs incurred by a Proposer in the preparation of or in connection with the Proposal, or for Work performed prior to the Effective Date of a resulting Contract.

## **H. Ethical Requirements**

From the time this RFP is published until a contract is awarded, no bidder shall offer or give, directly or indirectly, any gift, expense reimbursement, or honorarium, as defined by RSA 15-B, to any elected official, public official, public employee, constitutional official, or family member of any such official or employee who will or has selected, evaluated, or awarded an RFP, or similar submission. Any bidder that violates RSA 21-G:38 shall be subject to prosecution for an offense under RSA 640:2. Any bidder who has been convicted of an offense based on conduct in violation of this section, which has not been annulled, or who is subject to a pending criminal charge for such an offense, shall be disqualified from bidding on the RFP, or similar request for submission and every such bidder shall be disqualified from bidding on any RFP or similar request for submission issued by any state agency. A bidder that was disqualified under this section because of a pending criminal charge which is subsequently dismissed, results in an acquittal, or is annulled, may notify the



department of administrative services, which shall note that information on the list maintained on the state's internal intranet system, except in the case of annulment, the information, shall be deleted from the list.

## **SECTION 8 – Contract Terms and Award**

### **A. Non-Exclusive Contract**

Any resulting Contract from this RFP will be a non-exclusive Contract. The State reserves the right, at its discretion, to retain other Contractors to provide any of the Services or Deliverables identified under this procurement or make an award by item, part or portion of an item, group of items, or total Proposal.

### **B. Award**

If the State decides to award a contract as a result of this RFP process, any award is contingent upon approval of the Contract by Governor and Executive Council of the State of New Hampshire and upon continued appropriation of funding for the contract.

### **C. Standard Contract Terms**

The Agency will require the successful bidder to execute a Not to Exceed Contract using the Standard Terms and Conditions of the State of New Hampshire which is included as Attachment C.

The Term of the Contract will be for 2 years from the date of approval. The contract term may be extended by an additional term of 2 years at the sole option of the State, subject to the parties' prior written agreement on terms and applicable fees for each extended term. Contingent upon satisfactory vendor performance, continued funding and Governor and Executive Council approval.

To the extent that a Proposer believes that exceptions to the standard form contract will be necessary for the Proposer to enter into the Agreement, the Proposer should note those issues during the Proposer Inquiry Period. The Agency will review requested exceptions and accept, reject or note that it is open to negotiation of the proposed exception at its sole discretion. If the Agency accepts a Proposer's exception the Agency will, at the conclusion of the inquiry period, provide notice to all potential proposers of the exceptions which have been accepted and indicate that exception is available to all potential proposers. Any exceptions to the standard form contract that are not raised during the proposer inquiry period are waived. In no event is a Proposer to submit its own standard contract terms and conditions as a replacement for the State's terms in response to this solicitation.