



Sturbridge Tourist Association

A Committee of the Town of Sturbridge

Proposal Submittal Deadline and Submittal Address (mailing or hand delivery):

14 August 2019, by 12:00 pm

Town of Sturbridge
Attn: Kevin Filchak, M.P.A.
301 Main Street
Sturbridge, MA 01566

Sturbridge Tourist Association – Initial Review of Technical Proposals

Week of 14 August 2019

Sturbridge Tourist Association – Ranking of Technical Proposals and Review of Price Proposals

Week of 28 August 2019

Sturbridge Tourist Association – Vote Selecting Proposal

Week of 28 August 2019

Anticipated Contract Start Date

16 September 2019

Contact Information

Kevin Filchak, M.P.A.
(508) 347-2500 ext. 1411
Kfilchak@town.sturbridge.ma.us (any and all questions shall be submitted in writing to this email address)

The Town of Sturbridge reserves the right to reject any or all proposals or portions thereof, to accept a proposal or portion thereof, and to waive any informality.

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Overview

The Sturbridge Tourist Association (STA), represented by the Economic Development and Tourism Coordinator (EDTC), is seeking proposals for the development of a town brand and a three (3) year marketing strategy for the community. The STA will use these to promote Sturbridge to the public at large over the next few years.

Background

Sturbridge is a vibrant community with a diverse business base that benefits from its proximity to several major inter and intra state roadways. The town is home to fourteen hotels, almost fifty restaurants, three breweries and numerous merchants. However what the town is best known for is Old Sturbridge Village which, as the largest living history museum in New England, can and has drawn over 250,000 patrons a year to our community. Beyond the numerous eateries, hotels and the Village, the town is host to a number of burgeoning economic and entertainment sectors. Sturbridge is rapidly becoming a wedding destination with locations such as the Publick House and Hyland Orchard drawing hundreds of couples from across the country to wed in this idyllic New England community. For outdoor enthusiasts the town is building new outdoor trails every year; there are currently over thirty miles of available trails in town. Finally, the town is expanding its outreach efforts by creating local events that foster community spirit and encourage patronage of local businesses. All told Sturbridge hosts many wonderful things to see and experience.

It must be stated that Sturbridge greatly benefits from the revenues brought in by its tourists and visitors. Over the past ten years the town has seen yearly increases in the revenues that it collects from the hotel/motel room tax and the same is seen over the past eight years for our meals tax. In 2018 alone the town collected \$999,165 in hotel/motel tax revenues and \$464,678 in meals taxes. The revenues generated from local tourism are put towards one of three categories. First is the general fund to offset local operational costs. The second is the Betterment Committee which funds public safety, recreation and beautification efforts in town. The third and final way those dollars are spent is through the STA which uses its allocation to support tourist related events in, and marketing of, the community as well as funding the EDTC position.

Project

Over the past several years the town, through the funding the STA receives, has worked to promote itself and its businesses regionally and across the northeast. This has consisted of various multi-media campaigns done with different outlets, at different scales, and for different lengths of time. This leads to several challenges for Sturbridge as it is unclear how much of an impact, if any, these campaigns are having at attracting visitors to town. Furthermore Sturbridge does not have a clear message it is trying to convey beyond encouraging people to visit the community.

Therefore the STA is soliciting proposals to develop (A) a community brand that can be used both internally and by our local and regional partners (both public and private), and (B) a three (3) year marketing strategy that can be used to promote all that Sturbridge can offer its visitors.

The desired services to be provided by the applicant are described in the Scope of Services section of this RFP.

Any questions pertaining to the services required by the Town of Sturbridge or the technical aspects of this RFP should be directed, **in writing**, to Kevin Filchak, M.P.A., Economic Development and Tourism Coordinator at kfilchak@town.sturbridge.ma.us. Questions must be received no later than **7 August 2019 at 4:00pm**. Questions received after that time will not be answered.

The Town of Sturbridge reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals if it is deemed to be in the best interest of the Town to do so. The Town of Sturbridge may cancel this RFP in whole or in part, at any time whenever such an act is deemed to be in its best interest.

A **sealed** written proposal, **with separately sealed** technical and price proposals shall be submitted to:

Town of Sturbridge
Attn: Kevin Filchak, M.P.A.
301 Main Street
Sturbridge, MA 01566

Six (6) copies of the proposal must be received no later than 12:00pm on Wednesday, 14 August 2019. The final contract price and fee will be negotiated with the highest ranked proposal.

Scope of Service

The chosen consultant will be expected to develop a community brand and subsequent three (3) year marketing strategy for Sturbridge that will involve the following components:

- A written examination of Sturbridge's current brand and marketing strategy, identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats;
 - Written report to be submitted to the STA via the EDTC;
- Develop a profile of the types of Sturbridge visitor (location traveled from, purpose of travel, interests, media preferences, etc.);
 - Written report to be submitted to the STA via the EDTC;
- Conduct research to see how Sturbridge residents and businesses view the community;
 - It must include two community meetings: one for the general public and the other for key stakeholders (businesses, local and regional partners, etc.);
 - Written summary of the meetings to be submitted to the STA via the EDTC;
- Develop a town brand and written brand guidelines and publically present to a joint meeting of the Sturbridge Tourist Association and the Board of Selectmen;
 - Develop a written strategy for how the Town can adopt said brand (may be included as a part of the marketing strategy);

- Develop a written three (3) year marketing strategy for the town to market itself to those visitors profiled;
 - Publically present written strategy to the Sturbridge Tourist Association;
- Provide technical assistance, support and guidance during the initial rollout of the brand and strategy (last two months of the bid contract, anticipated May and June 2020).

Proposal Submission Procedures

1. The submission and review of the proposal shall comply with the purposes and intent of Massachusetts General Law Chapter 30B and all other applicable laws of the Commonwealth.
2. Proposals must be received no later than 14 August 2019 at 12:00pm. An original and six (6) copies must be submitted together with a transmittal letter signed by an authorized official of the firm.
3. The price proposal shall be submitted on the form found at the end of this RFP, in a separate, sealed envelope clearly marked "**Price Proposal – Branding/Marketing.**" Price proposals that are submitted in the same envelopes as the technical (non-price) proposals shall be rejected without further consideration. The price proposal shall include adequate provision for all proposed services.
4. Proposals and/or quotes may be changed or withdrawn prior to but not subsequent to 14 August 2019. Changes or corrections may be made by submission of such changes, in writing and in sealed envelopes, which identifies the submitting party and indicates that it contains a change or correction to the proposal for "**Branding /Marketing.**"

Submission Requirements

The following shall be considered to be the minimum requirements for submission. Each proposal shall contain the following.

- 1) Transmittal letter, no longer than two (2) pages in which the applicant must:
 - a. State your firm's understanding of the services to be performed and the work products to be provided as defined in the Scope of Services section of this RFP.
 - b. Make a positive commitment to perform the work within the required timeframe.

The transmittal letter must be signed by the individual authorized to negotiate and contractually bind the firm.

- 2) Timeline
 - a. Applicant shall provide a clear timeline from start of contract (assume start date of 16 September) through 30 June 2020.

- i. Timeline shall highlight key goals and milestones the applicant plans to achieve during the contract period.
- 3) Professional experience
 - a. Identify staff who will be assigned to this project. Provide resumes (which may be included as appendices) showing relevant past experience, education, training, etc.
- 4) References:
 - a. Applicant must submit a complete list of all jobs performed in the past three (3) years that are similar in size and scope to this project with contact names and telephone numbers. For each municipal contract the applicant was awarded in the last three (3) years, the following shall be provided:
 - i. Client contact name
 - ii. Contact telephone number
 - iii. Contact mailing address
 - iv. Summary of project scope
 - v. Amount of initial contract award
 - vi. Final total project cost
 - vii. Explanation for any difference between initial and final project costs
 - b. Town reserves the right to contact the reference provided, and use the information gained from the references as part of the factors used in determination of the contract award.
- 5) Non Collusion and Tax Compliance Forms contain in this RFP.

Quality Requirements

The following shall be considered minimum standards necessary to perform the scope of work. Acceptable evidence or certification must be provided to demonstrate the minimum standards are being met. Failure to meet the minimum standards as described below shall result in a rejection of the proposal.

- The Applicants' understanding of the Town's needs, the objectives and goals to be achieved and the work involved, and the nature and intent of the proposed public process;
- The quality and depth of the experience and expertise of the individuals who will do the work, and their track record in providing similar successful assistance in other tasks of this nature;
- Appropriateness of the project organization and individual team members; the identity, qualifications, and competence of the individuals (including and sub-consultants) who would actually do and/or be responsible for conducting the project, and the role of each in its completion;

- Quality of the Applicant's technical approach with emphasis on capacity to participate in a productive manner in staff and public meetings, taking into account comments and ideas from members of the public, town officials and staff;
- Appropriateness of the Applicant's Price Proposal, overall cost and the ability to perform the assigned tasks with a time frame and budget acceptable to the Town;
- Overall quality and responsiveness of the proposal;
- Other relevant criteria to be applied uniformly to all respondents.

Comparative Evaluation Criteria

Each Applicant must indicate if and how they meet the following Comparative Evaluation Criteria. Responses to each of these criteria will be judged in three (3) rating categories: Highly Advantageous, Advantageous and Not Advantageous.

A composite rating for each proposal will be based on the rating of each of the following Comparative Evaluation Criteria.

1) Proposed Methodology

- Highly Advantageous – The plan of services proposes a detailed, logical, and highly efficient scheme for producing a complete report that addresses all of the project objectives stated in the RFP.
- Advantageous – The plan of services proposes a credible scheme for producing a complete report that addresses most of the required issues.
- Not Advantageous – The plan of services is not sufficiently detailed to fully evaluate, or the plan does not contain all the components necessary to produce a complete report that addresses all of the required issues.

2) Social Media

- Highly Advantageous: Applicant has greater than five years of experience developing marketing strategies that include social media components.
- Advantageous: Applicant has between five and three years of experience developing marketing strategies that include social media components.
- Not Advantageous: Applicant has less than two years of experience developing marketing strategies that include social media components.

3) Research Capabilities

- a. Highly Advantageous: Applicant has the capability to research and develop understandings of the Sturbridge tourist population using data sources that will identify groups nationally.
- b. Advantageous: Applicant has the capability to research and develop understandings of the Sturbridge tourist population using data sources that will identify groups in at least the New York and New England regions.
- c. Not Advantageous: Applicant has the capability to research and develop understandings of the Sturbridge tourist population using data sources that will identify groups in the Tri-State area only.

Contract Award

The Town of Sturbridge will review the proposals and then make an overall evaluation, rating each proposal as either highly advantageous, advantageous or not advantageous. Those proposals failing to meet the Quality Requirements shall be deemed as non-responsive and shall be rejected.

The Town will determine the most advantageous proposal from a responsible and responsive proposer, taking into consideration the applicant's experience, staff capacity, references, proposed plan of services, or any other evaluation criteria set forth in the RFP as well as the proposal price.

As previously noted, the Town reserves the right to reject any proposal that, in its sole judgment, fails to meet the minimum requirements of this RFP; that is incomplete, conditional, or obscure; that contains additions or irregularities; in which errors occur, or if it is deemed to be in the best interests of the Town to do so.

The Town reserves the right to waive minor discrepancies or permit a proposer to clarify such discrepancies and so conduct discussions with all qualified proposers in any manner necessary to serve the best interest of the Town.

This contract is intended to be awarded to the selected applicant the week of 28 August 2019 and the scope of services detailed in this RFP shall be completed by 30 June 2020.

Proposals must be received prior to 12pm on Wednesday, 14 August 2019. **Faxed or electronic copies shall not be considered.**

Proposal should be mailed or delivered too:

Town of Sturbridge
Attn: Kevin Filchak, M.P.A.
301 Main Street
Sturbridge, MA 01566

Questions concerning this RFP shall be made, in writing, to the EDTC at kfilchak@town.sturbridge.ma.us.

Attachment 1: Certification of Non-Collusion

The undersigned certified under penalties of perjury that this proposal has been made and submitted in good faith and without collusion or fraud with any other person. As used in this certification, the word 'person' shall mean any natural person, business, partnership, corporation, union, committee, club or other organization, entity or group of individuals.

Signature of Individual Submitting Proposal

Name of Business

Date

Attachment 2: Tax Compliance Certification

Pursuant to M.G.L. c.62C, §49A, I certify under the penalties of perjury that to the best of my knowledge and belief, I am in compliance with all laws of the Commonwealth relating to taxes, reporting of employees and contractors, and withholding and remitting child support.

Signature of Individual or Corporate Name

Social Security Number or Federal Identification
Number

By
Corporate Officer (if applicable)

Date

