

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL**  
**VISITPITTSBURGH TOURISM REBRAND**



**VisitPITTSBURGH**  
120 Fifth Avenue, Suite 2800  
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

Date of Issuance: March 18, 2022

Point of Contact: Susan Klein, Chief Marketing Officer

**DEADLINE FOR RECEIPT OF PROPOSALS:**  
5 p.m. (EST) Friday, April 15, 2022  
See Proposal Outline for Submission Requirements

## Table of Contents

	Page
About VisitPITTSBURGH	2
Current Brand Overview	3
What We Seek	4
Desired Outcomes	6
RFP Submission Schedule and Contact	7
Proposal Requirements	8
Evaluation and Selection Criteria	9

## **About VisitPITTSBURGH**

VisitPITTSBURGH [[visitpittsburgh.com](https://www.visitpittsburgh.com)] is the official tourism development organization for Pittsburgh and Allegheny County, dedicated to expanding the tourism economy across the region, and generating a positive economic impact through business events, sports events and leisure tourism. VisitPITTSBURGH delivers on our mission in cooperation with our more than 650 business, civic and organizational partners

## **About Pittsburgh and Allegheny County**

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania is a world-class destination offering arts, culture, sports and impressive dining amidst its beautiful lush green scenery, rolling rivers and 446 bridges. Known for its friendly and welcoming residents, Pittsburgh offers affordable living with big-city convenience and small-town charm.

The second-largest city in Pennsylvania covering 55 square miles and home to 320,000 residents, Pittsburgh, a city built on innovation, has received a boost in its economy thanks to a diverse number of industries including health care, higher education, tourism, banking and a rapidly emerging tech sector. WalletHub named Greater Pittsburgh its sixth-best metro area for STEM professionals in 2021.

When the steel mills ceased operation within the city limits, Pittsburgh successfully reclaimed those buildings and transitioned to a 21st-century economy. Some of the city's top private employers and Fortune 500 companies include the University of Pittsburgh and the Medical Center, PNC Financial Services, Carnegie Mellon University, Verizon Communications, DICK'S Sporting Goods, Howmet Aerospace and PPG Industries.

The city is home to several national and global philanthropic organizations such as The Heinz Endowments, PNC Foundation, Richard King Mellon Foundation and The Pittsburgh Foundation. Thanks to decades of such philanthropy, Pittsburgh hosts 1,700 cultural events annually, boasts nine performing arts locations Downtown alone and is home to a symphony, ballet and opera.

The city also is a world leader in the green building movement with several LEED®-certified firsts: the David L. Lawrence Convention Center, Pittsburgh Glass Center, Senator John Heinz History Center and PNC Firstside Center just to name a few.

Prior to the disruption of the global pandemic, the tourism sector experienced substantial growth, reaching an economic impact of \$6.57 billion of direct spend from 33.9 million tourism-related visitors in 2019. With a robust history of drive market and regional visitors, Pittsburgh is poised to emerge from the global pandemic well-positioned for a return to its pre-2020 growth trajectory, in comparison with similar destinations.

### **VisitPITTSBURGH Current Brand Overview**

As the Destination Management Organization for the region, VisitPITTSBURGH's organizational remit is to be a key engine driving the regional economy. The organization raises awareness, generates positive impressions and inspires travelers to visit Pittsburgh. We reach travelers via targeted, multi-platform strategic outreach across a spectrum of demographic and vertical segments, based on extensive research and advanced performance and behavioral metrics.

Dedicated resources and campaigns target business and event visitors, sporting events visitors and leisure visitors. Our deeper segmentation analytics look at the behaviors and attributes of visitor audiences among drive markets, regional markets, national markets and international markets. Three specialized verticals operate within VisitPITTSBURGH, with their own sub-brand identities: MeetPITTSBURGH (business events and conventions), SportsPITTSBURGH (local teams and special sports events); and VisitPITTSBURGH (leisure tourism). In terms of organizational structure, at this writing the marketing, communications and research functions are rolled under the Leisure Tourism vertical and serve the research, marketing and communications requirements across the organization and its subbrands. Partnership Development for city and county businesses is also rolled into this vertical, under the

supervision of the Chief Marketing Officer. A current organization chart will be provided to the selected agency partner.

VisitPITTSBURGH, like most DMOs, is a 501c(6), not-for-profit business. Because tourism is such a key vector to the economy of the region, VisitPITTSBURGH has in 2022 launched a comprehensive 10-year regional Destination Master Plan to positively impact the economic success of the region as a destination in the long-term. The timely launch of a new tourism brand will underscore VisitPITTSBURGH's dedication to both near- and long-term business-building efforts.

Because the global pandemic severely curtailed travel by both leisure and business visitors, VisitPITTSBURGH continues to utilize brand assets, taglines and campaigns developed in 2020 through the present, including our campaign 'Only in Pittsburgh'; hashtag #LovePGH; and a 'Pittsburgh On The Move'-themed campaign for our annual meeting in Spring 2022; along with myriad special promotions for our partner organizations. A previous tourism brand campaign featured the brand slogan 'Pittsburgh: Mighty. Beautiful.' Locally, various other municipal and non-government organizations, businesses and alliances target similar audiences to VisitPITTSBURGH; while we are not competitors, there is potential for confusion among these organizations in the social media space, and among travelers seeking information about Pittsburgh as a destination. This should be considered by the partner agency. We also seek recommendations about the use of our own sub-brand identities (MeetPITTSBURGH and SportsPITTSBURGH).

### **What We Seek**

VisitPITTSBURGH is seeking a qualified agency partner to create a new tourism brand for Pittsburgh and Allegheny County. Our destination is positioned for, and deserving of, a new B2B and B2C-facing tourism branding that captures and reflects the collective excitement, pride and optimism about our region's achievements, growth and momentum. The time has come for a tourism rebranding that conveys the regions' multi-category appeal and myriad of attractions

for visitors, whether for business events, sporting events, and leisure tourism, across a demographic spectrum.

The new brand will serve as a beacon; repositioning the region across every target visitor segment and across all markets; from local to global. The new tourism brand should capture the innovative, welcoming and authentic values unique to our region. Deployed across our communications and content platforms, this renewed brand will serve as the basis for differentiation in all our segments. Beyond a graphic identity, the new tourism brand will be informed by the intangible drivers of affinity and excitement about our region, along with its physical assets and attractions. It should ignite curiosity and inspire action -- visitation – among those who don't know Pittsburgh or are due for a rediscovery, while serving as a touchpoint of pride for residents, businesses and institutions in our region.

### **Key Deliverables and Budget**

The selected agency partner will deliver the following:

- Brand Positioning:
  - Based on research supplied by VisitPITTSBURGH, and new research as needed to inform strategy and direction, a tested brand positioning, essence, promise and personality that is descriptive, versatile, visually compelling and data-driven.
  - The brand positioning must authentically reflect the demographic, market, cultural, geographic, transportation, infrastructure and quality of life advantages of Pittsburgh. It must ultimately inspire overnight tourism by consumers, and give business and sports event planners a strong reason to consider and choose Pittsburgh over competitor markets.

- Brand Expression Assets:
  - Brand Editorial Voice Guidelines for all communications platforms and channels, to reflect the brand positioning across B2B-facing thought leadership and editorial pieces, through B2C social media channels.
  - Visual Brand Assets and Visual Brand Guidelines for deployment across all communications platforms and channels, to include but not limited to:
    - Logos with detailed brand components, and all associated visual guidelines for use across all channels, from web, print, digital, signage, and additional formats as determined by VisitPITTSBURGH. The graphic elements must be able to be immediately reproduced by in-house designers and outside agencies with a minimum of guidance and refinement from selected agency.
    - Usage Guidelines for both in-house designers and outside vendors, including case usage in multiple mediums from digital to outdoor.
- Budget: From project inception to final execution, to include all deliverables above, with the exception of ancillary costs including but not limited to photography, travel, meals and lodging to be negotiated separately, fees to not exceed \$250,000. US.
- Timing: From discovery through delivery of final approved assets, engagement not to exceed 20 weeks, with a target for in-market deployment of assets for Q4, 2022.

While the new tourism brand will not supplant current municipal identity systems, it will be developed with input from an evaluation committee comprising key private and municipal stakeholders. Final approvals and sole point-of-contact will reside within VisitPITTSBURGH.

**Desired Outcomes**

VisitPITTSBURGH is seeking to improve our performance in key measurable areas related to our remit. The selected agency will understand that, while not tied to the fees set forth in this RFP, effectiveness of our new brand will be measured by the following KPIs as set forth in our strategic plan:

- Increased bookings of conferences, events and meetings for FY 2022 through FY 2025
- Increased attendance of sporting events for local teams; new bookings of non-traditional events such as Esports, National Senior Games, NCAA and other conferences
- Increased local and regional travel as reflected in airport passengers, hotel bookings, restaurant patrons and cultural attraction visitation.
- Increased national and international travel, as per above
- Increased recognition of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County as a preferred region for investment in new and emerging industries.
- Growth in real estate transactions and demographic growth through the attraction of skilled talent, college graduates and other professionals.

**Schedule of Major Activities**

March 18, 2022	RFP distribution
March 28, 2022	Intent to bid to be submitted to VisitPITTSBURGH
April 1, 2022	RFP Addendum – Responses to written questions
April 15, 2022	Proposals to be submitted to VisitPITTSBURGH
April 22, 2022	Agencies selected for further review and/or presentations
May 1, 2022	Agency awarded contract
May 3, 2022	Paperwork signed; start of contract



## **RFP Point-of-Contact**

Applicants to this RFP are to communicate only with the point of contact listed below. Email is the preferred communication method.

Susan Klein  
Chief Marketing Officer  
412 325.0294  
[susan.klein@visitpittsburgh.com](mailto:susan.klein@visitpittsburgh.com)

## **Intent to Bid Requirements**

Please include the following information in your submitted Intent to Bid. Return to [susan.klein@visitpittsburgh.com](mailto:susan.klein@visitpittsburgh.com) by 5 p.m. (EST), Monday, March 28, 2022. Bidding agency will be notified upon receipt of Intent to Bid.

- Company Name
- Full Address
- Website
- Main Contact Name, Title, Email, Phone(s)

## **Proposal Submission Requirements**

All proposals must include the following documents in the order listed below. Proposals should be submitted electronically only to [susan.klein@visitpittsburgh.com](mailto:susan.klein@visitpittsburgh.com) by 5 p.m., Friday April 15, 2022. Bidding agency will be notified promptly upon receipt of submission.

- Cover Page
- Proposal
  - Table of Contents
  - Authorization Letter

- Agency Background
  - Brief description of the bidding agency, company size and organizational structure as it relates to services proposed, including how long bidding agency has been performing the services requested.
  - Detailed description of successfully completed past projects with comparable scopes of work described within this RFP, with embedded links and/or accompanying exhibits
  - Capabilities, qualifications and expertise, including team structure, of individuals on team to be implementing the deliverables on project
  - Any specific organizational changes within the bidding agency which may have occurred during the last 12 months or anticipated in the next 12 months. Note potential impacts to the services requested in this RFP.
  - Any current lawsuits, legal actions or governmental investigations against your company.

## **Evaluation and Selection Process**

VisitPITTSBURGH will use the following criteria when evaluating proposals:

- Qualifications and Past Experience (Approx 50%)
  - Knowledge, creative expertise and organizational experience of the bidding agency with regard to branding and marketing
- Work Plan and Timeline (Approx 25%)
  - Description of services to be provided along with how these services/products will be implemented. Bidding agency should include a timeline with benchmarks based on the RFP.
- References and Detailed Cost Breakdown (20%)
  - Include breakdown of costs within proposed budget
  - Include payment schedule within proposed budget

- At least three (3) references
- Completeness of proposal, with a proposal Signature Page signed by a legally authorized representative of bidding agency (5%)
- Attachments
  - W-9
  - Link to most recent annual report (or report to employees/partners)
  - Letters of Recommendation (up to 3)

Questions should be directed to [susan.klein@visitpittsburgh.com](mailto:susan.klein@visitpittsburgh.com) All questions and answers will be shared equally among the responding bidding agencies.

## Notes

Costs - VisitPITTSBURGH will not assume any expense incurred by the bidding agency in preparation of the response to this RFP and also will not return the proposal to the bidding agency after a decision is made.

Labor Laws - the awarded firm will be required to comply with all applicable laws, including but not limited to labor laws, prevailing wage rates and workers compensation.

Should a contract result from this RFP, VisitPITTSBURGH reserves the right to award all items or any combination of items within this RFP at VisitPITTSBURGH's discretion.

Upon completion of the evaluation and selection process, VisitPITTSBURGH will notify all bidding agencies of selection/non-selection. If selected, the bidding agency shall provide VisitPITTSBURGH a draft agreement including a full description of services to be provided, as outlined in submitted proposal, within 7 days.