

**QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
FOR
NYSDED PR Services RFP # 14-6098**

Question: Can the NYSDED expand upon what they are looking for when they ask to "include a demonstration of how your company and staff meet the experience requirements in section 2.3.

Answer: Provide experience background on the individuals who would be assigned to the ILNY account.

Question: In which section of the complete proposal described in 3.1 should samples of collateral press materials that "demonstrate strong writing techniques based on media outlet, social media campaigns, guerilla marketing PR techniques and other travel destination related materials" (as described in section 2.3.4) be provided? Can we include some of that information in an appendix (either print or web-based) or does it all have to be inclusive of the page limits association with the appropriate section?

Answer: Reference to an appendix for samples is sufficient.

Question: Would it be possible to provide us with examples of past I Love NY "thematic campaigns?"

Answer: Please visit iloveny.com under Things to Do and refer to the lines of interest that I LOVE NEW YORK presently promotes.

Question: This section states that oral presentations will be at their discretion. What will determine whether or not the NYSDED will request oral presentations of the finalists?

Answer: We anticipate doing oral presentations unless circumstances dictate that it is not practical.

Question: As a non-exclusive PR agency, will the selected agency have a formal role with any other agencies?

Answer: No, the selected agency will not have a formal role with any other agency.

Question: Looking ahead to 2015, are there any regions the NYSDED has pre-ordained for special attention?

Answer: No. NYSDED does not establish more attention in one region over the other when promoting NYS. We strive to cover the state's vacation assets across all regions.

Question: It seems there is a typo in the section that asks for substantiation that a company has been in business for "ten (5) years." Can the NYSDED confirm if the required amount of time is for five or ten years?

Answer: The agency must have been in business for at least 10 years.

Question: Is the NYSDED looking for two different sets of references -- one that can substantiate agency's years in business and one that speaks to the quality of the bidder's work -- or are these one and the same?

Answer: If one reference can satisfy both requirement, then that is sufficient.

Question: The RFP calls out NYC, Montreal, Toronto, Pennsylvania and Ohio as primary markets. What about other drive distance metros such as Boston and other adjacent states? Does NYSDED want support in generating national and international tourism coverage?

Answer: Our targets are markets that are within a 5 hour drive to New York State. Yes, NYSDED wants support in generating national tourism coverage. Assistance with international PR support will be requested as needed.

Question: What content resources (photography/video) will be made available for use by the PR agency when fulfilling the scope of services?

Answer: The ILNY photo and video gallery is made available to the PR agency.

Question: How does NYSDDED coordinate its promotional efforts with the various TPAs and private tourism destinations across the state?

Answer: NYSDDED communicates with its TPAs and private tourism destinations across the state through conference calls, emails, speaking engagements and tourism conference participation.

Question: If the Word file is too large to email, can we provide a link for you to download the document?

Answer: Yes, you can provide a link for us to download the document.

Question: The RFP says the bidder must provide samples of collateral press releases, demonstrate strong writing techniques based on media outlet, social media campaigns, guerilla marketing PR techniques and other travel or destination related materials. In what section of the Proposal should we provide this information/these samples? Can these materials be included as an Addendum to the Proposal?

Answer: The samples of collateral press releases, demonstrate strong writing techniques based on media outlet, social media campaigns, guerilla marketing PR techniques and other travel or destination related materials can be included as an appendix.

Question: In what section of the Proposal should we include the letter from a Certified Public Accountant?

Answer: You can insert the letter from a Certified Public Account as an appendix in the back.

Question: If there is a three page limit for this section, in what section of the Proposal should we include Case Studies of our work to demonstrate our experience?

Answer: Appendixes can be used for any additional case studies to demonstrate experience.

Question: Can Case Studies showing our experience and samples of our work be included as an Addendum to the Proposal?

Answer: Case studies showing experience and samples of work can be included as appendixes referenced in the back of the submitted proposal.

Question: Is there a page limit for the resumes of company's key personnel?

Answer: There is no page limit, but a suggested two page limit would be sufficient.

Question: The RFP states the Department has established a 6% goal for the participation of certified minority-owned enterprises and a 6% goal for the participation of certified women-owned enterprises. During the evaluation of the Proposals, will points be given to agencies who demonstrate they qualify as or plan to utilize minority-owned or women-owned enterprises to complete the Scope of Work? Will agencies who do not include this be penalized in the evaluation of Proposals?

Answer: No, additional points will not be given to agencies who demonstrate they qualify as or plan to utilize minority-owned or women-owned enterprises to complete the Scope of Work. No, agencies who do not include this will not be penalized in the evaluation of proposals. However, the winning agency must satisfy their MWBE requirement as terms in their contract.

Question: Does the \$600,000 include all Administrative and other Expenses related to executing the Scope of Work?

Answer: Yes the \$600,000 includes all administrative and other expenses related to executing the Scope of Work.

Question: Will the state provide additional funding to cover Media Press Visits or should the \$600,000 total budget include Journalist travel?

Answer: No, the state will not provide additional funding to cover media press visits. The \$600,000 total budget includes journalist travel.

Question: Does the New York State Department of Economic Development have a social media AOR or do you have in-house personnel to manage/execute social media campaigns?

Answer: Yes, the New York State Department of Economic Development has a social media agency of record.

Question: Is there a separate hard-cost budget for the production of event/guerrilla executions described in Section 2.1.4 or is this included in the \$600K budget listed in Section 3.1.7?

Answer: No, there is not a separate hard-cost budget for the production of event/guerrilla executions. It is included in the \$600,000 budget listed in section 3.1.7.

Question: What tourism attractions, outside of New York State, does the Department view as the biggest competition within the target markets listed in Section 1.1.1.3?

Answer: The tourism attraction preferences for a visitor varies person to person, therefore we cannot indicate what would be our biggest competition.

Question: Who are the current spokespersons of the campaign and how long are they contracted?

Answer: The spokesperson for the media request is dependent on the nature of the inquiry.

Question: What are your overseas, targeted, international markets, outside of Canada? (Section 1.1.1.3)

Answer: Our current overseas, targeted, international markets, outside of Canada are China, UK, Germany, Australia and Brazil, Japan and Korea.

Question: What is your paid media budget for 2015 - 2016? (Section 1.1.1.3 & 3.1.7)

Answer: Our paid media budget for 2015-2016 is up to \$600,000

Question: Do subcontractors need to submit references and attorney recommendations as well? (Section 3.1.5 & 3.1.7)

Answer: No, subcontractors do not need to submit references and attorney recommendations to the Department.

Question: Can we provide embedded links to video in the first round of the response? Will they be viewed in the electronic submission? (Section 2.4.1)

Answer: Yes, you can provide embedded links to video in the first round of the response in the electronic submission. We recommend you provide a DVD or CD to submit along with your hard copy presentation.

Question: What prompted the search for a PR partner?

Answer: The current contract for PR services is expiring next year is what prompted the search for a PR partner.

Question: Why launch a PR program now when this campaign has existed for many years?

Answer: The campaign has had PR representation for several years. The current contract for PR services is expiring next year.

Question: Is this related to the governor administration?

Answer: No, this is not related to the governor administration.

Question: In May 2013 you held the first New York State Tourism Summit - were you happy with the coverage in the launch year and second year?

Answer: We were satisfied with the coverage we received for the first New York State Tourism Summit, but more is always welcome.

Question: What would you do differently in 2015?

Answer: Programming for the 2015 New York State Tourism Summit is still in development at this time.

Question: What was the target media for coverage? Global/national; National/regional; Regional/local?

Answer: All media is desired for the New York State Tourism Summit

Question: What is the media target for the campaign overall? Global/national; National/regional; Regional/local outlets?

Answer: All media is desired for the campaign overall.

Question: Who does NYSDDED see as its competitor set?

Answer: NYSDDED sees states within a 5 hour drive time as its competitor set.

Question: What does success look like to NYSDDED?

Answer: Success for NYSDDED looks like increased jobs, visitor spending and regional economic impact

Question: What metrics does NYSDDED use to measure success?

Answer: Metrics that NYSDDED uses to measure success are earned media reports, economic impact numbers, direct visitor spending, and job creation.

Question: Please clarify is the 5 year tourism experience requirement - is that just for the principle leading the account or is it expected of all PR team members?

Answer: The 5 year tourism experience is required for the leadership on the account.

Question: Will biographies capturing the depth of team members' relevant experience be accepted rather than formal resumes?

Answer: Yes, biographies capturing the depth of team members' relevant experience can be accepted rather than formal resumes.

Question: Is there incremental budget available for the proposed creative/guerrilla marketing activities or must all PR activities fit within the \$600,000 budget?

Answer: No, all PR activities must fit within the \$600,000 budget.

Question: Can you provide a list of the State's target vertical markets, in order of importance/significance?

Answer: The State's targeted lines of interest are eco-tourism, adventure, heritage travel, culinary and LGBT. However, each sector is equally important to promote.

Question: Can you provide a list of the State's target drive markets, in order of importance/significance?

Answer: The State's targeted drive markets are New York, NJ, CT, eastern PA, western Ohio, Montreal/Toronto, New England. However, this list cannot be ranked, because it depends on what is being promoted.

Question: How should operational expenses such as those associated with the facilitation of group and individual press trips, promotional giveaways, etc. be listed within the budget form?

- Would these fall under 'Administrative Expenses?'
- If needed, can another page be added to the form provided?

Answer: The operational expenses associated with the facilitation of the group and individual press trips, promotional giveaways, etc, would fall under administrative expenses. If needed, additional pages can be added to the form, however as stated in the RFP, do not change the format.

Question: Are events (whether trade or press, or consumer engagement) considered part of the scope of work to be performed by the PR agency?

Answer: Yes, events (whether trade or press, or consumer engagement) are considered part of the scope of work to be performed by the PR agency.

Question: We understand that the available budget is up to \$600,000 per year, can you please advise us of the total budget in 2012, 2013, and 2014?

Answer: The budget in the 2012, 2013 and 2014 was \$400,000.

Question: Is your current AOR participating in this bid

Answer: We do not know if our current AOR is participating in this bid. We do not know who is participating.

Question: Can you share a list of all participating agencies?

Answer: We do not know who the participating agencies are.

Question: Is the issuing of this bid mandatory per government requirement and / or the expiration of current contract?

Answer: The issuing of this bid is per the expiration of the current contract.

Question: What is considered the most effective campaign implemented to date for I LOVE NEW YORK?

Answer: The 2013 campaign with over \$95 Billion in economic impact is the highest it has ever been for New York State tourism.

Question: Are you expecting to see examples of campaign creative and messaging content developed specifically for I LOVE NEW YORK within the RFP submittal or will existing examples, developed for other clients, suffice as an illustration of agency capabilities?

Answer: Examples of existing campaign creative and messaging content developed for other clients is sufficient.

Question: Can you please share existing marketing plan and / or tourism reports?

Answer: Please see this year's 2014 Tourism Summit booklet which is included as an attachemnt.

Question: How do we obtain copies of the questions and answers regarding this RFP, as submitted by other agencies?

Answer: All PR RFP questions will be sent out to all known recipients of the RFP.

Question: What past PR efforts have been most successful in driving visitation?

Answer: We believe efforts that have attributed to driving visitation have been a combination of press trips, pitches, media events and relationships.

Question: Is this a mandated review or voluntary?

Answer: The PR RFP is a voluntary review due to the current contract expiring next year.

Question: Are you happy with the work of incumbent agency?

Answer: We have been satisfied with our AOR. However, we are moving forward in an open and competitive process due to the contract expiring.

Question: Can creative writing samples be submitted as an Appendix rather than included directly in 3.1.3?

Answer: Yes, creative writing samples can be submitted as an appendix rather than included directly in 3.1.3.

Question: Does this budget include fee and out-of-pocket expenses?

Answer: Yes, this budget includes fee and out-of-pocket expenses.

Question: What are the chief challenges you face from a marketing/PR perspective?

Answer: The success of the ILNY campaign has brought many opportunities which present challenges on time and deadlines.

Question: What is the biggest misperception you battle?

Answer: The biggest misperception we battle is that I LOVE NEW YORK is a state tourism brand, not a city.

Question: What other states or destinations do you consider to be your biggest competitors and why?

Answer: A few states we would consider as top competitors are Florida, California and Hawaii. Why, because they have multiple vacation assets across the state like New York.

Question: What states or cities would you consider a conflict of interest?

Answer: We are not sure what this question is asking.

Question: What state or city communications campaigns do you admire?

Answer: California is an example.

Question: What has been your most successful media campaign to date and why was it regarded as the best?

Answer: The most successful media campaign to date is the current program. Last year, New York State received over \$28M in earned media.

Question: What are the most important target demographics you want to attract?

Answer: The most important target demographics we want to attract is honestly all of them. New York State has something for everyone.

Question: Who else will be involved in making the decision?

Answer: A review team of qualified individuals.

Question: How will success be defined for the PR program?

Answer: Success will be defined by earned media, regional coverage, and industry and partner feedback.

Question: Who handles your social media channels?

Answer: We have a full-time staffer and social media agency.

Question: Scope item 2.1.9 “Develop a digital PR plan that can be integrated with ILNY social media outlets.” Can you clarify your expectation here regarding “plan”: would that be simply to create a strategic plan to guide your content creation and execution; would that be to create the plan and the content; would that be to create plan, content and perform community management and moderation for the channels?

Answer: Our expectation is for the bidder to simply create a strategic plan to guide our content creation and execution.

Question: Are all marketing tactics integrated under one plan?

Answer: All programs and initiatives under the I LOVE NEW YORK brand have a marketing connection with each other.

Question: Can you confirm that the in paragraph 3.1.8, Appendix D is supposed to be travel expense guidelines and not a questionnaire?

Answer: Please note that paragraph 3.1.8 on page 10 of the RFP shall be corrected to say:

3.1.8. Other.

Please complete and include: Request for Proposal Response Form, Bidders Identifying Data form, Appendix B (Budget), Appendix C (Non-Collusive Bidding Certification), Appendix E (MacBride Fair Employment Principles) Appendix F (Vendor Responsibility Information) Appendix G (Procurement Lobbying Disclosure Pursuant to Sections 139-j and 139-k of State Finance Law respectively)....