



Request for Proposals for Advertising Agency Services for VisitNorfolk

Contents

Invitation	2
Schedule of Events	3
Scope of Project	3
Agreement Term and Funding	4
Americans with Disabilities Act	4
Preparing and Submitting Proposals	4
Submission of the Proposal.....	5
Proposal Organization and Format	5
Oral Presentations and Site Visits	6
Proposal Scoring and Criteria.....	6
Creative Evaluation Criteria	7
Oral Evaluation Criteria.....	7
Proposal Requirements	8
Trade Secrets/Confidentiality	11
Vendor Compensation Plan	11
Payment Schedule	13
Ownership of Materials	13
News Releases	14

Invitation

The purpose of this document is to provide interested parties with information to enable them to prepare and submit a proposal for advertising agency services. The Request for Proposal (RFP) is issued on [DATE]. [NAME], [TITLE] shall serve as the sole point of contact during the selection process.

The Norfolk Convention and Visitors Bureau (dba Visit Norfolk) is a 501(c)(6) not-for-profit corporation whose mission is dedicated to promoting Norfolk as the premier destination, providing unmatched experiences and amenities to both residents and visitors, while driving economic growth through heightened visitation and fostering community prosperity.

VisitNorfolk is the City of Norfolk's official destination marketing organization whose responsibility is to market, sell, promote and represent the city and its many appeals to build the brand, generate awareness and enhance perception. It is governed by a Board of Directors, composed of representatives from the meetings and tourism sector, the general business community and the public sector. Its primary targets are meetings and conferences, group tours and leisure travelers, while concurrently supporting the City of Norfolk's efforts to attract residents, businesses and students.

Norfolk has a rich history and maintains extraordinary ties to the military, proudly honoring these traditions while continually evolving as a vibrant urban waterfront destination. Norfolk's dynamic character is driven by its thriving arts and culture scene, which offers remarkable variety and depth uncommon for a city of its size. The city's diverse communities, favorable climate and coastal Virginia location further enrich its appeal to a broad range of market segments.

VisitNorfolk serves a diverse audience of travelers who enjoy water-based amenities, family experiences and couples' getaways. Our visitors span multiple generations, from Boomers to Gen X, Millennials and Gen Z. While our primary mission is tourism promotion, we recognize that visitors often become future residents or business owners, contributing to the economic development of our region.

Norfolk is a city on the move, distinguished by a vibrant and highly walkable downtown which is filled with numerous amenities – world-class attractions, museums, performing art venues, chef-owned restaurants and lively year-round festivals and events. The city also offers exceptional outdoor experiences, boasting more than 140 miles of scenic waterways, including seven miles of sandy beaches ideal for swimming, boating, kayaking, biking, walking, bird watching and sightseeing cruises.

Beyond the bustling downtown area, Norfolk features a collection of distinctive neighborhoods, each presenting its unique atmosphere, local attractions, boutique shopping and notable dining experiences. These neighborhoods are part of what makes Norfolk appealing to visitors seeking authentic experiences.

For meetings and conferences, the city provides more than 5,000 hotel rooms ranging from bed and breakfast accommodations to premier flagship hotels, many conveniently situated within walking distance of downtown amenities. Norfolk's light rail system offers affordable and convenient exploration opportunities. Additionally, Norfolk is now a newly established year-round Carnival Cruise port, further enhancing its appeal as a leading coastal city. Norfolk's convenient accessibility is further enhanced by the Norfolk International Airport, providing easy connections for visitors from across the country and beyond.

VisitNorfolk serves a critical role as a community facilitator, bringing together arts organizations, attractions, event planners and various stakeholders throughout Norfolk and the region. The selected agency should have a deep fluency in these dynamics to help maintain VisitNorfolk's position as a valued convener and promoter of all that Norfolk has to offer.

(For more information about Norfolk and VisitNorfolk, please go to .)

Schedule of Events

Every effort will be made to adhere to the following schedule, although it may be varied at VisitNorfolk's discretion.

- Request for Proposals issued: Friday, April 4, 2025
- Deadline for submitting proposals: 12:00 noon EST, Friday, April 25, 2025
- Announcement of agencies selected for oral presentations/interviews: Friday, May 9, 2025

Scope of Project

Project Description: The selected vendor will work with VisitNorfolk's Marketing & Communications Department to plan, develop, implement, monitor and evaluate results-driven advertising campaigns to promote the City of Norfolk as a travel destination and as a great place to live, work and play. "Vendor" refers to a firm or agency submitting a proposal in response to this RFP.

VisitNorfolk requires a full-service agency that can handle both creative development and paid media strategy. The agency must have the capability to provide a range of integrated marketing services, which include but are not limited to:

1. **Strategic Planning and Brand Management** includes campaign planning, brand positioning and data-driven insights catering to leisure and group travelers.
2. **Creative Development** covers concept generation, content production across various media, messaging strategy and visual direction including video and photography.
3. **Digital Marketing** services entail website management, content creation, SEO/SEM strategies, email campaigns and web-based promotions.
4. **Paid Media Strategy** involves media planning, execution, optimization, performance analysis and cooperative advertising efforts.
5. **Social Media** responsibilities encompass strategic content planning, targeted advertising campaigns and campaign management.
6. **Meetings, Conventions and Group Travel Support** includes specialized marketing campaigns for meeting planners and group tour operators, event materials and cruise tourism strategies.
7. **Additional Services** cover market research, promotional support and collateral production.

The selected vendor must demonstrate the capability to handle all aspects of the above services or provide documentation regarding experience working in tandem with other agencies to ensure an integrated relationship capable of delivering seamless work. Vendors must describe those aspects or parts of the work that will be performed by Vendor staff and those that will be subcontracted. Vendors must additionally describe what they believe to be the advantages or disadvantages of using subcontractors.

Any third-party vendor interaction would need written approval from VisitNorfolk for all service scopes (media, creative, digital). This includes digital developers, video production teams, copywriters or other specialists not on the payroll of the agency.

For website maintenance and development, the selected agency will be responsible for supporting VisitNorfolk's custom WordPress build with Gutenberg block backend. This includes plugin updates, content types and adding new feature sets as part of the retainer agreement.

The selected agency must maintain flexible licensing with perpetuity rights for all assets produced, including videography, photography, voiceover and other creative elements. This allows VisitNorfolk to reuse assets across different mediums without additional costs. While not necessarily disqualifying if unable to provide this, a clear plan for asset licensing that prioritizes flexibility and cost efficiency will be viewed favorably.

Agreement Term and Funding

The Agreement with the selected Vendor shall be in effect for three (3) years beginning July 1, 2025, with the option by mutual written agreement of VisitNorfolk and selected Vendor to renew for up to two (2) additional one-year periods. Refer to the Terms and Conditions section of this RFP for detailed information.

The Agreement may be terminated upon sixty (60) days' written notice given by either party. All services performed and materials prepared by the selected Vendor during the sixty (60) days prior to termination of the Agreement must be approved in advance and will be billed to VisitNorfolk as provided for in the Billing and Payment section of the Agreement.

Americans with Disabilities Act

As covered by the Americans with Disabilities Act, VisitNorfolk does not discriminate on the basis of disability and upon request will provide reasonable accommodation to ensure equal access to proposals, programs, services and activities. If an individual with a disability requires accommodation for oral presentations or onsite visits, please contact the RFP point of contact prior to the scheduled time.

Preparing and Submitting Proposals

The evaluation and selection of a Vendor will be based on information submitted in the Vendor's proposal plus references and any required onsite visits or oral presentations. Failure to respond to each of the requirements in the RFP may be the basis for rejecting a proposal. VisitNorfolk is not liable for any costs incurred by Vendors in replying to this RFP.

Specific Response Requirements

Vendors are required to address each of the following items in their proposal response. Please organize your proposal to clearly address each question in the order presented:

1. **Agency Background and Experience:** Years in business, current top accounts, significant account changes since 2021 and current hospitality/tourism client accounts.
2. **Travel and Tourism Experience:** Provide a relevant detailed case study highlighting campaign goals, target audience and insights that informed your strategy, creative approach, media execution and measurable results.

3. **Co-operative Advertising Experience:** Describe your experience, approach and successes with co-operative advertising initiatives. Include how you engaged partners and measured results.
4. **Creative Production Capabilities:** Outline your in-house capabilities and external partners management, providing examples pertinent to destination marketing. This can include videography, photography, audio production, graphic design, brand identity development, print production, web design and development, motion graphics, animation, etc.
5. **Research and Data Capabilities:** Describe your approach to gathering and analyzing data to inform strategic decisions. What research tools and methodologies do you employ to understand target audiences? How do you measure campaign effectiveness and optimize based on results? Detail your experience with tourism-specific research and data sources.
6. **Media Planning and Buying Tools:** Detail your tools for planning, optimization and reporting for paid media. Describe your media planning process and what media partnerships and buying relationships you leverage to maximize client budgets. How do you stay current with emerging media platforms and opportunities?
7. **Digital Marketing & Social Expertise:** Describe your agency's digital marketing and social media capabilities. Include website development and maintenance specifically with WordPress. Explain your approach with SEO, SEM and content marketing strategies. What percentage of your agency's total revenue is digitally focused and social media focused? Provide examples of an integrated campaign with the client requirements, challenges, approach and value delivered.
8. **Meetings, Conventions & Group Travel:** Highlight experience with marketing to meeting planners, convention attendees and group travel operators including cruise-related tourism.
9. **Creative Philosophy:** Clearly define your creative process from strategy to execution and criteria for effective, measurable advertising. Provide examples of print, direct marketing, television and radio advertisements, outdoor, digital advertising and/or specialty advertisements you have created.
10. **Understanding of Norfolk:** Demonstrate your understanding of Norfolk's tourism product, offerings and unique selling points. If you are not locally based, describe your approach to becoming immersed in and knowledgeable about Norfolk. Identify Norfolk's competing markets. Demonstrate knowledge of regional nuances including Hampton Roads, Coastal Virginia and other relevant markets.
11. **Account Management and Staffing:** Relate the experience level and role of current staff who will work on the account, particularly highlighting relevant hospitality industry experience. Describe your typical client communication cadence and account management approach. Confirm your willingness to attend key in-person VisitNorfolk meetings including:
 - VisitNorfolk's Annual Meeting
 - Quarterly meetings to discuss strategy and ongoing results
 - Relevant travel and tourism industry events and conferences
12. **Asset Licensing:** Describe your approach to managing licensing for creative assets (photography, video, talent, etc.).

13. **Third-Party Vendor Management:** Outline your process for selecting, managing and overseeing third-party vendors, including necessary approvals. Include what liability insurance you have for contractors.
14. **References:** Provide at least three client references, including point of contact information, who can speak to your ability to operate as a full-service agency with testimonials if possible.
15. **Compensation Structure:** Provide a detailed proposal for your compensation structure, including monthly retainer fee and what services are included, hourly rates for work outside the retainer scope, commission structure for media placements, project-based fee structure and any additional costs not covered in the above.

Submission of the Proposal

Each Vendor must submit an original and four (5) copies of all materials required for acceptance of its proposal no later than 12:00 noon Eastern Standard Time on Friday, April 25, 2025 to: Sarah Hughes, VP of Marketing & Communications, VisitNorfolk 232 E. Main Street Norfolk, Virginia 23510.

Proposals must be physically received in the above office by the specified time stated above. Proposals not physically received by the stated time will not be accepted. Delivery to, postmarking, or acceptance of a proposal by the United States Postal Service (USPS) or other delivery service does not constitute physical receipt of a proposal.

All proposals must be packaged, sealed and show the following information on the outside of the package:

- Vendor's Name and Address
- Request for Proposal Title
- Date

Proposals should also be sent via e-mail to shughes@visitnorfolktoday.com. All proposals will become the property of VisitNorfolk and VisitNorfolk reserves the right to accept or reject any or all of the proposals and to waive any technicalities or irregularities therein. Furthermore, VisitNorfolk reserves the right to obtain clarification of any point in a proposal or to obtain additional information regarding a proposal. VisitNorfolk will award the Agreement to the Vendor submitting the proposal which in VisitNorfolk's opinion is in the best interest of and most advantageous to VisitNorfolk. All respondents agree that rejection shall create no liability on the part of VisitNorfolk because of such rejection and that the filing of any proposal in response to this request shall constitute an agreement of the respondent to these conditions. VisitNorfolk reserves the right to discuss and negotiate with selected Vendor(s) any terms and conditions in the proposals, including but not limited to, financial terms.

Information supplied in the proposal will be deemed to be correct, and VisitNorfolk is entitled to rely on the proposal. Submission of a proposal indicates acceptance by the Vendor of the conditions contained in this Request for Proposal unless clearly and specifically noted in the proposal submitted and confirmed in the agreement between VisitNorfolk and the Vendor selected.

VisitNorfolk will not reimburse responding firms for any expenses incurred in preparing proposals in response to this request. Proposals received after the date and time indicated will not be considered. No requests for extension of time will be granted.

Proposal Organization and Format

Each Vendor must submit a written proposal. Proposals may be supplemented by video, audio and samples of advertisements, promotions, etc., created by the Vendor.

Oral Presentations and Site Visits

Selected Vendors will be required to make oral presentations at VisitNorfolk offices citing specific proposal applications capabilities. Every reasonable attempt will be made to schedule presentations at a time that is agreeable to the Vendor. Failure of a Vendor to conduct a presentation on the date scheduled may result in rejection of the Vendor's proposal. Selected Vendors may be required to allow site visits to their place of business. Each Vendor making an oral presentation must provide eight (8) copies of a summary of its oral presentation at the time of the presentation. Provide names, titles and background of the account service, creative and media staff at the senior management level to which you would assign primary responsibility for the VisitNorfolk account. Staff who will be assigned and working on the account, with the experience and skills to meet the needs of VisitNorfolk, must be present and play a role in oral presentations. Oral presentations will be limited to 60 minutes, to include Q&A.

Proposal Scoring and Criteria Summary

Proposals will be reviewed by an evaluation committee and scored against the stated criteria. The evaluation committee will review references, request oral presentations and may conduct onsite visits in the scoring process. In recommending the award of this account, VisitNorfolk will evaluate and score in two selection phases.

First phase evaluation and scoring:

1. Written proposals demonstrating concepts outlined in creative evaluation criteria, including specific response to organization capability proposal requirements;
2. Cost proposal / Vendor compensation plan.

Finalists from the first phase evaluation will be invited to participate in the second phase of the selection process: Oral presentations demonstrating concepts outlined in oral evaluation criteria, including specific application capability proposal requirements.

Vendor presentations must clearly show past account and campaign experiences that have successfully met with complex client needs, specifically focusing on the hospitality industry's challenges and opportunities if applicable. This experience will assist in understanding and dealing with the needs of VisitNorfolk. Vendors must demonstrate broad experience and availability of a skilled staff.

Right to Reject Proposals and Negotiate Agreement Terms: VisitNorfolk reserves the right to reject any and all proposals and to negotiate the terms of the agreement with the selected Vendor prior to entering into an agreement.

Creative Evaluation Criteria

Campaign Development: Vendors must have the necessary ability to develop creative, measurable, results-driven advertising campaigns utilizing multiple communication channels. Vendors must produce, implement and evaluate campaigns and recommend effective marketing strategies which will effectively address the brand standards of VisitNorfolk's destination brand.

Vendors must have the ability to develop unique, imaginative and memorable print advertisements, web-based advertising, direct marketing campaigns, television and radio advertisements, outdoor

advertising and/or other advertising. All communications must be of high quality, clearly communicate messages, stand out among similar advertisements, be measurable, convincing and provide a lasting positive impression.

Oral Evaluation Criteria

Vendors must demonstrate clearly and succinctly their ability to produce creative, results-driven advertising campaigns that address the destination brand, to have a marketing strategy that creates a consumer relationship with proper branding elements to include appropriate campaigns and positioning to meet the needs of Norfolk's hospitality industry and VisitNorfolk.

Vendors must have the ability to analyze, understand and apply appropriate research to conceptualize, integrate, implement and evaluate such advertising applications; these strategies would be positive, memorable, convincing and measurable, to enable VisitNorfolk to maintain positive top of mind awareness in key markets and would position Norfolk apart from its competitors.

Vendors should present at least 2 full-service campaign case studies:

- At least one must be from the travel/tourism industry
- They should demonstrate how creative and media strategies worked together
- They should show clear, definitive results

Vendors must also demonstrate their understanding of Norfolk and its offerings. If not locally based, they should present a plan for gaining knowledge about Norfolk and immersing themselves in the destination. VisitNorfolk is looking for tailored approaches, not cookie-cutter solutions. Staff who will be assigned to the account, with the experience and skills to meet the needs of VisitNorfolk must be present and play a role in oral presentations. Oral presentations will be limited to 60 minutes, to include Q&A.

Proposal Requirements

Vendors are required to respond to all items outlined in the Specific Response Requirements section above. Be specific, thorough, and concise in your responses. In addition to addressing the specific requirements, Vendors should also provide the following:

1. A clear understanding of VisitNorfolk's goals and objectives
2. A comprehensive approach to meeting those objectives
3. Evidence of capability to deliver high-quality creative and strategic services
4. Demonstrated understanding of the tourism industry and destination marketing
5. A realistic timeline for implementation of proposed services
6. Clear description of account management structure and processes

Trade Secrets/Confidentiality

Upon receipt by VisitNorfolk, each proposal is considered a public record except for material which qualifies as "trade secret" information under Virginia law. After opening, each proposal will be reviewed by the evaluation committee, as well as other VisitNorfolk staff. Members of the general public who submit public records requests could be eligible to review the proposals as well. To properly designate material as trade secret under these circumstances, each Vendor must take the following precautions: (a) any trade secrets submitted by a Vendor should be submitted in a separate, sealed envelope marked "Trade Secret—Confidential and Proprietary Information—Do Not Disclose Except for the Purpose of

Evaluating this Proposal," and (b) the same trade secret/confidentiality designation should be stamped on each page of the trade secret materials contained in the envelope. Trade secret information should not be included in the electronic version of the proposal emailed to VisitNorfolk. To the extent such material is actually a trade secret under Virginia laws, it will not be subject to disclosure. You are directed to consult your own counsel as to whether information is in fact a trade secret. In submitting a Proposal, each Vendor agrees that VisitNorfolk may reveal any trade secret materials contained in such response to all VisitNorfolk staff and VisitNorfolk officials involved in the selection process, and to any outside consultant or other third parties who serve on the evaluation committee or who are hired by VisitNorfolk to assist in the selection process. Furthermore, each Vendor agrees to indemnify and hold harmless VisitNorfolk and each of its officers, employees, and agents from all costs, damages, and expenses incurred in connection with refusing to disclose any material, which the Vendor has designated as a trade secret. Any Vendor that designates its entire Proposal as a trade secret may be disqualified. Proposals will not be disclosed until an Agreement has been issued to a Vendor and any trade secret issues have been resolved.

Vendor Compensation Plan

It is important that VisitNorfolk understands the options available and how the Vendor records and bills various aspects of services.

Please state the proposed fee structure the creative partner proposes. Include what services the fee covers and specifically list area/services not covered by the fee that the creative partner might offer to VisitNorfolk.

Please specifically address the following:

Media placement: Vendor will be utilized for media services. Accordingly, all media planning and analysis, negotiation and purchasing should be covered. Please provide standard commission structure. Is Vendor willing to negotiate commission on media placement?

Web Support: Please identify direct and/or related costs for website maintenance and development, including support for the existing WordPress site.

Production Commissions: All production-related purchases made on behalf of VisitNorfolk should be billed at net cost. These purchases include, but are not limited to, printing and typesetting, film work, talent fees, audio, video and film production and freight and courier charges.

Project Estimation: Prior to beginning a project which will result in costs incurred on behalf of VisitNorfolk, Vendors must provide an initial proposal inclusive of estimated shipping costs, direct travel-related expenses, and applicable taxes, subject to a 10% variance. Once signed, dated and returned to the Vendor, the project estimation proposal will serve as confirmation between parties allowing the Vendor to begin work on the project. Any changes to an approved layout or projects resulting in fee changes require a revised estimate. Failure to obtain a written estimate relieves VisitNorfolk of costs outside of the primary project estimation. Vendors shall not, without prior written approval, incur any expenses or enter into any obligations for which VisitNorfolk may be legally responsible for, except in emergency situations where such action is, in the Vendor's opinion, necessary to safeguard the interest of their client.

Billing and Payment: VisitNorfolk requires invoices on a monthly basis. These invoices will detail but are not necessarily limited to costs and related charges for Hourly Charges (broken out by service and noted in billing); Production Costs (net); Miscellaneous out-of-pocket expenses: photocopies; postage based on

direct client-related postage use only; travel (if applicable with prior written approval); freight and courier charges. Vendors must provide service charge and interest rate information which may apply to any unpaid balances not paid in full within sixty (60) days of the date of the invoice. VisitNorfolk understands billing for individual projects may extend beyond a billing period. In these cases, VisitNorfolk may wish to be rendered partial billing for the project, with remaining billings to come in subsequent billing periods.

Payment Schedule

All expenses should be billed monthly for those costs incurred to date for that billing period.

Ownership of Materials

The material produced by Vendor shall be deemed to be "work for hire" as contemplated by the United States Copyright Act and owned by VisitNorfolk. However, in the event that some court may determine the material is not a work for hire, in the Agreement between Vendor and VisitNorfolk, Vendor will irrevocably grant and assign to VisitNorfolk sole and exclusive right, license and privilege to exhibit, distribute, market, transmit, perform and otherwise deal in and exploit the material produced by Vendor all around the world. Therefore, VisitNorfolk shall be the first owner of the entire copyright and all other rights in and to the material produced under the Agreement, and shall have the absolute and exclusive perpetuity right to exhibit, exploit, duplicate, dub, distribute, market, transmit, perform, reproduce, sublicense and use in any way the material throughout the world by all existing formats, including internet and mobile platform, and any as yet undiscovered methods and formats, and Vendor will grant VisitNorfolk all consent necessary to enable VisitNorfolk to exploit the material at its convenience. As a consequence, Vendor shall not be entitled to use the materials or any part of them produced under the Agreement, without VisitNorfolk's prior written consent, which can be withheld for any reason. At the end of the Agreement, Vendor will deliver to VisitNorfolk all papers and other materials related to the work performed under the Agreement.

News Releases

News releases and media contacts pertaining to the agreement shall not be made without the prior approval of VisitNorfolk.