

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS BRANDING STRATEGY FOR VISITOR PROMOTIONS FOR COVID-19 RECOVERY

I. INTENT

The Wrangell Convention and Visitor Bureau (WCVB) is seeking proposals from qualified firms or individuals to help research, develop and implement a strategically driven destination brand that represents Wrangell, Alaska. The brand should resonate with visitors and residents alike, as well as CVB partners and community stakeholders. The branding strategy will be used for marketing and promotional activities by the WCVB for the community of Wrangell, Alaska. The dramatic negative impacts to the visitor industry in Wrangell due to the COVID-19 pandemic is requiring the WCVB to re-evaluate and modify their existing marketing strategies.

II. DUE DATE

Proposals are due no later than **Monday, August 31, 2020 at 3:00pm**. The review of proposals shall follow immediately. Proposers should make arrangements to have a representative available for a Zoom follow-up interview (if requested) September 1-4, 2020.

Submit proposals by email in PDF format, at visitor@wrangellalaska.org with the Subject Line: RFP Response Visitor Industry Branding no later than 3:00pm ADT, August 31, 2020. Questions may be directed to Carol Rushmore, Economic Development Director, City and Borough of Wrangell at visitor@wrangellalaska.org.

III. BACKGROUND

The Wrangell CVB is comprised of 5 volunteer individuals that represent different visitor sectors of the economy. The members are appointed by the Mayor of the City and Borough of Wrangell for three year terms to what is essentially a city committee named the Wrangell Convention and Visitor Bureau. The WCVB represents the community as a whole, rather than a membership based organization. The WCVB is responsible for developing the annual budget from the transient tax money received from accommodations and implementing a marketing and promotional strategy for the visitor industry. For more information about Wrangell, please go to www.wrangellalaska.org and www.wrangell.com.

As the COVID-19 pandemic closed businesses, restricted travel and decimated the retail and tourism market in Wrangell, the WCVB began developing a new marketing strategy to prepare for the reopening of businesses and travel in 2021. The WCVB identified gaps in marketing efforts and developed an optional plan to implement in response to the significant impacts that the COVID-19 pandemic created. One of these activities is a branding strategy to better define what makes Wrangell special and unique and how to turn that into a marketing focus to reach and attract visitors, new residents and industry.

The community of Wrangell (population 2,400) is located on the northwest tip of Wrangell Island in central Southeast Alaska. The City and Borough of Wrangell is roughly twice the size of Rhode Island with 2,582 square miles of land and 883 square miles of water. It extends east to the Canadian border, north to encompass the Stikine River, south to Cleveland Peninsula of the mainland, and west to include several large islands. Several remote settlements are scattered throughout the Borough.

Wrangell is in the heart of the Tongass National Forest; in fact over 97 percent of the land within the Borough is federal land and another two percent is owned by the state. Visitors enjoy Wrangell because of its natural charm, friendly residents, uncrowded visitor destinations and its authentic Alaskan way of life. Important assets of the community for residents and visitors include the Stikine-LeConte Wilderness Area (including Stikine River flats, Garnet Ledge, Shakes Glacier, LeConte Glacier and river access to Canadian interior); Chief Shakes Tribal House; Totem Park; Petroglyph Beach State Historic Park; Anan Bear and Wildlife Observatory; Rainbow Falls Trail/North Country Trail and overlooks; other trails, camping areas, remote picnic/camping sites, golfing, wildlife viewing, fishing, and birding to name a few.

There is a need to develop a brand and marketing strategy for when travel resumes, that celebrates Wrangell and the benefits of visiting and living in the community.

IV. SCOPE OF SERVICES

a. Community Engagement.

- The consultant will be expected to work with a stakeholder Branding Committee comprised of individuals and WCVB members representing excursions, accommodations, retail, US Forest Service, Wrangell Chamber of Commerce, tribal members, and convention center.
- The Branding Committee will serve as an advisory body and provide feedback and input on the assessment, development, and implementation phases.
- An approach to engage the committee should be included in the proposal along with other recommendations for obtaining community input and support.

b. Research and Assessment.

- The process should include interviews/surveys with key stakeholders to determine existing assets, attitudes, perceptions, strengths, and weaknesses of the community's image and an examination of why visitors, businesses, residents, and fisherman are choosing Wrangell or not choosing Wrangell.
- Contractor should outline the methodology and resources to be used to objectively assess the community, the customer and the competition.

c. Brand Development.

- The brand should speak to our community as a whole and identify ways we can differentiate ourselves from our competitors and identify and provide rationale for target audiences.
- The contractor is expected to develop at least three options for the brand, based on the results of the research and assessment, and work closely with the steering committee to ensure the selected brand is both realistic and motivational.
- Deliverables include hard copy and digital versions of the brand name, graphic representation with and without a tag line, tag line, story of the brand, and brand messages. Graphics should be production ready and suitable for printing. Brand should be unique to our community, and available to be trademarked if the community so chooses.
- Contractor should outline their methodology to develop the brand image and list any subcontractors.

d. Brand Implementation Strategy.

- The implementation strategy should serve as a roadmap for adopting the brand by the WCVB and insert its use into marketing and promotion efforts to target audiences outside the city.
- The strategy should include a prioritized list of tasks with cost estimates. Tasks should be appropriate for the financial and marketing resources available in our community.
- The strategy should include recommendations and examples of how to use the brand to reach target audiences, including preferred media and message.

e. Outcomes.

- The consultant will submit time frames and recommend metrics to evaluate the effectiveness of the brand and marketing campaign.
- Provide all data, analysis, multi-media materials, master copies (hard and digital) of final products and all other relevant documentation to WCVB.
- Provide a recommended evaluation methodology with metrics to determine effectiveness of the brand.
- The City & Borough of Wrangell will retain sole ownership of and rights to the brand and all related materials.

V. RFP SCHEDULE

The dates listed below are estimates and subject to change with appropriate notice.

<u>EVENT</u>	<u>DATE</u>
RFP Release	August 14, 2020
Proposals Due	August 31, 2020
Branding Committee Recommendation	September 3, 2020
Assembly Decision	September 8, 2020
Contract/Award	September 11, 2020
Contract Completion	December 31, 2020

VI. BUDGET

The budget for these services is approximately \$45,000, including fees and expenses. The funding source is the CARES Act .

VII. PROPOSAL SPECIFICATIONS

In order to be responsive to this solicitation, written proposals must contain *at least* the following information:

- A. An identification of the consultant and any subcontractors proposed for this study.
- B. Qualifications and experience of the person(s) who will be personally working with the Branding Committee in the performance of this contract.
- C. A representative study prepared by the consultant team for a similar engagement.
- D. Proposed scope of work outlining responsibilities of the Consultant and the Branding Committee; the percentage of effort to be dedicated to community engagement, research and assessment, brand development, development of implementation strategy, and evaluating outcomes, and listing any services not anticipated in the scope of services for this RFP.
- E. Schedule for implementing the proposed scope of work.
- F. Proposed fee for the scope of services with a cost breakdown of staff time and salary, travel costs, and overhead.
- G. Identification and phone numbers of at least three clients acquainted with the past work of the consultant team on similar engagements.
- H. *Optional*, Alternative approaches or methodologies that meet the project intent, but if adopted would reduce project costs and generate additional cost savings.

VIII. SELECTION CRITERIA

Responsive proposals will be reviewed and rated by the WCVB. Each proposal will be analyzed to determine overall responsiveness and qualifications under the RFP. The WCVB may select all, some, or none of the respondents for follow up zoom interviews. The WCVB may also request additional information from respondents at any time prior to final

approval of a selected respondent.

Evaluation and selection criteria will include the following:

- A. **Methodology and Approach:** Proposal shows a clear understanding of desired outcome and describes an approach to the branding process that is complete, comprehensive, and clearly outlined. (30 points)
- B. **Qualifications and Experience:** Provide information which demonstrates the firm, and/or all individuals rendering services under the proposal, have adequate qualifications and experience with a branding process to provide the services required. Include the names and phone numbers of three (3) references. (30 points)
- C. **Ability to work through project timeframe:** Award of contract and issuance of Notice to Proceed is anticipated in early September. Due to the funding source, all funds must be expended before December 31, 2020. Please describe, in detail, the individual's or firm's capability to work throughout this timeframe. (20 points)
- D. **Flexibility:** The Branding Committee is made up of a very dynamic and busy group of individuals. It may be necessary to change regular meeting dates to accommodate the work and travel schedules of the Branding Committee. It is necessary for this position to be flexible and adapt to changing meeting dates. Please describe the individual's or firm's ability to be flexible. (20 points)
- E. **Cost Schedule:** Please provide a detailed cost schedule of each aspect of the proposal. (20 points)

IX. FIRM OFFER

For the purpose of award, offers made in accordance with this Request for Proposal must be held firm for a period of sixty (60) calendar days from the date of the proposal opening.

X. REJECTION OF PROPOSAL

The City and Borough of Wrangell (CBW) reserves the right to reject any and all proposals and to waive any informality or irregularity in the bids received whenever such rejection or waiver is in the best interest of Wrangell. The CBW reserves the right to modify the contract after its award.

XI. POSTING

This RFP can be found at <https://www.wrangell.com/rfps>