

**Town of Franklin Tourism Development Authority
Request for Proposals: Marketing/Promotional Services**

**Posting date: March 25, 2024
Due Date: April 26, 2024 at 3:00 p.m.**

I. PROJECT BACKGROUND

Franklin is a town in and the county seat of Macon County, North Carolina. It is situated within the Nantahala National Forest. The population is approximately 4,175. Franklin is a popular destination for hikers and outdoor enthusiasts, specifically in relation to the Nantahala National Forest, the Great Smoky Mountains, and the Appalachian Trail. The town and the surrounding area are rich in gems and minerals, and the area is known locally as the "Gem Capital of The World."

Franklin has been celebrated as a thriving community with many outdoor and recreational amenities. As part of an effort to further promote tourism opportunities, the Franklin Tourism Development Authority (the "TDA") is seeking proposals from companies or individuals capable of providing a full range of comprehensive brand marketing and brand management services.

II. SCOPE OF WORK

The TDA is soliciting responses for a project (this Request for Proposals, the "RFP") which will include the brand marketing and brand management in conjunction with the travel trade, and community stakeholders to ensure that brand marketing and communications tactics are in line with Franklin's unique and distinctive products, including natural resources, mountain culture, and unique dining and retail options.

Description:

The TDA's key brand marketing and management strategies are as follows:

- Develop effective marketing plans for each of TDAs designated major market areas with a common brand message, communicated in a way that is market appropriate.
- Differentiate Franklin from its regional competition by focusing on our mountain culture, activities, natural environment, and attractions, by engaging local organizations.
- Focus marketing on positive-impact prospects by developing data-driven plans based on a deep understanding of current visitors and the visitor of the future.
- Use advances in technology to enhance marketing efficiency and effectiveness, reach intended audiences, and promote regenerative tourism.
- Facilitate communication within Franklin to advance the goals of TDA to improve resident and business owner buy-in for marketing activities.

B. Objectives:

The key brand marketing and management objectives for this RFP are as follows:

- Primary focus on brand marketing in the Southeastern United States.
- Drive destination brand awareness.
- Take advantage of local market insights and intelligence on trends, distribution dynamics, consumer insights, and competitive analysis. Target both current and next generation of mindful travelers.
- Focus brand marketing to target mindful travelers with emphasis on staying in Franklin.
- Collaborate with the visitor industry to leverage resources and optimize results.
- Increase awareness, familiarization, and understanding of the diversity of Franklin’s people, place, and culture.
- Implement a responsible tourism branding communications program to educate visitors both pre- and post-arrival with specific information about safe travel and options and amenities available.
- Grow market share against competing destinations.
- Support local businesses and promote Franklin made products.

III. SUBMISSIONS & RESPONSE FORMAT

A. Questions:

Questions concerning this RFP must be submitted via email to the point of contact below. Responses to all submitted questions will be posted at: <https://franklinnc.com/bid-requests-town-franklin-nc.html>. Any revisions, addendums, and answers to questions received at least a week before the proposal due dates will be sent to those who directly received this RFP.

B. Deadline:

The deadline for responding to this RFP is **3:00 p.m. on Friday, April 26, 2024**. It is the responsibility of the firm submitting proposals to ensure that the point of contact has received a completed proposal by the required deadline.

Point of Contact:

Amanda Owens
 Town Manager
 Town of Franklin
 95 East Main Street
 Franklin, NC 28734
aowens@franklinnc.com
 828-524-2516 x 305

The TDA prefers to receive submitted materials via mail or Courier with subject line “Proposal for Marketing/Promotional Services”.

C. Submissions:

Responses are encouraged to be concise. Respondents may partner with other firms, local or otherwise, in order to provide the best possible proposal for ensuring quality and

efficient completion of the project tasks. All proposals must include, at a minimum, the following:

1. A cover page including the Request for Proposals title and applicant firm's name, any sub-Respondents or other partners (such as content creators (bloggers, photographers) and social media teams), and the office location from which the work will originate.
2. A summary of the Respondents' understanding and approach of the project Scope of Work.
3. A Statement of Qualifications applicable to this project including the names, qualifications and proposed duties of the teams' staff to be assigned to this project; a listing of recent similar projects completed, including the names, titles, addresses, and telephone numbers of the appropriate persons whom the TDA should contact.

IV. RESPONDENT SELECTION

Proposals will be reviewed and evaluated by the TDA Board based on the information provided. The Project will be awarded, subject to a satisfactory contract, to the Respondent best suited to timely and effective completion of the project, in the TDA's sole discretion.

Additional information may be requested prior to final selection. Final costs will be determined through negotiations with the selected firm.

V. EXHIBITS

Exhibit A – Response Submission Acknowledgement – to be returned as part of the submission packet.

VI. CONTRACTING

The selected Respondent must qualify as an independent contractor fully authorized to conduct business in its corporate name in the State of North Carolina and, prior to being awarded a contract, must apply for registration in North Carolina. The contract will not be executed until the Respondent is registered with the Secretary of State's Office.

Prior to beginning any work, the Respondent shall obtain Insurance Coverage in accordance with the Town of Franklin's policies. The certificate of insurance coverage shall be documented on forms acceptable to the Town.

VII. AGREEMENT REQUIREMENTS

The selected Respondent will be required to execute a contract with the TDA on the terms and conditions required by the Town of Franklin for the TDA as a component unit.

VIII. LIMITATIONS OF LIABILITY

The TDA and the Town assume no responsibility or liability for the response to this Request for Proposals.

IX. COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH PROPOSAL

Any costs incurred by any person or entity in preparing, submitting, or presenting a proposal are the sole responsibility of that person or entity, including any requests for additional information or interviews. The TDA nor the Town will reimburse any person or entity for any costs incurred prior to the issuance of the contract.

X. INDEMNIFICATION

Any party responding to this Request for Proposals is acting in an independent capacity and not as an officer or employee of the TDA or the Town. Any party responding to this Request for Proposals will be required to indemnify, defend, and hold harmless the TDA and Town, its officers, and employees from all liability and any claims, suits, expenses, losses, judgments, and damages arising as a result of the responding party's acts and/or omissions in or related to the response.

XI. REJECTION OF PROPOSALS

The TDA reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, to negotiate with one or more parties, or to award the contract to the proposal the TDA deems will meet its best interests, even if that proposal is not the lowest bid. The TDA reserves the right to re-advertise for additional proposals and to extend the deadline for submission of the proposals. This Request for Proposals in no way obligates the TDA to award a contract.

XII. OWNERSHIP OF DOCUMENTS

Any materials submitted to the TDA in response to this Request for Proposals shall become the property of the TDA unless another arrangement is made by written agreement between the TDA and the responding party. The responding party may retain copies of the original documents.

XIII. DUTY TO INFORM TOWN OF DOCUMENT ERRORS

If a respondent knows, suspects, or has reasonable cause to believe, that an error or omission exists in any of the project documents, including but not limited to pricing and rate calculations, the respondent shall immediately give the TDA written notice thereof. Respondents shall not cause or permit any work to be conducted that may be related to the error or omission without first receiving written acknowledgment from the TDA that TDA representatives understand the possible error or omission and have approved the requested modifications to the response or contract documents or that the Respondent may proceed without any modification being made to the response or contract documents.

XIV. PUBLIC RECORDS

Any and all records submitted to the TDA as a component unit of the Town of Franklin, whether

electronic, paper, or otherwise recorded, are subject to the North Carolina Public Records Law. The determination of how those records must be handled is solely within the purview of Town. All records the responding party considers to be trade secrets, as that term is defined by subsection 132-1.2 of the Public Records Act, or that the responding party otherwise seeks to have the Town consider as exempt must be identified clearly and specifically at the time of submission. It is not sufficient to merely state generally that a proposal is proprietary, contains a trade secret, or is otherwise exempt.

XV. CONTRACT TERM

The contract term for this proposal would be for one year, beginning on July 1, 2024 and terminating on June 30, 2025.

EXHIBIT A

Response Submission Acknowledgement

In submitting this proposal, it is understood that the unrestricted right is reserved by the TDA as a component unit of the Town of Franklin in making the award to reject any and all proposals or parts thereof, or to waive any informalities or technicalities in said responses. The undersigned hereby certifies that this response is genuine, and not a sham or collusive, or made in the interest or in behalf of any person, firm or corporation not herein named; that the undersigned has not directly or indirectly induced or solicited any respondent to refrain from responding, and that the undersigned has it, in any manner, sought by collusion to secure for himself and advantage over any other respondent.

Print Name

Signature

Title

Date

State of _____

County of _____

I, _____, Notary Public, do hereby certify that _____

[Name of Individual(s) Whose Acknowledgment is Being Taken] personally appeared before me this day and acknowledged the due execution of the foregoing instrument.

Witness my hand and official seal this _____ day of _____, 20__.

(Official Seal)

Official Signature of Notary

Notary's Printed or Typed Name

My Commission Expires: _____