

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS AND PROPOSALS



WEB DEVELOPMENT and CRM SERVICES PARTNER

Visit Nacogdoches, Texas

1. Introduction and Background Information

Texas' oldest town is one of the most popular tourist destinations in the state. People come to Nacogdoches to discover the city's historic past, research their ancestors and to enjoy the slow-paced and relaxing atmosphere.

2. Project Overview

Visit Nacogdoches is requesting proposals from qualified vendors to secure the professional services of a web development and CRM services partner. This partner must demonstrate the experience and expertise to provide website and online marketing services as described in this document. The selected partner will be responsible for the planning, creation, development and measurement of Visit Nacogdoches websites and online marketing tools. In addition, the partner will provide various strategic services such as new or modified site development to Visit Nacogdoches, as well as ongoing web maintenance and support. Last, the selected partner will also provide all CRM program management services.

The purpose of this RFP is to provide fair evaluation for all candidates and to provide all candidates with the evaluation criteria upon which they will be judged.

3. Background

Visit Nacogdoches was established in 1996, and functions as a destination marketing organization to promote Nacogdoches as a single travel destination. Visit Nacogdoches' mission is to strengthen and expand the local economy through travel and tourism promotion.

The objective of this solicitation is to redesign and launch the Visit Nacogdoches consumer-facing website, [visitnacogdoches.org]. The new website shall be developed with research-driven strategies, proven audience-engagement techniques, a thoughtful approach to project management, and sensitivity to the needs of Visit Nacogdoches.

This section provides background information on the audience, site traffic, goals and measures of Visit Nacogdoches.

Goals and Measures

Visit Nacogdoches' primary objective is to continue to build brand identity, awareness, and interest for the destination. The function of the Visit Nacogdoches site is to provide inspirational, relevant, and timely information to key market audiences.

Primary Goals:

1. Exemplify the Visit Nacogdoches brand identity
2. Display information in a user-friendly, mobile-first approach
3. Maximize current web-based technologies with a design that allows for content flexibility as well as changing technologies

4. Utilize web standards and design to target a variety of web browsers and computer displays, especially mobile devices
5. Encourage visitation to the destination and referrals to Visit Nacogdoches partners
6. Create "microsites" for a variety of groups and vertical audience sets
7. Collect RFPs from potential group and wedding planners
8. Be the official resource for travel professionals and members of the media
9. Build partner loyalty

Primary KPIs:

1. Time on Site & Bounce Rate – Focus on Engagement and exploratory content; Campaign specific content will ensure people who click through from campaigns stay on the site
2. Map & Widget Interactions – Interactive map conversions highlighting lesser-known areas; tracking flight booking widget
3. Partner Pass Throughs – Focus on encouraging click-throughs to local business partners by internal linking and upgrades to listing search features
4. Email Sign-up Conversions – Utilize custom sign-up forms to grow email sign-ups by converting on specific related content pages

Key Marketing Audiences

Visit Nacogdoches' website is a communication vehicle for a variety of audiences including leisure visitors, both domestic and international; meeting and wedding planners, tour operators and travel agents; the media; and, Visit Nacogdoches partners.

- Nature Enthusiasts
- History Buffs
- Weekend Warriors
- Outdoor Actives

Website Traffic

On average, Visit Nacogdoches has roughly 12,000 unique visitors per month viewing approximately 7,000 views per month. Visit Nacogdoches uses Google Analytics to provide these estimates.

4. Scope of Work/Project Plan

Visit Nacogdoches is seeking a well-qualified web development and CRM services partner to work collaboratively to improve existing web programs and create new innovative and effective online marketing programs. As such, the scope of services is potentially quite broad and will include some or all of the following services: web

development including new or modified site development, user interface/design, software integration as needed, web analytics and reporting, strategic services and guidance, managed hosting, content optimization, search engine optimization, and CRM program management and other related services, with specifics outlined below:

Technical Requirements

- a. Content Management System – Visit Nacogdoches is seeking a modern, fast, flexible, content-first, design-first, mobile-ready and non-proprietary CMS, which also offers industry-focused features. CMS features must include:
 - i. Demonstrable mobile-ready editing experience
 - ii. Built-in asset management
 - iii. Customized dashboards
 - iv. Flexible user management
 - v. Live preview/publish, page drafts, workflow that includes pre-publish page sharing and approvals
 - vi. Open/accessible and non-proprietary Content Management System (CMS) and can demonstrate an extensive, active community of agencies and independent developers.
- b. Integrations:
 - i. Customer Relationship Management (CRM) System: The web development and CRM services partner will provide guidance, recommendations, and a CRM solution for Visit Nacogdoches' e-mail marketing program.
 - ii. For informational purposes, Visit Nacogdoches currently does not have a CRM. Visit Nacogdoches uses Emma by Marigold as its email deployment platform and would like to continue using it; however, that is not a requirement for this proposal.
 - iii. Visit Widget Mobile and Web App
 - iv. Flexibility to allow for additional 3rd party personalization software
- c. Hosting – The web development and CRM services partner will manage and maintain hosting, providing custom environments using SaaS and cloud computing technologies to ensure optimal performance for the Visit Nacogdoches websites.
- d. ADA Compliance – The site must be mobile-first, or mobile-friendly The site also should adhere to WCAG 2.1 and allow for these guidelines to be easily followed as new pages are added after the redesign.

Feature Requirements

Proposals should provide solutions or recommendations. This is not a thorough list but contains some of the city's top priorities:

- a. Partner and event listings
- b. Event calendar
- c. Search and discovery platform - using natural language processing and machine learning with Typo-tolerance, Weighted results, Synonyms, Faceting and Deduplication
- d. Native personalization options
- e. Mobile-first mapping with routing capabilities
- f. Microsites and landing pages
- g. Customized design themes
- h. Localization - unlimited number of sites, languages, and locales.
- i. Community engagement

Design Requirements

Complete UX Redesign Reflective of New Brand Campaign, as well as Destination (sustainable/responsible tourism education) & Consumer Needs

1. Interactive landing pages – Increasing time on site and decreasing bounce rate on campaign landing pages by implementing more interactive features. Site reacts to each visitor based on season, activities, events, or date of planned visit
2. Interactive Maps – Seasonal maps Ex: summer activities and fall colors to help spread guests out and highlight lesser-known areas, dispersed camping, trail heads and content from __
3. CRM/Business listing and search upgrades – Optimized search featured for business listings and more informative design to listing pages. Allow for businesses to update their own listings.
4. Getting to know our audience – Better integration of email newsletter sign ups to grow our list and learn more about our most loyal visitors & outreach to locals

Analytics and Reporting

The web development and CRM services partner will manage all aspects of analytics and reporting for [Destination Organization]. This includes, but is not limited to, analytic audits, recommendations, and implementation of recommendations; ongoing analysis of website performance and recommendations for improvement; optimization and reaching strategic goals; and, consultation. In addition to monthly analytics, the web development partner will provide an executive summary highlighting successes, trends, and recommendations.

Ongoing Web Development Services

The web development and CRM services partner will work with the Visit Nacogdoches team to provide web development services for the Visit Nacogdoches website including:

- New or modified site development
- Non-proprietary access for Visit Nacogdoches employees to build and manage content and campaigns
- Development of easy-to-build pages for the Visit Nacogdoches team's use to add links, photos/videos, and links to PDF files
- Creation of online form for community stakeholders to input calendar listings
- Addition of a destination-specific interactive videos solution to the Visit Nacogdoches website (note: Visit Nacogdoches anticipates purchasing a library of destination videos; the web development and CRM services partner will be responsible for managing the set-up and integration on [Destination Organization]'s website)

Content Optimization/Search Engine Optimization

The web development and CRM services partner will provide ongoing content and SEO analysis, editorial guidance, recommendations and implementation, and the latest in performance optimization for Visit Nacogdoches' content optimization program, including best practices relative to Visit Nacogdoches' microsites and vanity URL pages.

5. Proposal Requirements

Proposal Structure

- a. Title Page – Include company name, address, web site, telephone number, fax number, email address and primary contact person(s).
- b. Cover Letter – Signed by the person, or persons, authorized to sign on behalf of the company
- c. Company Profile – Include length of time in business, company size, corporate structure, core competencies, and professional affiliations
- d. Team Overview
 - i. Introduce team assigned to this project, including each person's role
 - ii. Average queue times for projects, updates, and repairs
- e. Client Accounts
 - i. Provide mobile samples of work/features for three current clients
 - ii. List two clients added in the past two years
 - iii. List two clients lost in the past two years and reason for their departure
- f. Qualifications
 - i. Demonstration of technical, feature and design requirements
 - ii. Website hosting

- iii. Provide a list of firm's website hosting partners and its experience, expertise, and capability to provide:
 - Scalability
 - Security
 - 24/7 Support
 - Dedicated hosting environment
 - Back-up redundancy and disaster recovery plan
 - Optimal website performance/real-time data updates
 - Maintenance and server updates
- iv. Analytic and technology platforms – Provide specific examples regarding firm's experience with analytic and technology platforms as well as staff certifications, training, and proficiencies in common web languages and framework
- v. Content optimization strategy – Provide insight and examples regarding firm's experience, expertise and capability in creating, implementing, and measuring a content optimization strategy against specific KPIs

Include strategies for keyword targeting and mobile optimization plus firm's approach to identifying and addressing website structural improvements for optimal search engine performance

Price Proposal

Vendor shall provide a detailed cost analysis and budget deemed necessary to provide the scope of work outlined in this RFP. We require transparency of cost structure; please indicate how you handle pricing (retainer, lump sum, hourly rate or other preferred method).

- a. If hourly, costs should be shown by task and include all hourly rates per account level and estimated hours to perform work per account level
- b. Include all assumed hard costs and vendor mark-up fees
- c. Include all subcontractor fees and billings in price proposal
- d. List any cost savings and/or added value proposals offered

References

Provide a list of at least three client references for which the vendor has provided similar services. Include a contact name, organization's name, email, web address, phone number and relationship for each reference. These references may be contacted to verify the vendor's ability to perform the contract. Visit Nacogdoches reserves the right to use any information or additional references deemed necessary to establish the ability of the vendor to perform the conditions of the contract.

6. Proposal Due Date and Delivery Instructions

Applicants should send submit proposal electronically to Visit Nacogdoches

Mrs. Ashley Morgan
Visit Nacogdoches – Nacogdoches Convention & Visitors Bureau
200 E. Main Street
Visit Nacogdoches
ashley@visitnacogdoches.org

After the RFP is released and advertised, inquiries are preferred in writing via e-mail and should be addressed to Executive Director Ashley Morgan and received no later than 5:00 p.m. CST on 07/10/2024. Responses will be prompt and copies will be sent to all known applicants. It is a violation of county purchasing procedures to contact any other staff or board member of the Nacogdoches Convention & Visitors Bureau except the above, with regard to this RFP. (This and all procedures are strictly enforced; violators' proposals will be disqualified.)

Visit Nacogdoches reserves the right to reject any/all proposals, waive minor formalities and award/negotiate with firm(s) whose qualifications/proposal(s) best serve the interests of [Destination Organization]

7. Judging Criteria

The following criteria will form the basis upon which proposals will be evaluated.

Each proposal will be rated by category on a scale from 1 to 5 (with 5 being the highest). Each rating will then have a percent weighting applied, as noted:

- Suitability of the Proposal - the proposed solution meets the needs and criteria set forth in the RFP. [15% weighting]
- Competing Firm's expertise in recommending and implementing appropriate solutions, as evidenced by the proposal and references. Competing Firm's experience in similar projects and expertise in recommending and implementing appropriate solutions. [30% weighting]
- Value/ Pricing Structure and Price Levels - Proposed price is commensurate with the value offered. [20% weighting]
- Customer Service - Candidate firm has the ability to service the account effectively (i.e., sufficient staff for scope of project, average queue times for projects, update, and repairs) to effectively develop and maintain the website and CRM programs. [15% weighting]
- Proposal Presentation - The information is presented in a clear, logical, creative, and thoughtful manner. [10% weighting]
- Firm compatibility and overall fit with the Visit Nacogdoches team. [10% weighting]

Final scores will then be aggregated for each proposal, with up to 3 finalists chosen for in-person presentations.

8. RFP Schedule

Request for Proposal Distributed	6/10/2024
Deadline for Proposals	7/10/2024
Notification of Finalists	8/1/2024
Candidate Selection/Notifications	8/12/2024
Contract Begins	TBD

Respondents selected for presentations will be expected to present:

- Overview of capabilities
- Any applicable case studies
- Proposed first-year plan for Visit Nacogdoches to include a preliminary timeline and all-in budget for recommended first-year plan, including new or modified site development