

DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
(RFP #K00521)**

**TOURISM DIGITAL MARKETING SERVICES
DUE DECEMBER 10, 2021**

**QUESTIONS & ANSWERS
NOVEMBER 30, 2021**

TO ALL POTENTIAL OFFERORS:

The following information is being provided for purposes of clarification or in response to questions received from potential offerors. In addition to this addendum being posted on the eVA website and City website at the following links.

- eVA website: <https://mvendor.cgieva.com/Vendor/public/AllOpportunities>
- City website: <https://www.ci.staunton.va.us/departments/finance/procurement>

Questions & Answers

1. Do you have an example of a live campaign landing page on the website?
<https://getaway.visitstaunton.com/spring/>
<https://getaway.visitstaunton.com/family-getaway>
<https://getaway.visitstaunton.com/48-hour-staunton-getaway/>
2. As far as us designing & developing a landing page, would it be ok if it was setup as a sub-domain?
Yes, it could be. Our previous campaigns were set up as sub-domains.
3. Is there a budget?
\$80,000 - \$100,000 annually which includes any agency fees, creative, and paid digital media.
4. Is there an incumbent?
Rocketbike

5. How have your goals evolved over the last five years?

Our goals have evolved from a “heads in beds” tourist-centric approach to a community-based tourism approach. We want to make sure that not only are the tourists happy while they are in Staunton, but that the community is happy to welcome them.

6. Are there any specific targets you're hoping to meet or achieve under this new contract?

Increase brand awareness through innovative marketing strategies. Increase high-quality leads. Continue to build community support for the tourism industry.

7. How satisfied are you with your incumbent vendor?

We were satisfied.

8. On page 3, under D. Landing Page Design & Development #1, you mention “Design and development campaign landing pages, for digital campaigns, on the existing website www.visitstaunton.com.” Can you please confirm that we’ll be provided with both FTP access to the website, and a WordPress administrator account?

We are in the process of hiring a firm to redesign the current website this winter. Our agency will be given access to whatever is needed to design our landing pages.

9. On page 3, under D. Landing Page Design & Development #1, you mention “Design and development campaign landing pages, for digital campaigns, on the existing website www.visitstaunton.com.” Can you please confirm that your current hosting platform has a staging environment on it for us to perform development work on?

The current website does not have a staging environment. The new site may have a staging environment, but that is yet to be seen.

10. On page 4, under E. Analytics Tracking Set Up, you mention an “Existing Google Tag Manager installation.” Can you please let us know if you’re expecting the tracking to be built on Google Analytics 3 (Universal Analytics), Google Analytics 4, or both?

We currently use Google Analytics and our landing pages have been built on sub-domains. Example: <https://getaway.visitstaunton.com/spring/>

11. On page 4, under F. You ask the contractor to identify social influencers that complement Visit Staunton’s brand. Do you have a preference on which social media platform that influencer has an audience?

Previously, we have looked for influencers that have an active audience on Instagram, but would be looking to our agency for advice on this in the future.

12. Would you like the contractor to reach out to these identified influencers or is Visit Staunton expected to do that?

We would like the agency to reach out to the influencers with our assistance to plan their visit.

13. Your website links to a Twitter, LinkedIn, and YouTube account, but the RFP doesn't mention those. We wanted to confirm you would like us to only focus on Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube?

Yes, we would like to concentrate on Facebook, Instagram, and possibly YouTube.

14. On page 4, under G. Video Campaign(s), you mention that you may outsource video creation. Under what criteria would you outsource video creation?

We would outsource video creation if our agency does not have those capabilities.

15. Is the City of Staunton looking for an innovative approach or prefer proven campaigns based on existing templates?

We are looking for a mix of innovation and proven marketing approaches.

16. Is this RFP currently included in the budget or a new project?

It is included in the budget.

17. Is there an advertising budget designated for tourism digital marketing?

Yes.

18. Does the budget include media buying fees?

Yes. \$80,000 - \$100,000 annually to include agency fees, creative, and paid media.

19. When is the expected delivery date for the new VisitStaunton Website?

ASAP. We have not hired a firm for the redesign as of yet.

20. How key will the delivery of the new site play in the overall Year One marketing strategy?

It will play a key role.

21. In order to best tailor a fee schedule for RFP#K00521, could you please clarify the preferred fee structure for the City of Staunton's needs? For example: monthly retainer, hourly rates, media buying fee, or a blend?

A blend.

22. To properly value services provided in comparison to cost, could you please provide a rough estimate of the percentage of the budget should be focused on the services outlined in the RFP?

Previously, 40% of our budget is spent on agency fees and creative, and 60% on media buy.

23. Is there a SWaM set aside, points or other consideration to be included in the response?

There is no SWaM or other consideration to be included.

24. We are planning to provide a total budget allocation broken down by media tactic/service. Are any specific details or formatting of this information desired?

No.

25. Would it be possible to see samples of past creatives across different channels?

Please see the images on the last 4 pages below all of the questions.

26. And how have you previously allocated budget by channel?

75% Facebook, 25% Instagram, but looking for our agency to provide advice on this allocation and new creative ideas.

27. What have you spent in the past on creative fees?

Previously, 40% spent on creative/management fees and 60% spent on the media buy.

28. Are you using Crowdriff currently?

Yes.

29. What size is your visitor/e-news database?

7.1K

30. I just have one question please: This says 20 pages total. Can we do 20 pages double sided PLUS a cover letter and Addendum?

The proposals must be 20 pages total, so 10 pages 2-sided. The cover letter and addendum do not count towards the 20 pages.

31. What has been your biggest obstacle to increasing awareness of Staunton?

Budget. Brand perception that Staunton is not a diverse destination. Innovative marketing initiatives to increase awareness.

32. What has been the largest draw to Staunton in the past?

- Staunton's celebrated downtown/architecture --"One of the Best Small Towns in America" - Travel+Leisure
- Vibrant arts & culture scene – American Shakespeare Center's Blackfriars Playhouse, Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library & Museum, Frontier Culture Museum, Heifetz International Music Institute, Staunton Music Festival, Queen City Mischief & Magic Festival, etc.
- Amazing local food, farmers & chefs – James Beard nominated Chef Ian Boden at The Shack, Joel Salatin at Polyface Farm, Shenandoah Beerwerks Trail,
- Fields of Gold – Shenandoah Valley's Farm Trail, etc.
- Proximity to the outdoors, specifically Shenandoah National Park, the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests, Natural Bridge State Park.

33. What would Staunton residents say makes the city unique and special?

- Local residents/business owners
- Compact walkable downtown Staunton
- Diverse restaurant scene
- Blackfriars Playhouse
- Two Historic Hotels of America with conference centers – Hotel 24 South and The Blackburn Inn.

34. Have you identified target groups/demographics for the campaigns?

Yes.

35. If so, what are your primary and secondary audiences?

Well-educated and employed in professional occupations. Typically 40-65 years of age. Interests include arts & culture, food, weekend getaways, small town charm, local wine & beer. Geographic locations include NoVA/DC, Baltimore, Richmond, Hampton Roads.

36. If not, would the selected agency be fully responsible for identifying targets and personas?

We would be looking for input from our agency on this.

37. If the agency will be responsible for identifying target audiences, are there existing reports/data that could be utilized as part of our research? If so, what will the winning agency have access to as part of the discovery process?

Primary research on Staunton was conducted by Young Strategies in 2013/14. Secondary research can be obtained from the Virginia Tourism Corporation. In addition, we receive monthly Staunton STR reports and weekly Virginia STR reports. Yes, the agency would have access to this research.

38. Our goal is to tailor our response to the needs of the Tourism Department and this RFP, rather than to provide case studies and ideas that are not in line with expectations. Are you willing to provide information regarding budget parameters so that we can build an approach within this target and include more relevant case studies?

\$80,000 - \$100,000 annually to include agency fees, creative, and paid media.

39. What has your digital marketing approach been in the past? Which aspects of this strategy were most/least successful?

Most successful – Facebook and Instagram advertising and organic posts, blogs/content creation, UGC through CrowdRiff, e-newsletter. Least successful – contests/complicated promotions.

40. Will the digital marketing campaign have any traditional marketing components?

Yes.

41. What are you most excited about with the new campaigns/digital marketing agency partnership?

For the agency to be an extension of our very small team. Our DMO has three full-time employees and four part-time Visitor Center travel counselors.

42. Do you have any creative and/or design capabilities in-house?

Yes.

43. If so, what has been the division of responsibility between in-house creative and agency partners in the past?

The agency is primarily responsible for creative and/or design.

44. Is there anything you are hoping to change about this relationship moving forward?

No.

45. What is your current CMS?

WordPress. However, our website is set for a redesign this winter.

46. II. Specific Requirements: F. – Should the cost of the familiarization trip to be included in the scope?

Yes. We may be able to assist with hotel/attraction comps.

47. II. Specific Requirements: G. 5. States that Staunton may outsource video creation. Has this been done in-house in the past?

Very little has been done in-house, most has been outsourced to a video production company.

48. Should we assume this element would be included in the scope if the agency partner has these capabilities in-house?

Yes.

49. Is there a current Digital Marketing firm in place? Have you used one in the past?

Yes. Our contract with our current agency ends this month.

50. Will you be open to working with a firm outside of Staunton, yet within comfortable driving distance to Staunton?

Yes.

51. Are you committed to keeping your current website or is a redesign or new website in consideration? What is the current website platform?

We are in the process of hiring a firm to redesign the current website. WordPress.

52. Do you have a separate budget strictly for online/digital ad buys on the various social media/online platforms?

No.

53. Do you have a current budget amount in mind for digital marketing services?

\$80,000 - \$100,000 annually which includes any agency fees, creative and paid digital media.

54. Just want to confirm, does that budget not include creative then?

That budget includes creative, administration, and ad spend.

55. Will the firm be responsible for Staunton's social media postings, blogs, and any other messaging outside of ads?

Social media postings are done in-house. We use a local writer for our blogs and other messaging from our PR firm.

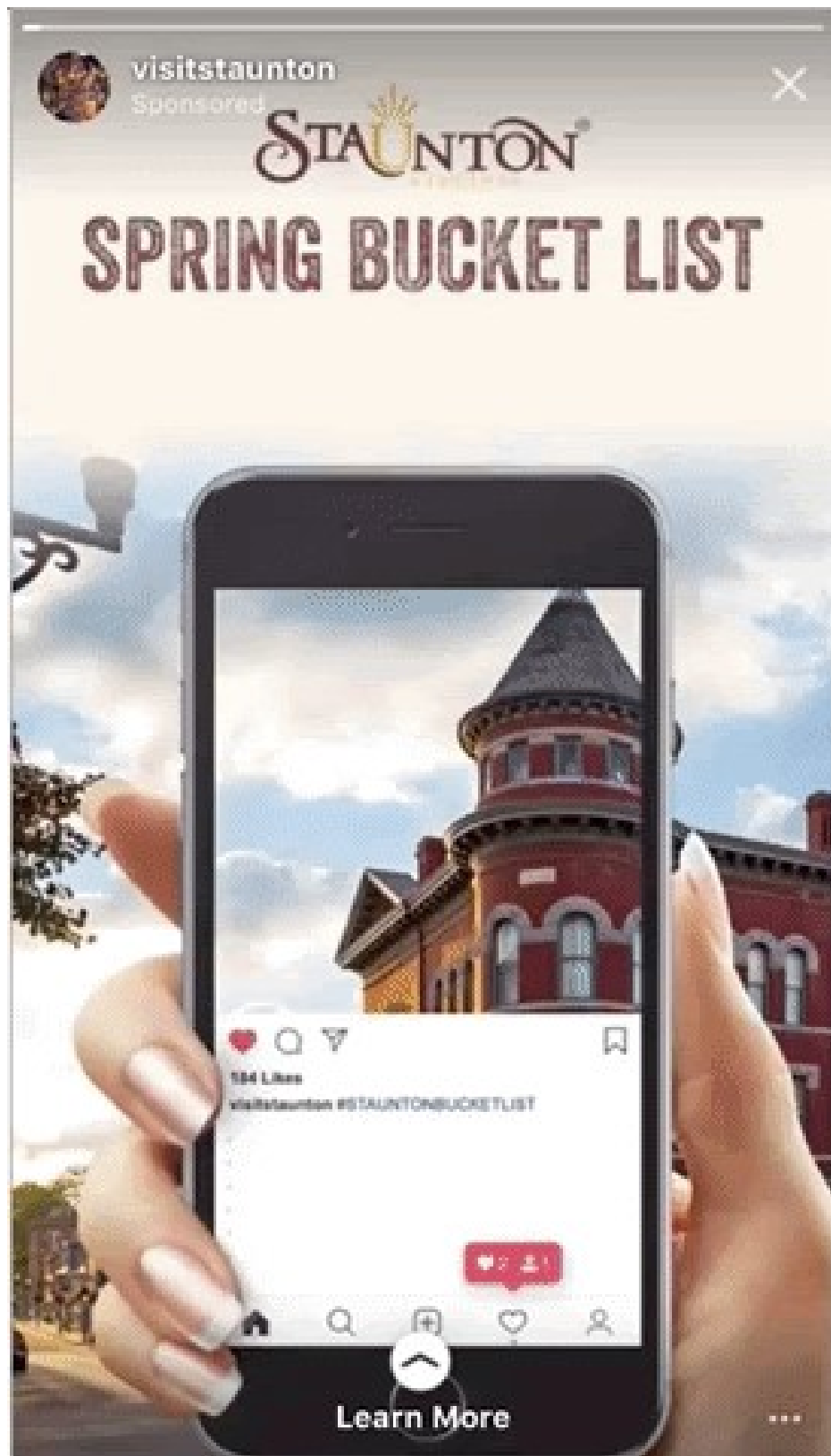
56. Do you have any insight into where your current visitors come from or any reporting from your website that shows who is clicking?

We currently use Google Analytics.

57. Is there any seasonality where your tourism goes quiet or vice versa when Staunton is very popular?

Fall is the most popular season followed by Spring and Summer. We are most quiet in the Winter.

Instagram Story



Facebook Ads

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