

COUNTY OF MONTGOMERY

PURCHASING DEPARTMENT
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REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL, RFP # 24-05 issued September 27, 2023 ADDENDUM NUMBER 2

DATE: October 25, 2023
TITLE: Tourism Brand Messaging and Strategy Update

Clarification:

1. **Question:** Is there a preference for in-state bidders, and would you consider out-of-state applicants?

Montgomery County Response: There is no preference for in-state bidders. Offerors should be properly licensed, credentialed, or registered to do business in their field in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Experience with similar entities may affect evaluation.

2. **Question:** What specific solutions or changes do you expect to see on the three strategic areas of improvement - Brand Narrative Evolution, Destination Gap Assessment, and Area Promotion?

Montgomery County Response:

There are no project specific solutions or changes up front, rather we seek direction and recommendation from the selected candidate.

3. **Question:** Could you provide more information on how the advertising and marketing programs are currently measured? Are there specific key performance indicators (KPIs) or metrics that the County prioritizes?

Montgomery County Response:

The selected candidate and proposal will provide guidance toward future benchmarking, measurement, and assessment of program outcomes.

4. **Question:** Do you have a strategy in place for this project so far, or would we start from scratch?

Montgomery County Response:

Our strategy will likely be based on recommendations from selected candidate. We want this project to focused on the synergy of our virtual visitor center. This was recently captured in the Digital Journal regarding the virtual visitors center: <https://www.digitaljournal.com/pr/news/getnews/introducing-montgomery-county-virginia-cutting-edge-virtual-visitor-center-launched-to-transform-tourism-engagement>

5. **Question:** Will any members of your team be involved in the campaign production process (creative direction, writing, design, etc.)

Montgomery County Response:

Absolutely, we hope to include our team in the production process with input toward product development.

6. **Question:** Are there current brands that you'd want to emulate or inspire from for your brand messaging?

Montgomery County Response:

There are no specific brands or sources of inspiration at this time. We look forward to discovery with successful candidate.

7. **Question:** What is your estimated budget for advertising and media buy?

Montgomery County Response:

There is no estimated budget for these items at this time, though we anticipate some level of recommendation toward such.

8. **Question:** What are your anticipated start and completion dates for this project, and can you please list any expected milestones for the deliverables during that timeline?

Montgomery County Response: The goal is to award a contract by mid-December 2023 and all work completed by March 31, 2023. This will be negotiated with the selected contractor.

9. **Question:** Does the asset inventory portion include both a collection of file assets such as branding elements and promotional materials, and an audit of current online listings & presence to ensure accuracy of information and prepare for updates?

Montgomery County Response:

Based on use of Digital Experience Platform, the Virtual Visitor Center, a key component rests with Google Places. To support accuracy and use of Google Places, a Destination Optimization process will be deployed concurrently to this project. Such will help boost and populate on-line listing assets. The successful candidate will help make recommendations in this regard.

10. **Question:** Can you explain why the Virtual Visitor's Center should be a distinct URL, rather than a sub-page of the main URL?

Montgomery County Response:

We would like to explore the ways and means for transitioning a focus from the website toward the Virtual Visitor Center. How would this work? Here is a link to a recent article in the Digital Journal regarding the Virtual Visitors Center: <https://www.digitaljournal.com/pr/news/getnews/introducing-montgomery-county-virginia-cutting-edge-virtual-visitor-center-launched-to-transform-tourism-engagement>

11. **Question:** After the needs assessment survey, asset inventory, and development of new URL(s) have been completed per this contract, will Montgomery County be implementing the positioning and strategy update themselves or with the assistance of a contracted marketing agency?

Montgomery County Response:

Montgomery County will likely be carrying some aspects, but contracted service(s) may be deployed. We really want to see what comes out in the proposals with potential future direction.

12. **Question:** What is the expected timeline for this project?

Montgomery County Response: The goal is to award a contract by mid-December 2023 and all work completed by March 31, 2023. This will be negotiated with the selected contractor.

13. **Question:** Is the selected firm responsible for gathering existing marketing elements, or will all existing marketing elements to be reviewed be given to us or at least a list provided?

Montgomery County Response:

Yes, the selected firm will be responsible for gathering existing marketing materials. We really want to see what comes out in the proposals with potential future direction.

14. **Question:** What do you consider to be the metrics for a successful project as a result of this RFP?

Montgomery County Response:

Pace of adoption for the project outcomes. Delivery of a dynamic brand message with new URL. We really want to see what comes out in the proposals with potential future direction, which could include such metrics.

15. **Question:** Is the County open to revamp the Tourism website or is that not part of this project?

Montgomery County Response: The current website is not part of this project.

16. **Question:** What is Tourism's relationship with Friends of Southwest Virginia? Do you share funding with this organization? Who are some of your partners?

Montgomery County Response:

We do not share funding with Friends of Southwest Virginia, but do collaborate with the organization. Tourism partners include: Virginia Tourism Corporation, Visit NRV, Blue Ridge Travel Association, Blue Ridge Parkway Association, the Crooked Road: Virginia's Heritage Music Trail, and Fish Virginia First.

17. **Question:** Is the Asset Inventory mentioned in the RFP for current marketing aspects or is it an inventory of current businesses in the area?

Montgomery County Response:

The Asset Inventory is likely something of a combination with both current marketing assets and current businesses in the area.

18. **Question:** Is the budget of \$30,000 to \$35,000 in the RFP only for development/creative costs or does it include any hard cost such as printing?

Montgomery County Response:

It could be both if proposed.

19. **Question:** What percentage of your visitors are overnight travelers versus day travelers?

Montgomery County Response:

That information currently not available.

20. **Question:** Your RFP reflects a need to, "Develop a new URL to replace <GoToMontVA.com> and <vc-GoToMontVA.com>" When referencing the new URL, do you intend to imply that you're seeking a new website address/ new URL for your existing website(s), or are you seeking a vendor who will not only deliver a new website address/ URL, but also design, develop, and launch an entirely new site along with new URL?

Montgomery County Response:

Not a new website, but a new focus toward Virtual Visitor Center. We need proposals on the how and why. Our existing website will be unchanged. The interoperability from a branding and marketing position is what we seek. Here is a link to a recent article in the Digital Journal regarding the Virtual Visitors Center: <https://www.digitaljournal.com/pr/news/getnews/introducing-montgomery-county-virginia-cutting-edge-virtual-visitor-center-launched-to-transform-tourism-engagement>

21. **Question:** Your RFP reflects a need for, "...Brand Narrative Evolution." When referencing this evolution, should we plan for final deliverables to encompass updated brand messaging/ positioning that would fall under your existing "Go To Town" branding, or would we be tasked to reimagine the entire destination brand from scratch, inclusive of a new logo, brand position, voice, typography, style guide, etc. in addition to the requested social/ meta tags and URL?

Montgomery County Response:

We would like for proposal to discuss each approach. What do you feel works? We want to maintain the Go To Town as a free-standing or bundled approach.

22. **Question:** Will the selected contractor have access to prior brand strategy materials as part of developing an update to one?

Montgomery County Response:

Yes, this is possible.

23. **Question:** Will the selected contractor have direct access to web analytics?

Montgomery County Response: Yes, this is possible. Virtual Visitor Center analytics would also be of consideration.

24. **Question:** Has the County completed an advertising ROI study in the past that the selected contractor will be able to access?

Montgomery County Response:
No prior advertising ROI study will be available.

25. **Question:** Are you looking for in-person focus group facilitation with stakeholders in addition to a needs assessment survey?

Montgomery County Response:
We would welcome this if part of a proposal.

26. **Question:** Are there advertising/marketing advisory board meetings that the selected contractor would be required to attend in person and/or virtually, and if so, are those dates available for review in advance?

Montgomery County Response:
The selected contractor would be meeting with tourism office staff, who may on occasion include stakeholder participation.

27. **Question:** Is the County currently contracted or partnered with any tourism research or advertising vendors outside of the ones listed in the RFP, and if so, can you provide a list in advance?

Montgomery County Response:
The County may be participating in an Arrivalist mobile location insights package via a VTC Research Grant Co-Op (awards not yet announced). The County is currently in contract negotiation with Miles Partnership for its Destination Optimization package. <https://www.milespartnership.com/destination-optimization>. The County is also in discussion with the HuddleUp Group for development of an outdoor recreation and sports tourism asset inventory project. <https://www.huddleupgroup.com/> The County is under contract with LeisureMedia360 for HERO banner ads on Virginia.org and lead spread in the 2024 Virginia Travel Guide – both with respect to Blue Ridge Highlands Region. The County is hosting FAM Tours through Geiger & Associates Public Relations.

28. **Question:** Will the selected contractor have access to prior advertising campaign performance reports?

Montgomery County Response:
No, this will be a separate, stand-alone project.

29. **Question:** Will you provide an updated RFP or publish a list of everyone's questions?

Montgomery County Response: All questions received to date have been answered in this addendum.

30. **Question:** Is the budget identified an annual one? And is it inclusive of media placements as well?

Montgomery County Response:

The identified budget is a one-time expenditure. It could be inclusive of media placements.

31. **Question:** Could we request an extension to the submission deadline?

Montgomery County Response:

No.

32. **Question:** Could we request an electronic submission in light of the lifting of all delivery guarantees from all the courier companies?

Montgomery County Response: No. Proposals must be submitted per the instructions in the RFP document in order to be considered.

33. **Question:** Could you let us know if you have a local preference or are you open to a Canadian agency that has done similar work with clients across the United States, with some currently being the States of California, Colorado and Wyoming?

Montgomery County Response: There is no local preference. Offerors should be properly licensed, credentialed, or registered to do business in their field in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Experience with similar entities may affect evaluation.

ACKNOWLEDGE RECEIPT OF ADDENDUM # 1:

COMPANY/FIRM NAME AND ADDRESS:

_____ Zip Code _____

SUBMITTED BY:

NAME: _____
(print)

SIGNATURE: _____

TITLE: _____

DATE: _____

Telephone Number: (____) _____ Email: _____