



**FLORIDA TOURISM INDUSTRY MARKETING CORPORATION**

**d/b/a VISIT FLORIDA®**

**Request for Proposals:**

**Search Engine Optimization & Marketing**

**Issue date: October 31, 2022**

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## 1.0 RFP Overview

The objective of Request for Proposal (RFP) is to solicit proposals/responses from qualified vendors to provide SEO & SEM management and strategy services to VISIT FLORIDA.

In the event that negotiations fail to result in a binding contract, VISIT FLORIDA retains the right to re-open negotiations with other ranking proposer(s) until a mutually beneficial relationship is secured. VISIT FLORIDA reserves the right to partially award the RFP to more than one agency.

The RFP process shall consist of two phases. Phase one consists of agencies submitting written proposals in response to this RFP. Phase two will consist of more detailed submissions (potentially including exercises and/or sample assignments) and presentations by selected agencies.

## 2.0 VISIT FLORIDA Overview

VISIT FLORIDA is the State of Florida's official tourism marketing corporation. VISIT FLORIDA has been repeatedly recognized as one of the leading destination marketing organizations (DMOs) in the United States.

To review our 2022 - 2023 Marketing Plan, please click [here](#).

To review our Strategic Plan, please click [here](#).

To view our consumer website, please click [here](#).

To view our business to business website, please click [here](#).

VISIT FLORIDA is a public-private partnership that receives funding from the State of the Florida, and is required to match each public dollar it receives with a contribution from a non-state source. This is done by actively recruiting the state's tourism industry to invest as Partners through cooperative advertising campaigns, promotions programs and many other marketing ventures. Through this public-private partnership, VISIT FLORIDA services more than 13,000 tourism industry businesses, including major strategic alliance partnerships.

VF's priorities include:

- Keeping Florida top of mind among target audiences;
- Protecting and growing visitor volume to Florida;
- Increasing Florida's overall market share from key markets, both domestic and international;
- Extending visitor length of stay and increasing visitor spend;
- Increasing visit frequency and visitor retention;
- Increasing travel to emerging Florida destinations;
- Growing brand awareness and engagement; and
- Promoting Florida tourism industry alignment.

## 3.0 VISIT FLORIDA's Audience

VISIT FLORIDA's audience includes:

- The Florida tourism industry at large (for partnership and cooperative advertising purposes);
- Consumers in the United States, Canada, and select international markets (currently through the “Follow Your Sunshine®” consumer brand);
- Florida residents (currently through the “LoveFL®” brand);
- Decision-makers in the meetings and convention industry around the world; and
- Domestic and International travel trade professionals.

More information can be found in our Marketing Plan (see section 2).

#### **4.0 Anticipated Scope of Work Overview**

This is a broad overview of the anticipated scope of work. The scope of work is subject to change and is not final until a contract is fully executed by VISIT FLORIDA and the selected vendor.

#### **4.1 Account Management**

The selected vendor will:

- Provide account representation to oversee the VISIT FLORIDA account and complete tasks and services as outlined in the applicable Scope of Work. The vendor shall provide VISIT FLORIDA with direct access to all persons providing services to or on behalf of VISIT FLORIDA.
- Participate in regular status calls and Agency Outlook calls with VISIT FLORIDA. Status calls will include updates for all projects, tasks and services relating to the Scope of Work. Calls will occur weekly and may shift only as mutually agreed by the Parties. Additional calls to address specific work streams or consult on team questions will be scheduled, as needed.
- Provide recommendations/solutions that are compliant with all applicable laws and regulations, and best practices regarding data security and personal privacy, including, but not limited to: Safe Harbor and EU data and privacy policies; COPPA; ADA; etc.
- Provide periodic education and training to VISIT FLORIDA and its partners, including, but not limited to:
  - Monthly industry updates; and
  - Quarterly education sessions for VISIT FLORIDA and/or its partners, conducted via video calls.
- Provide thought leadership and expertise to VISIT FLORIDA and its partners.
- Attend/Participate in agency campaign planning/brand camp meetings hosted by VISIT FLORIDA in Tallahassee.
- Review and update of SEO and SEM strategy, as needed. High level strategy updates are infrequent and usually driven by search engine algorithm updates or a shift in business priorities.
- Provide comprehensive monthly report on or before the tenth (10th) day of each month (or following business day in the event that the 10th day falls on a weekend or holiday). This report shall include, but need not be limited to: previous month’s activities, feedback, advice on strategic opportunities; recap of results for the month and to date; material updates related to activities conducted as a result of Agreement; and return on VISIT FLORIDA’s investments. This monthly report will be used by VISIT FLORIDA in evaluating Vendor’s performance.

#### **4.2 SEO Management & Strategy**

The selected vendor will:

- Provide recommendations related to SEO strategy as prioritized by VISIT FLORIDA including but not limited to: on-page optimization, SEO development, redirect maintenance, link building, SEO outreach, measurement, reporting and analytics.
- Provide support to VISIT FLORIDA's Content Team: using keyword research, data, and insights, collaborate and provide consultation on best practices for content creation, topic ideation, and opportunities to optimize content for search intent.
- Provide recommendations for technical SEO optimizations to include the management of redirects and 404 errors.
- Provide content optimization suggestions to repurpose existing content on keyword data and search opportunities.
- Provide measurement & optimization recommendations and other assistance as necessary to deploy front-end SEO tactics for VISIT FLORIDA's content taxonomy, digital assets (videos, video channels, pictures, slideshows, articles, cut lines, etc.), use of schemas and other structured data best practices for meta tags, page titles, headers, file names, inbound and outbound link building, link disavowing that can be measured and optimized in a regular, ongoing, daily, weekly and monthly practices.
- Provide SEO-related insights and input on the development of marketing strategies, paid search plans, creative assets, etc., as needed.
- Update and develop SEO Strategy that aligns with VISIT FLORIDA marketing goals and objectives. The SEO strategy shall address the technical SEO, content, on-site SEO, and off-site SEO and should take into consideration audit findings. The strategy shall include defined SEO key performance indicators (KPIs) and periodic reporting for weekly, monthly, and quarterly reports to include website and search metrics, engagement, rankings, benchmarks and goals.
- If assigned to do so by VISIT FLORIDA, conduct SEO audits across all VISIT FLORIDA web assets (websites and microsites) to review VISIT FLORIDA's SEO efforts with a technical review, content audit, current and historic metrics, current SEO implications, competitor analysis, backlink profile, and any additional analysis relevant to an SEO Audit. The content audit shall analyze articles and search landing pages, including on-page SEO, content depth and focus, duplication, search click through rates, etc., in order to discover content opportunities, areas for improvement and duplicated articles/content. Contractor shall review VISIT FLORIDA SEO rankings, providing detailed analysis of VISIT FLORIDA SEO rankings across in-state and out-of-state competitors.

#### 4.2 SEM Management & Strategy

The selected vendor will:

- Conduct a full audit of the VISIT FLORIDA paid search account.
- Utilize the findings from its full audit of the VISIT FLORIDA Paid Search account and historic performance benchmarks to improve targeting, quality scores and performance. Granular ad groups will be developed by keyword relevancy and by match types.
- **Keyword Development:** Agency shall focus on keyword development for VISIT FLORIDA's paid search campaign, and use this development in executing VISIT FLORIDA's paid search campaign. Agency shall review keywords known to be volume drivers (unbranded, category terms), as well as more specific, highly targeted keywords (specific product and brand terms) that have less volume but also come at more efficient levels. Keywords will be expanded to include long tail terms based on historic performance. Agency will continually leverage search query reporting tools to discover new search terms and expand accordingly. Negative keywords will also be developed to improve performance and targeted. These keywords will work to suppress irrelevant and

unwanted search queries. Negative keyword development will also be an ongoing process throughout the lifespan of the campaign. Agency will share recommendations with VISIT FLORIDA for approval.

- **Audience Segmentation:** Agency shall develop and execute an audience segmentation strategy that supports VISIT FLORIDA’s campaign and business goals. Remarketing Lists for Search Ads (RLSA’s) will be rolled out to execute remarketing opportunities. Additional audience targeting will be layered through the account to improve targeted and efficiency. These will include In-market audiences, similar audiences, demo targeting and more. All audience strategies will be outlined and presented to VISIT FLORIDA prior to launch for approval and then tested for performance on an ongoing basis.
- **Creative Messaging - Title & Description Development:** Agency shall develop new creative messaging titles and descriptions based on historic benchmarks. These creative treatments are tested and optimized based on continued learnings throughout the campaigns. Agency will take advantage of new and emerging opportunities such as Expanded Text Ads (ETAs), Dynamic Search Ads (DSAs) and Responsive Search Ads (RSAs) to achieve optimal performance and retain a competitive advantage. All creative messaging treatments will be presented to VISIT FLORIDA prior to launch for approval.
- **Planning and Execution of Paid Search Campaigns:** Agency shall plan and execute VISIT FLORIDA’s paid search campaigns, at the direction of VISIT FLORIDA. Agency shall provide tracking and testing services to continuously optimize campaigns for maximum ROI.

## 5.0 RFP Schedule and Process

RFP Schedule:

Activity	Dates
Announce Procurement	10/31/22
Deadline for Questions to be Submitted	11/14/22
Deadline for Response to Questions	11/18/22
Proposals Due	12/12/22
Initial Evaluation by VISIT FLORIDA	12/23/22
Presentations by Selected Vendors	1/24/22
Negotiation with Final Vendors	2/7/22
Agency Selection	On or about 2/28/22

Proposals must be submitted no later than close of business (5:00 PM EST) on the date specified in the Timeline. Proposals submitted beyond that deadline may be rejected.

Proposals should be submitted electronically to VF’s Procurement Officer:

Megan Yariv  
 Senior Counsel, VISIT FLORIDA  
 contractsteam@visitflorida.org  
 Subject Line: VISIT FLORIDA SEO/SEM RFP

## 5.1 Questions to VISIT FLORIDA

Interested parties may submit written questions up until 5PM EST of the deadline noted in the schedule. Please submit all questions to [contractsteam@visitflorida.org](mailto:contractsteam@visitflorida.org). Please include “SEO & SEM RFP” in the subject line and be as clear and specific as possible when wording the question.

Additionally, please be sure to include contact information – Company Name, Name, Title, Telephone, and E-mail address. VISIT FLORIDA may contact the agency to ensure clarity in VISIT FLORIDA’s response based on the question.

VISIT FLORIDA will respond to questions received by the deadline listed in the schedule and will post a copy of each question and response at: <https://visitflorida.box.com/s/07vjvx6yy6j3gy0lzs4g9425s3q5pboh>.

The question and answer process is “blind.” The identity of the person and/or agency submitting a question will be kept confidential while the RFP is ongoing (even from VISIT FLORIDA team members) and will be known only to VISIT FLORIDA's Procurement Officer who will work with the VISIT FLORIDA team to gather information and post answers.

## **5.2 Proposal Submission Process**

Proposals must be submitted no later than close of business (5 PM EST) on the date specified in the schedule above. Proposals submitted after that deadline may be rejected and not considered. All proposals should be submitted electronically via Box. [Click here to upload.](#)

Please note, agencies submitting confidential information which is exempt from Florida’s Public Records Act should mark the information confidential at the time of submission and should submit two copies, a clean copy and a copy with the confidential information redacted (for more information, please review the section on confidentiality and public records at the end of this document).

VISIT FLORIDA will notify each agency that their proposal has been received via email within two business days. Please be sure to include an email address with your proposal and identify the name of your agency in the comment box.

## **5.3 Initial Evaluation, Presentations, Negotiations, Award and Contracting**

VISIT FLORIDA will evaluate written proposals and notify vendors selected for presentations. VISIT FLORIDA’s procurement officer may contact vendors during this period to obtain further clarification to assist with the initial evaluation. Vendors which were not selected to proceed to the presentation phase will be notified at this stage.

The proposed account team lead must attend presentations. VISIT FLORIDA will provide preparation instructions and a presentation agenda ahead of the presentation. Agencies may be asked to complete an exercise or sample assignment in advance of the presentation.

VISIT FLORIDA will conduct final negotiations with one or more vendors, select one or more vendors for an award, and execute a contract.

## **6.0 Proposal Format and Content**

To ensure timely and fair consideration of your response, respondents are being asked to adhere to a specific response format, which is described in the following table. Proposals should be submitted as a PDF file and be no more than 15 pages, excluding samples of work requested. VISIT FLORIDA may ask clarification questions and request additional information from respondents. Respondents should read each section carefully and ensure that proposals contain all requested information.

	Proposal Section	Content
1.	Authorization Letter and Signature	Include a letter signed by an authorized agency representative with authority to negotiate on behalf of the agency. <b>The letter should include a statement of acceptance of VISIT FLORIDA's <a href="#">standard terms and conditions</a> or proposed alternative terms.</b> (Please note that many of the terms contained in VISIT FLORIDA's standard terms and conditions are either non-negotiable or are required by special provisions of Florida law that apply to VISIT FLORIDA. Requiring changes to the published terms may therefore place a proposal at a disadvantage).
2.	Table of Contents	No explanation required.
3.	Executive Summary	High-level summary of the most important aspects of your proposal, including a short explanation as to your qualifications.
4.	Agency Overview	Respond to Section 6.1 of this RFP.
5.	Agency Capabilities & Case Studies	Respond to Sections 6.2 and 6.3 of this RFP.
6.	Pricing	Respond to Section 7.0 of this RFP.

### 6.1 Agency Overview

- A. Provide company legal name, parent company, and ownership structure, mailing address, address, main phone number, and email address.
- B. Provide primary contact.
- C. Provide senior staff bios, including links to their social media profiles as appropriate. Include their location.
- D. If different from above, please provide proposed project team's staff bios, including links to social media profiles as appropriate. Include their location.
- E. Provide a brief background on your company. Include information that makes your business qualified for this project. Provide specific examples of any similar products.
- F. Indicate whether you have experience working with tourism clients. Provide examples.
- G. Provide contact information for at least **two current clients and two former** clients that VISIT FLORIDA can contact. If possible, please include travel industry or destination marketing clients as references. For each reference, please indicate the following:
  - Contact Name and Title;
  - Contact Vendor Name;
  - Contact Phone Number;
  - Industry of Client;
  - Service Description;
  - Length of Relationship; and
  - Brief explanation regarding the end of the business relationship, if applicable.



- H. List any existing clients that could be considered a conflict of interest to VISIT FLORIDA. List all destination marketing and tourism industry clients, and any other clients that may compete with VISIT FLORIDA. Please include any conflict mitigation strategies in place. A potential conflict will not disqualify a respondent, however, VISIT FLORIDA may exclude a proposal from consideration at any point in the review or negotiation process should the conflict(s) of interest be deemed unacceptable.
- I. If applicable, indicate the number of years and nature of your experience in the tourism industry and include any specific knowledge of Florida tourism and familiarity with Florida travel destinations.
- J. Proposals must provide evidence of financial stability. The agency must document sufficient financial resources to perform all services outlined in this RFP. Audited or reviewed financial statements are required for the three most recent years of operations. Please also provide the Agency's Dunn & Bradstreet number so that a report can be requested by VISIT FLORIDA.

## 6.2 Agency Capabilities

- A. Outline your project communication structure. If your account staff is separate from your project team or the technical experts who will work on this account, please detail how these teams work together with the client and, if applicable, the client's additional agencies.
- B. Outline your strategy, methodology, tools, and processes for SEO/SEM client services.
- C. Outline your standard or average timelines from briefing to completion for various projects such as a major SEO/SEM campaign, small campaign extension, and relevant real time crisis situation adjustment.
- D. Describe how the agency will provide analytics and tracking to demonstrate programs effectiveness, return on investment and determine future strategic planning.
- E. Indicate how the Agency will monitor and manage all aspects of this relationship.

## 6.3 Case Studies

Please provide two Case Studies that show relevant experience to the stated objectives, needs and scope of work detailed in this RFP. Ideally one case study would include an effort that occurred during COVID-19. Case studies should be in the following format:

- Client Requirements
- The challenge, goals and objectives
- Strategy developed to achieve goals and objectives
- Approach selected and rationale for approach
- Metrics selected and rationale for selection

- Value delivered against chosen metrics
- ***How does the case specifically apply to VISIT FLORIDA?***

## 7.0 Pricing Information

VISIT FLORIDA requests that each agency provide **detailed** pricing for account management and fees for services outlined in the RFP. **Pricing must be fully comprehensive and complete.** Explain how you approach a pricing structure: hourly, milestones, retainer or another model. Additional information and backup detail should be included as appropriate with your proposal.

When proposing pricing, assume a total media spend not to exceed \$1.656m (total spend may ultimately be lower, and may decrease in future years depending on VISIT FLORIDA's funding appropriation, but may be up to \$1.656m). Provide your most competitive fee proposal, as cost is a significant factor in RFP evaluation.

## 8.0 Evaluation Criteria

Written proposals will be evaluated with the following criteria in mind:

- Team Quality and Experience
- Agency Overview & Capabilities
- Pricing Information and Value
- Quality of Reference Feedback
- Depth of Tourism Industry Knowledge
- Client Services & Project Management
- Agency Capabilities

## 9.0 RFP Terms and Conditions

VISIT FLORIDA may adjust the specifications of this RFP throughout the process. This RFP does not constitute an offer by VISIT FLORIDA to contract, but rather represents a definition of the specific services being sought and invites agencies to submit proposals. Issuance of this RFP, the agencies' preparation and submission of proposals and the subsequent receipt and evaluation of any such proposals by VISIT FLORIDA does not commit VISIT FLORIDA to award a contract to any agency. Agencies, by submitting a proposal, agree that any cost incurred by it in responding to this RFP or participating in the RFP process, is to be borne solely by the agency. The issuance of this document and the receipt of information in response to this RFP will not in any way cause VISIT FLORIDA to incur liability or obligation to respondents, financial or otherwise, and VISIT FLORIDA will not reimburse or in any way compensate respondents for expenses incurred in connection with their response to this RFP.

VISIT FLORIDA shall incur no obligations or liability whatsoever to anyone by reason of the issuance of this RFP or the actions of anyone relative thereto. Only the execution of a written agreement with an agency related to one or more services described herein will obligate VISIT FLORIDA and then only in accordance with the terms and conditions contained in such agreement. Respondents understand and agree that submission of a proposal and/or participation in the RFP does not create a contractual relationship between any Respondent and VISIT FLORIDA.

Proposals, and any subsequent material submitted, will be considered complete and binding offers by the proposing agencies to contract for a period ending on the earlier of ninety (90) calendar days from their submission and the date the contract(s) is executed with the selected agency relating to the services covered by this RFP. No action or communication of VISIT FLORIDA other than the execution of a written contract shall constitute acceptance of such offer, and even then shall legally obligate VISIT FLORIDA only in accordance with the terms and conditions contained in the written contract.

VISIT FLORIDA reserves the right to enter into discussions and/or negotiations with more than one agency at the same time. VISIT FLORIDA may contract with one or more agencies at the same time, with no agencies, or with any party who did not submit a proposal, should it determine that such actions are in its best interest. VISIT FLORIDA reserves the right to reject any or all proposals in response to this RFP, waive any informality or irregularity in any proposal received and to award a contract to the agency or agencies of its choosing without explanation. VISIT FLORIDA will notify unsuccessful participants upon execution of the contract(s) awarded as a result of this RFP.

Interested respondents must direct any and all communications relating to this RFP to:

Meg Yariv, Senior Counsel  
[contractsteam@visitflorida.org](mailto:contractsteam@visitflorida.org)  
Subject Line: SEO & SEM RFP

Ms. Yariv is the sole contact for agencies. All other VISIT FLORIDA team members, including evaluators, are prohibited from discussing the RFP with agencies outside of the scheduled process.

Proposals must state that the agency will agree to execute a contract containing VISIT FLORIDA's standard terms and conditions which have been published alongside this RFP (and may be reviewed [here](#)), or include a mark-up of those terms with specific language changes that the agency would require in order to execute a contract. All proposed changes should include explanations of why they are necessary. Many of the terms contained in VISIT FLORIDA's standard terms and conditions are either non-negotiable or are required by special provisions of Florida law that apply to VISIT FLORIDA. Requiring changes to the published terms may therefore place a proposal at a significant disadvantage.

**Confidentiality and Public Records:** VISIT FLORIDA is subject to Chapter 119, Florida Statutes, Florida's Public Records Act. That means all records sent or received by VISIT FLORIDA in connection with its business must be provided to the public upon request unless specifically made confidential or exempt from such requirement [by Florida law](#). This requirement includes materials you submit to VISIT FLORIDA in connection with this RFP. Vendors may mark information submitted to VISIT FLORIDA that qualifies as a trade secret or some other exemption under Florida law as "CONFIDENTIAL." Vendors should only mark information "CONFIDENTIAL" if they believe that it satisfies a specific legal exemption to Florida's Public Records Act and should state the specific legal exemption relied upon. Vendors should ensure that confidential information is appropriately marked at the time it is initially delivered to VISIT FLORIDA, as failure to do so may destroy the confidential nature of the information. Vendors submitting proposals containing confidential information should submit two versions, a clean version for VISIT FLORIDA review and a version with all the confidential information redacted. Should VF receive a public records request once the RFP has concluded and VISIT FLORIDA has issued an award, it will provide

the redacted version and notify the vendor (note: VF will not disclose RFP materials while the RFP is ongoing). Should the requester dispute the applicability of the asserted public records exemption, VISIT FLORIDA will notify the vendor which then must take the appropriate course of legal action if it wishes to continue to assert the claimed exemption. For more information on Florida public records laws generally, see the “Sunshine Manual” here: ([www.myfloridalegal.com/sun.nsf/sunmanual](http://www.myfloridalegal.com/sun.nsf/sunmanual)). Finally, please note that the final contract terms awarded to the winning vendor or vendors will be a public record and will be posted on the VISITFLORIDA.org website as required by law and VISIT FLORIDA’s standard contract terms (which must be agreed to upon submission of a proposal).