

## **Request For Proposal**

This is a request for proposal (RFP) to provide marketing and advertising services for the McCurtain County Tourism Authority (MCTA). The McCurtain County Tourism Authority does business as Beavers Bend Cabin Country. The contractor shall provide all services customarily performed by a full-service advertising agency to successfully develop and conduct a comprehensive strategic marketing campaign to ensure that consistent, integrated messages are being communicated to all target audiences. Primarily focusing on promoting domestic travel and enhancing tourism development in McCurtain County, Oklahoma. The contract period would be from July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026. And would be renewable for up to two more consecutive years. The rebidding process must take place every three years.

MCTA is funded by a county lodging (excise) tax. The tax is collected outside of each city's limits (Broken Bow, Idabel, and Valliant) within McCurtain County. This 3% lodging tax is to promote, encourage, and develop tourism and recreational activities beneficial to McCurtain County. MCTA was established in 2002, by a passionate group of locals who had a vision for our county. They believed that lodging tax money should be spent to promote tourism and bring visitors here. Keeping with that original vision, MCTA puts 91% of the funds collected into advertising and promotion. MCTA also takes in dollars one year and spends it the next fiscal year. The budget is dependent on lodging tax collections. Lodging in this category is defined as the service of furnishing of rooms by hotel, apartment, rental cabin, motel, or yurt for the furnishing of public lodging. In McCurtain County, tourism generates an estimated \$150 million in lodging alone. MCTA is a county-governed organization that runs all its paperwork through the county commissioners. MCTA adheres to all governmental guidelines in spending tourism tax funds, including Title 19 purchasing guidelines for the state of Oklahoma as well as various other state statutes. MCTA also follows the state Open Meetings Act.

McCurtain County Tourism Authority works to spend lodging tax dollars to maintain, improve, enhance, and propel a positive and consistent image of McCurtain County among residents and potential visitors. At its core, MCTA operates under the following mission: *To increase interest in McCurtain County through advertising and promotion of existing business and to attract and provide services for visitors from around the world to the McCurtain County area.* It is the goal of the MCTA to use the most innovative and cost-effective advertising and marketing programs to raise awareness of McCurtain County as a desirable travel destination and to enhance the perceptions of McCurtain County to bring more visitors to the county, as well as to have more Texans and Oklahomans spend their tourism dollars in McCurtain County. This is accomplished by aggressively marketing and promoting McCurtain County's tourism assets to Texas, Oklahoma, Louisiana, and other domestic consumers.

### **MCTA Goals and Objectives for Fiscal Year July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026**

The goals and objectives of the MCTA during fiscal year 2025-2026 include but are not limited to:

- Increasing visitation to facilities
- Increasing revenue through increased visitation.
- Increasing visitation to the MCTA website.
- Targeting historically slow periods and improving visitations during those times.
- Targeting cabin inventory gaps.
- Increase awareness of McCurtain County to new and existing markets.
- Create an in-market campaign for community perception to ensure positive travel attitudes of locals and visitors.
- Create an in-market campaign to educate locals of the tourism impact and how MCTA helps our region's economy.
- Hold an in-market meeting for stakeholders to learn about a topic and what MCTA is doing for our area.
- Use exciting and effective image and "call to action" advertising messages that help travelers clearly distinguish McCurtain County from all other travel destinations and establish McCurtain County as a premier travel destination.

- Create exciting and effective image and “call to action” advertising messages that change consumer perceptions of McCurtain County as a travel destination, promote the positive attributes of the County, and increase consumer inquiries for McCurtain County travel information.
- Create an assets page of photography and video that locals can use to help them promote their businesses.

MCTA desires to be on the forefront of all media strategies and requires compelling ad execution to gain optimum attention. Contractor must demonstrate that they can utilize cutting-edge technology, the most up-to-date media trends to keep MCTA top of mind always in every market. All advertising’s primary call to action drives consumers to MCTA’s website and app: [www.beaversbendcabincountry.com](http://www.beaversbendcabincountry.com). MCTA’s media mix has grown to include advertising across various channels such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, Pinterest, Snapchat, TikTok, and other social channels. Also marketing and advertising on various network television stations, connected television, streaming services, broadcast and digital radio, Pandora, Spotify, podcasts, cinema ads, blogs, email marketing, digital display ads, print ads, outdoor media, and public relations.

#### Specific goals and objectives

- Unique posting on social channels
- Minimum of 105 Facebook Videos posted a year
- Minimum of 24 YouTube Videos
- 104 or more Insta Reels/Stories/shorts posted in a year
- Minimum of 4 posts per week on each social platform
- Monthly blog posts and email marketing blasts to media and subscribers
- Monthly reporting of stats
- Answer all social messages and website questions
- Assists locals in listing their tourism related businesses on the website.

## Expectation of Service

As the agency of record, the agency will be the primary point of contact for project coordination with any subcontractors and will be responsible for final work products. MCTA's executive director will be the second contact and loop in on all projects, even items considered but not implemented. Recognizing the value of a productive and collaborative team environment to bring in the expertise of all involved parties, we will ask that all have input into strategies and direct communication with the agency's staff and MCTA's director for implementation. The contractor(s) must be able to meet the MCTA's expectations of service during the contracted term, to include:

- Deep knowledge and understanding of McCurtain County tourism's brand and consumer segments.
- Extensive experience with the travel category.
- Ability to develop and contribute to an integrated marketing strategy across paid, earned, and owned media – with input and guidance from all involved.
- Commitment to a team approach – accepting that good ideas are the goal, no matter their origin.
- Ability to deliver consistency in messaging.
- Fully integrated creative development.
- Proactive in bringing opportunities and ideas that challenge MCTA, helping the further advancement of our tourism marketing objectives.
- Clear lines of agency communication and responsibility.
- A thorough appreciation for emerging technology, trends, platforms, and messaging opportunities – and how to best leverage them on behalf of McCurtain County Tourism Authority.
- An absolute commitment to transparency, trustworthiness, and integrity.
- Ability to develop and manage right-size campaigns for budget.
- Ability to have limited funds and work hard to achieve goals.
- Integrity to responsibly and frugally spend tax dollars in the best way.
- An understanding of the unique systems, timelines, and responsibilities inherent to a county government account.
- Previous agency and/or key staff experience with a destination marketing organization.
- Commitment to be available at key functions and events in our region.
- Willingness to incorporate and expand on existing partnerships and programs that have been successful.

- Filming and video experience a must.
- The ability to handle 98% of our account and its functions in-house.

Services – Upon request, the Contractor or Vendor shall be capable of performing the services listed below. MCTA may utilize other vendors and in-house resources for these same services for projects not encompassed by specific directives, campaigns or programs assigned to the successful vendor.

- All services specific to and necessary for the performance of the contract include, but are not limited to:
  - Contractor shall employ marketing strategies using both traditional and new media elements, including but not limited to print, broadcast television, streaming/connected television, radio, out-of-home, digital display, online video, digital native content, paid social media, specialized app environments, programmatic advertising, strategic marketing partnerships, podcasts, Influencer campaigns, and experiential marketing, which are effective and result in strengthening the tourism image of Oklahoma and in increasing the numbers of tourists to the state. The contractor shall identify target markets in collaboration with proprietary data studies, including but not limited to, regional drive markets, in-state travelers, and niche-group markets.
  - Provide consultation, design, layout, artwork, copywriting, video production, mechanical work, Internet design, and copy preparation and production supervision as requested.
  - Obtain objective, third-party pre-market and post-market testing determined by MCTA.
  - Provide cooperative advertising opportunities with profit and nonprofit agencies, in-state and out-of-state partners, and the private sector.
  - Produce presentations for MCTA-sponsored advertising campaigns and promotions.
  - Produce state-of-the-art audio-visual presentations.
  - Support and assist with county and regional special event promotions and press conferences.
  - Assist and participate in the planning and programming of conferences and launch events, as needed.
  - Provide still, video, film and digital photography needs as requested and approved by MCTA.
  - Provide occasional support for media and travel/trade

- familiarization tours.
- Assist with online, and Internet website marketing efforts and social media integration.
  - Prepare and submit award and contest entries for national and state competitions.
  - Produce collateral and other requested materials on programs where MCTA partners with other organizations.
  - Creative Design- includes but is not limited to Static Print, produce print ads for consumer magazines and trade publications, Web Graphic Design, provide design and other creative elements for MCTA websites/apps, produce ads for interactive media, Television Graphic Design, design work as needed, and Guides/Brochures.
  - Currently MCTA produces 1 brochure/guide and 2 maps. The vendor will be responsible for designing as needed.
  - Video Design: Produce radio and television spots for airing in both in-state and out-of-state markets. This includes but is not limited to Writers, Producers, Videographers, Talent Management (All talent must have talent release on file), sound design, voice-over talent, Post-Production, and Project management. Talent needs non-compete clauses for related work in a 4-hour radius of McCurtain County, Oklahoma.
  - Recommend, and after approval by MCTA, select and negotiate media purchases that will reach target audiences, be cost-effective, and allow for increased editorial coverage or exposure. Media buying includes but is not limited to, Television, Web, Print and Digital.
  - Advise, place, and conduct year-round seasonal, niche, and personal-based digital campaigns with the intent of driving increased visitation to McCurtain County.
  - Manage, report on, and optimize 12-month pay-per-click strategy.
  - Keep Search Engine Optimization current and up to date on website.
  - Develop and deliver necessary creative elements in collaboration with MCTA for campaign elements.
  - Coordinate and integrate with MCTA's owned media.
  - Provide comprehensive monthly metrics and analysis to evaluate effectiveness and media channel performance.
  - Integrate, and utilize agency and MCTA's marketing data stack to optimize campaigns.
  - Detailed ad tracking through pixel placement and UTM links on all digital advertising (as available). Evaluation of

- the resulting analytics to optimize advertising campaigns.
  - Identify new digital marketing opportunities to continue to leverage a multi-channel approach to drive more visitors to our destination and increase ROI.
  - Digital Marketing Design - Design and production to include all current formats and others that may be developed during this contract.
  - Creative Writing - Copywriting as needed for television, radio, printed guides/brochures, websites, digital marketing, social media, printed ads, press releases, etc.
  - Additional Services - Provide consultation, design, layout, artwork, mechanical work, internet design, copy preparation and production supervision as requested.
  - Assist with online, Internet website marketing efforts and social media integration.
  - SEO analysis and recommendations for optimization of MCTA's website.
  - Assist MCTA staff with answering of all messages through all channels.
- Administration needs include but are not limited to the following
  - Provide static account managers.
  - Consistently meet deadlines.
  - Provide individual project estimates/quotes and manage projects to stay within agreed-upon budget.
  - Have the availability to interact daily for project meetings or project management input.
  - Be able to handle criticism and adjust quickly where needed.
  - Must have consistent, established project status reporting and billing process. Must be able to follow government guidelines.
  - Must provide status reports (electronic) on a consistent periodic basis, change and frequency of the status report will be at MCTA's discretion.
  - The ability and willingness to manage third-party vendors, such as printers, photographers, copywriters, videographers, and talent.
  - Expertise in developing strategic marketing plans at enterprise and project levels.
  - A minimum of five years experience in video production.
  - A minimum of at least five years' experience in producing a variety of print, marketing and advertising materials that successfully met customer needs.
  - A minimum of at least five years' experience in digital marketing strategies with proven tracking effectiveness.

- Legally possess and utilize the most current versions of industry-standard graphic design, word processing and interactive development software, including but not limited to such programs as Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, PowerPoint), Analytics Platforms, all current and future social media platforms, and Adobe Creative Suite.
- Must be able to work cross-platform between Macintosh and PC operating systems.
- Ability to follow and maintain current best practices in email marketing development.

### **Contract Term and Renewal Options**

The initial Contract term, which begins on the effective date of the Contract, is one year and there are two one-year options to renew the Contract, with an optional, one-year transition period should we award the business to another agency.

### **Contract Specifications**

The purpose of this Request for Proposals (RFP) is to invite responses (Proposals) from those in the advertising industry to provide advertising and marketing support to all divisions of MCTA. Agencies should submit their best and final offer.

MCTA projects total marketing expenses, including Media, Production, and Special Events, Promotions and Vendor compensation, to be estimated \$3 million per year throughout the 3-year agreement. Actual FY24 expenditures, and subsequent contract year expenditures, will be contingent on MCTA receiving the necessary funds from Lodging Tax collections. If additional funds become available, MCTA reserves the right to add funding to this contract. This contract will be IDIQ – indefinite delivery, indefinite quantity.

MCTA intends to select a full-service agency that can provide a comprehensive solution for MCTA's operational advertising and marketing. MCTA intends to execute one contract as a result of this procurement (the Contract) encompassing all of the services contemplated in this RFP and Proposals shall be evaluated accordingly.



## **Budgeting**

For each task, the ad agency bidding shall prepare and submit an estimated budget. Expenditures by the agency will not be reimbursed unless they have the prior written approval of MCTA. All expenditures must be pre-approved in writing by MCTA. Electronic approvals (email, text, etc.) must be followed up with a signed document within three (3) days of the approval.

The agency chosen must maintain financial and accounting records and evidence pertaining to the contract in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles and other procedures specified by MCTA and county and state guidelines. All expenditures related to a campaign or project must be documented in a unique job folder and a binder kept specifically for that campaign or project. This includes all internal allocated expenditures and external subcontracted expenditures. All vendor invoices and all receipts must be kept in binder as well. These records must be made available at all reasonable times to MCTA, the McCurtain County Court House, and/or its designees during the contract period and any extension thereof, and for seven (7) years from the date of final payment on the contract or extension thereof.

The agency shall maintain a listing of all approved estimates including a description of the expenditures and the amounts. For quotes or bids, notes must be kept documenting why you chose one over another.

The agency shall obtain competitive bids on any expenditure for the account as follows, unless directed by MCTA to engage a particular vendor. Documentation of the bid process must be included in the appropriate task folders and yearly binder:

- Up to \$5,000 – Up to three bids, may be phone bids
- \$5,001 - \$10,000 – At least three phone/email bids
- \$10,001 and over – At least four bids

The agency shall pay for all charges, without reimbursement from MCTA, including but not limited to: postage charges, overnight deliveries, phone calls, facsimile charges, copying, etc., from the agency to MCTA representatives, suppliers, publishers, broadcasters, and others, except as specified below:

MCTA will pay all postage required for direct mail advertisement,

brochures, letters, etc., to the general public or a specialized market group if such correspondence is mailed in the name of or over the signatures of an official MCTA contact as part of the approved advertising plan or with the prior written approval of MCTA.

All billing to MCTA is net, they are not allowed to mark-up invoices. Any cost savings realized through negotiation is passed on to MCTA.

### **Additional Compensation Requirements:**

#### Minimum Timekeeping Requirements:

- The agency must maintain a record of time expended in performance of this contract.
- The agency will report usage of hours to MCTA on a monthly basis. The contractor must maintain an internal control system that has the capacity to segregate labor hours and resultant costs by contract.
- MCTA reserves the right to audit any or all of the above-described records at any time, with or without cause.

### **Up Front Pass-Thru Costs:**

- Sometimes there will be pass through costs when McCurtain County is hosting an event locally. Lodging and food may need to be booked by the agency for MCTA.

In accordance with Title 74, Section 80.40 all agency travel expenses to be incurred by the agency that is part of a service contract shall be included in the total price proposal. The agency shall pay for all travel-related expenses incurred by their staff in meetings with or on behalf of MCTA. It is anticipated that there will be routine meetings/presentations. (2 annually)

Travel costs for creative and production personnel related to media productions and press checks/color approvals and travel costs for any MCTA requested out of state meetings/presentations, will be reimbursed at actual costs not to exceed what is allowable in accordance with Oklahoma State Travel Guidelines (Title 74, Section 500.1 et seq.); such travel must be pre-approved by MCTA.

MCTA is seeking proposals from qualified Vendors (advertising agencies) with an office located in the region (four-hour radius) of McCurtain County.

One-on-one meetings in person are preferred, but MCTA is open to alternatives. Weekly coordination meetings are anticipated by MCTA.

MCTA is an extremely hands-on organization and has come to expect all agencies and vendors to produce the best product in the least amount of time and in the most cost-effective manner.

MCTA will expect the awarded agency to put all efforts into accomplishing each task in the time allowed to MCTA's satisfaction.

### **MCTA's Responsibilities**

MCTA will issue an estimate approval for all production projects, media buys, and other work not included in the monthly service fee.

MCTA will schedule regular meetings with the agency to monitor progress of work. MCTA will evaluate agency services and work products for quality and compliance with the applicable contract requirements. MCTA will provide the agency with information on its tourism programs, targets, objectives, and general tourism information.

MCTA will provide its available research information and analytical support for development of advertising and marketing programs and will participate in research programs conducted by in support of all programs.

MCTA will reimburse the agency on a net basis (actual cost) for purchases and expenditures (not included in the agency's monthly services fee) made by the agency on behalf of MCTA, provided a Cost Approval has been issued in writing by MCTA. Upon request, MCTA will provide access to MCTA's current advertising campaign and materials pertaining to the contract requirements to enable the agency to become familiar with MCTA's existing advertising campaign. MCTA will not provide compensation for any services rendered prior to July 1, 2025.

### **Partnership Programs**

MCTA currently works in partnership with other agencies; companies; nonprofits, etc. Our part of the partnership is usually advertising dollars through the MCTA local grant advertising contract.

A yearly annual sum is established for partnerships and the marketing MCTA keeps a declining balance of those funds.

### **Value Add Services**

Value Add services that the vendor could provide within the structured frame of the contract but outside the monthly retainer fee should be identified along with the estimated value.

It is expected for the agency to partner with MCTA to secure sponsorships at appropriate values throughout the contract. Potential sponsors could be viewed as a value-add service.

### **Transition Process**

Transition Period – MCTA anticipates a need for a transition period in the event the contract is not awarded to the incumbent vendor. It is the vendor's responsibility to advise the time needed, within reason, to complete the transition. This will need to identify and include all time and any fees associated with asset transitions (video, photography, creative files, account files, vendor account transitions, freelance talent transitions, etc.), as well as all time and any fees associated with learning and implementation of all annual production and media projects, research, MCTA branding platforms, etc.

Services to be furnished under this contract shall be documented, signed by the MCTA's Executive Director. Such orders may be issued at any time during the term of this contract.

The agency shall not proceed with any work under a proposed plan unless authorized by the MCTA's Executive Director. Each project or task order will indicate an effective date which shall be considered the start date as far as the determination of due date(s) for deliverables is concerned.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, MCTA understands that input from and discussions with the agency are often necessary to arrive at an understandable scope and direction for the work covered by a task. The parties agree in good faith to participate in those discussions and cooperate to arrive at the scope and direction for each project or task. MCTA further understands that sometimes the agency may have to perform work (e.g., concepting, planning, research, etc.) to provide the input described above and to develop the scope of the proposed task order or project. Because the agency is paid a flat compensation fee, any such work performed prior to issuance of the project or task order will not cause MCTA to pay additional amounts to the agency or vendors involved. Any project or task order issued during the effective period of the contract and not

completed within that period shall be completed by the agency within the time specified in the task order. The contract shall govern the MCTA's and the State of Oklahoma's rights and obligations with respect to that task order to the same extent as if the task order were completed during the contract's effective period. All work and services to be performed under this contract shall be initiated by a task order or project request to be issued by the agency. The request will specify, at a minimum, the following information: a description of the work to be performed, the desired period of performance or required completion date, reporting requirements and deliverables and the date and time the response is due.

The task order request neither commits MCTA to pay any costs incurred in the submission of any proposal or in making necessary studies for the preparations thereof, nor does it commit to issue a task order for such services. A technical proposal specifying the agency's approach to performing the required work, a detailed work schedule identifying all significant milestones and deliverables, a price proposal for the required work on a firm-fixed price basis. The agency shall identify each category of labor required to perform the work and the corresponding number of hours for each category, if the services are outside of the covered services provided by the Monthly Service Fee. Any of the agency's out-of-town travel shall be priced in accordance with the State Travel Reimbursement Act (74 OS §500.1 et seq.) and must be approved prior to travel, MCTA may enter discussions with the agency regarding the Task/Project Proposal for purposes of negotiating the technical approach, proposed staffing hours, or any other issues. Should we determine to proceed with the work identified in the Task/Proposal Request and any associated estimates, the Director will sign the estimate and return – either via email or mail.

### **Instructions to Offerors/Agencies**

Agencies submitting offers are cautioned to carefully read the entire solicitation in order to be fully aware of all the requirements, provisions and clauses. They should provide all information required by this solicitation. Additional information about the agencies' capabilities of satisfying the needs of MCTA for advertising and promotion may be included. Speculative creative development ideas and techniques will be accepted as part of the offer, but are not required. This does not include full campaigns.

Contact for Questions. All prospective Offerors who have questions regarding this RFP are to submit them in writing to the MCTA office by email or by mail to Charity O'Donnell, MCTA, 113 W. Dr. Martin Luther King Dr., Broken Bow, Oklahoma, 74728. Charity's email is [bchamber@pine-net.com](mailto:bchamber@pine-net.com)

Offerors must submit one (1) clearly marked original offer plus three (4) copies each no later than the date and time as indicated on the RFP. (March 10, 2025) Proposals shall be submitted in 10 point or larger font, be double-spaced, and be on standard 8.5 x 11 inch paper with all pages numbered. Also, two digital copies must be submitted on a jump drive. No big binders over 3 inches and no fancy leather portfolios or binders as all information must be kept and stored for 7 years. Comb binding is acceptable.

Each Offeror shall provide all of the information required by the solicitation. The Offeror shall sign the offer and print or type its name on each sheet on which it makes an entry. Offers must be typewritten or written in ink. Penciled offers will not be accepted. Erasures or other changes must be initialed by the person signing the offer.

The RFP Form shall be executed in the name of the Offeror, signed by an authorized person, and notarized with full knowledge and acceptance of its provisions. Any information considered "Proprietary" or "Confidential" by the Offeror shall be submitted with the RFP response in a separate envelope clearly marked "Proprietary" or "Confidential" with the RFP number and closing date on the front of the sealed envelope. The Offeror shall include with the designated information a statement describing the nature of the information and the rationale why it is considered "Proprietary" or "Confidential".

MCTA reserves the right to reject any offer that does not comply with the terms and conditions of this RFP. A proposal may be rejected when the Offeror imposes terms and conditions that would modify requirements of the RFP or limit the Offeror's liability to the MCTA. Approval of Contract. The contract resulting from this request for proposals is subject to the written approval of the MCTA Board of Directors.

Resources. Offeror shall provide a detailed, written description of the resources (e.g., facilities, manpower, business equipment systems, accounting systems, internal auditing procedures, management and administration, legal services) the Offeror possesses.

Account History. Offeror shall provide a written description of its recent (within the last three years) account history for travel-related businesses, services and/or destination marketing organizations. Descriptions should include accounts similar in nature and budget size to the MCTA campaign. Account history should include the types of campaigns developed, billing history, and types of services provided.

Description and Work Samples of Similar Campaigns. Descriptions and work samples of similar campaigns the bidder has conducted.

Evidence of ability to purchase or acquire cost-efficient media schedules for programs appropriate to the target market, including public service announcements. Evidence of ability to make effective, innovative and cost-efficient use of non-traditional media to extend awareness and exposure of the advertising product and message. Evidence of ability to develop and conduct advertising and marketing activities, including media placements, in domestic markets. Evidence of ability to make effective use of brand awareness and positioning statements in the overall marketing campaign strategy, including media placements and promotional activities. Evidence of ability to develop a plan for marketing tourism development programs and related information services for assisting businesses, organizations and communities in creating and promoting tourism development opportunities. The Offeror shall provide an outline of its recommendations for promoting Oklahoma as a premier travel destination to consumers and the travel trade, including special events and media relations.

The outline shall include proposed allocation (in both percentage and dollar amounts) for the most effective and efficient expenditure of an approximate **\$3,595,000.00 budget**. Please explain the budget amount for research, production for different media and marketing categories for a one-year period. The explanation shall be of sufficient detail to determine responsibility of the Offeror.

### **Required Bid Structure Preparation of Bid**

The Bid is required to be structured into separate, labelled and easily identifiable sections using the Bid Packet format provided below. A Bid submitted using any other format may not be accepted. The Bid should not contain duplicative content. Any section of the Bid Packet that is not

applicable to the Bid shall have a page inserted to denote the section is not applicable. For instance, if business references are not required, the Bid should contain a page after the "Business References" section heading that reads "Not Applicable," "N/A" or some similar notation.

Bidder is to submit ONE (1) complete original and (4) copies of their written response as well as two (2) USB flash drives of the bid response in a sealed envelope. PDF is an acceptable format for initial solicitation responses. No binders larger than 3 inches.

The Bid will be evaluated using a best value criteria, based on the following **criteria**:

Round One:

Familiarity with McCurtain County's tourism industry and product, Digital Marketing Expertise, Creative Marketing/Media/Brand Development, pricing of Services, company profile, experience, staffing, references and sample of work.

Round one due back by March 10, 2025.

Round Two:

Once the review team has completed its evaluation of the RFPs, bidders qualifying will be invited to participate in the second phase of the review process. The second phase will consist of 1-hour presentations from each of the selected agencies (May 20<sup>th</sup>) before the review team, followed by a 30-minute question and answer session. These sessions have a three-fold objective: Allow the review team to get better acquainted with the presenting agency, its key staff members, and the organization's areas of expertise; Give the advertising agency an opportunity to make its case before the review team. In particular, this time should be used by the agency to demonstrate to the review team its unique skills, qualifications, and plan to elevate McCurtain County tourism industry to an even greater role in the region's economy by enhancing the image, generating additional travelers, increasing visitor spending and thereby state and local tax collections, and improving advertising effectiveness ROI; and Provide an opportunity for the agency to share its ideas on how the new Round Two will be evaluated on the following criteria:



Familiarity with McCurtain County Oklahoma's tourism industry and product  
Demonstrated expertise in integrated, multi-media planning  
Strong background in creative direction  
Experience converting research findings to brand building  
Tourism marketing experience  
Obvious enthusiasm for broadening our brand recognition  
Qualified and experienced staff Pricing / Value  
Services

Prospective Bidders are urged to read this solicitation carefully. Failure to do so will be at the Bidder's risk. Provisions, terms, and conditions may be stated or phrased differently than in previous solicitations. Irrespective of past interpretations, practices or customs, proposals will be evaluated and any resultant contract(s) will be administered in strict accordance with the plain meaning of the contents hereof. The Bidder is cautioned that the requirements of this solicitation can be altered only by written amendment approved by the state and that verbal communications from whatever source are of no effect. In no event shall the Bidder's failure to read and understand any term or condition in this solicitation constitute grounds for a claim after contract award.

Required submittals are as follows:

Submit an organizational chart for your agency, including the number of employees by department and function.

Provide biographical sketches of key staff members who will work on the account, including each individual's name, title, role on the account, and percentage of time that will be dedicated to the McCurtain County tourism account. Where appropriate, include relevant work accomplishments and experience.

Provide a summary describing the average tenure of your employees, typical annual turnover, and practices/policies in place to ensure account continuity with staff turnover.

List the agency's current clients, including all clients and specific brands. Indicate the year the client was acquired and the assignment relationship (project based or agency of record) and the scope of work (e.g. creative, strategy, media planning/buying, public relations, digital, etc.).

How is your agency uniquely qualified, experienced, and positioned to market McCurtain County as a premier tourism destination?

Describe your approach to developing integrated advertising campaigns.

Include a description of your agency's creative, media, and production processes, and how they determine and prioritize strategy, insights, and recommendations.

How does your agency motivate its staff and other agency partners to continually strive for excellence on behalf of a client?

Provide details on your agency's experience in developing and executing content strategies.

Describe your experience working with clients which are governmental agencies.

Elaborate on your experience working with destination marketing organizations.

Describe your approach to measurement and analytics.

What is your approach to continuous reporting and optimization?

How do you demonstrate program success to your clients and remain accountable for the program's outcome?

List and briefly describe any proprietary research tools of the agency (and explain if any tools have additional costs not included in a core retainer).

List and explain your agency's capabilities in understanding and marketing to specific audience segments (and include any proprietary programs the agency uses to gain a better understanding of an audience's habits, tendencies, and motivations).

Provide a recent case study that demonstrates your agency's ability to develop and execute integrated marketing and communication ideas (including paid, owned, and earned media):

Define your client's challenge.

Detail the responsible agencies and their specific contributions to the overall idea.

Media Planning & Buying Capabilities:

List the agency's primary analytic and planning tools you will use to service the account.

Indicate those which have additional out-of-pocket costs and those which are accessible to the client without additional costs.

Provide samples of reports or dashboards where appropriate.

What are the primary factors you use to gain a competitive

buying advantage for your clients?

Provide 3 examples of media added value you negotiated on behalf of your clients.

Digital Capabilities

Describe your process for developing a digital strategy.

What do you believe is the most significant/important development in the digital arena to date, and how is your agency set to capitalize on it?

What is your approach to data, research, and measurement?

Provide a(n) example(s) of monthly reporting.

What key metrics do you most often use with your clients?

Describe your process for content development.

How do you ensure content is strategic and maintains a strong linkage to the brand?

Provide case studies from the previous 24 months, including creative examples, for three (3) projects identified above. Must include at least two (2) multi-channel, complex campaigns with detailed pixel tracking. What key insights and analyses led to the program's success? Describe the key performance indicators and program measurements used to gauge the program's overall effectiveness.

Provide a listing of experience in the last three (3) years of digital marketing campaigns that includes the following:

Customer project goals: Digital platforms utilized. Audience size and budget, statistical results of projects.

Transition Process: If the contract is not awarded to the incumbent agency, provide a detailed strategy for transitioning the business that includes:

Process for transitioning assets – video, photography, creative files, account files, vendor account transitions, freelance account transitions.

Process and timeline for learning all brand platforms, as well as reviewing and implementing all annual production, digital, and media projects, as well as research projects and findings to date.

Any and all fees associated with the transition process.

Provide written response and samples for budgeting/expenditures and reports.

Provide written response and samples for account/project management process, digital platform used in account management and reports.

Provide a minimum of three references from current clients.

References must be related to the scope of services for which the agency is bidding. For each reference, provide the company name, dates of service, contact person (including title, telephone number, and e-mail address), and a complete description of the services provided. References may be contacted to verify the agency's ability to perform the services specified in the RFP. MCTA reserves the right to use any information, additional references, or supplemental research deemed necessary to establish the ability of the agency bidder to meet the contract's requirements. Negative references may be grounds for proposal disqualification.

Provide a listing of experience in the last three (3) years of video production that includes.

- (a) Customer project goals;
- (b) Date of project;
- (c) Audience size of project;
- (d) Statistical results of project.
- (e) Provide video for three (3) projects identified above in Portfolio

Provide a listing of experience in the last three (3) years for a variety of print, marketing and advertising materials that successfully met customer needs.

- (f) Customer project goals;
- (g) Project Timeline;
- (h) Target audience and size of project;
- (i) Statistical results of project.
- (j) Provide examples for three (3) projects identified above in Portfolio

Provide a listing of experience in the last three (3) years of printed guide/brochure production that includes the following.

- (k) Customer project goals;

- (l) Production timeline;
  - (m) Cost – printing and creative production;
  - (n) Statistical results of project.
  - (o) Provide creative examples for three (3) projects identified above in Portfolio.
- (vii)

### **Confidentiality Request**

Unless otherwise specified in the Oklahoma Open Records Act, Central Purchasing Act title 19 guidelines, or other applicable law, documents and information a Bidder submits as part of or in connection with a Bid are public records and subject to disclosure after contract award pursuant to OAC 260:115-3-9<sup>2</sup>. However, a public Bid opening does not make the Bid immediately accessible to the public. All material submitted by a Bidder becomes the property of the State. No portion of a Bid shall be considered confidential after the award of the Contract except, under 74 O.S. §85.10, information in the Bid determined to be confidential by the State Purchasing Director or delegate. Typically, a properly submitted confidentiality claim of a potential awardee is reviewed and determined prior to award; a properly submitted confidentiality claim of a non-awarded Bidder is reviewed and determined only when responding to an open records request concerning the Bid. Additional information regarding information considered confidential by a Bidder.