



USA

VisitTheUSA.com

**Brand USA**

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## **REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL**

Strategic Visioning and Corporate Consulting Vendor

April 1, 2021



## INTRODUCTION

Brand USA is a non-profit, public-private partnership established by the Travel Promotion Act of 2009. Our mission is to increase incremental international visitation, spend, and market share to fuel our nation's economy and enhance the image of the USA worldwide. Through the financial and in-kind support of hundreds of industry contributors, and in partnership with the federal government, Brand USA has been able to achieve and expand upon this mission each year. International travel and tourism drives economic growth in the United States, bringing jobs and capital to local communities throughout the country. It is the number one services export and represents nearly 10 percent of total U.S. exports across all industries.

Brand USA is the only federally-sponsored program charged with promoting the full breadth of travel experiences in the United States around the world. We act as a multiplier for efforts by state and city tourism boards and private companies, telling a unified and inspiring story about the awesome possibilities of travel to our incredible land. We advance our mission through coordinated marketing, promotional efforts, and educational campaigns that inspire international visitors to travel to the United States. Our approach works. Brand USA efforts are responsible for increasing international visitation, generating additional spending, tax revenue, and jobs that support your constituents and the American economy as a whole.

Brand USA is only able to generate these results with the support of contributing partners, including the federal government. We work closely with and are funded by cash and in-kind contributions from entities within and outside the travel industry. Our supporters include destination marketing organizations, travel agents, tour operators, hotel and lodging companies, attractions, retailers, airlines, and others.

The federal government's support and funding enable us to invest in critical infrastructure for in-market campaigns that many of our partners are unable to make on their own. From digital platforms in foreign markets to a marquee trade show that connects domestic travel and tourism companies with foreign travel agents and tour operators, our partners recognize the value of working with Brand USA and fund our mission accordingly. We in turn are able to draw international travelers to, through, and beyond gateway cities to ensure the benefits of international visitation are felt in local economies across the country.

To achieve our mission, Brand USA deploys a number of market-driven strategies to increase inbound visitor travel to the United States and drive tourism dollars to communities in all 50 states, the five territories, and the District of Columbia. These include consumer campaigns, cooperative marketing, communications efforts, and travel trade outreach.



## PURPOSE

Given both the incredible disruption to travel and tourism as a whole, and international travel in particular, and that Brand USA has actively served the needs of the U.S. travel and tourism industry for 10 years this is an excellent time to assess what we're doing and how we can improve and better meet our mission. Brand USA is seeking a skilled third party to aid the board of directors and management in assessing the state of the organization, from a big picture "rearticulation of Brand USA's mission and vision" to functional review of internal and external processes that fundamentally move the company forward.

The vendor will liaise with the board of directors and management directly and with Brand USA's constituency in the travel and tourism industry by survey. The vendor will be selected in advance of a May 20<sup>th</sup> Board Meeting and expected to conduct preliminary field work in advance of an in-person (if possible) meeting July 20<sup>th</sup>.

## BACKGROUND

Brand USA is a District of Columbia nonprofit corporation formed pursuant to an Act of the U.S. Congress. Brand USA is governed by an 11-member board of directors appointed by the Secretary of Commerce. The directors are professionals representing ten different travel and tourism industry verticals identified in the Act.

Brand USA's primary objectives as written in the Act are to increase incremental visitation and spend so the economic and diplomatic benefits of increased visitation are felt across the entirety of the United States, including equal efforts to promote rural and urban destinations; to identify, counter, and correct misperceptions about U.S. entry policy; and to provide useful information to potential visitors.

Brand USA is responsible for setting annual objectives that must be reviewed and approved by the U.S. Department of Commerce that speak to that core mission described above. Brand USA is responsible for chronicling its rationales and results of its efforts in furtherance of those objectives, specifically including a statutorily required annual Return on Investment Study and its efforts to promote travel to rural and urban destinations in equal measures, in an Annual Report delivered to the U.S. Congress.

Brand USA funds the organization through cash and in-kind contributions from non-Federal sources, which are matched by up to \$100m in federal funding managed by the United States Treasury. If the United States Treasury account is fully funded and Brand USA meets its matching requirements, Brand USA's annual budget is approximately \$150m. Brand USA's contributors are travel and tourism entities (see pages 77-78 of the Annual Report) spanning from large, multi-national entities like Marriott, Universal, and Enterprise to destination marketing organizations with smaller budgets like Visit Birmingham and Visit Sarasota. Brand USA typically receives contributions from 150 entities on an annual basis with the 15-20 contributors accounting for roughly 80% of the cash contributions.



## SCOPE OF WORK

We expect the winning vendor to perform independent research on similar organizations with similar missions and to conduct interviews with staff, the board of directors, and other stakeholders including contributors, industry program participants or sponsors, and government liaisons in order to provide a long-term strategic plan including short- and long-term goals, strategies, initiatives, and capabilities:

### Current Assessment

- Review and potential rearticulation of our corporate mission, vision, and statement of purpose
- Situational Assessment – a report on the current state of Brand USA including strategy, organization, process, and performance

### Recommendations

- Strategic options for growth between 2022 and 2027 to include revenue projections, business modeling, and responsiveness to contributor interest and changing market dynamics
- Organizational structure, including human resources and other tools and technologies necessary to pursue (potentially rearticulated) Corporate priorities and growth projections
  - Emphasis on corporate and DEI cultural considerations. (Possible liaison with external [DEI consultant](#))
- Leadership behavioral qualities, including expectation and alignment with the mission and vision of the organization
- Development and implementation of strategies and processes to establish, pursue, and achieve short- and long-term goals, including clear and concise reporting, other accountability tools, and cross-departmental coordination for greater impact

We expect that the vendor will need at least two sessions with the board, staff, and stakeholders in order to deliver the situational assessment and options for growth.

## QUALIFICATIONS AND PROPOSAL DELIVERABLES (Not to exceed 20 pages)

The proposal should contain detailed descriptions of the vendor's experience and expertise necessary to deliver the scope of work, and at the very least the following items:

### **Executive Summary**

- Company strategic planning and project management experience
- Team bios and roles
- Client references
- Case studies and/or examples of finished written work

### **Methodology or Approach**

- Demonstration of strong facilitation skills
- Creating environments that welcome information from multiple sectors and diverse communities
- Data collection and utilization skills
- Ability to challenge orthodoxy and inspire innovation

### **Project Management**

- Timeline
- Specific activities and management responsibilities
- Interim milestones and deliverables

### **Budget**

- Vendor to provide hourly rates and estimated staff time for specific interim deliverables, the total budget for specific interim deliverables, and the total budget proposal



## MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

Proposals may be rejected if they do not include all deliverables. Proposers wishing clarification of this RFP must submit questions in writing to Brand USA, no later than **April 12, 2021**, and sent by e-mail to [RFPadmin@TheBrandUSA.com](mailto:RFPadmin@TheBrandUSA.com). Questions will not be answered on calls, with the exception of meetings with scheduled finalists during, or after the meeting. Company names will be removed from the published question/answer document. Duplicative questions, irrelevant questions and questions already addressed in this RFP may not be published. Pitches will be not be accepted outside the RFP process.

Costs for developing proposals are entirely the responsibility of the proposer and shall not be reimbursed by Brand USA.

1. **Notice of Intent to Bid** must be received by **April 19, 2021** (due by 5:00 PM EDT).

The notice shall be sent by e-mail to [RFPadmin@TheBrandUSA.com](mailto:RFPadmin@TheBrandUSA.com). The NOTICE OF INTENT TO BID, is nonbinding; however, it ensures the receipt of all addenda related to this RFP. Proposals will be accepted only from applicants who submitted a timely NOTICE OF INTENT TO BID.

2. **RFP Responses** must **not exceed 20 pages** and must contain the following information:
  - a. No Conflict of Interest: Client relationships that could potentially be considered a conflict of interest must be listed.
  - b. Contract Manager/Team: identify one individual on the proposer's account team who will manage the event. Include resumes, or descriptions of anyone to be involved with Strategic Visioning RFP
  - c. Proposal Deliverables Listed Above
3. **Certification Form**: Must be signed and accompany all RFP Response submissions.



## TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

This tentative schedule may be altered at any time at the discretion of Brand USA. Brand USA reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, or any part thereof; waive an informality in the proposals and accept the proposal that best meets the needs of Brand USA.

A. Proposal Released	April 1, 2021
B. Written Questions (due by 5:00 PM EDT)	April 12, 2021
C. Written Questions Answered and posted to Brand USA website	April 13, 2021
D. Notice of Intent to Bid Due (due by 5:00 PM EDT)	April 19, 2021
E. Proposal Due (due by 5:00 PM EDT)	April 26, 2021
F. Notification and Scheduling of Finalist Interviews	April 30, 2021
G. Finalist Presentation/Interviews	May 12-14, 2021
H. Notice of Intent to Award Contract and Public Posting	May 17, 2021

## DELIVERY OF PROPOSAL

Proposals should be e-mailed to [RFPadmin@TheBrandUSA.com](mailto:RFPadmin@TheBrandUSA.com). We will acknowledge receipt, so if you do not receive a receipt notification within two business days, please contact us. If the file size of your proposal is too large to email or send via FTP service, contact us and we will make arrangements.

## EVALUATION AND CONTRACTING

All proposals satisfying the requirements of this Request for Proposals will be evaluated to establish which of the providers best fulfills the needs of Brand USA and this project. This Request for Proposals in no way commits Brand USA to award a contract, to pay any costs in preparation of a proposal, or to contract for the goods and/or services offered.

Brand USA reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals received as a result of this request, to negotiate with all qualified providers or to cancel this Request for Proposals. After awarding the contract, the schedule will include a period of collaboration between Brand USA and the selected Contractor to better define, elaborate upon, and fix the Contractor's final Scope of Work and general Terms and Conditions.



## ATTACHMENT 1

### NOTICE OF INTENT TO BID

Due: April 19, 2021

SEND TO: [rfpadmin@thebrandusa.com](mailto:rfpadmin@thebrandusa.com)

NAME OF BIDDER / COMPANY:
CONTACT PERSON:
MAILING ADDRESS:
TELEPHONE:
FAX:
E-MAIL ADDRESS:
SIGNED:





## ATTACHMENT 2

### CERTIFICATION

*Please include this statement as part of the Proposal*

#### Certification Statement

By submission of this proposal and authorized signature below, Proposer certifies that the undersigned corporate officer has authority to bind the bidder to the terms of this Proposal and hereby certifies on behalf of the bidder that:

1. He/she has read and understands all commitments and terms of this Proposal.
2. The information contained in this Proposal is accurate.
3. Proposer's quote is valid for at least 120 days from the date of proposal's signature below.
4. Proposer understands that if selected as the successful Proposer, he/she will have ten (10) business days in which to complete contract negotiations, if any, and execute the final contract document. Date of execution can be extended by mutual agreement of contractor / Brand USA.

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Authorized Signature

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Typed or Printed Name

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Title

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Date

#### Official Contact

Brand USA requests that the Proposer designate one person to receive all communications for clarification and verification of information related to this proposal. Please identify this point of contact below:

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Official Contact Name

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Phone Number

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Official Contact Title

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Facsimile Number

---

Email Address

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Street, City, State, Zip



## ATTACHMENT 3

### FOR BRAND USA USE ONLY

Bid/Proposal: \_\_\_\_\_

Evaluated By: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Proposal Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation committee will judge each written proposal based on the following criteria:

	MAX. POINTS	SCORE
Company and Team Qualifications	30	
Methodology	30	
Sample Plan	20	
Cost effectiveness	20	
TOTAL POINTS	100	