



USA

VisitTheUSA.com

Brand USA



REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

China & India Readiness Program

September 28, 2018



INTRODUCTION

Brand USA is the destination marketing organization for the United States with the mission of increasing incremental international visitation, spend, and market share to fuel the nation's economy and enhance the image of the USA worldwide. Established by the Travel Promotion Act as the nation's first public-private partnership to spearhead a globally coordinated marketing effort to promote the United States as a premier travel destination and communicate U.S. entry policies, Brand USA began operations in May 2011.

As one of the best levers for driving economic growth, international travel to the United States currently supports 1.8 million American jobs (directly and indirectly) and benefits virtually every sector of the U.S. economy. Brand USA works in close partnership with more than 700 partner organizations to invite the world to explore the exceptional, diverse, and virtually limitless travel experiences and destinations available in the United States of America.

Brand USA is governed by an 11-member Board of Directors. Each director is appointed by the U.S. Secretary of Commerce. Each director represents a sector of the travel and tourism industry as identified by the Travel Promotion Act. The executive leadership team possesses strong expertise and experience in the travel, tourism, and advertising industries.

Brand USA delivers a dynamic marketing program that includes, but is not limited to, a global advertising campaign, earned media and public relations strategies, a robust social media outreach plan, promotional and incentive campaigns, trade shows and sales missions, and educational campaigns about U.S. entry policies. Brand USA carefully selected its marketing tools and target audience after vigorous analysis of existing and original market research.

Brand USA is committed to including diverse firms as an important part of its sourcing and procurement activities. In furtherance and support of this goal, we encourage minority, women and locally-owned firms to pursue business opportunities with us. Minority and women-owned firms who otherwise meet the minimum requirements set forth in this Request for Proposal are encouraged to submit a Notice of Intent to Bid. In addition, Brand USA also seeks to do business with firms that also recognize the value of diversity and inclusion in the composition of their workforce and in their own contracting, subcontracting or teaming activities. We encourage such firms who meet the minimum bidding requirements (regardless of size or ownership) to also submit a Notice of Intent to Bid. Brand USA reserves the right to give weight or allocate bidding credit to diverse firms or those with a demonstrated commitment to inclusion as part of its evaluation process.

WHY DOES A COUNTRY AS POPULAR AS THE USA NEED A MARKETING PROGRAM?

Although the United States remains one of the world's most popular travel destinations, during the first decade of this century, while the global travel market was booming, the USA's share of international travelers declined 37 percent—from 17.2 percent in 2000 to 12.4 percent in 2010. The resulting impact on the U.S. economy was an annual loss of 467,000 jobs and \$606 billion in lost revenue. In addition to being seen as unwelcoming (resulting from increased security measures that came following 9/11) and too familiar, the United States was also one of the world's only industrialized nations without a national tourism board to attract international travelers to its shores in order to fuel the nation's economy by inspiring the world to visit the U.S.A.—to see it again, or for the first time.

With the strength of a national marketing effort from Brand USA now in place, the United States is working to regain its share of the global travel market. By welcoming more international visitors to the USA, Brand USA is supporting U.S. economic growth, helping to spur job creation, and creating a more positive impression of the United States around the world.

WHY IS INTERNATIONAL VISITATION SO IMPORTANT TO THE NATION'S ECONOMY?

International visitation helps local communities.

On average, overseas visitors spend nearly \$4,400 per trip and generate tax revenue in communities across America without burdening local services, such as public schools and fire departments. When international travelers spend this kind of money in our communities, it lessens the tax burden on U.S. citizens.

International visitation supports American jobs and economic growth.

When international visitors come to the U.S.A., the money they spend directly supports about 1.2 million American jobs and added over \$180 billion to the U.S. economy. Overseas arrivals represent around 50% of all international arrivals, yet account for over 85% of total international travel spending. (Source: US Travel Association and NTTO 2016 Data)

International visitation enhances the image of the United States worldwide.

Surveys show that international visitors to the United States are 74 percent more likely to have a favorable view of America and 61 percent more likely to support U.S. policies.

Who Pays for It?

International visitors and private contributions fund the work of Brand USA— no U.S. taxpayer dollars are used to fund Brand USA's marketing efforts. Instead, the organization is supported by contributions from partnering organizations that are matched by fees paid by international travelers to the Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) program.

ESTA is an automated system implemented by the Department of Homeland Security in 2008 that determines the eligibility of visitors from 38 international markets to travel to the United States under the Visa Waiver Program (VWP). ESTA authorizations are generally valid for multiple trips over a period of two years or until the traveler's passport expires, whichever comes first.

BRAND USA IS BUILDING ON SUCCESS

Brand USA is delivering on a dynamic marketing strategy that includes, but is not limited to, a global advertising campaign, earned media and public relations strategies, a robust social media outreach plan, promotional and incentive campaigns, trade shows and sales missions, and educational campaigns about U.S. entry policies. Brand USA carefully selects its marketing tools and target markets and travelers after vigorous analysis of existing and original market research.

Brand USA with and through the support of more than 700 partners worldwide has made notable progress towards our mission of increasing international visitation to the United States and by all accounts, our efforts are working. Since we began operations in 2011, Brand USA has:

- Established consumer and trade marketing initiatives in more than 30 international markets, which generate 90% of all inbound travel to the United States.
- Expanded our USA consumer campaign to 16 key markets that generate more than 85% of the United States' international visitors.



- Significantly increased the effectiveness of our consumer campaigns during FY2016 that helped drive increases in international traveler intent to visit the USA ranging from 7% to as high as 99%.
- Established the nation's largest in-market representation network to work directly with the international travel trade in 20 top travel markets.
- Increased partner program participation in Brand USA cooperative marketing programs by 13% from 245 in FY2015 to 277 in FY2016, which demonstrated value for partners.

According to studies by Oxford Economics, in the past four years alone (fiscal years 2013 through 2016), Brand USA's marketing initiatives are responsible for welcoming 4.3 million incremental visitors to the USA, benefiting the U.S. economy with more than \$13.6 billion in incremental spending; and nearly \$30 billion in total economic impact, which has supported, on average, nearly 51,000 incremental jobs per year.

PURPOSE

The goal of the RFP is to identify a firm or firms that can provide best practices and up-to-date training tailored towards the travel industry broadly, and potentially specified for various industry verticals (such as hotel, transportation, retail, attractions), on how to best welcome Chinese and Indian visitors. You may bid on one or both of the projects. The criteria and deliverables are the same for each target market.

About the Program

The objective of the Readiness programs is to educate partners and stakeholders to achieve the cultural awareness and the knowledge necessary to provide the service standards that Chinese and Indian consumers will require when they visit the U.S.

The vendor will provide a series of seminars to pre-determined regions in the U.S. The aim is to help Brand USA stakeholders and analyze current products and services, with regard to their suitability for Chinese and /or Indian travelers, and to develop an action plan to increase visibility and market share.

The vendor will create Brand USA content that will be used as a basis for developing training materials; the vendor will provide training sessions to US partners on dates and locations that are mutually agreed upon.

Whilst the training content will be geared towards Brand USA and the participating DMOs, the content will include an overview of the general landscape of Chinese and Indian culture. The training materials will be customized to the destination and their product(s).

As part the readiness programs, information will provide a brief history of China and India including but not limited to geography, economy and politics. Providing insight into modern China and India; the lifestyle of its peoples; introduction to the negotiation culture; how to best service Chinese and Indian visitors. In depth training will also review aspect such as traditional and digital marketing trends, understanding of the Chinese and Indian travel trade supply chain as well as information on the evolution of the Chinese and Indian traveler.

SCOPE OF WORK

The selected vendor will provide:

- Written Materials
 - White paper: general best practices guide and tool for Brand USA partners

- Destinations (city and state)
 - Attractions
 - Hotels
 - Rental Cars
- Accreditation guidelines (if applicable)
- Online training kit and materials
 - 1 hour in-person training materials (pre-written material)
 - ½ day in-person training materials (pre-written material)
 - Full-day in-person training materials (pre-written material)
- General Web training – Live on TheBrandUSA.com, across the below subject matter:
 - General information around conducting business in China
 - General information around conducting business in India
 - Economic changes and trends in China
 - Economic changes and trends in India
 - Chinese travelers and cultural focus
 - Indian travelers and cultural focus
- Webinars and Seminars:
 - Launch webinars to introduce the China and India Readiness Programs to partners
 - 6 Regional Seminars
 - Develop a strategy to host 6 in-person regional seminars across the United States. (Regions to be discussed and decided on with Brand USA)
 - Develop and provide the content for this program
 - 50-100 attendees
 - ½ Day to a full-day seminar (both options should be outlined)
- Suggested program Accreditation process
 - Develop the requirements and guideline on how to establish accreditation through the in-person seminars
- Event Coordination – across all in-person seminars
 - Ability to coordinate with state, local and regional DMOs (convention & visitors bureaus, chambers of commerce) and other businesses and membership organizations (e.g. retail groups, associations), and work collectively with Brand USA for on-site registration, organization and follow-up survey



Core Objective

Brand USA's focus is not only to increase incremental visitation to the United States from the Chinese and Indian markets but to enhance the visitor experience of the Chinese and India traveler while they are in the United States. In order to assist our destination partners to provide a great travel experience, Brand USA is putting an emphasis on creating two 'Readiness Programs'; one for Chinese and another from India to help our partners develop a greater understanding of China and the Chinese traveler/ India and the Indian traveler. Brand USA wants to identify a partner with vast knowledge and experience with the China market / Chinese travelers and India market / Indian travelers to educate our industry partners to enhancing visitor experience and ensuring our partners are ready to provide a great visitor experience. Brand USA is looking for knowledgeable partner who can provide up-to-date training through a series of in-person trainings as well as webinars and written material.

To be an effective partner the vendor requirements are:

- Established experience working directly with the Chinese and Indian markets and knowledge and familiarity with:
 - Entry Policy
 - Chinese government regulations
 - Indian government regulations
- Proven track record from current and past training programs directly or indirectly connected to travel and tourism of building international business strategy to market and do business with the Chinese and Indian market:
 - Written materials
 - Presentations both live and webinars
- Event administration
- Partner can respond for one market only (India only or China only) or both markets (India & China)

Deliverables

The response should address the skill and knowledge the organization brings to the table:

- **EXPERIENCE:** Company background and statement of experience in connection to the Chinese and Indian markets as well as the needs outlined in the above Scope of Work. Work experience directly connected with the travel and tourism industry is a plus. Event planning and coordination of seminars with 50 plus attendees
- **WRITTEN MATERIAL:**
 - Case studies and/or prior relevant work (minimum of two examples with demonstrated results)
 - Include tourism related activities your team is or has engaged in; china and/or to reach the Chinese market, India and/or to reach the Indian market.
 - Planned accreditation process (if applicable)
 - Project plan including budget and price schedule
- **TEAM:** Staff plan and written bios including external resources that may play a role in the execution of the events. To demonstrate the strength of your team please include a minimum of two case studies with demonstrated results for contracts of a similar scope. In addition, please provide any relevant tourism related activities your team is or has engaged in china and/or to reach the Chinese market and in India and/or to reach the Indian market
- **OTHER:** Any relevant information about the company that you would like us to consider in evaluating your response to this RFP.

BUDGET

Based on the RFP requirements, the must submit a detailed, realistic budget with an estimated execution timeline. Please itemize the budget based on program cost, for example a budget cost for each individual seminar, should be funneled into an overall project budget estimate. Please provide an estimated budget per seminar as well as a cost break down difference of a half day and full day seminar

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

Proposals must address each item listed in Scope of Work, giving specific details of techniques to be used in achieving each of these requirements. Proposals may be rejected if minimum requirements are not met. All proposers wishing clarification of this RFP must submit questions in writing to Brand USA no later than October 8, 2018, (due by 5:00 pm, EST), and sent by email to rfpadmin@thebrandusa.com.

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 (Attachment 1)** must be received by October 17, 2018 (due by 5:00 p.m. EST).



The notice shall be emailed to rfpadmin@thebrandusa.com at the Brand USA office. 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 contain the following information:
 - a. Executive Summary
 - b. Services and Activities: Provide description of the nature of the organization's services and activities. Note when the business was established, brief history and location. List the location (s) of the office(s) from which the primary work on this contract would be performed. Address how you will have the necessary personnel, experience, skill, and financial resources to perform the work in a satisfactory and timely manner.
 - c. At least three examples of work per market that coincide with the requirements.
 - d. No Conflict of Interest: Read and complete the Conflict of Interest Form. Client relationships that could potentially be considered a Conflict of Interest must be listed.
 - e. Contract Manager/Team: Identify one individual on the proposer's account team who will manage the contract work. Identify the role of each member who will service the account. Current resumes must be attached for each person who would in any way be associated with this account.
3. References: Provide at least three references who can assert that you have a satisfactory record of performance.
4. Budget
5. Timeline and/or Project Plan
6. **Certification Form (Attachment 2)** must be signed and accompany all RFP Response submission.

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.

B. Written Questions (due by 5:00 p.m. EDT)	October 8, 2018
C. Written Questions Answered and posted to Brand USA Website	October 11, 2018
D. Notice of Intent To Bid Due (due by 5:00 p.m. EDT)	October 17, 2018
E. Proposal Due (due by 3:00 p.m. EDT)	October 31, 2018
F. Notification and Scheduling of Finalist Interviews	November 16, 2018
G. Finalist Presentation/Interviews	November 19 – 20, 2018
H. Notice of Intent to Award Contract and Public Posting	November 26, 2018

DELIVERY OF PROPOSAL

Each bidder is required to deliver a PDF of its proposal to Brand USA's RFP Admin, no later than October 31, 2018 (3:00 p.m. EDT). The PDF should be no more than three separate files. The proposal may not exceed 15 pages double spaced at 12-point font, not including examples and case studies. Please submit written examples and case studies separately. Six printed copies of the proposal must be delivered by October 31, 2018, to Brand USA, 1725 I St NW, #8, Washington, DC 20006.

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.

Proposals may be e-mailed to RFPadmin@TheBrandUSA.com or sent by courier such as Federal Express, UPS, etc. to:



Brand USA Headquarters
C/O RFP Administrator
1725 Eye Street NW, Suite 800
Washington, DC 20006
ATTN: RFP – China & India Readiness Program
Phone: 202.536.2060
Email: RFPadmin@TheBrandUSA.com



ATTACHMENT 1

NOTICE OF INTENT TO BID

Due: October 17, 2018

SEND TO:

Brand USA Headquarters

C/O RFP Administrator

1725 Eye Street NW, Suite 800

Washington, DC 20006

ATTN: RFP – China & India Readiness Program

Phone: 202.536.2060

Email: 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.

Authorized Signature

Typed or Printed Name

Title

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:

Official Contact Name

Phone Number

Official Contact Title

Facsimile Number

Email Address

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 (per market):

	MAX. POINTS	SCORE
Ability to meet specifications: examples of past work and relevant material	35	
Demonstrated training experience and staff background	25	
Experience working with the China and/or India market	30	
Cost effectiveness	10	
TOTAL POINTS	100	