

Answers to Offerors

1. Prior to March 2020, who was/were your target audience(s)? What were their markets of origin, reasons for travel, and duration of stay?

In a typical year, we have two major target markets. First one being our Summer Primary Markets, or our National Market, which targets summer vacationers from key feeder markets, which we have identified as Minneapolis, Seattle-Tacoma, Dallas-Fort Worth, and Denver DMA's with a HHI of \$75k or higher. Our second market is our Regional Drive Markets, primarily In-State, Western Dakotas, and Wyoming with a HHI of \$50K or higher.

For both we focus on markets with interest in road-tripping, history, outdoor recreation, family travel, Yellowstone National Park, craft beer. For our regional market, we add additional focuses on events, shopping, food scene, urban adventures.

Duration of stay varies between day-tripping and two nights.

2. How have those visitation patterns changed over the last 6-7 months?

The biggest change we have seen in our visitation patterns is the loss of the retiree or at risk travelers. Typically in late summer we would see an increase of road-trippers who are empty nesters or retired travelers looking to avoid the summer crowds.

3. Have you conducted any consumer research regarding market perceptions or reactions to advertising over the past 2 years?

Yes, please reference https://www.visitbillings.com/sites/default/files/2017-18%20Billings%20Visitor%20Profile%20Study%20-%20Final%20Report%20of%20Findings%201.18.19_0.pdf

4. What has been your media budget per year over the past 3-5 years?

2016-17 – Advertising Budget - \$415,150
2017-18 – Advertising Budget - \$385,375
2018-19 – Advertising Budget - \$590,398
2019-20 – Advertising Budget - \$585,409
2020-21 – Advertising Budget - \$425,000



Please note, not all this budget is handled by our agency of record. Visit Billings reserves some of these funds for in house advertising decisions, cooperative opportunities, etc. Also this does not include agency fees and retainers.

5. What are you looking for in an agency partner?

We are looking for a partner who has respect for our destination and understands our strengths and weaknesses as a destination. We are not a mountain town, we are where the mountains meet the plains. We have a balance of outdoor recreation and urban amenities. Our agency needs to understand who we are and challenges our identity as a western city.

6. Are there any destination marketing brands/ organizations that you, or your team, think are "getting it right"? If so, who?

In our opinion, "getting it right" isn't a consistent theme with many brands and destinations. However, we appreciate Visit Utah and Visit Wyoming for their efforts. Each always offers great inspiration.

This is not a destination brand, however our team identifies with this inspirational commercial: <https://youtu.be/936qd6rQju0>

7. Where do you envision the destination in 5 years?

With an agency that has offered creative and strategic solutions every week, month, and year.

8. How do you currently measure success?

The health and wellness of our stakeholders relates to success of our mission execution. Smith Travel Research reporting is important to our organization and destination. Room Demand and other data help us measure success. From a campaign point of view, in order to support our stakeholders and tourism partners, we measure on engagements and Key Performance Indicators such as, Partner Referrals, Visitor Guide Requests or Views, 3+ minutes on Site, and eNewsletter Sign-ups. In a typical year, STR data is monitored using the previous year as a benchmark, Covid-19 has altered this information.



9. Please verify contract term is in 1 year increments beginning January, 2021 with the option to renew for additional 1 year terms up to 6 years.

That is correct.

10. How does earned media fit into your marketing plans? We didn't see it called out in the scope of work document. Is this something that you handle in-house? If so, are you open to suggestions on strategy or tactics related to earned media?

Earned media has previously been a joint effort of agency and in house. Our team will absolutely be open to suggestions on strategy and tactics related to earned media.

11. What platform is your website built on?

Our website is built on Drupal.

12. For evaluation purposes, how do you prefer to see the cost breakdowns?

We prefer an estimate per project that also includes a thorough breakdown of the estimate which incorporates an hourly rate.

13. Please clarify acceptable delivery of our response. Is it hard copy only or will digital submissions be accepted?

Digital submissions will be accepted. Please email to alyson@visitbillings.com. We recommend requesting a read receipt when sending this way.

14. Is there an incumbent agency and do you expect they will be responding to this RFP?

Yes, we anticipate our current Agency of Record will be responding to the RFP.

15. The budget indicates approximately \$650k for these services and the fiscal year is July 1 – June 30. And the RFP states *“The duration of the initial contract between Visit Billings and the partner is expected to begin on the date outlined in this document upon approval by all parties involved (approximately January 2020).”* a. Does this mean the term of the services would begin July 1, 2021? Please clarify the term start and end date.

b. Did the statement above mean to be January 2021 (not January 2020)? Please clarify.



Our fiscal year is July 1 – June 30th, however we are able to start our contract when we see fit. We are looking to begin our contract on January 1st, 2021. Apologies for the error.

16. How much of the annual \$650k budget comes from BCVB and how much comes from BTBID?

The FY20-21 Budget is comprised of \$375,000 from BTBID and \$50,000 from BCVB. This number does not include retainer fees and only represents money spent on actual buy.

17. Who comprises the Committee that will be reviewing, scoring and selecting the Agency?

Our committee consists of the following people.

Alex Tyson – Executive Director, Visit Billings

Aly Murnion – Leisure Marketing, Sales, and Social Media Manager, Visit Billings

Luke Ashmore – Visitor Services/ Special Projects Manager

Lori Walker – General Manager, Home2 Suites by Hilton and BTBID Board Member

Jeff Ewelt – Executive Director, ZooMontana and Tourism Advisory Council Member

18. How many Agency finalists will be selected for in person presentations?

The committee can select as many finalists as they see fit. During our last RFP process we invited two agencies to present as finalists.

19. Who will the Agency finalists be presenting to?

Agency finalists will be presenting to our committee listed above.

20. Have you done in-depth consumer segmentation, consumer research or brand research? a. If so, when and can you share that research information?

Yes, please reference www.visitbillings.com/sites/default/files/2017-18%20Billings%20Visitor%20Profile%20Study%20-%20Final%20Report%20of%20Findings%201.18.19.pdf

21. Has additional segmentation and consumer research been done during COVID? a. If so, when and can you share that research or insights?



Not on a local level, however the Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development has access to some information.

22. The RFP states *“Proposers must submit eight (8) copies of the written proposal by the deadlines described in the Schedule of Events to: Aly Murnion, Visit Billings, 815 South 27th St. Billings, MT 59101; or alyson@visitbillings.com. Proposals received after this time will not be accepted for consideration.”* a. Please clarify if 8 copies are required or if an electronic submission is acceptable or if both 8 hard copies and an electronic submission is required.

One electronic submission is acceptable. Please email to alyson@visitbillings.com. We recommend requesting a read receipt when sending this way.

23. What platform is the website built on?

Our website is built on Drupal.

24. We understand how important overnight bed tax collection is to any destination. a. How important is the quantification of economic impact for restaurants, attractions, etc. to attribution of the marketing communications efforts? Any insights are appreciated.

If our lodging partners are thriving, this will equate to full restaurants, retailers, and attractions. Supporting all tourism partners is important to Visit Billings. However, so is the health of our business community. We believe if we are effectively and efficiently marketing and selling the destination, the community as a whole will thrive.

25. Are there any BIG BETS for your organization in 2021 or beyond?

There are many opportunities for destination and product development in the next 24-36 months. Billings works closely with strategic partners to ensure growth as a community and destination. At the same time, fostering sports tourism, leisure strategies, and meeting recruitment are always major wins for the destination, community, and our organization.

26. Where the proposal states: Proposers must submit eight (8) copies of the written proposal by the deadlines described in the Schedule of Events to: Aly Murnion, Visit Billings, 815 South 27th St. Billings, MT 59101; or alyson@visitbillings.com. Proposals received after this time will not be accepted for consideration. Does this mean that we have the option to send 8 copies through the mail, or only one proposal through email?

One electronic submission is acceptable. Please email to alyson@visitbillings.com. We recommend requesting a read receipt when sending this way.

