

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)
issued by
THE CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA, ALASKA
for
VISIT SITKA: CONVENTION & VISITOR SERVICES
October 2024

A. GENERAL INFORMATION

1. **Intent.** The City and Borough of Sitka (CBS) is requesting proposals from qualified firms to provide professional services to operate Visit Sitka, the CBS owned brand for destination marketing, destination management, and convention services in relation to the visitor industry in Sitka.
2. **Review of RFP.** Proposers should carefully review this RFP for defects and questionable or objectionable material. Comments must be made in writing and received at least seven (7) days prior to proposal deadline. This will allow issuance of any necessary addenda, if appropriate. CBS will not uphold protests based on any omission or error, or on the content of the RFP, if these faults have not been brought to the attention of CBS as noted above.
3. **Deadline for Proposals.** **Proposals must be received by 2:00:00 P.M. AKST, xxxday, XX, 202X.**

Proposals may be submitted:

- Through Bid Express (access via <https://www.cityofsitka.com/bids-rfps>);

OR

- Hand delivered OR mailed to:

City and Borough of Sitka
Attn: Clerk's Office
100 Lincoln Street
Sitka, AK 99835

The exterior packaging of proposals submitted via hand delivery or mail shall be clearly marked: **Visit Sitka RFP**

4. **Addendum.** The Proposer must acknowledge receipt of all Addenda in their Cover Page as described in Section D(1) of this RFP. It is the responsibility of the bidder to regularly check the website for addenda to the project for which they are bidding.

5. **Proposal Formatting.** Proposals must be limited to the maximum page numbers as described in sections D and E of this RFP. Margins will be one inch, all pages will be 8 ½” x 11”, and font size shall be no less than 11-point.
6. **Questions Regarding this RFP.** Prior to the deadline for proposals, inquiries may be directed to Amy Ainslie, Planning & Community Development Director, City and Borough of Sitka at amy.ainslie@cityofsitka.org. While phone inquiries can be made to (907) 747-1814, emails are requested to allow for tracking of potential questions.

B. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. **Sitka’s Visitor Industry.** The visitor industry is an important sector of Sitka’s economy, contributing significantly to employment, local shopping/spending, and tax revenues. It is also an industry that is closely connected to the everyday lives of Sitka’s residents as they share streets, facilities, services, and nature with visitors. CBS seeks to fund convention and visitor services through its brand, Visit Sitka, with the goal of marketing and managing Sitka’s visitor industry in-line with community goals and desires for visitation.
2. **Expected Engagement with CBS during Contract.** The CBS Tourism Manager (or other designee as determined by the Municipal Administrator) will serve as the Visit Sitka Contract Manager. The CBS Tourism Manager will be the single point of contact for all things related to the Visit Sitka Contract. Visit Sitka is also required to fulfill an ex-officio (e.g. non-voting) membership role with the CBS Tourism Commission (duties are further described in Appendix A).
3. **Contractual Relationship.** The services sought through this RFP require a performance-based, contractual relationship where services are rendered, and CBS ensures the services have been provided. Pending authorization from the CBS Assembly upon successful negotiations with the selected Proposer, CBS intends to award a three-year (3) contract for Visit Sitka operations with one, three-year (3) optional contract extension that can be executed by mutual agreement of CBS and the Contractor.
4. **Contract Payment and Performance.** CBS and the Selected Proposer will establish payment terms commensurate with evaluation of performance and service delivery milestones during contract negotiations.
5. **CBS Ownership of Visit Sitka.** CBS will continue to own the Visit Sitka brand in perpetuity including the name, logo, and other visual representations of the Visit Sitka brand. All materials developed or acquired by the Contractor under the Visit Sitka contract shall be the exclusive physical and intellectual property of CBS. All materials developed or acquired by the Contractor under the Visit Sitka contract shall be provided to CBS electronically as requested by CBS and no later than the termination date of the contract in standard industry formats as agreed upon in the contract. The Visit Sitka branding shall only be used for, with, and on reports, advertisements, communications,

publications, or other work products directly associated with approved services under the Visit Sitka contract.

6. **Cruise-Related Expenditures.** Contractor must be able to track the percentage of effort and cost attributable to cruise passengers. Methodologies for tracking and allocating costs will be mutually agreed upon by CBS and Contractor, and described in the contract; Proposers must demonstrate capacity for robust tracking and reporting as it relates to staff/subcontractor time and expenditures.

C. SCOPE OF SERVICES

1. **Additional Detail Provided in Appendices.** Appendix A, Scope of Services, fully lists and describes the scope of services to be provided under the Visit Sitka contract. The Core Services are categorized by the primary subject areas of: Destination Marketing; Destination Management; Meeting, Convention, and Event Services; and Reporting.
2. **Core Services and Optional Services.** The services in Appendix A are also delineated between Core Services and Optional Services. Proposers **must** provide required responses in relation to Core Services in order to be considered responsive to this RFP. Proposers **may, but are not required,** to submit responses in relation to Optional Services. The submission requirements for Core Services and Optional Services are detailed in Sections D and E respectively. The evaluation process for Core Services is detailed in Section F.

D. PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE SERVICES

The following subsections detail Proposal requirements related to providing Core Services as described in Appendix A. Unless explicitly described as optional (which is referred to with language such as, “as desired”, “if desired”, “at the discretion of the Proposer”, or anywhere “may” is used), Proposals must include all requirements listed below to be considered responsive to this RFP.

1. **Cover Page (One page maximum)**
 - a. Statement indicating response to CBS Request for Proposals for Visit Sitka
 - b. RFP due date and time
 - c. Consultant name (and logo if desired)
 - d. Acknowledgement of receipt of Addenda (if any)
 - e. Other information/graphics as desired
2. **Letter of Interest (One page maximum)**
 - a. Provide on Proposer’s letterhead
 - b. Identify Proposer, key proposed team members and leadership
 - c. Expression of Proposer’s interest in being selected

- d. Brief summary of Proposer's background and distinguishing qualities or capabilities to perform the services
- e. Signed by an authorized representative of the Firm.

3. **Table of Contents (One page maximum)**

4. **Experience and Qualifications (Seven page maximum)**

- a. **Proposer's Background.** Provide general background information on the Proposer's firm including specialized experience, capabilities, and unique qualifications for visitor related marketing and services.
- b. **Local Knowledge.** Provide a statement demonstrating the Proposer's knowledge of, and familiarity with, the community of Sitka and the visitor industry in both Sitka and Southeast Alaska.
- c. **Relevant Work Experience and References.** Identify the unique experiences, abilities, and perspectives the Proposer will bring to Visit Sitka operations. Include a narrative of services, projects, programs, or initiatives within the last five (5) years that demonstrate the Proposer's experience with services of similar scope and size to those described by this RFP.
- d. **Organizational Structure.** Describe the Proposer firm's administrative and operational structure that will be used to provide services under the Visit Sitka contract. Identify existing positions within the firm's organization which will support the Visit Sitka contract and new positions that will need to be created (if applicable). An organizational chart must be included; additional narrative description of the organizational structure is at the discretion of the Proposer.
- e. **Contract Manager.** Identify the position within the Proposer firm's organization which will serve as the intended Contract Manager for the Visit Sitka contract including their title and summary of key functions and responsibilities within the firm's organization. Introduce the Contract Manager including their name, qualifications, education, professional experience, and professional licensure and/or certifications. A one-page resume for the Contract Manager may be included as an appendix to the Proposal and will not count against the page maximum for this section.
- f. **Staff Experience and Assignments.** Identify and introduce other key positions and existing personnel in the Proposer firm's organization who will support the Visit Sitka contract including the experience and qualifications of existing personnel, and work to be performed by key positions/personnel under the Visit Sitka contract. One-page resumes for key personnel may be included as appendices to the Proposal and will not count against the page maximum for this section.
- g. **Reporting and Record Keeping.** State the Proposer firm's capability to maintain, and report upon, detailed records of finances, activity, and other data collection related to the Scope of Services as detailed in Appendix A.

h. **Conflicts of Interest.** Proposers must state any known or potential conflicts of interest.

5. **Approach to Providing Services (Three page maximum)**

- a. **Overall Approach.** Describe the Proposer's approach to providing all Core Services as described in Appendix A. Proposers may group like-services together in their explanation, but must comprehensively address all Core Services.
- b. **Challenges and Solutions.** Identify potential challenges in delivering Core Services, potential solutions, and the Proposer's general approach to problem solving.
- c. **Subcontracting.** Identify Core Services for which the Proposer anticipates utilizing subcontractors, if any. Proposers may, but are not required to, identify subcontractors by name/firm.

6. **Proposal Cost (Template provided plus one page maximum)**

- a. **Proposal Cost Template.** The Proposal Cost Template for Core Services is provided as Appendix B; Proposers must completely fill out and submit the Proposal Cost Template for Core Services with their Proposal.
- b. **Additional Narrative:** Proposers may, but are not required to, provide additional narrative explanation of, or context for, their proposal cost for Core Services not to exceed one page in length. If Proposer's cost information is inconsistent between the Proposal Cost Template and Additional Narrative, scoring will be based on the numerical values provided in the Proposal Cost Template.

E. PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS FOR OPTIONAL SERVICES

The following subsections detail Proposal requirements related to providing Optional Services as described in Appendix A. Proposers **are not required** to include a response regarding Optional Services in their Proposal to be considered responsive to this RFP, nor will responses regarding Optional Services affect the scoring of a Proposal.

Proposers **that elect** to include Optional Services in their Proposal must include the following:

1. **Capability and Approach (One page maximum per Optional Service)**

- a. **Optional Service Identification.** Identify the name and item number of the Optional Service as listed in Appendix A.
- b. **Capability.** Describe the Proposer's capability, relevant experience, and expertise to provide the Optional Service.
- d. **Overall Approach.** Describe the Proposer's approach to providing the Optional Service. Include potential opportunities as well as challenges and solutions. Identify whether subcontracting is anticipated; Proposers may, but are not required to, identify subcontractors by name/firm.

2. Proposal Cost (Template provided plus one page maximum)

- a. Proposal Cost Template.** The Proposal Cost Template for Optional Services is provided as Appendix C; Proposers must fill out and submit the Proposal Cost Template for Optional Services with their Proposal. Proposers only need to fill out the cost information for Optional Services they are responding to.
- b. Additional Narrative.** Proposers may, but are not required to, provide additional narrative explanation of, or context for, their proposal cost(s) for Optional Services not to exceed one page in total length.

F. EVALUATION AND SCORING

Proposals that are determined to be responsive to this RFP will be evaluated and scored on their responses regarding Core Services by the CBS Selection Committee based on the following criteria:

Scoring Criterion	Description	Maximum Points
Experience and Qualifications	Experience and qualifications to successfully provide services	30
Approach to Providing Services	Quality, clarity, and comprehensiveness of described approach	30
Total Proposal Cost	$\frac{(\text{Lowest Total Proposal Cost}) \times (40 \text{ Points})}{\text{Your Total Proposal Cost}}$	40
Total Maximum Points Available		100

G. RULES GOVERNING COMPETITION

- 1. **Evaluation.** The CBS Selection Committee will review, evaluate, score and rank proposals, in accordance with criteria identified in Section F. Clarification of submitted material may be requested during the evaluation process.
- 2. **Interviews.** Upon receipt and evaluation of the RFP Proposals, CBS may choose to conduct interviews. CBS will notify each Firm being considered for contract award of the date, time and virtual meeting credential. You are encouraged to have all key team members actively participate in your presentation and in answering questions.
- 3. **Disclosure of Proposal Contents.** CBS, a municipal corporation and political subdivision of the State of Alaska, is subject to the Alaska Public Records Act codified at AS 40.25.100-220, and the public records provisions in the CBS Charter. The contents of proposals submitted in response to this RFP will be kept confidential until the top ranked

proposer is announced. Immediately following announcement, all proposals become public information.

4. **Proprietary Information.** All Proposals received by CBS in response to this RFP are deemed property of the CBS and are subject to the Public Records Act. CBS, or any of its agents, representatives, employees, or consultants shall not be liable to the Proposer or individual participating in a Proposal, as a result of the disclosure of all or a portion of a Proposal under this RFP. Any information contained in a Proposal which the Proposer believes constitutes proprietary or confidential, exempting the information from any Public Record disclosure shall be clearly designated. Blanket designations shall not be accepted. All proposal information will be treated by CBS in a confidential manner during the evaluation and award activities, and will not be disclosed to any person or entity not involved in the evaluation and award process until after contract award.
5. **Irrevocability.** All proposals must be irrevocable for 90 days from submission date.
6. **Costs.** All costs incurred by the Proposer in preparation of the proposal, including any interview costs, shall be the sole responsibility of the Proposer.
7. **Right to Waive.** The Evaluation Committee may waive any informality or minor irregularity in the proposals or proposal process. Informalities or minor irregularities:
 - a. Do not affect responsiveness;
 - b. Are merely a matter of form or format;
 - c. Do not change the relative standing or otherwise prejudice other proposals;
 - d. Do not change the meaning or scope of the RFP; or
 - e. Do not constitute a substantial reservation against a requirement or provision.
8. **Rejection of Proposals.** Only responsive and responsible Proposers will be considered for evaluation. CBS may reject any proposal that does not comply with all the material and substantial, terms, conditions and performance requirements of the RFP. Proposers may not qualify the proposal nor restrict the rights of CBS. If a Proposer does so, CBS may determine that proposal to be a non-responsive counteroffer and the proposal may be rejected.
9. **Modification and Cancellation.** CBS reserves the right to modify this RFP at any time. CBS further reserves the right to evaluate the Proposals in any manner CBS deems appropriate. CBS may decide to cancel the solicitation at any time prior to award if it is in its best interest, in which case no award will be made.
10. **Negotiations.** Following the selection of a proposal, the successful Proposer may be invited to enter into contract negotiations with CBS. If held, negotiations shall be within the scope of the RFP and limited to those items which would not have an effect on the ranking of proposals. If an agreement cannot be reached during the negotiation process, CBS will notify the Proposer and terminate the negotiations. CBS reserves the right to negotiate a contract with the respondent that best meets the selection criteria.

11. **Award.** Upon conclusion of successful negotiations and compliance with any pre-award obligations, CBS will issue an Intent to Award, with contract award contingent upon Assembly budget authorization. It is CBS' preference to award one Firm the entirety of the work as described in the Scope of Services, but may choose multiple Firms to complete some or all of the Work. Additionally, a contract may be authorized in full, in part, or in phases.

H. TERMS & CONDITIONS

1. **Insurance Requirements.** Prior to award, insurance must be secured and maintained for the risks and in the amounts as determined in negotiations with the selected Proposer. The Contractor will need to name CBS as additionally insured and provide waiver(s) of subrogation for CBS.
2. **Nondisclosure and Confidentiality.** Contractor agrees that all confidential information to which it has access in performing this contract shall be used only for purposes of providing the deliverables and performing the services specified herein. Contractor shall not disseminate or allow dissemination of confidential information to third parties unless authorized in writing by the CBS. Confidential information, as used herein, includes but is not limited to financial data, bank account data and information, user lists, passwords, technology infrastructure, and technology data (infrastructure, architecture, operating systems, security tools, IP addresses, etc.).
3. **Contractor's Good Standing with CBS Finance Department.** Contractors must be in good standing with CBS prior to award, and prior to any contract renewals, and in any event no later than seven (7) business days following notification by CBS of intent to award. Good standing means: all amounts owed to the CBS are current and the Contractor is not delinquent with respect to any taxes, fees, assessment, or other monies due and owed to CBS, or a Confession of Judgment has been executed and the Contractor is in compliance with the terms of any stipulation associated with the Confession of Judgment, including being current as to any installment payments due; and Contractor is current in all CBS reporting obligations (such as sales tax registration and reporting and business personal property declarations). Failure to meet these requirements may be cause for rejection of your bid.
4. **Licensing and Registration Requirements.** Contractor is responsible for obtaining and maintaining all appropriate licenses as required by federal, state or local laws. Licensing and registration information may be required prior to award, if requested by CBS. An Alaska Business License is required to perform services in the State of Alaska.
5. **Law, Ordinances and Rules Requirements.** All applicable laws, ordinances and the rules and regulations of all authorities having jurisdiction over this Contract shall apply to the Contract throughout.

I. LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix A: Scope of Services

Appendix B: Proposal Cost Template for Core Services

Appendix C: Proposal Cost Template for Optional Services

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VISIT SITKA RFP

APPENDIX A: SCOPE OF SERVICES

A. CORE SERVICES

1. Destination Marketing

- a. Marketing Plan
 - Develop, implement, and maintain a three-year marketing plan to achieve the visitor marketing goals of the City and Borough of Sitka
 - Facilitate plan development and annual review with the CBS Tourism Commission
- b. Promote visitation to Sitka in accordance with the Marketing Plan in a variety of mediums including but not limited to:
 - A promotional and informational website
 - Online advertising and social media presence
 - Search engine optimization
 - Print media
 - Distribution of videos
 - Trade shows
 - Hosting media and industry members
- c. Design and publish an annual visitors guide (Proposer may seek outside revenue through advertising and distribution fees)
- d. Promote CBS venues and services including Harrigan Centennial Hall for meetings, conventions, and special events
- e. Maintain and disseminate a directory of local businesses
- f. Management of the Visit Sitka brand

2. Destination Management

- a. Visitor Services:
 - Operation of a year-round, staffed Visitor's Center in the downtown Sitka area to provide in-person assistance to visitors
 - Seasonally operated visitor information desks at Harrigan Centennial Hall and the Sitka Sound Cruise Terminal (the latter is subject to private property owner approval)
 - Creation and distribution of printed and digital resources including visitor information and guides, brochures, and maps at staffed locations, state/municipal ports of entry (e.g. the Rocky Gutterez Airport, the ferry terminal, the O'Connell Bridge lightering dock), and on the Visit Sitka website.
 - Collaborating with CBS on wayfinding and mapping initiatives including physical maps and signage

- b. Manage the Tourism Management Best Practices Program (TBMP):
 - Maintain the list of program members and their status
 - Issue program member identification and collateral (stickers, decals, certificates, digital stamps, etc.)
 - Operate a community feedback line (phone and email)
 - Communicate community feedback to program members, ensure program member compliance, take appropriate steps for compliance/enforcement as defined under program standards/provisions
 - Annually review TBMP standards/provisions, program operations, and community feedback with the CBS Tourism Commission and integrate changes/additions from review for upcoming program year
- c. Publishing and maintaining the cruise ship calendar
- d. Community communications for tourism-related street closures
- e. Serving as a liaison to the CBS Tourism Commission (serving as an ex-officio member):
 - Attend Commission meetings (at least one per month)
 - Provide technical/professional expertise
 - Assist with research or other data collection
 - Prepare reports and presentations for Commission review

3. Meeting, Convention, and Event Services

- a. Provide assistance to the organizers of meetings, conventions, and special events where a significant number of attendees will be traveling to Sitka (e.g. conferences, association meetings, sporting events, arts and social events, etc.). Assistance may include securing venues, providing vendor information, printed collateral, etc.
- b. Provide/distribute information on meeting, convention, and event support services offered in the community
- c. Create and distribute convention delegate welcome folders and welcome signs in local businesses.
- d. Follow-up with organizers, venues, and support service providers to ensure customer satisfaction

4. Reporting

- a. On a regular basis as established in the Contract, provide CBS with reports on destination marketing and management key performance indicators (KPIs) as established in the Market Plan which may include but are not limited to:
 - Visitation numbers delineated by forms of travel (i.e. cruise passengers, independent travelers, air travelers, ferry travelers, etc.)
 - Number of conventions at Harrigan Centennial Hall delineated between regular/recurring conventions in Sitka versus newly hosted conventions
 - Social media posts and levels of user engagement
 - Search engine optimization and user engagement

- Number of local businesses utilizing free and paid advertising services provided by the Contractor
 - Number of visitors at the Visitor's Center
 - Number of maps printed and digital downloads
 - TBMP registrations and compliance reports
 - Pre- and post-season surveys if conducted by Contractor
- b. Contractor must demonstrate capability to track expenses to inform and execute an appropriation methodology for different sources of funding (i.e. Commercial Vessel Passenger Excise Taxes and Visitor Enhancement Funding) taking into account different requirements and limitations for use of said funding.
- c. Economic data collection and analysis:
- Performing intercept surveys with visitors at the Visitor's Center and seasonal visitor information desks on spending habits
 - Collaborating with local businesses to document and analyze revenue trends
 - Annual reporting on economic data collection and analysis

B. OPTIONAL SERVICES

1. Providing a public restroom at the Visitor Center
2. Managing tourism-related street closures:
 - Erecting and removing street barricades
 - Managing on-street signage
 - Coordinating with Sitka Police Department to manage vehicles within closure area
 - Opening and closing of temporary restrooms on closed streets
 - Managing required permitting through AK DOT/PF
3. Downtown pedestrian safety – staff the downtown area with pedestrian monitors to ensure clear intersections and prevent jaywalking
4. Event planning and management:
 - Securing and/or subcontracting vendors
 - Assisting with event agenda, operations/logistics planning, venue set-up/ décor planning, communications/promotion, etc.
 - Liaising with venues before and during events
 - Providing staff for event set-up, welcome/registration tables, and other operational support

VISIT SITKA RFP
APPENDIX B: PROPOSAL COST TEMPLATE FOR CORE SERVICES

Company Name _____

Cost Proposal

CORE SERVICES

Fill in yellow cells with cost to provide Core Services over the 3-year contract term as described in Appendix A: Scope of Services

Destination Marketing		\$ -
1a	Marketing Plan	\$ -
1b	Promoting Sitka	\$ -
1c	Annual visitor's guide	\$ -
1d	Promotion of CBS venues and services for meetings/conventions/events	\$ -
1e	Local business directory	\$ -
1f	Management of Visit Sitka brand	\$ -
Destination Management		\$ -
2a	Visitor services	\$ -
2b	Management of TBMP	\$ -
2c	Cruise ship calendar	\$ -
2d	Street closure communications	\$ -
2e	CBS Tourism Commission liaison	\$ -
Meeting, Convention, and Event Services		\$ -
3a	Assist groups with conference planning	\$ -
3b	Provide information on all support services offered in community	\$ -
3c	Create and distribute convention welcome materials	\$ -
3d	Follow-up and customer satisfaction	\$ -
Reporting		\$ -
4a	KPI reporting	\$ -
4b	Tracking and reporting of cruise-related expenditures	\$ -
4c	Economic data collection and analysis	\$ -
Total cost		\$ -

VISIT SITKA RFP
APPENDIX C: PROPOSAL COST TEMPLATE FOR OPTIONAL SERVICES

Company Name _____

Cost Proposal

OPTIONAL SERVICES

Fill in yellow cells with cost to provide Optional Services 1-3 over the 3-year contract term as described in Appendix A: Scope of Services. If you are responding to Optional Service 4, please use any space on this sheet to provide a fee schedule for event planning and management services.

Optional Services	\$	-
1 Public access to restrooms in visitor center	\$	-
2 Manages Lincoln Street Closures	\$	-
3 Pedestrian safety in downtown corridor	\$	-
4 Event planning and management:		