



Explore Lincoln City

City of Lincoln City

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

Marketing Agency of Record

Lincoln City, Oregon

February 29, 2024

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL SCHEDULE

Request for Proposals Issued:	February 29, 2024
Deadline to Submit Clarifying Questions:	March 11, 2024
Request for Proposals Due:	March 29, 2024
Tentative Date for Proposal Presentations:	April 8-12, 2024
Tentative Council Presentation Notice of Intent:	April 22, 2024
Notice of Intent to Award Contract:	June 1, 2024
Anticipated Contract Start Date:	July 1, 2024



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I. NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the City of Lincoln City by and through Explore Lincoln City, will receive proposals per specifications until 5:00 PM, Pacific Time, March 29, 2024 to provide Marketing Agency of Record services. No proposals will be received or considered after that time.

The resulting contract from this Request for Proposal will have an initial term of one year, from July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025, with two (2) additional one (1) year optional extensions thereafter subject to mutual agreement of the parties.

This document may be obtained at <https://www.explorelincolncity.com/about-us/request-for-proposals/>. Proposals are to be mailed to Explore Lincoln City at 801 SW Hwy 101, Suite 401, Lincoln City, OR 97367, or sent by email to ttrainor@lincolncity.org.

For questions detailing the procurement process, contact : Tyrel Trainor at ttrainor@lincolncity.org or (541) 996-1272.

Explore Lincoln City reserves the right to reject any and all proposals not in compliance with public bidding procedures and requirements and may reject for good cause any and all proposals upon the finding that it is in the public interest to do so and to waive any and all informalities in the public interest. In the award of the contract, Explore Lincoln City will consider the element of time, will accept the proposal or proposals, which in their estimation, will best serve the interests of Lincoln City and will reserve the right to award the contract to the contractor whose proposal shall be best for the public good.

II. PURPOSE OF RFP

Explore Lincoln City (ELC) invites the submittal of responses to this Request for Proposal (RFP) from qualified firm(s) interested in becoming the Marketing Agency of Record for ELC. ELC will enter into a contract with the selected agency of record to provide a continuity of integrated marketing support, with annual review of contract terms and compensation.

III. BACKGROUND

ELC is the recognized Destination Management Organization (DMO) for Lincoln City. The mission of ELC is to strengthen Lincoln City's economic health by inspiring travel, encouraging overnight stays, and stewarding brand identity as the trusted destination and trip planning resource. ELC does this through destination management, destination stewardship, tourism promotion and visitor experience in Lincoln City and the surrounding area. ELC works in partnership with members of the industry and with communities to develop and enhance local tourism assets

and experiences. This department balances the interests of visitors, businesses, other organizations, and government through innovative leadership and strategic investment of resources and staff.

Explore Lincoln City strives to be leaders in responsible tourism, prioritizing comprehensive stewardship goals, sustainable practices, inclusive experiences, and diverse representation for all visitors to Lincoln City. This means protecting natural and cultural resources such as indigenous history and culture along with the rare and diverse ecosystem surrounding the city. Promoting sustainable travel, making experiences and locations more accessible, and empowering local communities while ensuring every visitor feels welcome and respected is our goal. By collaborating with stakeholders, measuring progress, and embracing innovation, Explore Lincoln City creates a thriving future for their destinations that benefits both visitors and residents.

ELC is funded by a portion of tax dollars generated from a city-wide transient lodging tax (TLT) of 12%. The annual funding available varies with the collection of TLT dollars. These tax dollars are to be used for the development and promotion of tourism in Lincoln City. The Lincoln City City Council advises and oversees the programs and budget of Explore Lincoln City.

ELC employs a core staff of six (6) FTE. Explore Lincoln City's Marketing Manager will be the primary point of contact for the Marketing Agency of Record with oversight from Explore Lincoln City's Director. In addition to two (2) administrative employees, ELC employs two (2) staff to manage and deliver social media and content efforts, events and promotions.

The ELC marketing main objective is to deliver a brand message to reach our audience of local and regional markets. Core markets include the greater Portland metro area, the Willamette Valley, with emphasis on Salem and Eugene, and the Pacific Northwest region, including greater Oregon and Washington State. Historically, target audiences are 24-65 years of age and predominantly leisure visitors. Explore Lincoln City's target markets are comprised of "Empty Nesters" and "Young Families". Empty Nesters are defined as adults close to or past retirement with children 18+ who have left the household. Young families are defined as those with children in the household under the age of 18. Statistically, for both groups, women in these families (up to 80%) are obtaining the most information about travel to LC and planning getaways.

ELC marketing campaigns include a mix of print advertising (leisure and travel media), out of home (billboards, buses, commuter trains), digital (banners, video, SEM), social media, broadcast (target cable TV), and streaming (YouTube, Hulu, Disney+), and sponsored editorial. Additional marketing services not covered under the contract with a Marketing Agency of Record include public relations, non-paid social media, SEO, and website management. The Marketing Agency of Record will

work closely with all in-house staff and assist in integrating the marketing strategies of these aforementioned programs.

IV. OBJECTIVES

ELC proposes to retain a highly qualified, capable firm to act as the full-service Marketing Agency of Record. Special consideration will be given to those agencies with proven destination marketing experience. The successful agency will work with ELC to support a variety of branding, marketing, and strategic efforts. ELC is seeking an agency that values partnership, communication and can interpret and actualize our vision into compelling and emotive calls to action that will inspire consumers to visit, experience, stay, and return to Lincoln City. ELC expects an agency that is creative, producing work that stands out in a competitive market; knowledgeable, demonstrating a thorough understanding of marketing concepts and trends; and accountable, with results-based execution and timely follow through. Beginning in 2018, ELC's current agency of record delivered a creative direction that featured "cut paper" promotional materials. That same year, Explore Lincoln City was presented with the Oregon Travel & Tourism Industry Achievement Award by Oregon Tourism Digital Marketing for the use of this creative on the 2018 Finders Keepers promotional materials. Since then, working alongside its current agency of record, ELC has used this creative style on most of its promotional materials. While this creative direction has been successful for the duration of its run, ELC is looking for a new creative direction.

V. SCOPE OF WORK

The City of Lincoln City is requesting proposals from qualified and interested multi-disciplinary agencies for professional services related to developing and implementing brand management, integrated marketing, and advertising plans for ELC. The selected agency of record shall provide ELC with professional marketing services that will be outlined in a contract for services including an approved annual program of work and budget for each year of the contract based on Explore Lincoln City's strategic plan.

Retainer Services – Creative Development and Strategy: Marketing Agency of Record shall provide account services, concept advertising, conduct market research/trends pertinent to creative development, creative direction, art direction, copywriting, media evaluation/recommendations, campaign measurements and reporting for ELC. It is expected that the selected agency of record will provide Retainer Services that include, but are not limited to:

- Lead brand/messaging development for ELC for both corporate and consumer delivery;

- Evaluate and determine the need and timing for a brand refresh or overall redesign;
- Provide brand style guides and messaging, to be integrated and used by ELC's in-house staff (only if it needs updated).
- Develop integrated marketing strategic plans and recommend the appropriate spend, media, and strategies to be most effective in achieving ELC's objectives and within budget parameters;
- Evaluate media opportunities, recommend media plans, and negotiate media buys for the best advertising rates and placements for all forms of media;
- Establish metrics and tracking methodologies of all advertising and marketing programs, and provide regular and annual reporting of status, performance measurements, and improvement efforts;
- Research and identify evolving technologies and trends with all marketing channels, including paid social media, and integrate into ELC's media plans;
- Review all new requests for media and sponsorship opportunities and provide ELC with recommendations;
- Creative concept design and evaluation of core marketing campaigns, including cooperative advertising with tourism partners;
- Prepare and write headline and advertising copy;
- Creative concept design for supporting the annual Finders Keepers program and poster; including glass float stamp design.
- Coordinate brand messaging and visual identity within ELC marketing assets (i.e., website, email marketing, social media, etc.);
- Negotiate the lowest possible rate consistent with hi-res quality and good craftsmanship on purchases of new photography, video, soundtrack, and other materials with appropriate licensing use or ownership rights;
- Provide a repository of all images purchased and used on behalf of ELC within a DAM (i.e., CrowdRiff, contracted and provided by ELC);
- Concept design considerations for promotional campaigns and other marketing programs;
- Coordinate with the PR and communications team for integrated strategies between paid placements, earned media and publicity.
- Regularly review visitation and occupancy data to Lincoln City to guide media buys and creative direction.
- Assist with strategic long-term planning utilizing research and analysis from sources such as Dean Runyan Associates, Longwoods International, Smith Travel Research, and coordinate any needed market research projects with any future research firms.
- Participate in regular status meetings with ELC staff.
- Submit an annual report of fiscal year accomplishments and ROI.
- Occasional travel to Lincoln City.

Non-Retainer Services – Creative Production and Media: In addition to the services

outlined above, ELC will request additional advertising and marketing services for collateral, events, photo file, and unplanned items. Marketing agency shall provide services outside of the retainer for creative production, media services, hard costs, and miscellaneous projects for ELC. Media buying will include net media costs plus a media buying rate. It is expected that the selected agency of record will provide Non-Retainer Services that include, but are not limited to:

- Execute the process of establishing a brand refresh or overall redesign;
- Media buying and trafficking of approved advertising plans;
- Design, edit, produce, and submit approved advertising;
- Develop and execute promotional campaigns and other marketing programs,
- Creative production services of the Finders Keepers collateral, including printing and shipping of the annual poster;
- Concept, create, and produce other print collateral outside of the annual Visitor Guide and Finders Keepers collateral;
- Purchase costs of new photography, video, soundtrack, and materials with appropriate licensing use or ownership rights (exempt from any markup fees);
- Develop and execute the approved concept for promotional campaigns and other marketing programs.

VI. FUNDING, BUDGET & TERMS

Funding of the work described herein will be determined by TLT collections and ELC as approved and authorized by the Lincoln City City Council. ELC will have the ability to consider any identified change in Retainer Services and associated fees for this service during the annual renewal process, as influenced by unperceived market changes. Each year, the awarded firm is expected to provide a detailed marketing budget to ELC outlining the anticipated annual costs of services prior to work commencing for that fiscal year.

ELC FY 23-24 media budget, including commission, was nine hundred and fifty thousand dollars (\$950,000). Future media budget is expected to be similar, based on City Council approval. Other approved work will be compensated within an agreed monthly retainer, project-based estimate and/or on an agreed hourly basis. Fees may not be duplicative (i.e., charge an hourly rate for media planning and placement plus a media commission fee).

VII. SELECTION PROCESS

From a review of the statements of qualifications received, ELC intends to evaluate the proposals and possibly invite one or more firms to be interviewed before making a final selection of a firm for the project. ELC will notify selected firms of the date and times of interviews, if any. ELC reserves the right to select based

solely on statements of qualifications received.

The selected respondent whose selection was based on qualifications will then negotiate with ELC on fee and contract conditions. If a reasonable fee cannot be achieved with the respondent of choice, negotiations will proceed with other qualified respondents until a mutually agreed contract can be negotiated.

VIII. EVALUATION CRITERIA

An evaluation committee will review all proposals that are initially deemed responsive, and they shall rank the proposals in accordance with the below criteria. The evaluation committee may recommend an award based solely on the written responses or may request proposal interviews/presentations.

Interviews/presentations, if deemed beneficial by the evaluation committee, will consist of the highest scoring proposers. The invited proposers will be notified of the time, place, and format of the interview/presentation. Based on the interview/presentation, the evaluation committee may revise their scoring.

Written proposals must be complete, and no additions, deletions, or substitutions will be permitted during the interview/presentation (if any). The evaluation committee will recommend award of a contract to the final City of Lincoln City decision maker based on the highest scoring proposal. The decision maker reserves the right to accept the recommendation, award to a different proposer, or reject all proposals and cancel the RFP.

Proposers are not permitted to directly communicate with any member of the evaluation committee regarding this RFP during the evaluation process.

Evaluation Criteria – Written Response	Points Available
Project Understanding & Management Strategy	25
Creative & Design Approach	25
Qualifications Experience & References	25
Overall Quality & Creativity of Proposal	10
Proposed Pricing/Fees	15
Available Points	100

Evaluation Criteria – Oral Presentation (if any)	Points Available
Agency Presentation	50
Answers to ELC Prepared Questions	20
Rapport with ELC Staff	20
Review of Written Response	10
Available Points	100

SUBMITTAL INSTRUCTIONS

Responses must observe submission instructions and be advised as follows:

Complete proposals may be mailed to the address below or emailed directly to ttrainor@lincolncity.org. The subject line of the email must clearly identify the RFP title. ELC will provide confirmation that the proposal has been received. If the proposal is mailed, a sealed original copy labeled with the RFP title and digital copy (on compact disk or flash drive) must be included. The proposal (hardcopy or email) must be received by 5:00 PM, Pacific Time on March 29, 2024.

Mailing address including UPS and FedEx:

Explore Lincoln City
Attn: Tyrel Trainor
801 SW Hwy 101, Suite 401
Lincoln City, OR 97367

ELC reserves the right to solicit additional information or proposal clarification from the vendors, or any one vendor, should the City deem such information necessary.

IX. PROPOSAL CONTENTS

To enable ELC to efficiently evaluate the responses, it is important that each response be submitted as outlined in this section. Please include an outside cover and/or first page, containing the name of the project followed by a Table of Contents. Provide the following information in the order in which it appears below:

Written Response

Agency Information

- Provide basic information including agency name, addresses, and telephone number of all offices.
- Describe your organizational structure and size of agency.
- Provide general history of agency including number of years in business.
- Provide the name of agency principal(s) and primary contact.

Project Understanding & Management Strategy

- Describe your agency's values and approach to client relationships and account management, including enough detail so ELC can determine that the agency has a thorough understanding of the services required by this project.
- Illustrate the agency's strategic and integrated planning process, in addition to proposing how the firm will approach this work with ELC.

- Indicate what you would characterize as key competitive challenges, opportunities, and trends that ELC should be mindful of relative to today's changing technologies and marketing environment.

Creative Design & Approach

- Include information on the agency's creative process, corporate culture, and what sets your creative capabilities apart from other agencies.
- Provide information on the steps that would be taken to create the marketing/advertising strategies for Lincoln City.
- Provide samples of work or case studies created for projects similar in size and scope that demonstrate the agency's creativity working across multiple channels (preference will be given to work presented that is of current agency employees who will be assigned to ELC's account and work within the travel industry).

Qualifications, Experience & References

- All team members (including subcontractors) included on the team shall be identified. Demonstrated levels of experience and available staff must be clearly stated.
- Provide background information describing your business, including a comprehensive overview of your capabilities to provide the requested service, your ability to develop a tourism destination management organization's advertising campaign, and initial ideas that demonstrate how your agency's experience can benefit Lincoln City.
- Provide overview of how your agency measures and reports impact of brand marketing activities and Return on Investment (ROI).
- Demonstrate your ability to manage aggressive project timelines while maximizing budgets.
- Provide a summary of marketing and advertising services of this nature provided to any current clients in Lincoln County, as well as tourism clients from outside the county.
- Provide a minimum of three references including contact names, dates that the services were provided, addresses and telephone numbers. At least two of the references must be current clients. References may be checked to verify the agency's ability to perform similar tasks.
- Indicate your knowledge of the travel industry (specifically destination management organizations) and the City of Lincoln City.
- Indicate your experience working with government agencies or non-profit agencies of similar size and scope as described in this solicitation.

Overall Quality & Creativity of Proposal

- The composition of the submitted proposal will be considered a reflection of

the agency's work and approach to business.

Proposed Pricing/Fees

The pricing/fee component must include the total annual cost for the contract with break outs showing a schedule of prices for specific services: including the monthly retainer rate for services with a precise definition of expenses covered by the retainer, staff hourly charges, and media buying and trafficking commission.

Specifically itemize:

- Monthly Retainer Services Fee
- Hourly and material rates for Non-Retainer Services
- Media buying commission rates
- Travel expenses or reimbursements

Additional Information

- Provide any other information as part of your proposal, which you believe to be important to the selection process.

Oral Presentation (if any)

Will consist of an agency-prepared presentation and an informal review of the written proposal. There will be time for questions from all parties. The oral presentation must be made remotely either through a video conferencing service, such as Zoom, or by phone and will last no longer than one hour. All other questions and contact with ELC with regard to this RFP must be done in writing (via e-mail is satisfactory) and all questions/answers will be shared with all finalists.

Information to be Evaluated in Oral Presentation:

- Level of understanding of Lincoln City tourism evident in presentation.
- Ability to answer ELC prepared questions.
- Relevance of marketing strategies.
- Creativity of presentation.
- Flexibility of marketing program to meet changing trends, mediums, and evolving technologies.
- Outlined recommendation of a strategic marketing direction and associated anticipated budget allocation for specific program areas.
- Interaction with ELC staff members.

FINAL SELECTION WILL BE MADE BASED UPON THE COLLECTIVE POINTS AWARDED

ADDITIONAL INSTRUCTIONS, NOTIFICATIONS, AND INFORMATION

- **All Information True:** By submitting a response, Respondents represent and warrant that all information provided in the response submitted shall be true, correct, and complete. Respondents who provide false, misleading, or incomplete information, whether intentional or not, may be excluded.
- **Proposals are deemed confidential** until the “Notice of Intent to Award” letter is issued. This RFP and one copy of each original proposal received in response to it, together with copies of all documents pertaining to the award of a contract, will be kept, and made a part of a file or record which will be open to public inspection.
- **Cost of Responses:** ELC will not be responsible for the costs incurred by anyone in the submittal of responses.
- **Contract Negotiations:** This RFP is not a contract or a commitment of any kind. If this RFP results in a contract offer by ELC, the specific scope of work, associated fees, and other contractual matters will be determined during contract negotiations.
- **No Obligation:** ELC reserves the right to evaluate responses submitted; waive any irregularities therein; select candidates for the submittal of more detailed or alternate proposals; accept any submittal or portion of submittal; reject any or all Respondents submitting responses; should it be deemed in ELC's best interest; or cancel the entire process.
- **A completed W9** will be needed for the awarded contract.
- **Registration with the Oregon Secretary of State:** The ability to maintain current business registration with the Oregon's Secretary of State will be expected.
- **Professional Liability Insurance:** The Respondent shall have the appropriate liability insurance certificate by an insurer authorized to transact insurance in the State of Oregon, to be submitted on an annual basis.
- **If the publishing firm works with other businesses in Lincoln City,** an Occupational Tax Permit (OTP) would be needed and any updates to the OTP submitted on an annual basis.

X. TIMELINE & SUBMITTAL INSTRUCTIONS

Estimated selection timeline:

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