

VISIT CHICAGO SOUTHLAND

2025 REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

For

PROGRAMMATIC MARKETING SERVICES CHICAGO SOUTHLAND LEISURE RECOVERY CAMPAIGN

RFP Issue Date: October 21, 2024

Bid Proposal Due Date: November 18, 2024



I. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

INTRODUCTION

Visit Chicago Southland (VCS) is issuing this Request for Proposals (RFP) for programmatic marketing services and invites submittals from qualified vendors.

Purpose

The development and implementation of a Chicago Southland Leisure Recovery Campaign focusing on four areas: **To-A-T (trails, trains, tunes & taprooms), festivals, restaurants and arts/culture.**

Process

The proposal submission and review process will consist of following: the issuance of the RFP, receiving proposals and the review process. At the conclusion of the evaluation process, a successful applicant may be chosen at the discretion of the bureau.

Qualified Vendors (Applicants)

- Demonstrated success in programmatic advertising campaigns and digital strategies.
- Experience in destination marketing for a Cook County entity preferred, but not required
- Ability to provide comprehensive plans, professional ad placement and measurement with reporting and written overviews
- Hotel room and flight booking data
- Retargeting

Questions - [Kim Kislowksi kim@visitchicagosouthland.com](mailto:kim@visitchicagosouthland.com)

BACKGROUND

History

Visit Chicago Southland was founded 38 years ago as a subsidiary of the South Suburban Regional Economic Development Coordinating Corporation. In 1993, the CVB separated from that parent organization, service marked the name “Chicago Southland,” and became an independent 501(c)(6) organization. As a regional marketing cooperative, Visit Chicago Southland represents the south and southwest communities, approximately 25 miles south of downtown Chicago.

Mission

Visit Chicago Southland’s mission is as follows:

Visit Chicago Southland promotes the region’s communities as an exceptional destination for meetings, events and leisure pursuits while advocating for the development of outstanding, inclusionary experiences that attract visitors and residents alike.

Who We Are

Visit Chicago Southland represents over 4,000 sleeping rooms, many of which are limited service or motels. There are nine full-service conference hotel facilities and several smaller properties offering meeting room capabilities. The diversity of these properties dictates the need for a coordinated sales and marketing program that attracts business and clients who will utilize their facilities. What one property may wish is not necessarily what another wants; market segments vary as well as flexibility in rates and date availability. This poses a unique challenge for the VCS.

Geographic distribution of hotel/motel properties is broad, with groupings in:

- Bedford Park (Midway Airport Area)
- Bridgeview/Burbank
- Alsip/Crestwood/Oak Forest/Orland Hills/Orland Park
- Chicago Heights/East Hazel Crest/Homewood/Markham
- Calumet City/Lansing/South Holland
- Matteson/Monee

Strengths and Challenges

Strengths:

- Visitor Information Center (VIC)
- Proximity to Midway, O'Hare International and Lansing Airports
- Availability of sports venues
- Increasing upward mobility of Chicago Southland population and positive news coverage of the region
- Abundance of hospitality services in the region
- 5-hour drive to 8 midwestern states

Challenges:

- Regional Image / National Press on Chicago Crime
- Interstate signage
- Lack of airport transportation to hotels
- Region lacks a major, year-round attraction
- Tax structure in southern Cook County discourages business investment
- Inconsistent hospitality service and high turnover rates among hospitality personnel
- Lack of a convention center to market puts the entire Chicago Southland region at a severe competitive disadvantage.

For more information about Visit Chicago Southland, please visit VisitChicagoSouthland.com, find us on Facebook (Chicago Southland), or follow us on Instagram (@VisitSouthland), Twitter (@VisitSouthland) and YouTube (Chicago Southland CVB).

I. TIMETABLE

The schedule provided is an estimate of deadlines. Visit Chicago Southland reserves the right to amend the RFP at any time and any changes to this schedule will be posted to our website with the date of the change stated.

Distribution of RFP	Monday October 21, 2024 via email and online VisitChicagoSouthland.com/2025MarketingRFP
Proposal Submissions Due	Monday November 18, 2024 3:30 CST to Kim@VisitChicagoSouthland.com
Notice of Selection	by Wednesday, December 11, 2024

CONTRACT ACTIVITIES

Start of Contract Period	January 1, 2025
End of Contract Period	September 30, 2025

II. PROPOSAL OUTLINE

The proposal should utilize a numerical outline, with titles/subtitles that are consistent with the following outline:

- I. Introductory Letter
- II. Programmatic Leisure Recovery Campaign Comprehensive Plan
- III. Deliverables
- IV. Background and Demonstration of Past Performance

I. Introductory Letter

The introductory letter must be on the official letterhead of the company that will provide the work and must be signed by an individual authorized to legally bind the applicant. If the signer is not the president or equivalent principal officer if not a corporation, evidence shall be submitted showing the individual’s authority to bind the applicant. The letter must include complete geographic, telephonic and electronic contact information for a) the business headquarters, b) authorized signer, c) RFP contact person and d) primary person who will be responsible for performing the scope of the work described in the proposal.

II. Chicago Southland Programmatic Leisure Recovery Campaign:

Applicants must submit a comprehensive plan with **estimated or guaranteed impressions, clicks and conversions for the campaign outlined below for implementation January 1, 2025 – September 30, 2025**. Reporting with written overviews is required in a monthly and quarterly format. The goal of the campaign is to increase leisure website visits with the ultimate goal of conversions (information requests and participation in Bandwango mobile passports).

Campaign Details

The development and implementation of a Chicago Southland Leisure Recovery Campaign focusing on four areas: **To-A-T (trails, trains, tunes & taprooms), festivals, restaurants and arts/culture.**

Programmatic Campaign (Display)

- Timeline: January 1 – September 30, 2025
- **Budget: \$21,112**
- Geo targets: DMAs-Champaign-Springfield-Decatur, IL, Peoria-Bloomington, IL, Rockford, IL, Lafayette, IN, South Bend-Elkhart, IN, Madison, WI, Milwaukee, WI, St. Louis, MO, Davenport-Quad Cities, IL/MO.
- Campaigns and target demos:
 - **To A T** - Those that are interested in outdoor recreation, trails, biking, train spotting, railfanning, trains, live music and craft beer.
 - **Arts/Culture** – Those that are art lovers, history buffs, museum goers, sculptures, art shows, craft fairs, painting and cultural events.
 - **Events/Festivals** - Those that frequent local events, attend festivals for music, culture, food or art.
 - **Savor the Southland Restaurant Bandwango Pass** - Those that dine out frequently, researching restaurants, families with children, young people, foodies and likes to try new places.

III. Deliverables

- Daily campaign monitoring and optimizations
- Provide a monthly or quarterly report demonstrating the clicks, impressions, click-through rates, costs per click, conversions and other applicable key performance indicators.
- Retargeting
- Site/Pixel Tracking

IV. Background and Demonstrated Past Performance

Applicants who have not done prior work with VCS must provide relevant information that clearly demonstrates the applicant's financial position and related experience and knowledge of marketing as it relates to tourism.

To be included, but not limited to:

- Minimum of three (3) financial references
- Applicant's establishment, development and accomplishments
- Locations of business headquarter and branch offices
- The number of years in business
- The number of years providing services relevant to the work described in this RFP
- Minimum of three (3) client references and a short narrative of the work provided including success stories
- List of past and or current CVB clients

- List of IL and Cook County tourism clients
- The identification of all threatened or pending litigation and business disputes involving the applicant

Submittal Procedure

Visit Chicago Southland must receive proposals electronically by **November 18, 2024 BEFORE 3:30 PM CST** to Kim@VisitChicagoSouthland.com. Compliance with this deadline is mandatory. Any proposal received after this deadline will be rejected. It is the vendor's responsibility to ensure timely receipt of their bid proposals.

Applicants must furnish all information necessary to evaluate the bid proposal. Proposals that fail to meet the mandatory requirements of the RFP will be disqualified. Verbal information provided by the applicant shall not be considered part of the applicant's proposal.

Proposals can be submitted electronically by emailing a PDF to Kim@VisitChicagoSouthland.com by the required deadline. Use of a file sharing service is allowed as long as the document is uploaded and a notification of the upload with password and link is emailed to Kim before 3:30 pm CST on **November 18, 2024**. Any costs of preparation and delivery of the proposals are solely the responsibility of the applicant.

IV. RFP EVALUATION

Evaluation Process

The evaluation process is designed to award the contract not necessarily to the vendor of least cost, but rather to the vendor with the best combination of attributes to perform the required services.

Evaluation Criteria

Visit Chicago Southland will evaluate all proposals and make an award using the following criteria, which are listed in no particular order:

- Compliance with the mandatory requirements of the RFP
- Evaluation of applicant's experience and qualifications as outlined and including introductory letter, background and demonstrated past performance
- Evaluation of applicant's ability to meet all the service requirements of the RFP as outlined. Other factors include, but are not limited to:
 - Applicant's project approach and methodology
 - Quality of project work plan
 - Description of the proposed deliverables
 - Project management and internal controls

V. PROVISIONS, CONDITIONS, DISCLAIMERS AND DISCLOSURES

Government contract restrictions and/or guidelines

Visit Chicago Southland has the right to accept none of the proposals, reject or deny any proposal, and accept partial proposals.

Contracting department

All contracts will be approved by Visit Chicago Southland and signed by the President/CEO.

Insurance

Any consulting firm under contract with Visit Chicago Southland must agree to meet the minimum insurance requirements.

Notice of selection

Notice of intent to award the contract will be sent electronically to all vendors submitting a timely bid proposal. Negotiation and execution of the contract shall be completed no later than December 11, 2024.

Conflicts of Interest

No relationship should exist between the applicant and VCS that interferes with fair competition or is a conflict of interest. Applicants must also disclose if they are working with other destination marketing organizations.

Insurance

During the course of this agreement, the contractor shall, at its sole expense, procure and maintain insurance with mutually acceptable companies as noted below:

- Comprehensive General Liability Insurance with limits no less than \$1,000,000 per occurrence and \$2,000,000 in the annual aggregate;
- Commercial Auto Insurance covering all owner, non-owned and/or hired autos with limits no less than \$1,000,000 per accident;
- Workers' Compensation Insurance with Statutory limits and Employer's Liability limits no less than \$100,000 per accident, \$100,000 per employee in the event of disease, and \$500,000 policy aggregate in the event of disease, and;

During the course of this agreement, the contractor shall provide a certificate of insurance as outlined above in addition to listing VCS as additional insured.