

Request for Proposals for Marketing Services

Proposal Deadline: 5:00 PM; Monday, May 1 2017

Downtown Sanford, Inc. (DSI), a nonprofit organization located in Sanford, requests proposals for the development of a comprehensive strategic marketing plan.

Questions regarding this RFP should be directed to jennstclair@downtownsanford.com no later than 5:00pm April 28, 2017. Responses to all questions will be sent via email within 3 days.

Electronic submissions of the proposals are required and must be submitted to jennstclair@downtownsanford.com with "RFP Submission for Marketing Services" in the subject line.

Summary

With this Request for Proposal (RFP), DSI seeks to acquire the services of a qualified local marketing firm to help develop a comprehensive marketing strategy. DSI invites proposals from interested marketing agencies with experience in brand development and management; marketing; social media strategy, implementation, and management; website design and development; and market research. Preference will be given to agencies with experience working with main street organizations and communities.

Bidders must follow exactly, and be responsive to, ALL requirements of this RFP. It is the bidder's responsibility to provide all specified materials in the required form and format. Responses that are not in the required form and format will not be considered.

The work to be performed will support DSI's primary mission to develop Downtown Sanford as the primary economic, cultural, and social center of the community; to educate the community on the unique assets and historical significance of the downtown area; and to promote and stimulate the improvement of these assets.

Background

DSI was originally formed in 1984 (named the Downtown Sanford Redevelopment Corporation) as a result of Downtown Sanford being selected as a North Carolina Main Street community in 1984. In 1980, the National Trust for Historic Preservation had created the National Main Street Center to encourage revitalization in downtown areas that had become victims of urban sprawl. DSI follows the Main Street Approach to downtown redevelopment, an approach which marries historic preservation and economic development using four key areas: Organization, Promotion, Design, and Economic Restructuring.

The corporation is governed by a 15-member Board of Directors, which are appointed by the sitting board members. The funding for the organization comes from private donations and tax revenues generated within a municipal service district. Currently, property owners within the municipal service district pay an additional \$.13 per \$100 valuation to support downtown initiatives. The City of Sanford also contributes substantially through funding for the Director's salary and through both financial and in-kind contributions to specific capital improvement projects.

In 1997, the Downtown Sanford Redevelopment Corporation embarked on a long-range strategic work plan. Components of the work plan included changing the name to Downtown Sanford, Inc., preparing a market study for downtown, developing the design for Depot Park, and commissioning the initial stages of a streetscape improvement plan.

Today, Depot Park and Phase 1 of the Streetscape Project has been completed. Marketing efforts continue, including joint local advertising efforts and special events designed to bring visitors from across the state into downtown and the Lee County community. DSI also continues to manage daily issues such as parking, appearance, security, infrastructure (lighting, trash collection, etc.), and administration of its building improvement grant program.

Learn more at downtownsanford.com

DSI Statistics

Year of Incorporation: 1984

Number of Employees: 1

Annual Budget: \$100,000

DSI Marketing Goals

Working in collaboration with the Executive Team at DSI, the marketing contractor will work towards:

- Evaluating current marketing efforts, both traditional and social media
- Design a step-by-step, comprehensive marketing strategy to best use our limited resources and grow our marketing efforts
- Build a media guide for DSI to purchase advertising based on key demographics

Scope of Work

The scope of work will include the following:

- Serve as DSI's expert advisor for the development and implementation of marketing strategies for its primary mission of increasing traffic in Downtown Sanford
- Develop a marketing plan focused on achieving DSI's Marketing Goals
- Conduct market research to identify target demographic segments with the highest potential to reaching DSI's goals
- Provide a written media guide for outlets that best use our marketing dollars and reach target demographics

- Provide next steps to expand marketing efforts as DSI's marketing budget increases
- Making recommendations on brand advancement

Response Requirements (minimum requirements)

For ease and efficiency of review, DSI has specified the numbering protocol below for bidders. Please follow this numbering protocol exactly, and do not re-number, insert numbers, or otherwise modify the sequence. Responses that do not follow this numbering order will not be considered.

1. Company profile

- a. Name of the business, contact person, and contact information: Provide address, telephone, mobile telephone number, fax number, e-mail address, and web address, as applicable.
- b. Statement of ownership: Describe the type of business entity (sole proprietorship, corporation, LLC, or other), and list the majority and minority owners.
- c. List of subcontractors. If applicable, provide company name, contact person, address, and telephone number, and intended percentage of work to be performed by any subcontractor.

2. Qualifications

- a. Provide a brief description of your firm, including its founding and history; number of employees; service areas; and, awards or other forms of recognition.
- b. Provide a description of your work process.
- c. Special consideration: Describe the experience with and knowledge of main street communities among your firm's personnel, in the context of their careers.
- d. Special consideration: Describe the experience with and knowledge of travel and tourism, in the context of their careers.
- e. Special consideration: Describe the experience with and knowledge of small city branding among your firm's personnel, in the context of their careers.
- f. Special consideration: Describe why and how your firm is uniquely positioned to serve as DSI's lead marketing strategist and advisor.

3. Experience and ability to perform this work

- a. Describe the approach your firm would undertake to successfully complete the tasks described in the Scope of Work
- b. Provide examples of relevant work and / or case studies.
- c. Provide a minimum of three (3) client references.
- d. Provide a list of personnel who would be assigned to DSI work, along with their credentials and experience.

4. Pricing

- a. Provide a schedule of fees for all relevant services described in the Scope of Work

including cost of Ongoing Consulting, Management, and Strategy Development.

b. Based on your approach, provide an estimate of the annual number of hours required for each service area described in 4a.

Questions

Individual questions regarding this RFP will be responded to only as follows:

Questions regarding requirements and scope of work will be accepted up to 5:00pm on Friday, April 28, 2017 via email only, at jennstclair@downtownsanford.com. Answers to all questions received by this deadline will be sent via email.

Telephone calls, faxes and/or requests for a solicitation will not be accepted or acknowledged.

Award

DSI reserves the right to alter the timing of the start of any work described above, to not proceed with some or all of the work, and to contract with more than one vendor for services described within this RFP. DSI reserves the right not to award a contract for this RFP, and will not reimburse the cost incurred by bidders who respond to this notice.

Anticipated Selection Schedule

- RFP Distributed April 5, 2017
- Question & Answer Period April 5-28, 2017
- Proposal Due Date May 1, 2017
- Interviews May 19-June 2, 2017
- Contractor Selection July 9, 2017
- Commencement of Contract August 1, 2017

Protocols for Preparing and Delivering Responses to this RFP

Responses to this RFP must be delivered electronically to DSI by 5:00pm May 1, 2017.

Responses submitted after 5:00 pm will not be accepted. Responses must be submitted electronically via email to: jennstclair@downtownsanford.com with "RFP Submission for Marketing Services" in the subject line.

Submissions should consist of one (1) PDF document containing all of the requested information in the same order as the numbered Response Requirements listed above.