

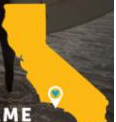


# REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

PROFESSIONAL MARKETING SERVICES

VENTURA COUNTY LODGING ASSOCIATION  
305 S. Kalorama Suite C1, Ventura, CA 93001

CAMARILLO  
OXNARD  
VENTURA  
PORT HUENEME





## **REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL PROFESSIONAL MARKETING AND PR SERVICES**

The Ventura County Lodging Association (VCLA) also known as Ventura County Coast (VCC) a privately funded non-profit organization, is seeking proposals for creative, public relations and media buying services from a qualified agency. The selected agency will assist the VCLA team with the development and execution of unique, innovative, effective, integrated programs that drive overnight visitation while reinforcing Ventura County Coast as a premier California leisure and group destination.

The goal of this request for proposal (RFP) is to identify a qualified partner and enter an annual contract with an approximate start date of July 1, 2023, with the option of two one-year extensions to be considered annually. This is an RFP for those capable of meeting minimum requirements and carrying out the scope of work. All proposals will be carefully reviewed and evaluated based on the criteria outlined in this packet. Proposals must be submitted in accordance with the conditions outlined in this RFP. Ventura County Lodging Association reserves the right to adjust the budget and related services at any time.

### **PUBLISH DATE**

April 26, 2023

### **INTENT TO BID AND QUESTIONS**

Notice of Intent to Bid along with any questions, should be received by close of business on May 5, 2023.

### **PROPOSALS DUE**

Proposals are due no later than 5:00 PM PST May 25, 2023 via email to:

[dlion@venturacountycoast.com](mailto:dlion@venturacountycoast.com)

### **MAIN POINT OF CONTACT**

Dave Lion  
Director of Marketing & Communications  
Email: [dlion@venturacountycoast.com](mailto:dlion@venturacountycoast.com)  
Phone: (805) 504-7884  
305 S. Kalorama Suite C1  
Ventura, CA 93001



## **ABOUT VENTURA COUNTY COAST**

Ventura County Coast (VCC) is a tourism brand encompassing the California cities of Camarillo, Oxnard, Ventura and Port Hueneme. The brand is administered by the Ventura County Lodging Association (VCLA) comprised of more than 60 lodging partners and destination marketing organizations seeking to attract overnight business and leisure visitors to the region.

**Vision:** Be a thriving local hospitality industry that enjoys high occupancy, profitability growth for assessed businesses and sustained Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) to support our city partners.

**Mission:** Promote tourism through regional collaboration, targeted marketing and data driven decisions.

**Goal:** Inspire and attract overnight visitors to the region while boosting revenue for hospitality related businesses.

## **ABOUT THE DESTINATION**

For travelers craving sunshine, good vibes, outdoor adventure and family fun, Ventura County Coast has it all. The region delivers an idyllic California coastal experience blending whimsical seaside attractions with contemporary culture, all conveniently located just an hour north of Los Angeles.

The region encompasses four unique city destinations with surf-town vibes and small-town charm. Camarillo, Oxnard, Ventura and Port Hueneme each convey the quintessential "California State of Mind" without breaking the bank. Additionally, just a short distance off the coast you can also explore and discover Channel Islands National Park, one of North America's magical treasures.

**Location:** Gateway to the California Central Coast, located off Highway 101 between Los Angeles and Santa Barbara.

There are five large markets (with a population of more than 250,000 people each) within a 2.5-hour daytrip drive of Ventura County Coast. An additional eight large markets are within a 5-hour drive (overnight trip). Overall, there is a total population within a 5-hour drive of Ventura County Coast of more than 27.1 million people.



Approximate distance from major destinations

- Santa Barbara – 27 miles
- LA – 52 miles
- San Francisco – 359 miles
- Fresno/Bakersfield – 114 miles
- Las Vegas – 315 miles

## VENTURA COUNTY COAST CITY PARTNERS

### CAMARILLO

Located just an hour north of Los Angeles alongside Highway 101, Camarillo is easy Southern California living without the crowds. Visitors can expect almost year-round sunshine, which means there's plenty of time for open-air shopping at the Camarillo Premium Outlets, exploring the surrounding hills by foot or bike, and indulging at an award-winning restaurant or winery.

Named for its founding family of ranchers, Camarillo is steeped in small-town charm and rich agricultural history. Step back in time at historical attractions like the Camarillo Ranch and the Commemorative Air Force museum or live in the moment at a local roadside farm or unique exhilarating attractions like Skydive Coastal California or Skyrider Ultralights. Couples love the romantic country setting for weddings having said, "I do" in over 30 surrounding venues and companies come here for hassle-free training and retreats.

### OXNARD

California cool, panorama-perfect, culturally authentic and vibrant beyond measure. Oxnard is home to miles of pristine golden-duned beaches, electric nightlife, some of the best taquerias in the state, historic Victorian era architecture, the Oxnard Taco Trail, and an expansively picturesque harbor that serves as the closest access point to the Channel Islands National Park. Just sixty miles northwest of LAX and in close proximity to Santa Barbara and other major destinations, Oxnard is one of California's best kept secrets.



## **VENTURA**

Ventura is a vibrant town that checks stress and pretense at the door. Its artistic culture, enduring history, and privileged locale are crazy-inviting, very much alive, and refreshingly human.

Sun Sand & Waves - Ventura is Southern California's whispered secret. A real deal surf town with empty beaches that call to surfers, swimmers, kayakers, and beach-lovers who just want to relax. Loll on the sand in the sun or plunge into the ocean and grab some ocean fun yourself. Our beautiful beaches and ocean playground await you.

## **PORT HUENEME**

Just sixty miles northwest of Los Angeles and a short drive along the beautiful coast from Malibu, you'll find Hueneme Beach and the friendly city by the sea. Port Hueneme is the place for travelers looking to dig their toes in the sand, take a long walk on the pier or just kick back and relax. With walking and biking trails winding throughout the city and a perfect climate almost year-round, revive your soul in Hueneme.

## **BRAND POSITIONING**

Ventura County Coast's brand is based on an emotional connection that draws visitors to enjoy unique outdoor activities, family-friendly fun, and good vibes. As a forward-thinking organization, we are committed to using new technology and digital platforms to enhance and evolve our brand positioning. We believe our destination has tremendous potential to be a trail blazer in destination marketing, and we are looking for an agency partner that is creatively eager to help us achieve this vision.

## **AUDIENCES**

### **OUTDOOR LOVER**

- Looks for beach and water activities, hiking, biking and outdoor events.

### **GOOD VIBE SEEKER**

- Looks for events, shopping, food, wine, beer, beach time, arts and culture.

### **FAMILY**

- Looks for outdoor experiences, kid-friendly activities, shopping, family-friendly restaurants.



## **GROUPS**

Ventura County Coast has over 200,000 square feet of conference and event space and can accommodate groups from 10 to 1,000 attendees. Planners can choose from beachfront locations, unique offsite venues, and full-service hotel conference centers. With our famous year-round weather and amazing coastal location, a planner can also take an event from land to sea in a matter of minutes.

## **MARKETS**

- BUILD: Arizona, Nevada, Dallas, Denver, Portland, Seattle, Northeast Coast
- GROW: Central Valley, Northern California
- PROTECT: Southern California

## **TOP INTERNATIONAL MARKETS**

- Mexico
- Germany
- Canada
- China
- UK

## **SCOPE OF WORK**

In coordination with the Ventura County Lodging Association, the agency will assist in developing a data-driven advertising and PR strategy that includes both innovative, forward thinking, and cost-effective integrated marketing tactics, including but not limited to digital, social, experiential, artificial intelligence, out-of-home, over-the-top, print, broadcast, etc. Strategies will focus on attracting leisure and group visitors to Ventura County Coast, with key emphasis on increasing overnight visitation and supporting local businesses and our communities. Additionally, concept and creative services for our campaigns will be required along with and other creative services on an as needed basis. The use of subcontractors for this account must be approved by the Ventura County Lodging Association.



## OBJECTIVES

- Generate a fresh take on destination marketing strategies and create efficient PR and advertising plans that align with our strategic goals and builds brand equity.
- Execute on an agreed upon set of deliverables that drives growth in both brand awareness and hotel bookings in a way that can be monitored and tracked and is effective and efficient.
- Develop a holistic approach to brand advertising including concepting creative materials and campaign elements for brand consistency.
- Create high-quality content that aligns with our voice, mission, personas and market preferences.
- Measure, analyze and optimize campaigns to ensure we are reaching our desired target markets in the most effective way possible.

## IN-HOUSE MEDIA BUYING AND REPORTING

Agency shall plan and execute an annual media plan. Media plans should utilize research and market insights to develop strategic recommendations for budget allocation, market prioritization, and channel mix. Successful agency needs to have the in-house capability to purchase digital placements including display, video, native, audio, and mobile ad inventory on ad exchanges using various methods of targeting including geo-targeting, retargeting and behavioral targeting. Our selected agency must have access to and be adept at the use of demand-side platforms or other bidding technologies and authoritative in the navigation of such systems. Our selected agency must also be knowledgeable in building, animating, and scaling designs to fit a wide variety of ad spots in an efficient manner. While our focus will remain in the digital landscape, print from reputable industry publications, and other traditional media can be added to the overall mix. Agency should also provide insights on emerging trends and new media to continually evolve and reach the target audience.

Regular monthly reporting on campaign and brand program performance utilizing expertise, agency tools, data, partnerships, and other resources to manage program efficiency and performance. Agency should always continue to look for ways to evolve measurement and reporting to show the bigger picture and communicate value to stakeholders.



## **CREATIVE SERVICES**

Develop a holistic approach to brand advertising including concepting creative materials and campaign elements as needed. Deliverables will be executed under the associations brand guidelines and coordinated with other marketing materials to ensure brand consistency.

Creative materials may include but are not limited to:

- Digital Advertising
- Broadcast Assets (TV, Radio, Video)
- Print Advertising
- Annual Report
- Supplemental Demand Driver Marketing Plans

## **CONTENT CREATION**

The selected agency will be responsible for collaborating with our team to create a content strategy and execute it by writing high-quality, experiential content that aligns with our voice, mission, personas, and market preferences. The agency should have excellent journalistic-style writing skills and be able to provide insider information beyond research aggregated from web searches. Superior editing skills are a must.

With the assistance of our in-house team, the agency will strategize topics, themes and create a content calendar with reasonable deadlines. The agency will be responsible for ensuring our content is search engine optimized.

Additional content services may be requested as needed. Please note the Ventura County Lodging Association has in-house video and photo support that can assist with production work once a clear creative direction has been established with the agency. Additionally, the agency will have access to our media library.

## **PR ASSISTANCE**

While we have an in-house Communication & PR Specialist, we believe an agency can bring fresh ideas and perspectives. We are seeking an agency that can work collaboratively with our in-house team to develop and implement a comprehensive public relations strategy that will effectively communicate our brand message, increase brand awareness, and establish our association as a thought leader in the industry. The strategy should also include crisis management planning and execution in the event of negative press or a public relations issue.





## **ACCOUNT SUPPORT**

Maintain regular communication on all activities. Attend on-site meetings as needed throughout the duration of the relationship. Provide clear budgets and plans outlining when materials are due for paid insertions prior to placing insertions. Provide year-ahead estimated budget breakout for expected costs upon receiving annual budget at the start of the fiscal year. Agency and client will review, and client will approve before work begins.

*It is also requested the agency has bandwidth to take on special or out-of-scope projects, to be discussed and agreed upon on a case-by-case basis.*

## **REBRANDING & VISUAL IDENTITY**

As the association has grown and evolved since our inception in 2011, we recognize the need to adapt to the changing consumer landscape. With Visit California's recent announcement on a migration from "Dream Big" to "The Ultimate Playground" and new demand drivers emerging in our region, we believe it is time to consider a full rebrand that will help us to better identify and communicate with our audiences.

We understand rebranding is a significant undertaking, and we are committed to approaching this process thoughtfully and strategically. Our goal is to create a new visual identity that better reflects our brand values and resonates with our target audience. We are looking for a partner who can guide us through the rebranding process and help us to develop a refreshed brand and strategy that is innovative, impactful, and sustainable in the long term.

*This project is planned to be handled as an out-of-scope project.*

## **METRICS FOR SUCCESS**

Agency should be capable of real-time campaign monitoring and monthly stat summary reports that are used to evaluate performance and inform our planning efforts moving forward. Monthly stat summaries should gather essential key performance indicators (KPIs) based on industry recommendations for both tourism and advertising.



## **QUALITY ASSURANCE AND QUALITY CONTROL**

Deliverables shall be of the highest quality and executed under specified deadlines. Quality assurance processes shall be enacted to prevent, to the extent possible, flaws in deliverables. Quality control processes shall be enacted to identify flaws, which were not caught in quality assurance processes, in deliverables.

## **PROPOSALS**

### **REQUIREMENTS**

Please include the following with your proposal:

- A brief company history, overview of services and capabilities.
- Brief biographies of all staff members to be assigned to this client account.
- An organizational chart including staff members who will be working on account.
- A statement of understanding of the scope of work.
- A summary of approach to ensure that the needs in this RFP will be satisfied.
- A description of your company's internal process of responding to client requests.
- A list of previous work for other tourism organizations relevant to this assignment.
- Names, addresses and phone numbers of a least three clients we may contact.
- Three examples of quality deliverables produced in the past two years.
- A budget proposal/staffing budget sheet provided separately from this proposal.

*Finalists will be required to prepare and present an in-person presentation.*

### **BUDGET PROPOSAL**

Please use the provided budget worksheet. Worksheet is available for download at [www.venturacountycoast.com/rfp](http://www.venturacountycoast.com/rfp)

Budget proposal must contain all costs that would be invoiced to Ventura County Lodging Association for the performance of these services.

The proposal should contain:

- Hourly billing rates/billing structure
- Projected hours by task
- Any additional costs/charges (e.g., travel, print, etc.)
- Annual rate increases, if any
- Terms of payment



## **SELECTION CRITERIA**

Agency selection will be based on the following criteria:

- Track record of building successful out-of-the-box content marketing campaigns with measurable ROI.
- Familiarity with Ventura County Coast brand and Ventura County Coast product and how this knowledge is integrated into the proposal.
- Highly creative team within the agency.
- Experience in the travel trade/tourism/hospitality industry, associations, and not-for-profit organizations, and/or group sales/meetings advertising.
- Capabilities in goal setting, strategic planning, client/agency communication and measurable outcomes with proven ability to turn research and insights into innovative messaging.
- Budget management, experience delivering cost-effective solutions and ability to negotiate favorable media rates.
- Turnkey administrative and account support, from strategic level planning to concise day-to-day communication to timely billing that aligns with budget plans provided by Ventura County Lodging Association.
- Fee/Cost proposal that is reasonable and appropriate for the scope of work providing maximum services in relation to fees charged.

## **BUDGET & TERM**

The Ventura County Lodging Association fiscal year runs from July 1st through June 30th. The first fiscal year of the contract will be funded between \$1,300,000 to \$1,500,000 depending on the approved media plan. This budget figure is based on all media placements, brand development, creative production, talent fees, strategy execution, media planning and placement, account management fees, and out-of-pocket expenses. Ventura County Lodging Association reserves the right to adjust both the budget and related services. The term may be extended in one-year increments for a total of two years based on an annual review of accomplishments and subject to approval by the Ventura County Lodging Association. Each annual review will allow for consideration of adjustments in agency scope and fees.



## **SUBMISSION PROCESS**

Ventura County Lodging Association reserves the right to waive any requirement or condition of the RFP upon finding that it is in the associations best interest to do so. Ventura County Lodging Association is not under any obligation to award a contract and reserves the right to terminate the request for proposal process at any time and to withdraw from discussions with any or all vendors who have responded. Costs for developing proposals are entirely the responsibility of the proposer and shall not be reimbursed.

Please submit your proposal electronically to Dave Lion, Director of Marketing & Communications, at [dlion@venturacountycoast.com](mailto:dlion@venturacountycoast.com) OR, proposals may be submitted as a hard copy to the following mailing address:

Ventura County Lodging Association  
ATTN: Dave Lion  
305 S. Kalorama Suite C1  
Ventura, CA 93001

Submissions must be received no later than 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, May 25, 2023. Please direct any questions to Dave Lion via email. An official written answer will be provided to all questions received by the deadline described in the Schedule of Events and will be posted to [www.venturacountycoast.com/rfp](http://www.venturacountycoast.com/rfp)

## **Schedule of Events**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Task</b>
Wednesday, April 26, 2023	RFP Issued
Friday, May 5, 2023	Intent to Bid and Questions Due
Friday, May 12, 2023	Questions Answered
Thursday, May 25, 2023	Proposals Due
Monday, June 5, 2023	Notification of Finalists
Wednesday, June 14, 2023	Finalists Presentations/Interviews
Friday, June 16, 2023	Final Selection and Agency Notified
Saturday, July 1, 2023	Intended Contract Start Date

\*Should a prospective agency decide to withdrawal their proposal, a written letter should be submitted by May 30, 2023.



### **CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT**

As a selected agency for this RFP, your organization will guarantee that all discussions, materials and findings will be held in confidence. This RFP and the nature of work solicited is the confidential and proprietary information of the Ventura County Lodging Association.

Submission of a response to this RFP does not bind the Ventura County Lodging Association to engage your company to provide the requested services. Ventura County Lodging Association reserves the right to reject any and/or all proposals, accept any proposal terms it deems to be in the best interest of the association, waives any informalities in proposals submitted and waives any minor irregularities or discrepancies in proposal procedures.

**AGENCY TEAM**

NAME	TITLE	YEARS OF EXPERIENCE	HOURLY RATE

**BUDGET PROPOSAL**

MEDIA BUYS	EXPENSE	% OF TOTAL BUDGET
<b>MEDIA BUY TOTAL</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>%</b>

PUBLIC RELATIONS	EXPENSE	% OF TOTAL
<b>PUBLIC RELATIONS TOTAL</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>%</b>

CREATIVE SERVICES	EXPENSE	% OF TOTAL
<b>CREATIVE SERVICES TOTAL</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>%</b>

CONTENT DEVELOPMENT	EXPENSE	% OF TOTAL
<b>CONTENT DEVELOPMENT TOTAL</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>%</b>

ACCOUNT MANAGEMENT	EXPENSE	% OF TOTAL
<b>ACCOUNT MANAGEMENT TOTAL</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>%</b>

TOTAL BUDGET PROPOSAL		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>100%</b>

**BUDGET WORKSHEET AVAILABLE AT: [www.venturacountycoast.com/rfp](http://www.venturacountycoast.com/rfp)**