

Request for Qualifications RFQ-2023
Carbon County Office of Tourism
Marketing/PR Campaign and Media Buys

Carbon County Office of Tourism is looking for vendor(s) to guide and implement a creative-precise marketing and PR strategy, *and* oversee associated media buying and manage multiple social media sites. Respondents may reply to all, *or* the creative portion, *or* the media portion of this RFQ.

Carbon County aims to attract and support visitors who travel thoughtfully and engage with local communities and businesses in order to create more memorable and connective experiences. In most cases, this equates to longer visits and increased spending. In addition to improving the quality of visitor experience, this approach will increase travelers' economic impacts through longer stays and additional services, including guided travel, workshops, and add-on options.

Carbon County is looking to make responsible incremental growth that will begin to expand our economy and quality of life. Our residents are proud and protective of our beautiful assets and while they are interested in growth, they want it to be conscientious thus preventing us from becoming overgrown. However, tourism is the front-door to economic development in other industries as our visitors sometimes become residents and business owners. **It is important to Carbon County to attract visitors that appreciate the culture, heritage, and values that are part of the heart of Carbon County in order to ensure that the traditions live on as we grow.** We do not want to not mimic any other destination, but to maintain the uniqueness of our own as we continue to welcome visitors from around the world. Many local communities have expressed over the years that "we don't want to become Moab or Park City."

Carbon County has a total population of 24,418. It is lined in a "corridor like way" with several small and unique communities including Price City, the county seat and the "hub" of the corridor; Helper City, known as the "main street" of the corridor; Wellington City, a small community located in the heart of the county; East Carbon City, the corridor's hidden gem, and Scofield, known best for their State Park. We are looking for ideas of how to creatively expand our messaging to include all the towns and cities through media opportunities that will increase bookings while continuing to grow awareness and momentum of our brand and tagline, **Carbon Corridor, Start Here.**

About the Brand

Carbon Corridor was created in 2018 through a new destination development and branding/marketing pilot program offered by the Utah Office of Tourism (UOT). We went through an extensive branding process to create a brand that is inclusive county wide. Formerly known as Castle Country, a regional brand that included both Carbon and Emery counties, that no longer served us as Emery County underwent their own rebranding. After much consideration and with the help of the Utah Office of Tourism, we arrived at the Carbon Corridor. We are

located halfway between Salt Lake City and Moab with easy access to the San Rafael Swell in Emery County, which makes us an ideal home base or a convenient stop along the way. We would like to capitalize on our own landscape where people can slow down, start here, and adventure throughout the county. We have the beautiful Nine Mile Canyon, known as the world's largest outdoor art gallery. Our Wood Hill Trail System, designated back in 2017, provides access to approximately 30 miles of single track trail for mountain biking and running. Our assets also include Range Creek Canyon, Gordon Creek Falls, North Springs Shooting Range, Carbon Event & Recreation Complex, Historic Coke Ovens, Energy (Scenic Byway) Loop, Historic Helper Main Street, Helper Mining & Railroad Museum, USU Eastern Prehistoric Museum, as well as over 250 miles of an OHV Trail System, to name a few.

After three years of focusing on brand awareness we are now ready to further develop the dimension and depth of our creative identity to demonstrate the attractiveness of Carbon County. We want to be known as a unique and connective experience rather than a pit stop along HWY 6. We believe that part of that includes sharing the nature and character of the people, our history, heritage, lifestyle, values, and activities meaningful to our locals.

Local Pride

We believe our locals are our first audience. We always take into consideration the impact of our efforts on the quality of life for our locals. We don't want mass numbers of visitors like many destinations have sought. That is why we want to stay focused on *quality tourists* as opposed to *quantity tourists*.

Locals and alumni are some of our best ambassadors. We want our creativity to be backed by and instill pride in our locals. We want to have some of our creative endeavors placed locally so they will take pride in how we present ourselves to the visitors regionally, nationally, and internationally.

For example, Carbon Corridor as a new brand has been met with some resistance as some locals find it hard to move away from the old brand. However, we agree that some work needs to be done on the local level to change how locals feel about the needed change by helping them embrace it.

Measures and Metrics

Carbon County is committed to campaigning using measurables. We desire to have more sustainable, year-round tourism and extend the average length of stay. We are also sensitive to representing the objective of controlled and responsible growth. For example, we may identify a goal of increasing our visitation by 30%. Monitoring a goal like this could come from a qualitative and quantitative analysis that shows a 30% maximum increase allowed. That way we're not compromising the quality of the experience for both the visitors and the residents. The work considered under this RFQ would include a strategy to help prevent surpassing that threshold.

Markets

The top domestic markets for Carbon County are Salt Lake City, Utah, Denver, Colorado, and Los Angeles, California.

We also get day-trippers from all over who are commonly known to visit Emery County (east and west) for outdoor recreational activities. We have marketed these areas for events and believe there are more opportunities in these communities, including ours, for more day-trippers and perhaps weekenders to experience our growing need for a “less crowds” visitation experience.

Tourism Operation

Carbon County Office of Tourism is currently structured by a Director of Economic Development & Tourism, a Tourism Specialist, a part-time Administrative Assistant, and a part-time contracted Content Creator. Our current Tax Advisory Board is managed by the Tourism Office and consists of 9 members with the majority being from the hotel and/or restaurant industry.

Carbon County Office of Tourism operates solely on Transient Room Tax (TRT), which is collected from short-term rentals/lodging in Carbon County.

Expectation for Deliverable by Carbon County

The chosen vendor is expected to provide these deliverables as part of this contract, though specific details and expectations will be outlined and agreed upon as part of the final collaborative process of building a scope of work.

A. Creative Agency

Strategy:

- Develop a high-level, integrated marketing and PR strategy for Carbon County Office of Tourism for the next 2 years that builds on the brand and approaches the items that are shared in the narrative.
- Use of data sources available through Carbon County, UOT, and additional research to optimize the marketing strategy.
- Bring expertise to managing and advancing the brand.

Campaign Development and Execution:

- Craft and present creative approaches to marketing campaigns in line with the overall marketing and PR strategy.
- Produce all creative and accompanying campaign assets including maps, visitor guide design, billboards, and out-of-home advertising.

Reporting:

- Set and measure success metrics related to advertising, marketing, and PR that map back to the objectives and concerns listed in the narrative.
- Define key performance indicators (KPIs) and detailed campaign measurements metrics for annual integrated marketing plans.
- Create a shareable grant tracking system and track all grant funding and spending.

Website:

- Provide art production and web ready assets to assist the County in updating and maintaining the Carbon Corridor website.
- Assist in the copyright and copy editing of content required to keep the site.
- Review and track analytics around site traffic, visitation, and dwell times on the tourism portion of the website (www.carboncorridor.com).

Social Media:

- Conduct social media efforts by designing creative assets, providing strategic campaign concepts, writing and posting content across active social channels including Facebook, Instagram, and Tik Tok.
- Follow, comment, like, and share content from the community to ensure the account is engaged in topical posts.

B. Media Buying Agency

- Solicit, secure, and monitor paid and non-paid social media time and/or space in various domestic and international media outlets, including broadcast, print, digital/social, radio, out-of-home, direct mail, etc. The vendor shall secure media placements and rates most advantageous and economical to Carbon County.
- Seek out and recommend partnerships and media placement opportunities that will help Carbon County to achieve the goals listed in the narrative.
- Constantly track placement performance and optimize for best results, particularly the metrics on trackable bookings.
- Use of data sources available through Carbon County, UOT, and additional research to optimize media placements.
- Set, monitor, and regularly report out on ROI benchmarks and data sharing.
- Present the client with new options for placement and tracking methods as they become available.

C. Value Add

- Please list anything else that your experienced agency does that isn't listed in this RFQ that would be of value to Carbon County's marketing and PR efforts. Please include the additional proposal and cost.

D. EVALUATION OF PROPOSALS

The criteria listed below will be considered when making an evaluation of the proposals. Proposals for each service will be evaluated separately. The top two scores may be chosen to go to a second round where they will be asked to provide an in person or online presentation.

| % OF SCORING WEIGHT | EVALUATION CRITERIA |
|----------------------------|--|
| Mandatory | Previous Destination Marketing Organization/Convention Visitors Bureau Experience. |

| | |
|-----|---|
| 20% | <u>Technical Experience of the Agency</u> : Considering relevant experience, preferably with state or federal clients, demonstrable expertise in specific RFQ selected. |
| 20% | <u>Qualifications of Staff</u> : Appropriateness of assigned staff to account. Cite relevant experience and credentials. |
| 35% | Responsiveness of the proposal in clearly meeting the needs of the services to be performed: 1.) Proposal meets needs of the client 2.) Proposal meets deliverables desired |
| 25% | Cost of the Agency's proposal |

Contract Award:

It is anticipated that this RFQ will result in multiple contract awards; one for a creative agency and one for a media buy agency. These could be to the same firm or two separate firms. Applicants may apply for one category of the RFQ or both. Carbon County is not responsible for bids that are late due to delays in delivery by any source. Fixed and emailed bids are not acceptable. Bids will be opened during the regularly scheduled Carbon County Commission meeting at 4:30 p.m. on December 6, 2023 at the aforementioned address in the Commission Chambers.

Carbon County reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any informality of any bid, and to select the bid which in the opinion of the County provides the best product, warranty and/or service to the County.

Category 1: Creative Marketing and PR Strategy

Category 2: Media Buy

Closing date and time:

The closing date and time for this sourcing event is **December 5, 2023 5:00 p.m. MST.**

Proposal Submittal:

SEALED BID to the Carbon County Clerk's Office at 751 E. 100 N. Price, Utah 84501

Length of Contract:

The contract(s) resulting from this RFQ will be for two (2) years with the option to renew each year.

Anticipated Schedule:

The following is the anticipated schedule for this procurement. The County reserves the right to alter these dates. All deadlines are prevailing (Daylight or Standard) Mountain Time.

Dates:

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| RFQ issued: | November 13, 2023 |
| RFQ Submittal DUE DATE: | December 5, 2023 at 5:00 p.m. MST |
| Potential Presentations/Interviews: | December 8, 2023 |
| Potential Award Date: | December 13, 2023 |

Requirements with Submittal:

- Bio of the Agency with a list of key personnel and a point of contact
- List of destination clients the Agency is currently representing
- Written Proposal for Carbon County Office of Tourism
- Cost breakdown
- References
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Failure to submit cost or pricing data will result in your proposal being judged as non-responsive and ineligible for contract award. Offeror must guarantee its pricing for one year.

Contact information:

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