

Expression of Interest for Public Relations Services

Overview

The West Virginia Department of Tourism (“Tourism”) is excited to begin the search for a new expert public relations agency eager to join the team focused on sharing Almost Heaven with the world. Creativity, collaboration, and expertise are core to Tourism’s mission. New agencies are invited to present big ideas to help grow the state’s visitation.

The three-person public relations team at the West Virginia Department of Tourism has been overseeing the following duties:

- Proactively sending hyper-targeted pitches to local, regional and national media
- Creating curated media mailers to initiate conversations about press trips to the state
- Planning and managing individual press trips
- Reactively responding to incoming media requests
- Attending conferences to meet with new and existing journalist contacts
- Writing press releases about in-state events and tourism business openings
- Organizing in-state media events for the Governor
- Tracking news clips manually

Proposed Scope of Work

- Partner with the West Virginia Department of Tourism’s PR team to develop and implement cutting-edge earned media strategies to make West Virginia a well-known destination and secure placements in top-tier publications.
- Proactively pitch West Virginia stories through well-established writer relationships
- Monitor and quantify media coverage and report results
- Recruit media members to attend familiarization tours across the state seasonally.
- Identify and attend public relations-related conferences, trade shows and events with the West Virginia Tourism PR team to build new relationships with media members.
- Secure broadcast features for West Virginia.
- Other duties associated with earned media strategy and public relations.



Submitting an Expression of Interest

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS:

The selection will follow the process set forth in the West Virginia State Code.

There should be no communication related to this Expression of Interest outside of formal channels contemplated by this process. Those who have questions may submit them via email to Hanna Kroeger (contact information provided below) by 5 p.m. Eastern Time on March 27, 2026. Written answers will be publicly posted on our website in the [Purchasing & Procurement](#) section on March 31, 2026.

Finalist Vendors will be notified that they are invited to meet virtually with Tourism's review committee to present the content of their proposal and work samples in an oral presentation format. These presentations will be scheduled for April 16-17, 2026.

DO NOT SUBMIT PRICING PROPOSALS as part of the initial application. This information will be requested during the negotiation process.

Proposal Format:

Expressions of Interest may be submitted electronically or by mail to the address below. If submitted via mail, please include five copies. Written questions should also be directed here. The required components to be submitted with the proposal are as follows: Part I, Part II; and at least one Part III (each Part is described in detail below), as applicable, depending on which scope(s) of work the Vendor is pursuing. In its entirety, the Vendor's proposal shall demonstrate how the West Virginia brand can be further leveraged to increase traveler spending.

Proposals should be submitted to:

Hanna Kroeger, Junior Accountant
West Virginia Department of Tourism
1900 Kanawha Blvd. E, Building 9, Suite 106
Charleston, WV 25305
Hanna.E.Kroeger@wv.gov

Selection Timeline:

- Written questions submission deadline March 27, 2026, at 5 p.m. ET
- Written answers provided March 31, 2026



- Expression of Interest submission deadline April 6, 2026, at 5 p.m. ET
- Notify finalists for virtual presentation April 13, 2026
- Virtual presentations April 16-17, 2026
- Selection and negotiation process begins April 22, 2026

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PART I:

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS

Please include with the proposal a signed statement acknowledging that you meet the mandatory requirements, listing the requirements specified here, and adding any supplemental notes explaining how you meet or will meet these requirements.

- The Vendor must have a minimum of five years of experience in the applicable field.
- The Vendor must designate at least one dedicated employee to serve as an account representative.
- The Vendor must travel at the request of Tourism to and from Tourism's office. Travel-related expenses incurred are the responsibility of the Vendor and are not reimbursable.
- The Vendor must have the financial capacity to execute the contract set forth by the Vendor and Tourism.
- The Vendor must ensure the total expenditures performed under the terms of this Contract do not exceed the amount set by Tourism unless such change is mutually agreed upon by the Vendor and Tourism.
- The Vendor must agree that all content developed by the Vendor under the terms of this Expression of Interest shall become the exclusive property of Tourism.
- The Vendor must be willing to work collaboratively with all other partners contracted to perform work for Tourism.

Failure on the part of the Vendor to meet any of these mandatory requirements may result in the disqualification of the proposal. Tourism, in its sole and absolute discretion, will determine whether these mandatory requirements have been met.





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Charleston, West Virginia 25305

(304) 558-2200 | WVtourism.com

DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM

PART II: STATEMENT OF QUALIFICATIONS

Company overview

- Provide Vendor's legal name, parent company(ies), ownership structure, and contact information for primary contact.
- Provide a list of all accounts gained and lost in the last 12 months with a description of why accounts were lost.
- Provide a list of the top five client campaigns with media budgets meeting the below budget benchmarks.
 - Public Relations – Budgets of \$50,000 or greater
- Provide the total number of employees and their locations.
- Provide the primary Vendor location that will be used to service Tourism, and a discussion of how Tourism's account would be serviced in Charleston, WV?
- Provide bios for the proposed account team that Tourism would be working with directly.
- Provide Vendor staff turnover rate for the last 12 months.

References

- Provide contact information for two clients that Tourism may contact. For each reference, please indicate the following:
 - Company name
 - Contact name and title
 - Contact phone number and email address
 - Type of service provided
 - Length of relationship

Potential conflicts of interest

- Please list any existing clients that could be considered a conflict of interest to Tourism. A conflict will not necessarily disqualify a Vendor; however, Tourism reserves the right to exclude a proposal from consideration at any time.

PART III: WORK SAMPLES

Vendor will submit work samples applicable to the scope(s) of work the Vendor is interested in fulfilling. All Vendors will submit at least one Part Three.



Public Relations Work Sample

Propose strategic ways to garner earned media attention for the state of West Virginia.

- PR pitching: Draft a pitch that could be sent to media contacts to raise awareness for something new in the state or a hidden gem experience/location/restaurant, etc. Explain the type of outreach you'd recommend.
- Media engagement activations: What are some ways Tourism could creatively engage with the media? Develop strategies and create mockups for each idea.
- Familiarization tours: Tourism hosts journalists on individual familiarization tours seasonally. Give a recommendation on ways to improve tours based on current trends and work Vendor has done previously.
- Big idea: Beyond the requested items, please provide one big idea to elevate the public perception of West Virginia.

The selection process will be conducted in accordance with West Virginia Code § 5B-2I-4(f). Nothing in this Request for Expressions of Interest in any way alters or limits the discretion of Tourism or the Secretary of Tourism pursuant to that statute or otherwise limits or alters the selection process set forth therein. Tourism may choose to select no Vendor for any or all of the three Scopes of Work. Tourism may cancel the selection process for any or all of the three Scopes of Work at any time, in its sole and absolute discretion. Tourism may also, in its sole and absolute discretion, issue one or more new Requests for Expressions of Interest for the Scopes of Work described herein or for different scopes of work. Under no circumstances is Tourism liable for any expense incurred by any Vendor in responding to this Request for Expression of Interest, regardless of whether the Vendor is selected to perform a Scope of Work, whether any Vendor is so selected, or whether the selection process is canceled or new Requests for Expression of Interest are issued.

