



# 3 YEAR RECOVERY PLAN THE PATH FORWARD

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL  
MAY 2022

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## Executive Summary

Our city, our community, and our local businesses are in a place of significant transformation from the impact of COVID-19, years of systemic racism, the killing of George Floyd, and the following social unrest. Since 2020, we have seen a sharp decline in the number of visitors to our city, which has been slowing the economic and employment recovery of Minneapolis.

The arts, food, entertainment, and hospitality industries are at the heart of the cultural vibrancy and quality of life that make Minneapolis unique. These industries draw businesses, residents, and visitors to the city. As we plan to build back stronger and more equitably, marketing and selling Minneapolis to leisure travelers will be an important part of the city's future economic and employment recovery.

Meet Minneapolis is seeking a full-service agency that will work with our in-house marketing team to develop, create, and execute a multiyear leisure travel campaign for Minneapolis. The campaign will increase awareness of Minneapolis as a leisure travel destination, drive visitation of hospitality businesses and overnight hotel room nights and improve public perception and sentiment. The scope of work includes strategic planning, creative production, and media services that will help support our objectives. For this program of work, Meet Minneapolis is only considering agencies with offices in the Minneapolis-Saint Paul region.

The work of this RFP will directly impact our board priorities, which are outlined below. One of Meet Minneapolis' core values is inclusion: championing diversity and equity for all. This touches every facet of our organization but is most visible to the external community through our marketing efforts – from images on social media to dedicated community resources within our website to the development of our marketing for the Minneapolis Cultural Districts. Reflection of diverse perspectives from our community at the inception of the work – from the research to the team leading the efforts to the reach of our campaign – is a priority. The campaign will activate an inclusive recovery and boldly tell our rich and diverse story. We want to ensure that those providing goods and services to Meet Minneapolis are representative of Minneapolis' diverse communities.

In addition, we have emphasized the importance of spending with BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) businesses within in our community. Creating broader opportunities for BIPOC businesses provides greater competition in the marketplace, therefore, creating stronger relationships and engagement with all of Minneapolis' communities and fostering economic development and equality.

The ideal agency partner will have experience working with destination marketing or businesses in the hospitality or attractions industries and be able to contribute breakthrough creative and bold, innovative media plans. The agency will also have experience working with cultural and racially diverse individuals and groups as it relates to meeting project goals and objectives. The ability to understand key analytics and provide insights into the effectiveness of campaigns are important, as are traditional elements of an agency/client relationship, such as the timely delivery of work and responsive service.

**The deadline to respond to this RFP (Request for Proposal) is on or before 5:00 pm CST on June 10, 2022.** It is anticipated that the selected agency partner will begin work in July for campaign deployment in the early fall.



Meet **Minneapolis**  
City by Nature

**2022 Meet Minneapolis  
3-Year Recovery Leisure Travel  
Marketing Campaign RFP**

The Meet Minneapolis contact for this RFP is Katie McMahon. All submissions, questions, and communications should be sent to her at [katiem@minneapolis.org](mailto:katiem@minneapolis.org). No phone calls will be accepted.



**About Meet Minneapolis**

**What is a Destination Marketing Organization?**

A destination marketing organization (DMO) is an organization that promotes a location as an attractive travel destination. DMOs are known as tourist boards, tourism authorities, or as a "Convention and Visitors Bureau". Where a suitable infrastructure exists, they encourage event organizers to choose their location for meetings, incentives, conferences, and exhibitions. They also promote the destination and provide information to travelers.

DMOs are generally tied to the local government infrastructure, often with supporting funds generated through specific taxes, such as hotel taxes and membership fees.

**Meet Minneapolis Background, Funding, KPIs**



**What is the Mission of Meet Minneapolis?**

At Meet Minneapolis, our mission is to positively impact the economic and social prosperity of our Minneapolis community by attracting visitors, meetings and events that directly support jobs and local businesses and generate critical revenues.

**What are the Values of Meet Minneapolis?**

- **Service:** We Have a Spirit to Serve
- **Inclusion:** We Champion Diversity, Equity and Belonging for All
- **Collaboration:** We Do Great Things Together
- **Passion:** We Are Proud Ambassadors
- **Integrity:** We Are Honest and Transparent



**Meet Minneapolis Board Priorities**

- Boldly Tell Our Rich and Diverse Story
- Embrace Our Community’s Mandate for Social Change
- Activate an Inclusive Recovery Strategy

**Meet Minneapolis Destination Branding and Strategy**

The Destination Branding and Strategy team (marketing, public relations, communications, social media, and partnership) creates dynamic promotional programs and materials, assisting other departments in carrying out their sales initiatives.

The department also creates and maintains various websites directed at target markets (e.g., leisure travelers, meeting attendees) for promotional purposes. Branding and Strategy is also responsible for publicizing Minneapolis, the Minneapolis Convention Center, and the Meet Minneapolis organization to the media and for supporting our 500 partner businesses across the region.

The marketing department of the Destination Branding and Strategy team will be main point of contact for this program of work.

**Leisure Travel Insights (General)**

The following companies all provide frequently updated, free information on national travel and tourism research, trends, and insights. This should not be considered a comprehensive list.

[CivicScience](#)

[Destination Analysis](#)

[The Harris Poll](#)

[Longwoods International](#)

[Miles Partnership](#)

[Tourism Economics](#)

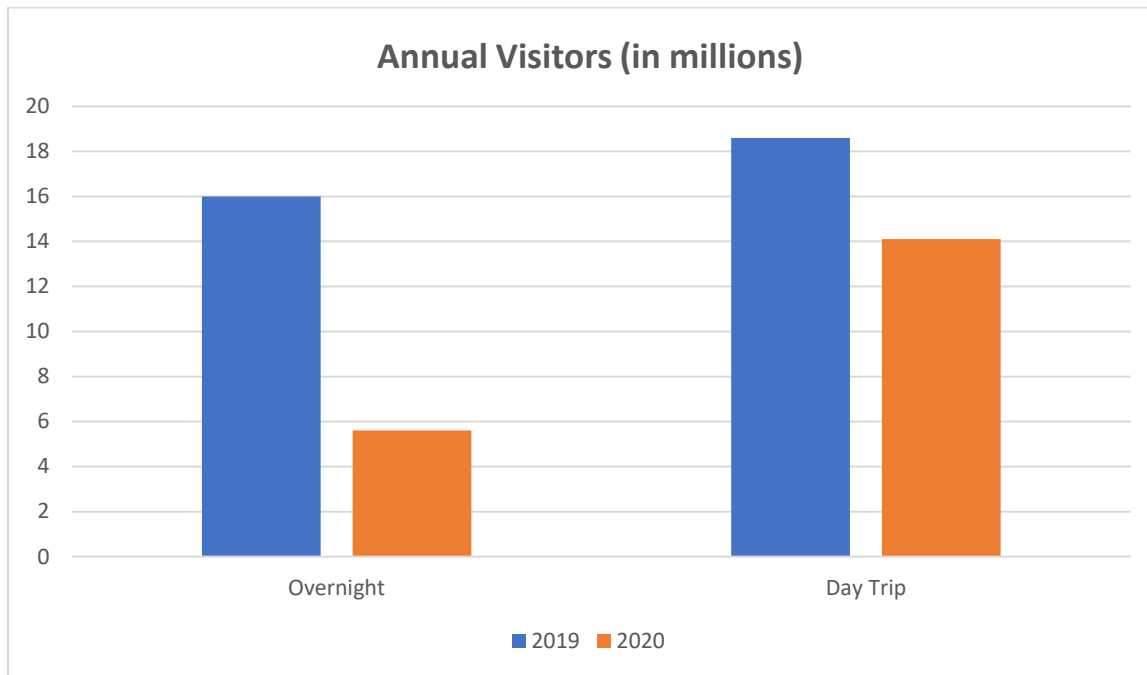


**Minneapolis Specific Leisure Travel Insights**

Below is a snapshot of annual research that can be found in the Longwoods International Minneapolis Travel USA (United States) Visitor Profile Report. The full reports are available upon request.

**Annual Minneapolis-Saint Paul Metro Region Visitors**

The Minneapolis metro region saw 19.7 million visitors in 2020, down 57% from 34.6 million in 2019.

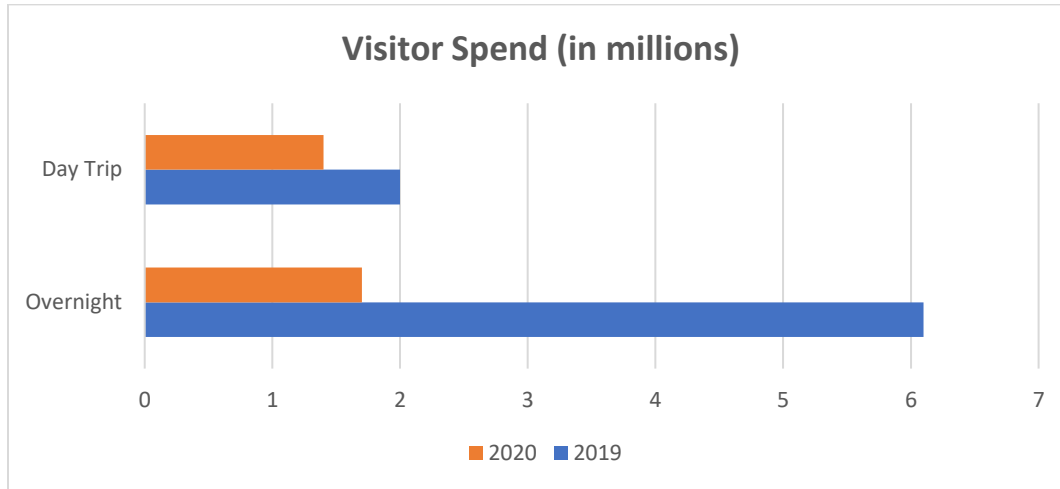


**Visitors to the Minneapolis-Saint Paul Metro Region**

	2019		2020	
	Overnight	Day Trip	Overnight	Day Trip
Visiting friends/relatives	51%	40%	56%	48%
Leisure - marketable trips	33%	50%	28%	44%
Business (incl. business/leisure)	17%	10%	16%	8%

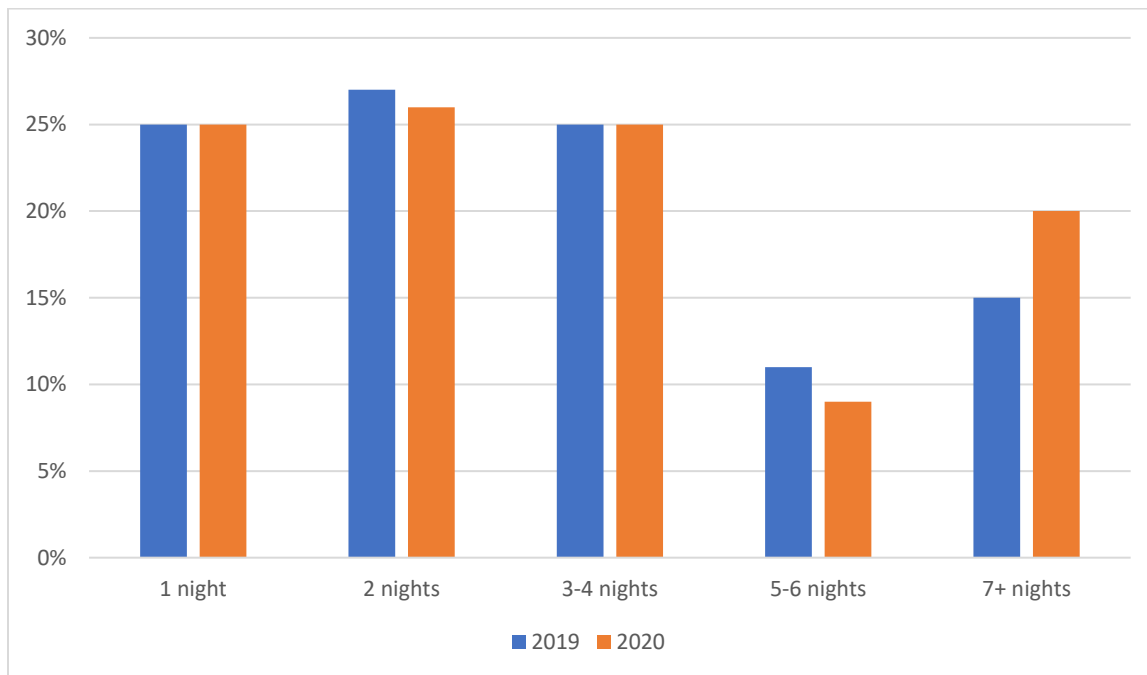
### Minneapolis-Saint Paul Metro Region Visitor Spend (in millions)

As expected, visitor spend decreased significantly in 2020. The impacts of this can be seen in the jobs supported by the tourism industry, which decreased from \$35,949 in 2019 to \$21,271 in 2020.



### Average Length of Stay in the Minneapolis-Saint Paul Metro Region

While the number of visitors significantly decreased in 2020, the average length of stay remained largely the same at three nights. The most interesting change is the increased 5% of visitors who stayed 7+ nights, which could be a result of the ability to work remotely for extended periods of time.



### How Visitors Spend Their Time in the Minneapolis-Saint Paul Metro Region

	2019		2020	
	Overnight	Day Trip	Overnight	Day Trip
Entertainment	52%	47%	49%	38%
Outdoor Activities	23%	10%	34%	28%
Cultural Activities	18%	12%	20%	12%
Sporting Activities	15%	10%	15%	5%
Business Activities	11%	6%	14%	5%
Other Activities	0%	0%	28%	19%

### Top Reasons for Visiting the Minneapolis-Saint Paul Metro Region

	2019		2020	
	Overnight	Day Trip	Overnight	Day Trip
Visiting friends/relatives	51%	40%	56%	48%
Special event	13%	16%	7%	2%
Other business trip	9%	6%	7%	6%
City trip	7%	9%	5%	8%
Touring	4%	4%	2%	9%
Business-Leisure	4%	2%	7%	1%
Conference/Convention	3%	1%	2%	1%
Casino	3%	2%	4%	4%
Outdoors	2%	5%	5%	7%
Theme park	1%	2%	1%	1%
Cruise	1%	0%	1%	1%
Golf Trip	0%	1%	0%	0%
Resort	0%	0%	2%	0%
Ski/Snowboarding	0%	0%	0%	0%
Shopping	0%	11%	0%	11%

### Where Minneapolis-Saint Paul Metro Region Visitors Come From

	2019		2020	
	Overnight	Day Trip	Overnight	Day Trip
Minnesota	27%	62%	39%	67%
Wisconsin	15%	21%	13%	19%
Illinois	5%	1%	6%	2%
Iowa	6%	4%	5%	3%
North Dakota	4%	3%	3%	1%





**Timing of Visits to the Minneapolis-Saint Paul Metro Region**

	2019		2020	
	Overnight	Day Trip	Overnight	Day Trip
Jan	9%	5%	12%	5%
Feb	7%	5%	8%	5%
Mar	9%	14%	6%	10%
Apr	7%	4%	5%	2%
May	9%	5%	4%	5%
Jun	8%	19%	8%	18%
Jul	10%	7%	9%	4%
Aug	10%	6%	8%	3%
Sep	8%	9%	6%	12%
Oct	10%	10%	15%	8%
Nov	8%	7%	9%	7%
Dec	5%	8%	10%	20%



## Resources

### **Meet Minneapolis Website**

<https://www.minneapolis.org>

### **Meet Minneapolis YouTube Channel**

<https://www.youtube.com/c/meetminneapolis/videos>

### **2021 Leisure Focused Campaign – Top 8 Reasons Why Minneapolis Should be on your Summer List:**

Top 8 Video:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PZ\\_uht2ap80](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PZ_uht2ap80)

Top 8 Landing Page:

<https://www.minneapolis.org/top-8-reasons-why-minneapolis>

### **Most Recent “Brand Anthem” Video (2018/2019)**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UxXM-d-ca28>

### **Brand Voice Project (2017)**

Work completed in late 2017 by **Joe Smith/Padilla Agency** on the Brand Voice for Minneapolis Leisure Travel (available upon request).

### **2019 Minneapolis Travel USA Visitor Profile Report**

This report provides a visitor profile for the Minneapolis metro region’s domestic tourism business (available upon request).

### **2020 Minneapolis Travel USA Visitor Profile Report**

This report provides a visitor profile for the Minneapolis metro region’s domestic tourism business (available upon request).



## Project Overview

### Why are we doing this?

Supporting the health of the Minneapolis tourism and hospitality industry (our hotels, restaurants, arts and culture, retail stores, venues, signature special events, sports) and the thousands of workers it employs **is critical to helping grow a vibrant, inclusive, and bustling city that people want to live, work, visit, and play.**

### Who is the Target Audience?

We are interested in the agency's perspective regarding recommendations and targeting demographics. Location-based demographics must be included because it is important that regional audiences see our message.

### What is the objective of the work?

- Improve brand perception and influence travel intent
- Drive Minneapolis visitation and hospitality business traffic (e.g., food and drink, arts/culture/theater, events, attractions, public transportation - Light Rail, bus, Nice Ride, Ride Share)
- Secure Minneapolis hotel room nights
- Support board and organizational priorities

### What are key challenges or barriers that the campaign is focused on overcoming?

#### Historical challenges:

- Lack of awareness/nothing to do/no reason to visit
- "Not for me"
- Weather (perception that it is always winter/cold)

#### Spring 2020-2022 challenges:

- Lack of familiarity with a city that was once 'known' to many of our regional visitors (How has the city changed, what's open? Do you need to wear a mask?)
- Misperceptions around social unrest, damages, and subsequent recovery (Did the entire city burn down? Has anything been rebuilt?)
- Unease around 'being welcome' or safe, especially for members of BIPOC (Black Indigenous People of Color) communities
- Concerns around public safety; confusion regarding status of police department
- Reliance on local media for stories and information regarding Minneapolis, versus first person perspective

### What Action Do We Want People to Take During This Campaign?

Come to Minneapolis and shop, stay, eat, drink, be entertained, and support Minneapolis businesses – and share your positive experience with others.

### High-level Components of the Work (additional details in Scope of Work):

- Strategy development
- Creative concept and theme development



**2022 Meet Minneapolis  
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- Creative asset development and execution (omnichannel)
- Media strategy, planning, and execution
- Campaign metrics planning and reporting

**Campaign evaluation metrics:**

- Improve perception of Minneapolis – did you see the campaign and are you more likely to come to Minneapolis?
- Trackable interest in visiting Minneapolis
- Other metrics to be determined in partnership with agency



## Scope of Services

Meet Minneapolis is seeking a full-service agency that will work with the in-house marketing team to develop, create, and execute a multiyear leisure travel campaign for Minneapolis that will increase awareness, improve perception, and drive visitation and overnight visits to Minneapolis. The scope of work includes strategic planning, creative production, and media services that will help support our objectives.

The campaign will focus on the following core areas and deliverables:

1. **Strategic Planning and Account Management:** The agency will partner with the Meet Minneapolis marketing team to design and implement the strategy for driving overnight visits to Minneapolis. The agency will be responsible for managing, tracking, and reporting on all aspects of this campaign. Deliverables will include, but aren't limited to:
  - a. Based on budget, agreed upon goals, and research, the agency will develop a marketing strategy for Meet Minneapolis for fall 2022. This strategy must be targeted at leisure travelers and should aim to create a positive perception of Minneapolis to drive short term visitation. The strategy must ensure that reaching BIPOC consumers are layered into the overall approach.
  - b. Work with the Meet Minneapolis marketing team to define the target audience for the leisure marketing campaign.
  - c. Create campaign brand look and feel, voice and tone, and overall positioning to attract overnight leisure travelers.
  - d. Keep Meet Minneapolis updated on industry insights and trends and regularly infuse new ideas into the campaign.
  - e. Provide a singular, experienced point of contact to facilitate and manage the project and to oversee the team assigned to our business.
  - f. Maintain regular status reports and meetings with Meet Minneapolis to review ongoing process.
  - g. Manage and track budgets and timelines.
2. **Creative Services:** The agency will develop a campaign that improves brand perception, influences travel intent, and drives overnight visitation to Minneapolis. Deliverables will include, but aren't limited to:
  - a. Create a brand, messaging, and collateral to reflect who we are as a city and attract overnight visitors to Minneapolis. Cultural and racial diversity must be reflected in developed assets.
  - b. Develop the campaign creative to be used across a variety of platforms, including but not limited to logo, fonts, and color palettes.
  - c. Develop all creative assets that will be needed to support the marketing campaign. This will include a wide range of mediums including, but not limited to, TV, radio, print, video, digital media, paid social media, and website images. The agency will be responsible for providing the creative strategy, copywriting, content development, and design for all mediums.
  - d. Ensure all marketing materials are in alignment with Meet Minneapolis's strategy and values.
3. **Media Services, Campaign Execution, and Campaign Evaluation:** The agency will provide the media strategy and execution of the campaign. Deliverables will include, but aren't limited to:
  - a. Develop and recommend the most effective media strategy to reach our agreed upon target audience and achieve our goals.



- b. Execute all media planning and buying, including research, negotiations, contacts, placement, trafficking, monitoring metrics, reporting, evaluation, and maximizing the value of the campaign.
- c. Review, assess, and proactively communicate media opportunities and changes that may impact the course of the plan.
- d. Review, track, and manage all media invoices to ensure adherence to contracts and resolution of any billing discrepancies.
- e. Assist with the creation, naming, and placement of tracking pixels on digital advertisements.
- f. Provide comprehensive media reporting monthly, including agreed upon KPIs and how the agency recommends we should adjust our plans based on the results.
- g. Identify, monitor, report and adjust agreed upon tracking and evaluation for improvement of efficacy in campaign.

## Budget and Terms of Contract

### Budget

The 2022 budget for this project is approximately \$850,000 and is all inclusive of development, production, and media costs. Of this budget, we estimate \$400,000-\$500,000 for any supplemental research, development, and production and \$350,000-\$450,000 for media.

This is a three-year contract and we have budgeted \$500,000-\$1,000,000 for both 2023 and 2024. It is subject to change based on occupancy tax collections, which fund destination marketing and other budgetary decisions and should not be construed as guaranteed.

### Terms

The agency contract will be for a term of three years.

## RFP Response Requirements

### 1. Cover Letter

A dated cover letter that describes the agency's background, clients, experience, and specific areas of expertise in relation to the scope of work outlined. Include number of years in business and scope of general services provided to clients. Please include:

- a. Company name (full legal entity)
- b. Company address
- c. Primary contact name
- d. Contact phone
- e. Contact email
- f. List of office locations and number of employees at each.

*If the agency plans to use any subcontractors they must be mentioned here, along with their business experience and a brief description of how the partnership would operate.*



2. Agency Background and Experience

Detailed description of the agency's background, experience, and specific areas of expertise, providing work samples as appropriate. Please include:

- a. Tell us why you're interested in working with Meet Minneapolis and describe your understanding of the city's transformation over the past two years and differentiating factors in a concise and impactful way.
- b. A brief statement about why your agency is uniquely qualified to work on this project, how you differentiate yourself from your competitor.
- c. Describe your agency's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion and outline your team's representation from underrepresented and/or marginalized groups. Through specific examples/case studies, tell us about your experience working with clients for which diversity, equity, and inclusion is a primary priority.
- d. Describe your agency's in-house capabilities.
- e. Share any experience with tourism, hospitality, or travel accounts. Include client name and brief overview of services provided.
- f. Describe your organization's experience providing similar services including strategic planning, creative development, media buying, and marketing campaign execution.
- g. Detail the agency's commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion, and understanding of cultural competency as it relates to designing and carrying out the strategies, tactics, and work to meet project goals and objectives.
- h. Share three case studies from within the past five years that most closely align with our marketing needs. Include the challenge, creative examples, media plans, and a summary of the outcomes.

*The same information for all proposed subcontractors should be included as well. A detailed explanation of how the account will be administered with the use of subcontractors – including share of billings, financial reporting, and invoicing and accounting – is required.*

3. Work Process

We are interested in understanding your creative approach and how you work. While we have done our best to outline a scope, we acknowledge that the assistance we need is complex and we are in the foundation building stage. We welcome additional feedback or refinements to this scope that would help us reach our goals.

- a. Describe your approach to analyzing and understanding a client's business and identifying opportunities for growth, including your experience with and approach to audience targeting. Explain how you apply insights, learning, research, and analytics to the strategic process. Explain how you have included diverse perspectives from the onset of your process and how it is interwoven.
- b. Describe your process for onboarding and how you plan to continually provide fresh thinking throughout the relationship.
- c. Describe how the agency would approach this scope of work.
- d. Describe your strategic approach and tactics used in a campaign specifically designed to drive targeted traffic to a website (preferably a mostly non-transactional site like Meet Minneapolis's) and how you would measure the effectiveness of the campaign.
- e. Explain how you measure success and include sample metrics (data-focused reports) as well as campaign wrap-up and/or results reports (including insights, takeaways, and future



recommendations).

4. Key Personnel

Provide a recommended structure for supporting the Meet Minneapolis account and include names, roles, and brief bios of the assigned team members and agency leaders.

The team must include members with demonstrated cultural competency and individuals who have multicultural backgrounds. Diverse perspectives must be represented in the strategic/creative process.

If the agency is not owned and operated by BIPOC individual(s), proposal should outline the inclusion of business(es) who are at least 50% owned and operated by BIPOC individuals and perform at least 15% of the total value of the contract. Non exhaustive list of examples can include strategy development, public relations, creative services (videographers, photographers, designers), media buying or BIPOC owned media companies for media placement.

5. Price Proposal

Provide a detailed cost analysis and budget deemed necessary to provide the scope of work outlined in this RFP. Please indicate how you handle pricing (retainer, lump sum, hourly rate, or other preferred method).

- a. If hourly, costs should be shown by task and include all hourly rates per account level and estimated hours to perform work per account level.
- b. Include all assumed hard costs and agency mark-up fees.
- c. Include all subcontractor fees and billings.
- d. List and cost savings and/or added value proposals offered.

6. References

Please provide a list of at least three client references for which the agency has provided similar services. Include a contact name, organization name, email, website, phone number, and relationship for each reference. These references may be contacted to verify agency's ability to perform the contract.



## Evaluation Criteria

Meet Minneapolis will choose an agency that best meets the needs of the organization. To be considered, the agency must have employees in the Minneapolis-Saint Paul region. The following criteria will be used when evaluating proposals:

	Points
<p><b>Overall experience of agency and demonstrated results</b></p> <p>Possesses the right mix of capabilities, staff expertise and experience, along with proven abilities and effectiveness. Able to manage - either with a collection of partners or a singular agency - the scope of the required work.</p>	25
<p><b>Overall quality of work and approach</b></p> <p>A proven track record of establishing campaign brand identity, marketing strategy, strategic positioning and messaging, account management, media planning, integrated creative campaign development, and content marketing across all channels.</p> <p>Agency demonstrates an understanding of the project based on a short narrative on their approach and how they would tackle this work strategically and creatively.</p> <p>Provides insights into evaluation metrics that would be utilized for measurement of the campaign.</p>	25
<p><b>Qualifications of cultural competency/BIPOC owned business inclusion</b></p> <p>Plan and process for integrating BIPOC and diverse voices from the onset and throughout the program of work. Demonstrated experience and commitment to organizational inclusion. Identification and inclusion of BIPOC owned business(es).</p>	20
<p><b>Familiarity with Minneapolis and the tourism industry</b></p> <p>Demonstrated understanding of tourism marketing and influencing audience decision making, understands the unique challenges we face in Minneapolis and the ability to help change perception, and understands Minneapolis as a tourist destination.</p>	15
<p><b>Budget</b></p> <p>Effective and efficient delivery of quality services is demonstrated in relation to the budget allocation. Approach to services versus media investment is balanced and structured to maximize marketing investment.</p>	15



## Submission Process and Timeline

### How to Submit a Proposal

Agencies responding to this RFP must submit an electronic proposal via email to the above email address before 5 pm on June 10, 2022.

If the agency would like to submit hard copies in addition to the required electronic proposal, they must include three copies. Email [katiem@minneapolis.org](mailto:katiem@minneapolis.org) to schedule a drop off time at the Meet Minneapolis office.

### Selection Process

Following the receipt of initial RFP responses, Meet Minneapolis will select the agencies deemed qualified to move to Round 2. Round 2 agencies will be asked to meet in person at Meet Minneapolis to share a capabilities presentation with the Meet Minneapolis agency review committee. The committee will make a final selection based on these presentations.

### RFP Timeline

Deadlines for submission of all materials is 5 pm CST on the respective dates designated below.

RFP released	May 16, 2022
Questions Due	May 25, 2022
Consolidated Q&A posted by Meet Minneapolis	June 1, 2022
<b>Deadline for submission</b>	<b>June 10, 2022</b>
Notification to round one agencies	June 15, 2022
Finalist agencies pitch to Meet Minneapolis team	June 27-28, 2022
Agency selected and work begins	June 31, 2022