

Meet Minneapolis

3-Year Recovery RFP Questions

Thank you for submitting questions regarding our RFP. We appreciate the time you took to ask thoughtful questions. Please note that many questions pertain to past campaigns, previous research, understanding of audience, etc. Our annual leisure marketing budget has been under \$150,000 - \$200,000/year and Meet Minneapolis has not done a large-scale leisure campaign like this, at this spend, in the last five years. Unfortunately, we are unable to provide specifics for some of these questions.

Previous Leisure Marketing Campaigns

While we have not done a large-scale campaign recently, we have done many smaller leisure marketing campaigns, including:

- Seasonal Campaigns: [Make it a Weekend](#), [Top 8 Reasons Why Minneapolis Should be on Your Summer List](#) – both campaigns were promoted via social and digital marketing.
- Special Industry Partnerships: Expedia Spotlight Programs (Hotel Room Night Focus): <https://www.expedia.com/spotlight/ExploreMinneapolis>
- Special Event Campaigns and Initiatives: Women’s Final Four, Men’s Final Four, Super Bowl, VeeCon, Art-a-Whirl, Twin Cities Pride, Bachelorette, Great Northern Festival – promoted via social and digital marketing with “explore around these events” content.

Research/Insights and Audience Segments

Because our budgets for these campaigns have been small, learnings about our audience and their behaviors have not been statistically significant or available. All current research and insights available for the RFP have been provided (if you did not request the visitation reports or the brand voice presentation, you can access them [here](#)). Because we have not had a large budget dedicated to leisure travel, we have not been able to invest in audience identification and segmentation, though this is something we would like to do with our agency partner.

KPIs and Success Measurements

This initial program of work should focus on driving visitor spend and overnight stays in Minneapolis. Components of the work should include some reputation management and a re-introduction to Minneapolis and who we are as a city now. We think of this initial work more as a “brand anthem” or welcome/invitation to Minneapolis. The campaign messaging should consider what assets does Minneapolis offer visitors that they cannot experience anywhere else, and what is the vibe/soul/feeling of the city that will drive day trips, visitor spend, and overnight stays?

General Questions

- 1. Has Meet Minneapolis done campaigns in other languages to target cultural audiences whose second language is English? Is this a consideration for this new campaign?**

Answer: This will depend on the audience and the campaign. Meet Minneapolis has not historically executed an integrated marketing communications campaign in multiple languages but has created specific pieces in other languages. We are open to it as an element of this campaign if it makes sense, but we do not foresee a budget that will allow for all campaign elements and cultural nuance to be replicated in alternate languages.

- 2. In partnering with your in-house team, will they be responsible for the execution of any campaign elements?**

Answer: To be determined, however do not assume that the Meet Minneapolis team will be responsible for the execution. Our goal is for an agency to do a majority, if not all, of the execution.

- 3. You want to attract people to Minneapolis. Mall of America, for example, is in Bloomington. How strict are you in your description of “Minneapolis”?**

Answer: While our focus is the city of Minneapolis, there are some exceptions such as the Mall of America, Paisley Park, and Minnesota United games at Allianz field. These exceptions are limited to known tourist attractions that can be “trip motivators” in their own right.

- 4. Do you know how much of this decline is COVID related vs. racial strife fallout?**

Answer: We do not have specific data to answer this. However, the decline in hotel occupancy is largely due to the lack of business travel, meetings, and events (which is a result of COVID).

- 5. Are there any current Meet Minneapolis ad campaigns running and how are they performing?**

Answer: Not at this time, we will have two paid campaigns in market mid-June for our summer campaign and Minneapolis Cultural Districts.

- 6. Is there an incumbent agency?**

Answer: No, this is the first large scale leisure campaign that Meet Minneapolis has done in recent years.

- 7. Are you able to share your current/most recent marketing and media plans with us?**

Answer: As these are a much smaller scope and budget, we will not be making these available as part of the RFP process. These may be shared as part of the onboarding process with the selected agency.

8. Describe your ideal marketing partner?

Answer: As part of the RFP process, we are interested in hearing what you think makes your agency an ideal marketing partner.

9. How involved are the city council and Mayor in this 3-year commitment?

Answer: Meet Minneapolis is a contracted partner of the City of Minneapolis. We are a separate organization and operate autonomously under a volunteer board of 36 members. The mayor and six city council members are all members of the board. The full Meet Minneapolis board has approved our budget for the three-year commitment. The selection of the agency partner will be done by staff-led committee.

10. It will be important to get workers working downtown again, and in from surrounding suburbs to provide an authentic Minneapolis experience to leisure travelers. Is there anything in the works in that regard?

Answer: This body of work is led by other partners, including the mpls downtown council, Minneapolis Regional Chamber of Commerce and Greater Minneapolis Building and Owners Management Association. We are supportive of their work and amplify their efforts including involvement in committees, but it is not a part of this scope.

11. In the eyes of Meet Minneapolis, what programs/ideas had been successful pre-COVID/civil unrest?

Answer: Meet Minneapolis has not executed a large-scale leisure campaign with this level of budget in the last 10 years. Historically, the organization has focused on attracting meeting planners and meetings to Minneapolis.

12. Is there anything Meet Minneapolis wants to stay away from?

Answer: Not at this time, though that may change based on the direction of the strategy and campaign when work kicks off.

13. What influence does Meet Minneapolis have in the events that come to Minneapolis? i.e., concerts, shows, etc.

Answer: Meet Minneapolis leads the bid process for rotating sporting events and other large-scale events, such as the Super Bowl, Women's Final Four, conferences, large meetings, etc. Outside of those and the convention center, which is owned by the city, we do not influence events that come to Minneapolis.

14. Are there any existing relationships with other local organizations Meet Minneapolis hopes to leverage?

Answer: No. Meet Minneapolis will own this campaign, but we would hope that likeminded organizations and businesses within the hospitality community would amplify the messaging and share the campaign.

15. Are you able to share your public relations plan that is underway with Padilla?

Answer: This campaign launched on 5/31. [You can read about it here](#). It includes multiple organizational partners with an all-in \$150,000 budget and is only focused on the metro area.

16. Are there any mandatories in terms of messaging and/or executions? Things that you know work well. For example, is there a tagline that you know needs to be worked into our campaign creative?

Answer: There are no mandatories – beyond the goal of increasing visitation to Minneapolis - at this time.

17. Have there been recent tourism campaigns for other destinations that you feel struck a compelling tone and reached the audiences you intend to target?

Answer: News stories have frequently referenced Seattle, Portland, and Minneapolis together. We like Seattle's [long form video work](#), but it is not a full-fledged campaign. We also appreciated Travel Portland's 2021 repositioning. A good recap is included [here](#).

Jackson Hole did a wonderful job authentically advancing inclusion in what could be stereotyped as a male-dominated ski town with this [older video](#) and Puerto Rico has done a series of PR-generating work that we admire, like [#covertheprogress](#). Milwaukee has both style and substance with [Powered by the People](#).

18. What actions outside of this campaign are being taken in pursuit of your DEI priorities that may inform our messaging and media tactics?

Answer: There are a wide range of initiatives under this umbrella that the organization has advanced in the last five years, and this will be a part of any agency onboarding. As it specifically relates to marketing, Meet Minneapolis assists in marketing the Minneapolis Cultural Districts.

19. What have been the most successful aspects of your digital marketing experience for Minneapolis.org in recent years? What aspects of Minneapolis.org, if any, have yet to receive adequate engagement?

Answer: Focusing on traffic from organic search and creating content that we know leisure travelers are looking for online. Also, putting together landing pages for major public events in the city that help visitors access information about the event and how to experience the city while in town.

Curated city guides for smaller events/groups have not received as much engagement. These pages are usually sent to event planners to use as promotional pieces for their event.

20. Could you please share any "Minneapolis.org" website traffic information with us? In particular we'd be curious to hear the following stats for 2019 vs 2020 vs 2021:

- a. Total number of visits
 - i. 2019: 2,369,787
 - ii. 2020: 1,279,809
 - iii. 2021: 1,978,268
- b. Total number of unique visitors
 - i. 2019: 1,814,328
 - ii. 2020: 1,044,074
 - iii. 2021: 1,584,112
- c. Bounce rates
 - i. 2019: 61.2%
 - ii. 2020: 66.2%
 - iii. 2021: 64.1%
- d. Top 5 most popular pages of entry
 - i. 2019: [150 Things to Do in Minneapolis](#), [Home page](#), [Light Rail/Bus Schedule](#), [Events Page](#), [Skyway Guide](#)
 - ii. 2020: [Home page](#), [150 Things to Do in Minneapolis](#), [Minneapolis Convention Center](#), [Events Page](#), [Patio Dining](#)
 - iii. 2021: [150 Things to Do in Minneapolis](#), [Home Page](#), [Events Page](#), [Minneapolis Convention Center](#), [Vaccine/Testing Info](#)
- e. Top 5 most common exit pages
 - i. 2019: [150 Things to Do in Minneapolis](#), [Light Rail/Bus Schedule](#), [Skyway Guide](#), [Home Page](#), [MCC Events Calendar](#)
 - ii. 2020: [150 Things to Do in Minneapolis](#), [Home Page](#), [Events Page](#), [MCC Events Calendar](#), [Patio Dining](#)
 - iii. 2021: [150 Things to Do in Minneapolis](#), [Home Page](#), [Vaccine/Testing Info](#), [Events Page](#), [Skyway Guide](#)
- f. Source of traffic (organic, paid search, social, etc.)
 - i. 2019: Organic (83%), Direct (9.2%), Referral (3.2%)
 - ii. 2020: Organic (81%), Direct (11.4%), Social (2.5%)
 - iii. 2021: Organic (80.2%), Direct (10.8%), Social (3.7%)

21. Since the City of Minneapolis funds Meet Minneapolis, will agency proposals be a public record?

Answer: Data practices requests are reviewed on a case-by-case basis. We recognize that proposals can contain trade secret information.

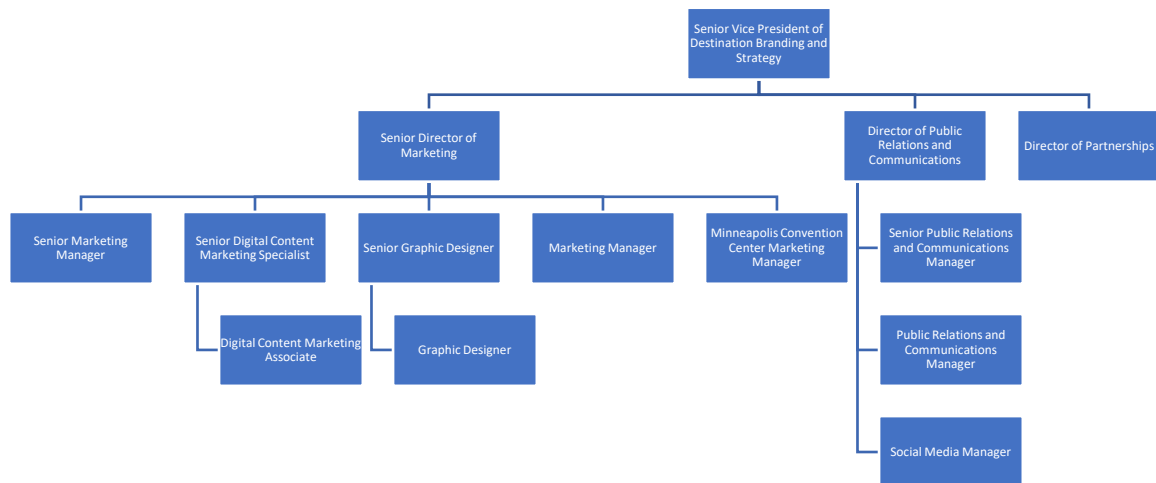
Team and Operations

- 1. Can you tell us more about your internal team? We know you can internally create and maintain marketing assets. How many people are on your team? What capabilities do they represent? The goal of this line of questioning is to understand how far you want and need an agency partner to take the work before your team feels comfortable executing further.**

Answer: The team structure can be found below. We would like the agency to execute all aspects of the campaign concepting, development, media placement, and execution. We anticipate there will

be natural opportunities for the Meet Minneapolis in-house team to assist but the agency should plan on most of the development.

2. What is the current structure of your creative group at Meet Minneapolis as we plan how best to collaborate?



The day-to-day client lead will be Katie McMahon, Senior Marketing Manager.

3. How much PR support are you looking for?

Answer: This will depend on the campaign. Any marketing elements that have a strong PR element would be developed by the partner agency. Our internal PR team can assist in pitching, placement, and support; however, the agency partner is anticipated to lead this work.

4. What roles do you envision being played by the Meet Minneapolis team once the strategic and creative direction(s) have been agreed upon? Do you have a specialty area where you are currently very strong (e.g., social media, design, copywriting)?

Answer: We're looking for an agency partner to execute this work.

Strategy and Creative

1. What is your approval process for strategic recommendations and creative campaigns such as this one?

Answer: We are a small organization, which affords us the ability to make approvals and recommendations efficiently. Campaign defining approvals on strategic and creative direction will include the CEO of Meet Minneapolis. Subsequent tactics will be approved by the core marketing

team, who have ample experience representing both agency and client. The marketing subcommittee of the board will be informed of direction but do not need to approve. Internal approvals will be managed by the organization lead, Katie McMahon.

2. Can we get the Brand Voice Project work mentioned on page 10? How happy are you with this work today? Do you feel it still reflects the needs of the organization after a crazy few years?

Answer: The core of this work still reflects the organization, but as part of this project we believe the Brand Voice needs a close look to make sure the voice and messaging reflect who we are as a city today.

3. Who do you consider your competitors?

Answer: Broadly: we compete with anything that can consume a substantial portion of time. Tactically: most visitors are from a regional drive market, so any geographic 'city' can be competition – Madison, Milwaukee, Chicago, etc. Microscopically: our hotel community competes with surrounding suburbs that can provide free parking, easy freeway access, similar hotel amenities. For many of the people we are trying to reach, it is less about "Minneapolis versus Chicago" and more about "Is there a reason for me to go to Minneapolis?"

4. What is working and not working about your current approach to tourism marketing? What do you like about your current efforts? Your current relationship?

Answer: We do not have a current agency of record. Our in-house summer marketing and Cultural Districts campaigns are event centered and do not include the elements of an integrated marketing campaign.

5. How are you feeling about your non-campaign brand strategy and creative elements? We do not want to fix what isn't broken, but it helps to understand how you feel these pieces are working as we approach a campaign solution.

Answer: We see an overall brand analysis as separate from the leisure marketing campaign. However, the campaign work may 'lead' the consumer facing brand, as it is a significant spend for the organization. Our website, Minneapolis.org, and recent and featured content, and our social media channels, are tools that can aid in understanding the brand voice and imagery.

6. What do you envision the creative approval process will be like? How many people will be involved in the decision of what creative direction to go? Is there a larger committee or a smaller team?

Answer: Please see answer to question #1.

7. Is there a targeted amount of spend for businesses located in the Twin Cities?

Answer: No. This will depend on the strategic decisions made around the campaign and the target audience. However, the primary focus is not the metro area.

Media and Digital Marketing

- 1. Does Meet Minneapolis schedule its paid media support aligned with when visitors are more likely to visit?**

Answer: Not always. We market Minneapolis as a four-season destination and focus on both peak and need times. The cost-per-acquisition is higher in our winter season.

- 2. Is media support scheduled around particular events and/or key reasons for visitors to come to Minneapolis (i.e., Stone Arch Festival), or conversely, are these periods avoided because visitors will already be coming?**

Answer: It is a mix of both. We amplify existing events – particularly after the past two years, we do not want to shy away from any positive media exposure – and we identify need periods to drive visitation. For this campaign, we have focused on efforts on a fall media spend to soften the shoulder season.

- 3. Which paid media efforts have performed best for Meet Minneapolis, and how is that performance determined/measured?**

Answer: Due to the low-level spend across many small campaigns, previous performance is not a benchmark for this large-scale campaign.

- 4. Are you willing to share your 2019 and 2020 media plans/performance? We'll offer a fresh perspective on media strategy, but it's always helpful to know where you're coming from.**

Answer: These will not be shared as part of the RFP process. Leisure media campaigns in 2019 were limited to social media. 2020 media plans centered on the "We Need Us!" campaign and focused on a local audience. Plan and performance details will be shared as part of the onboarding process.

- 5. Can you share historical media plan details (flowchart or media mix)?**

Answer: Any available media plan details will be shared with the agency as part of the onboarding process.

- 6. How has paid social or paid search been used previously? Can you share details on this program and its effectiveness?**

Answer: Historically, we have used paid social to amplify events that are happening in Minneapolis (Women's Final Four, Super Bowl, VeeCon, etc.) and short seasonal campaigns. Our budget has been below \$30,000 annually for paid social. We have not utilized paid search in the last five years. Program details will be shared with the selected agency as part of the onboarding process.

- 7. Can you provide additional clarity on what type of paid media Meet Minneapolis has used in this effort in the past? What percentage has been digital? What percentage, if any, has been broadcast?**

Answer: Our paid media for leisure travel has been extremely limited. We have done some social media advertising around events (i.e., Women's Final Four, VeeCon), and have done some paid social around our 2021 summer campaign. The majority of our paid media has been digital. Paid media plans will be shared with the selected agency as part of the onboarding process.

- 8. What percentage of the budget has been used for paid media compared to agency fees for communications services?**

Answer: We have not worked with an agency for leisure travel in recent years.

Measurement and KPIs

- 1. How does Meet Minneapolis evaluate success as it pertains to client satisfaction and campaign resonance (beyond transactional measures)? Please provide information on key metrics.**

Answer: Our anticipation is that this is a three-year campaign, and we would work with the same agency for the entirety of the campaign. While we do not have a formal evaluation tool for client satisfaction, the core agency team has worked collectively with more than 20 different agencies and has awareness of the elements of a strong, trusted agency partnership. Campaign resonance is priority.

- 2. How do you measure active campaign performance and/or optimize efforts while campaigns are live?**

Answer: We rely on our media partner to monitor and track campaign performance and offer suggestions for optimization.

- 3. Based on the decline in overnight stays in 2020 vs. 2019 and the KPIs of measuring hotel stays and volume of expenditures at restaurants, businesses, etc., is it fair to assume that increasing overnight stays is the primary objective (vs. increasing day trips and/or improving perceptions of Minneapolis?)**

Answer: Yes, overnight stays is the primary objective from a measurement standpoint. But the campaign should not be focused on hotel stays. While one of our main KPIs is hotel room nights, the campaign should be able to address all trip types (day trips, residents spending more time/money in the city, overnight stays, etc.).

- 4. How much does tourist revenue in suburbs/surrounding areas affect your KPIs?**

Answer: If the question is asking about visitors staying in surrounding suburbs instead of Minneapolis, yes, this impacts our hotel room night KPI. We do not have specifics on how much we

lose to surrounding suburbs. Our goal for this campaign is for people to stay overnight in Minneapolis.

5. Has brand perception been measured in the past?

Answer: We have not had a leisure brand perception study in recent years.

6. What would be determined a success in regards to changing perception?

Answer: We are open to the agency's suggestions based on what is feasible through media and research abilities. Examples include improved brand perception among those who viewed advertisement, propensity of future visitation, etc.

7. Are you able to track average spend by visitor origin and time of year?

Answer: While those tools exist, we do not currently use them so cannot track this on a city level.

8. Within the broader goal to drive visitation and traffic, are there specific measured goals for duration, dollar spend, time spent?

Answer: No.

9. Do you have preferred metrics for the ongoing campaign media reporting? Or are you looking for that recommendation?

Answer: We are looking for our agency partner to make that recommendation.

10. Will the success of this effort be measured by number of visitors, number of overnight stays, length of stay? Or will it be measured by a combination of those metrics?

Answer: Number of visitors is a primary metric, but we know data points can be a combination of metrics.

Audience

1. How much of Meet Minneapolis' budget is invested in the top 5 regions/states from which visitors are currently coming from, vs. the rest of the country?

Answer: Our recent history targeting has been regional (within 300 miles of Minneapolis).

2. Is there an audience priority or focus of business vs. pleasure?

Answer: This campaign should only focus on leisure travelers.

- 3. How are the objectives measured (i.e., traveler intent, etc.) - website traffic, separate market research, other?**

Answer: We are looking to our agency partner to recommend a measurement plan based on campaign strategy.

- 4. Do you have any baseline awareness or interest research metrics amongst the audience(s) that you can share? Also, do you have existing/preferred partners? Or, are you looking for the Agency recommendation on both?**

Answer: No, we are looking for the agency to recommend.

- 5. What specific demographics/visitors are you seeking to attract?**

Answer: We are looking for the agency to help us determine target audience.

Data and Tools

- 1. What tools were used in the past to define the target audiences for the previous campaign? How were the audiences deemed accurate for that campaign?**

Answer: We have not done leisure campaigns in recent history and have not defined target audiences for leisure travel.

- 2. In the research on page 8, what are the “other activities” from 2020?**

Answer: This study was completed by Longwoods, and they do not provide that information. It is safe to assume it includes anything that does not fit into the categories listed.

- 3. The RFP mentions “regional visitors/regional audiences.” May we request that list or get a better understanding of how broad/narrow that definition of “regional” is.**

Answer: In the past, regional audiences have been identified based on miles from Minneapolis. Typically, we define regional visitors as 50-500 miles from Minneapolis.

- 4. What were your “past targeted demographics”? We know you are interested in our agency’s perspective on who to target, however, it would be good to know who you channeled in previous campaigns. You specifically call out, “location-based demographics.” Similar to “regional visitors” (above), we want to make sure we are speaking the same language.**

Answer: Because we have not done extensive leisure marketing in recent years, we don’t have detailed demographics for our target audience with a broad campaign. Historically, we have typically focused on 50-500 miles, but due to media costs in Chicago and the effects of COVID, that range has been closer in for the last two years. We have done some demographic targeting on top of the

geographic location targeted for social media buys, focusing on events and interests where Minneapolis has traditionally over-indexed (sports, cycling, arts).

- 5. It appears that Spring Break time period is down (March/April), along with summer. Are the number of families visiting down?**

Answer: We do not have that data available. In general, apart from select event-driven weeks or weekends, 2022 hotel data is not on pace with 2019.

- 6. It seems September day trips are up and October overnights are up – are you seeing flat or up visits from couples and/or senior citizens?**

Answer: We do not have that data available. We would caution that the 2019 versus 2020 data should not assume to carry over into 2022.

- 7. Are you seeing decrease visits from people of color, and if so, which ones? And do you know why?**

Answer: We do not have that data available.

- 8. What is driving the December day trip increase? Shopping? Holiday markets? Do you know?**

Answer: We could make assumptions around shopping, holiday markets, visiting family and friends, company parties, but we do not have the actual data to support it.

- 9. Have you seen any changes in the attractions that are getting people to come to Minneapolis – any NEW ones? Is interest in others waning? (i.e., Mall of America). We noted that casino and resorts are up, but not specifically which ones.**

Answer: We do not have that data available.

- 10. Looks like travel to Minneapolis within the state is performing better than from adjacent states. Do you have a good sense of which counties we're drawing from most in MN? Do you know where the people from adjacent states are going instead of MN? Are they staying in their own states?**

Answer: We do not have that data available.

- 11. Do you currently utilize a dashboard for real-time reporting? If so, what application?**

Answer: We utilize a product called Voyage, which can pull in some data on a lag utilizing partnerships with Near.

- 12. What test & learn tactics have you deployed?**

Answer: We have utilized A/B testing in social media. We have not had a large-scale campaign/budget for creative testing.

13. Will there be any updated consumer research and market studies available to the team at the outset of the project?

Answer: We will be able to provide any updated research that is available by that time, however, our past research has focused on a different primary audience (meeting planners).

Timing and Budget

1. Is your fiscal start July 1?

Answer: No, the Meet Minneapolis fiscal year begins on January 1.

2. Is the paid media spend for Year 1 to cover Fall 2022–June 2023 (\$350,000-\$450,000)?

Answer: No, paid media spend should be for the 2022 calendar year.

3. For the proposal, we would not be able to provide firm details regarding out-of-pocket costs for production or any additional research needed as that would be contingent on the final approved work. Can that be confirmed to be acceptable?

Answer: Yes, a rough estimate would be acceptable.

4. In years 2023 and 2024, how much of the budget do you expect for media versus development/execution?

Answer: We would anticipate the budget to be more heavily weighted to media versus development/execution.

RFP Clarification

1. The RFP states that creative should be in market by “early Fall.” However, with discovery, creative conceiving, and execution, realistically we may be looking at October or November at the earliest. Can you confirm?

Answer: Ideally, we are still looking to have the campaign in market in September. We would not be able to launch later than October.

- 2. If our team were to propose working with a subcontractor / collaborator for a very specific deliverable (say a freelancer on our team), are we required to answer A-H in question #2, or just provide a bio hitting on their overall background and role in the scope of work?**

Answer: Providing a bio and describing their background and role in the work is sufficient.

- 3. Can you confirm the objectives of this scope are focused on leisure travel and do not include increasing business and conference travel?**

Answer: Yes, we are only focused on leisure travel.

- 4. As we decide which work to share, between two equally powerful campaigns would you recommend erring on the side of tourism or diversity and inclusion?**

Answer: Both! All relevant examples should be shared.

- 5. Will we have the opportunity to speak / meet with the Meet Minneapolis team before the submission?**

Answer: No, we will only be meeting with agencies that move on to round 2.

- 6. How many Agencies are participating in the RFP process?**

Answer: Unknown until submission deadline

- 7. Should the Agency proceed from Round 1 to Round 2 of the process, is there an expectation of additional material or work developed for Round 2?**

Answer: No. Agencies that move on to round 2 will be asked to present their RFP to the Meet Minneapolis team. After the presentation, the agency should be prepared to answer questions related to the RFP.

- 8. Regarding Response Requirements 3D: are you looking for our approach and possible tactics to demonstrate our thinking, or a specific plan recommendation?**

Answer: We are just looking to get an understanding of your agencies approach and tactics. A specific plan recommendation is not required.

- 9. This has been indicated to be a 3-year recovery plan, is it expected that proposals and pricing are framed in the context of a full three-year plan, or just an overall approach?**

Answer: An overall approach. We are most focused on the budget of the 2022 program of work.

- 10. What do you mean by production costs?**

Answer: This will depend on the campaign strategy, but could include videography, photography, design, printing, etc.