

**LEGAL NOTICE
REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS (RFQ)
GREENE COUNTY TOURISM
PROFESSIONAL CONSULTANT SERVICES**

FULL SERVICE TOURISM AGENCY OF RECORD

Greene County is soliciting Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for professional consultant services for a Marketing, Advertising, Communications, and Public Relations Agency of Record (AOR) that can assist the department with all DMO tourism-related services, inclusive of, but not limited to: Strategic Planning, Public Relations; Content Management, Digital Marketing; Social Media Marketing; Search Engine Optimization/Search Engine Marketing; Advertising; Collateral Development; Video and Still Photography; Broadcast Production; Media Planning and Buying; and Website Management and Hosting. Certified minority and/or women owned business enterprises, as well as service disabled veteran owned businesses are encouraged to respond. RFQ's shall be directed to Heather Bagshaw, Tourism Director, Greene County Tourism Building, 700 Route 23B, Leeds, New York 12451. RFQ's are due no later than 4:00 p.m. on Tuesday, November 30, 2021.

Copies of the RFQ may be obtained at Greene County Tourism Building or on the County's website at <http://greenegovernment.com/category/rfp>.

GREAT NORTHERN CATSKILLS OF GREENE COUNTY SCOPE OF SERVICES

FY2022-2024



Request for Qualifications for Greene County Tourism FY2022-2024

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Invested Community Partners

GREENE COUNTY LEGISLATURE

Matt Luvera, District 1: Catskill

Linda Overbaugh, District 1: Catskill

Jack Keller, District 1: Catskill

Michael Bulich, District 1: Catskill

Charles Martinez, District 2- Coxsackie

Thomas Hobart, District 2- Coxsackie

Edward Bloomer, District 3 - Athens

Greg Davis, District 4 - Greenville

Patrick Linger, District 5- New Baltimore

Jim Thorington, District 6 - Prattsville, Ashland, Windham, Jewett

Larry Gardner, District 7- Halcott, Lexington, Hunter

Harry Lennon, District 8- Cairo

William Lawrence, District 8- Cairo

Patty Handel, District 9 – Durham

TOURISM ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Courtney Reinhard, Baumann’s Brookside (Lodging – Resort)

Chip Seamans, Windham Mountain (Attraction – Ski Resort)

Lenore Whitcomb, Winter Clove Inn (Lodging – Resort)

Brian Christman, Christman’s Windham House (Lodging – Golf Resort)

Russ Colton, Hunter Mountain (Attraction – Ski Resort)

Patty Handel, Blackthorne Resort (Lodging – Resort)

Marianna Leman, Albergo Allegria (Lodging – Inn/B&B)

Jennifer Greim, Thomas Cole National Historic Site (Attraction – Arts and Culture)

Tinker Nichol森-Pachter, Sunny Hill Resort & Golf Course (Lodging – Golf Resort)

Background

The region was settled in the 17th century by Dutch and English colonists who were enticed by its fertile ground. However, other nationalities began to take root as industry along the Hudson River flourished and Catskill became the most important cultural center outside of Albany and New York City. By the time construction of the Erie Canal was underway in 1817, an influx of Germans, Italians, and Ukrainians had settled in the area.

As the region developed, the Great Northern Catskills of Greene County quickly became an established vacation destination for wealthy New Yorkers. Eager to escape the oppressive city heat and enjoy the fresh mountain air, people flocked to the legendary "mountain houses." Perched on scenic bluffs, tucked away high in the mountains, the Catskills hotels flourished.

Simultaneously, in the early 19th century, the area's scenic views and striking landscapes inspired a new genre of American art with the Hudson River School of painters and motivated Washington Irving to set his famous 1819 short story, *Rip Van Winkle*, in the Catskill Mountains. The legacy persists and throughout the year, visitors can explore the home of painter Thomas Cole, now a historic site, or hike the Hudson River Art Trail, a journey to many of the places that inspired some of America's greatest landscape painters.

Today, the Great Northern Catskills (GNC) of Greene County is a four-season destination providing endless outdoor recreation, historical and cultural options, one-of-a-kind lodging opportunities, festive Catskill Park and Hudson Valley region, the county offers breathtaking views of the Hudson River and Catskill mountains.

Introduction

Greene County is seeking professional consultant services and desires to contract with an Agency of Record (AOR) for Tourism Services with the Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Planning (GCEDTP: Greene County's Official Destination Marketing Organization/DMO and Designated Tourism Promotion Agency/TPA). The Department requires a full-service Advertising, Communications, and Public Relations Agency of Record (AOR) that can assist the department with all DMO tourism-related services, inclusive of, but not limited to: Strategic Planning, Public Relations; Content Management, Digital Marketing; Social Media Marketing; Search Engine Optimization/Search Engine Marketing; Advertising; Collateral Development; Video and Still Photography; Broadcast Production; Media Planning and Buying; and Website Management and Hosting;. (www.greatnortherncatskills.com)

The Great Northern Catskills of Greene County is part of two New York State Tourism Regions, Hudson Valley Tourism (HVT) and the Catskills Association of Tourism Services (CATS). Both organizations receive funding from the County via ILNY/Empire State Development Matching Funds program. The budget for the department is from the appropriation of funds designated by the Greene County Legislature.

Due to the recent worldwide pandemic, GNC is employing a back-to-basics approach. We will ensure our dollars are spent in the most economical and efficient way to deliver the best return on investment. We recognize that many of Greene County's businesses may not have the financial means to execute a strong marketing campaign so the county will look to implement a more robust sales strategy to encourage group and international travel. Our efforts will be key to their recovery.

In this plan there is a heavy focus on marketing to consumers who are in-state, primarily the NYC metro area, and those surrounding the Eastern New York State boarder. There is also an emphasis placed on the travel trade market, both domestic and international. In 2021 we built new pages on our website to promote group travel. We have an emphasis on building the travel trade market through relationships developed at the IPW 2021 Convention.

Additional information on the regional tourism impact, marketing and advertising analytics, and the strategic goals can be found on the bottom of the following webpage, <https://greencountyedc.com/business-support/projects-plans-studies/>.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

All firms submitting proposals in response to this solicitation must meet the following minimum requirements to qualify for consideration:

1. At least three years of experience providing Advertising, Website Management, Social Media, Content Development and Public Relations Services to a Tourism Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) with a proven track record of demonstrated results. Firms with no experience directly representing Tourism DMO's wishing to submit a proposal shall provide a statement and evidence of relevant experience similar in scope and nature to be considered for this solicitation.
2. Shall be a full-service Advertising, Website Management, Social Media, Content Development and Public Relations AOR. Firms not conducting business as an AOR wishing to submit a proposal shall provide a statement and evidence of contractor and sub-contractor relationships that would operate in similar scope and nature to be considered for this solicitation.
3. Shall have experience in New York State, the ILNY Catskills and Hudson Valley Tourism Travel Regions, and Matching Funds Program. Firms not currently familiar with NYS, Hudson Valley or the Catskills wishing to submit a proposal shall provide a statement and evidence of relevant experience similar in scope and nature with comparable travel regions to be considered for this solicitation.
4. Shall have experienced personnel, who possess the skills necessary for the work/services to be performed with respect to the goods and/or services to be furnished, capable of timely delivery of goods and/or services, and have the fiscal responsibility necessary to perform the obligations of any contract entered into for such goods and/or services.
5. Shall have experience in design, execution, hosting and content management for Adaptive/Responsive Website Design in Drupal.

REQUIRED ELEMENTS OF PROPOSAL

Please include the following information in your proposal:

1. Summary of qualifications relevant to representing Greene County Economic Development, Tourism and Planning.
2. Credentials, including a brief history of the firm and biographies of principals and staff who would be dedicated to the Greene County Economic Development, Tourism and Planning account. (Please also include the number of full-time and part-time employees who work for the firm).
3. If applicable, description of Minority and Women Owned Business Enterprise (M/WBE) qualifications and NYS Certification Number.
4. A complete list of services provided by the firm, including those not specified by this RFQ. Indicate which capabilities are performed internally and which are outsourced to sub-contractors and/or freelancers.
5. Description of experience in the Destination Marketing and Tourism industry and give examples of relevant work for Website Development, Advertising and Social Media campaigns, and Public Relations placements (include any campaign benchmark successes).
6. Description of performance tracking/measuring results and ROI methodologies. (Please also include examples of how these performances were used in marketing campaigns).
7. Remuneration Schedule with hourly rates and fees of all relevant personnel and services and an explanation of the billing policies, terms and accounting procedures as they will relate to Greene County Economic Development, Tourism and Planning as a client.
8. Financial statement demonstrating ability to handle the account, as it will require operation on a reimbursement basis.
9. A list of past and current accounts, indicating length of each relationship with your agency and details of services you provided. (List any past and current Destination Marketing and Tourism accounts separately).
10. References to include three clients the firm has served within the last three years.

Marketing Tactics - 2022

PAID ADVERTISING

- Will rely heavily on digital strategies. Will use channels that use behavioral targeting; retargeting those interested in the Great Northern Catskills of Greene County, and use authentic visuals and video.
- A portion of advertising spend will focus on building relationships with tour operators and receptive operators to increase individual and group travel, such as leisure travel, to the domestic and international markets.

OBJECTIVES

- Focus on digital media tactics for a trackable, conversion-based campaign lift.
- Continue to increase brand awareness of the Great Northern Catskills of Greene County a must-experience destination.
- Focus on diverse Greene County lodging (i.e., family resorts, yurts, treehouses, B&B, etc.).
- NEW: Deliver leads to county hotels for individual and group travel.
- NEW: Create opportunities for area businesses to participate in these media opportunities.

MARKETS

- Phase 1: Drive Markets/In-state
- Phase 2: Northeast / New England markets
- Phase 3: Domestic and International
- Behavior based instead of geographic
- Vacation Planners (travel trade)

TACTICS

- Approx. 75% Digital; 25% Broadcast/Print/Radio
- Retargeting (People interested in in the Catskills)

PUBLIC RELATIONS AND EARNED MEDIA

- Conduct media missions to involve local area businesses to tell the story of the GNC experience. Markets chosen as consumer sentiment and research dictates.
- A portion of the public relations spend will focus on building relationships with tour operators and receptive operators to increase individual and group travel, such as leisure travel, to the domestic and international markets.

OBJECTIVES

- Maximize exposure of Greene County as a tourism destination and highlight area businesses to showcase things to do during visit.
- Connect county area businesses with media to increase brand awareness of a GNC vacation.

MARKETS

- Phase 1: Drive Markets/In-state
- Phase 2: Northeast / New England markets
- Phase 3: Domestic and International
- Behavior based instead of geographic
- Vacation Planners (travel trade)

TACTICS

- Proactively pitch story ideas to writers and publications, bloggers/vloggers, social influencers, and broadcast outlets.
- Send monthly media e-newsletter to a travel media contact list where an emphasis is on continuing to build the list with applicable media.
- Host media in destination—reactive and proactive.
- Attend ILNY Media Night to connect with and pitch media.
- Identify relevant media, resonating storylines, coordinate individual/group media missions/appointments.

SOCIAL MEDIA

- Social Media Channels:
 - Facebook: [GreatNorthernCatskills](#)
 - Instagram: [catskilltourism](#)
 - YouTube: [CatskillsNY](#)
 - Twitter: [CatskillTourism](#)
- Continue to leverage social media to inspire visitors to choose the Great Northern Catskills of Greene County as their next vacation destination.

OBJECTIVES

- Increase followers and engagement on social channels.
- To more effectively and better diversify the inclusion of county businesses into GNC social content.
- Improve brand awareness.

MARKETS

- In-State
- Drive Market, Northeast
- Behavior based instead of just geographic

TACTICS

- Leverage Crowdriff to secure user generated content to showcase authentic experiences.
- Apply and promote hashtags to maximize aggregation, engagement, and reach.
- Utilize Instagram stories to highlight 'things to do.'
- Use Influencers to promote the GNC brand.
- Educate locals and area businesses on ways to share our messages on their social media.

WEBSITE AND CONTENT

- The website will continue to be a good resource for all things Greene County travel.
- Continue to optimize website to make more relevant and increase authority so it can rank well and drive more qualified traffic to the website.

OBJECTIVES

- To more effectively and better diversify the inclusion of county businesses and their content into GNC online and social content.
- Utilizing content, increase awareness of the Great Northern Catskills of Greene County, with a special emphasis on unique lodging.
- Educate area businesses about relevant marketing and tourism trends and best practices.

MARKETS

- Local tourism industry/area businesses when focusing on internal communications
- In-State
- Drive Market, Northeast
- Behavior based instead of just geographic

TACTICS

- Drive traffic to GreatNorthernCatskills.com via digital ads, social media, search engine optimization efforts, and other marketing tactics.
- Utilize and promote hashtags to maximize aggregation, engagement, and reach.
- Optimize website to showcase business listings and hyperlink to their websites.
- Enhance event listings to become the “go to” website for all events in Greene County.
- Optimize search feature on website.
- Generate business e-newsletters with relevant and timely tourism trends and best practice.

VISITOR SERVICES AND GUIDES

- Effectively promote the locations of the visitor center and kiosks throughout the county.
- Find new ways to distribute guides and collateral to eliminate waste.

OBJECTIVES

- Provide a safe and fun environment for our visitors.
- Continue in-county promotion of Travel Guide and general brochures.
- Advocate for locals to be brand ambassadors to help extend our reach.

MARKETS

- Local, regional, and statewide.

TACTICS

- Ensure visitor center and county kiosks have up-to-date travel collateral to assist visitors.
- Use New York State Thruway Travel Plaza Centers and other outlets as budget allows to distribute our collateral.
- Distribute travel guide and other brochures to local businesses bi-annually, or on an as needed basis.
- Development of promotional materials and printed products, such as:
 - ✓ Travel Guide
 - ✓ Mountain Bike Guide
 - ✓ Dining Guide
 - ✓ Motorcycle Guide
 - ✓ Beverage Guide
 - ✓ Golf Guide
 - ✓ Vacation Guide

Overview of Sales

SALES: GROUP SALES – *NEW FOCUS*

- The primary goal of the GNC sales department is to promote Greene County as the ideal destination for individual, family, and small group travel.

OBJECTIVES

- Provide sufficient funding to seize opportunities to book additional visitation into the destination or for programs that will generate leads for new group business.
- Identify listings within third-party online destination sales and marketing channels.
- Generate qualified group leads and increase room nights for Greene County hotels and other tourism businesses.

MARKETS

- State and regional leisure group planners
- Destination wedding specialists and planners
- Domestic travel agents

TACTICS

- Participate in industry tradeshows which connect GNC to our target markets.
- Host Familiarization Tours (FAMS) for meeting planners from target market segments.
- Careful selection of qualified third-party planners will be included in these FAMS, as they may acquire all types of segments of business.

SALES: TRAVEL TRADE – *NEW FOCUS*

Reaching international foreign independent travelers is done working through both Tour Operators located internationally and Receptive Operators, who are located stateside. Collectively, International Tour Operators and Receptive Operators are referred to as the Travel Trade.

OBJECTIVES

- Become top-of-mind among international travelers who are booking long-haul trips to the Catskills and the Hudson River Valley.
- Identify Tour and/or Receptive Operators to create campaigns promoting Greene County as the ideal long-haul holiday and generate bookings from international markets.
- Maintain relationships with Tour and Receptive Operators in order to keep them informed of updates in the area and to stay current on any materials needed (images, copy, etc.) for their printed sales brochures and website landing pages.
- Continue to participate in opportunities to meet with product managers to increase offerings for the area to the international market.
- Keep international reservation agents educated on the amenities of the area so they can assist guests in booking the destination for their holiday.

MARKETS

- Tour and Receptive Operators representing the international markets
- Focus on Europe and Canada.

TACTICS

- Hold some funding in contingent status in order to have it readily available for time-sensitive opportunities that will generate international bookings for the area.
- Participate in industry tradeshows which connect GNC with Tour and Receptive Operators who service our target markets.
- Host Familiarization Tours for international product managers and reservation agents.
- Utilize and enhance listings within third party online destination sales and marketing channels such as Touroperatorland.

Effectiveness Measurements

RESEARCH

Current relation with Rove Marketing includes a dashboard of the past three years of near data (mobile data of select points of interests) and AirDNA (short-term rental data).

OBJECTIVES

1. Develop the Catskills region and county dashboard including, but not limited to, Google Analytics, Website Goals, Social Media Stats, Tourism Economic Results, and much more.
2. Identify other data indicators to include in the county dashboard.

TACTICS

1. Leverage research data to make sound marketing decisions to keep the Great Northern Catskills of Greene County the top destination of choice for all travel needs.

Consultant Selection

Staff of the Department of Economic Development, Tourism & Planning will review consultant proposals. Greene County may conduct interviews with one or more respondents. The Greene County Legislature will authorize the GCEDTP to enter into a multi-year contract with one full-service agency of record. All respondents will be notified of the selection as soon as possible after the submission deadline.

Special Conditions:

The selection of a consultant shall not guarantee any minimum amount of services under the contract.

Upon selection and award, Greene County will enter into a multi-year contract. On an annual basis scopes of services will be negotiated, depending on the Marketing Plan, with a dollar amount based on the legislature funding of tourism for that year.

Greene County reserves the right to reject any or all proposals; to negotiate any elements of a proposal; to conduct interviews at its sole discretion; and to solicit and/or select contractors outside of the scope of this RFQ.

Greene County assumes no responsibility or liability for costs incurred by respondents to this RFQ, including any requests for additional information, interviews, or negotiations.

All applicable State and Federal rules and regulations must be adhered to by the consultant including stipulations on equal opportunity employment, affirmative action, nondiscrimination, civil rights, Americans with disabilities, and record keeping.

Greene County anticipates that this RFQ will meet its needs for consultants to complete the aforementioned professional services, and is conducting this process in accordance with the procurement rules and procedures established and known at the time of the release of this RFQ. Contract language with the successful consultant (s) shall include the appropriate State and Federal language regarding the provision of services to the County.

Greene County, in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and 78 Stat. 252, 42 USC 2000d-4 and Title 49, Code of Federal Regulations, Department of Transportation, Subtitle A, Office of the Secretary, part 21, Nondiscrimination in federally assisted programs of the Department of Transportation issued pursuant to such Act, hereby notifies all bidders that it will affirmatively ensure that any contract entered into pursuant to this advertisement, minority business enterprises will be afforded full opportunity to submit bids in response to

this invitation and will not be discriminated against on the grounds of race, color, sex or national origin in consideration for an award.

Greene County requires its consultants working on New York State funded projects (when applicable) to meet any employment and business goals imposed on grant awards through Executive Law 15-A for the State's Minority and Women Owned Business Enterprise contracting program (MWBE). Greene County also requires its consultants working on New York State funded projects to meet any employment and business goals imposed on grant awards (when applicable) through Executive Article 17-B for participation by Service Disabled Veteran Owned Businesses. Certified Minority and/or Women Owned Business Enterprises as well as Service Disabled Veteran Owned Businesses are encouraged to respond to the RFQ.

Submissions in response to this RFQ shall be considered public documents and, with limited exceptions, all submissions will be available for inspection and copying by the public. If a firm considers any portion of its proposal to be protected under the Freedom of Information Law governing access to public documents pursuant to Article 6 of the Public Officers Law, the firm shall identify each such portion as Confidential, Proprietary, or Business Secret. If a request is made for non-disclosure, Greene County will determine whether the material should be made available under the law. If the material is not exempt from public disclosure law, the County will notify the firm of the request and allow the firm five days to take whatever action it deems necessary to protect its interests. If the firm fails or neglects to take whatever action within said period, the County will release portions of the submission deemed subject to disclosure. By making a submission, the firm assents to the procedure outlined in this paragraph and shall have no claim against Greene County on account of actions taken under such procedure.

SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

A formal Request for Qualification may be obtained by contacting Greene County Economic Development, Tourism and Planning, Greene County Tourism Building, 700 Route 23B, Leeds, New York 12451. The RFQ may also be directly downloaded from www.greeneconomy.com.

To be considered, the proposal must respond to all requirements in the RFQ. Proposals received after the deadline stated below will not be considered.

Questions regarding this RFQ should be sent in writing to: Heather Bagshaw, Tourism Director, Greene County Tourism, via email at hbagshaw@discovergreene.com.

All proposals shall include a completed Proposal Cover Sheet (next page) and include a properly signed Certification of Non-collusion (last page).

Please provide [1] electronic copy and [3] bound copies of your proposal by 4:00PM Tuesday, November 30, 2021. Please send printed copies in a sealed envelope or box to:

Heather Bagshaw

Tourism Director

Greene County Tourism

700 Route 23B

Leeds, NY 12451

Phone: 518-943-3223

Email: hbagshaw@discovergreene.com

PROPOSAL COVER SHEET

RFQ Response for Greene County Economic Development, Tourism & Planning

Date: _____

To: Heather Bagshaw

Tourism Director

Greene County Tourism

700 Route 23B

Leeds, NY 12451

Phone: 518-943-3223

Email: hbagshaw@discovergreene.com

From: _____ (Proposer's Name)

_____ (Address)

_____ (City & State)

_____ (Phone)

_____ (Email)

_____ (Web Address)

Name of Corporation

Signature of Contracting Officer

NON-COLLUSION BIDDING CERTIFICATION

By submission of this proposal, each proposer and each person signing on behalf of the proposer, and in the case of a joint proposal, each party thereto certifies as to its own organization under penalty of perjury, that to the best of his or her knowledge and belief;

1. The prices in this proposal have been arrived at independently without collusion, consultation, communication or agreement, for the purpose of restricting competition, as to any matter relating to such prices with any other contractor or with any competitor.
2. Unless otherwise required by law, the prices which have been quoted in this proposal have not been knowingly disclosed by the proposer and will not be knowingly disclosed by the proposer prior to opening, directly or indirectly, to any other proposer or to any other competitor, and
3. No attempt has been made or will be made by the proposer to induce any other person, partnership or corporation to submit or not to submit a bid for the purpose of restricting competition.

Name of Proposer: _____

Signature of Proposer

Or Representative: _____

Title: _____

Date: _____

FALSE STATEMENTS MADE HEREIN ARE PUNISHABLE PURSUANT TO SECTION 240 OF THE NEW YORK STATE PENAL LAW

NOTE: A proposal shall not be considered for award, nor shall any award be made where items (1), (2), and (3) above have not been complied with; however, that if in any case the proposer cannot make the foregoing certification, the proposer shall so state and furnish with the proposal a signed statement which sets forth in detail the reason therefore. Where items (1), (2), and (3) above have not been complied with, the proposal shall not be considered for award, nor shall any award be made unless the head of the purchasing unit or the political subdivision, public department, agency or official thereof to which the proposal is made, or his designee, determines that such disclosure was not made for the purpose of restricting competition.