



2018-2019 RFI: Visit North Carolina Print Program

RFI Posting Date: Thursday, November 16, 2017
RFI Deadline: Monday, December 4, 2017
Agency Contact: Shawn Gordon – Vice President – Media Director

Client Name: Visit North Carolina
Plan Name: 2018-2019 Fiscal: Print Program
Plan Period: July 1, 2018 – June 30, 2019

We are pleased to invite your participation in this Request for Information for Visit North Carolina’s 2018-2019 print program.

Due to a high number of RFI submissions, responses should be comprehensive, focused and strategically compelling, as opportunities to elaborate in person or via phone are not guaranteed. If there are questions and/or additional needs, LGA will reach out to you.

Thank you in advance for your consideration and participation in this annual planning process for Visit North Carolina.

Introduction

This **RFI (REQUEST FOR INFORMATION)** serves as the information gathering process for the 2018-2019 program year (July 1, 2018 – June 30, 2019). Our objective is to source, collect and review print media opportunities that will potentially help Visit NC succeed in attracting more visitors to North Carolina.

Your submission to this RFI will stand as your singular entry within the Visit NC vendor library for the 2018-2019 fiscal planning year.

The Visit NC print program is designed to generate promotional opportunities for two distinct but equal factions:

1. North Carolina Brand (Visit NC)
2. Partner Co-Op Programs

Once gathered, LGA will review all RFI submissions in order to build a consideration group designed to meet the specific 2018-2019 campaign parameters (e.g., budget, target audiences, creative concepts). **Only** vendors that fall within the consideration set for the campaign will be contacted and presented with an opportunity to propose detailed media plans and recommendations.

Print Pillars for 2018-19:

Campaign	Description / Goals	Timing	Plan Timing
Brand Campaign	Drive awareness of North Carolina and traffic to VisitNC.com	Planned annually Campaign flight dates TBD based on final plan	RFP distribution: Jan. 2, 2018 Proposals due: Jan. 12 Plan development: thru Jan. Plan approval: late Feb.
Partner Co-op Program	Enables North Carolina tourism partners (DMOs, attractions, etc.) to amplify their marketing voice via programs facilitated by Visit NC	Planned annually Campaign flight dates TBD based on final plan	RFP distribution: Jan. 2, 2018 Proposals due: Jan. 12 Plan development: thru Jan. Plan approval: late Feb. Partner sales: March+

The Brand Campaign and Partner Co-op Program will be approved by the Visit NC client team in February and presented at the 2018 Visit North Carolina 365 Conference on Tourism (March 4-6, 2018 in Winston-Salem, North Carolina).

Visit NC Messaging & Audience Strategy

CONFIDENTIALITY: *The following brand and audience strategy information is confidential and proprietary to Visit North Carolina. We ask that you refrain from sharing beyond those in your organization who must be aware in order to structure your proposal(s), and absolutely do not circulate to other destinations, advertisers, prospects or industry contacts.*

Brand Strategy

Visit North Carolina orients all messaging and communications on the following brand strategy statement:

The inviting authenticity that pervades North Carolina creates richer experiences where you feel each moment and emotion to the fullest to truly be more in touch with yourself.

This “richer experiences” strategy focuses not just on North Carolina as a place, but on the genuine, substantive, depth of emotion that travelers feel when they’re here, which drives them to feel more like themselves.

Target Audience

Visit NC is intentionally moving away from defining our target audience based on demographics. While demographic data is still a factor, we recognize today’s traveler is more complex than an age range, income bracket or family status, and have evolved our strategy accordingly.

Overall, our primary target audience is comprised of travelers with medium affinity for North Carolina who have not yet visited the state. This definition is rooted in data: once travelers visit North Carolina, nearly 90% of them return. Our focus, therefore, is on converting travelers who have not yet visited to inspire them to come once, then again and again based on their experience in our state. While this doesn’t actively exclude past visitors, we’re especially interested in inspiring those who know something about us, have overall positive perceptions of us, but haven’t yet come to see us.

Because we also know this group is looking for depth of feeling, our audience and messaging strategy centers around what people are seeking, not just who they are. And not just the activity or experience they’re seeking – the emotion they’re hoping to feel as a result of that experience. We’ll craft content, creative, public relations and other messaging around these mindsets to best connect with and appeal to them.

Free & Joyful	Travelers seeking this mindset want a break from everyday responsibilities, driven by experiences that feel lighthearted and unrestricted. They often travel with significant others and friends, and embrace activities like breweries, beaches, hiking, nightlife, urban sightseeing and concerts. They are likely to be inspired by social media, especially by unique places to stay and things to do.
Full & Connected	Travelers seeking this mindset are looking to unite and embrace loved ones, driven by places to make the best memories with family and friends. They often travel with significant others, parents, kids and grandparents, and embrace activities like beaches, zoos, sporting events and sightseeing. They are less likely to be influenced by ads, reviews or social media.
Exhilarated & Alive	Travelers seeking this mindset love activity and adrenaline, driven by experiences and adventures that offer them the next big rush. They often travel with friends, kids and significant others, and embrace activities like whitewater rafting, ziplines, biking, mountain climbing, water sports, NASCAR and concerts. They pay attention to ads, but find user reviews most important, and search for inspiration on social media.
Serene & Refreshed	Travelers seeking this mindset believe getting away best helps them relax and recharge, and they are driven by or attracted to places that fulfill and refresh them. They often travel with significant others, friends, kids and alone, and embrace activities like spas, gardens, beaches, nature, galleries and museums. They’re most openly influenced by ads, especially by unique places to stay and things to do.

Visit NC Messaging & Audience Strategy (continued)

Visitor Profile

It's also important to consider the profile of the existing North Carolina visitor. Here are a few key factors to inform your proposal recommendations:

Trip duration:	3.7 nights (for overnight travelers)
Average HHI:	\$84,220
Transportation:	91% arrive by car
Trip expenditure:	Averages \$616 per overnight trip

Seasonal visitation trends:

- Summer: 36%
- Fall: 24%
- Spring: 22%
- Winter: 19%

Primary Markets: FL, GA, MD, OH, PA, NJ, NY, SC, TN, VA, Washington, D.C.

Objectives & Measures of Success

The overall success of the 2018-2019 Visit NC Brand campaign is ultimately judged by its ability to **generate awareness and drive qualified traffic to North Carolina travel destinations, activities and events.**

Success of the 2018-2019 Partner Co-Op program will be determined by the ability to deliver impactful, cost-effective marketing opportunities that generate strong levels of partner participation.

2018-2019 RFI Requirements

Please show us **why Visit NC and LGA should consider your property** for inclusion within the upcoming 2018-2019 campaign. What are your core capabilities and what separates you from the crowd?

Given the brand strategy and target audience information shared here, we want to know **how you are uniquely positioned to help deliver our desired audiences** to VisitNC.com and ultimately North Carolina.

This is your chance to creatively tell us your story. For instance: How do you align with the target mindsets we've identified here? How could your outlet help drive longer trips to North Carolina? How could you help drive higher trip expenditures? How could you help reach travelers who plan trips months or weeks ahead of trips and those who plan the day before? How could you bolster our strong seasons and help during our shoulder seasons? How can you target our key mindsets?

In addition to traditional print components, LGA is interested in learning more about possible opportunities to reach your publication's audience through digital programs – primarily in the form of sponsored and/or featured content hosted on your site(s). This featured content may be utilized by Visit NC to promote brand messages for the state or for co-op partners, or a combination of both. Creativity in offerings across content, social media, sweepstakes and custom programming is encouraged.

LGA is also requesting that all proposals include an overview of the “Added-Value” opportunities available from your group based on various spending level options.

We will consider all items that would help increase the value of the program for both Visit North Carolina and its partner destinations. Examples of desired “Added-Value” would be the ability to either increase our print frequency (bonus pages) or adding a digital component in conjunction with our print campaign (digital impressions) to form integrated packages.

Additionally, Visit North Carolina is interested in exploring opportunities for enhanced consumer engagement. As such, we welcome further details on opportunities to engage outside of traditional paid impressions to include activities such as, but not limited to: digital influencer partnerships, editorial roundtable meetings, test kitchen demonstration access, etc.

Submissions will be reviewed and assessed based on the following criteria:

- Vendor overview, including key differentiators
- Strategic alignment with Visit NC's brand message and target audiences
- Strategies for driving campaign awareness and website visitation
- Ability to supply access to rich 1st and/or 3rd party audience data
- Ability to provide low-investment level opportunities for Visit NC Partner Co-Op programs
- Targeted reach and scale, plus contextual relevancy
- Points of innovation and creativity
- General pricing structure/efficiencies (CPMs) for both Full Page and Spread Units. Please also include opportunities for added-value (e.g., negotiated rates, additional pages, bonus digital weight)
- Foundation for measurability and ability to show program performance
- Ability to demonstrate Travel, Tourism & Hospitality industry success, particularly but not limited to other state tourism/DMO brands. Previous work on parallel industries would also be of interest as they may stretch thinking
- Communication effectiveness (e.g., responsiveness, thoroughness, attention to details)

Submission Delivery

RFI responses are due by 5pm on Monday, December 4, 2017.

Please mail a hard copy of your 2018 Media Kit as well as your last three (3) issues to Shawn Gordon at the address listed below. Do **NOT** reply to the originating RFI distribution email or send email submissions directly to any Visit NC or LGA contact.

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2018 Visit North Carolina 365 Conference | Sponsorship Opportunities

The [Visit North Carolina 365 Conference](#) is the single best opportunity of the year to connect with more than 500 participants of North Carolina's tourism industry leaders and decision-makers. This annual conference will be held March 4-6, 2018 at the Benton Convention Center in Winston-Salem, NC and includes participants from all travel and tourism sectors – including destinations, attractions, lodging and more. This opportunity to speak directly with tourism professionals has proven to create new and lasting relationships for previous sponsor attendees above and beyond any partnerships with Visit NC. In addition to exhibitor networking time with all attendees, sponsors also have the opportunity to receive a full list of attendees prior to the conference to seek appointments and follow-ups after the Conference. Sponsorship packages start at \$1,500, with full details and benefits available for [review here](#).

NOTE: While Visit NC certainly encourages sponsorship participation at the 2018 Conference, any commitments, or lack thereof, will not be factored into planning decisions specific to this RFI.

For information regarding available sponsorship opportunities, please reach out to Visit NC's Tourism Marketing Specialist and Conference Planner, Dana Grimstead (dana.grimstead@visitnc.com; 919.447.7761).