



**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS:
MARKETING AND ADVERTISING PARTNER**

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The Natchez Convention Promotion Commission (NCPC), operating as Visit Natchez, serves as the official destination marketing organization for Natchez, Mississippi, with a mission to promote the city as a premier location for leisure travel, group tours, meetings, and conventions. Through strategic marketing, stakeholder collaboration, and responsible stewardship of public tourism funding, Visit Natchez works to drive visitation, increase overnight stays, and enhance the overall economic impact of tourism within Adams County. As the destination continues to evolve, Visit Natchez is committed to strengthening its position in the regional and national tourism landscape while ensuring alignment among its marketing efforts, community stakeholders, and long-term growth objectives.

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PURPOSE & INTENT

Visit Natchez seeks to engage a professional marketing firm to serve as its primary integrated marketing partner (one-stop-shop), responsible for strategy, creative, media, public relations, and performance reporting, among potentially other marketing-related functions.

The selected firm will be required to:

- Provide strategic leadership tied to real outcomes
- Align marketing with destination realities and stakeholder interests
- Operate in a board-facing, performance-driven environment
- Help guide Visit Natchez through a post-ARPA transition



BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Context

Natchez is a destination that has, and continues to be, defined largely in terms of historical context. While this continues to be important, it has been determined that it is necessary for Natchez brand messaging to evolve to capture new/emerging audiences, and better align with post COVID travel trends.

The following points outline top-line aspects identified by Visit Natchez that should guide your firm's response to this request:

Destination Strengths

- Historic architecture and heritage tourism
- Mississippi River and river cruise visitation
- Strong regional drive markets

Destination Challenges

- Aging legacy audience
- Short average length of stay (1.6 nights)
- Perception as a pass-through destination
- Underdeveloped awareness among younger travelers
- Positioning versus other in-state and regional destinations
- Limited weekend options (many hospitality businesses are closed on Sundays)

Emerging Opportunities

- Cultural tourism (food, music, Black history)
- Forks of the Road investment
- New Houston air service (direct flight)
- Luxury RV resort
- Expansion of experiential assets



CAMPAIGN OBJECTIVES

Preservation of Legacy Tourism

The selected firm will be charged with collaborating on strategy development for preserving Natchez's primary tourism drivers, namely historical based tourism centered around Spring and Fall Pilgrimage, while also concurrently evolving messaging to be more appealing and relevant to younger audiences.

Brand Evolution

The selected firm will be asked to offer recommendations on evolving the Visit Natchez destination brand to be more relevant to non-traditional audiences, focusing on aspects such as cultural and experiential based hospitality experiences.

Increased Average Length of Stay

Visit Natchez has identified increasing average length of stay, specifically for leisure travelers, as a primary KPI. Average current length of stay for drive market travelers is 1.6 - 1.8 days. The goal of Visit Natchez is to increase this to 2+ average days over the length of this marketing contract. The selected firm will be asked to offer recommendations for both marketing campaigns promoting increased length of stay, as well as potential programming, activations, and organizational adaptations within the city that will help to achieve this goal.

Increased Visitor Value

The selected firm will be asked to present both messaging and media strategies that focus on optimizing high-value visitors over volume visitation.

**Repeat Visitation**

Natchez has traditionally strong repeat visitation, much of which is tied to historical based tourism (i.e. Pilgrimage). The selected firm will be asked to make recommendations to increase repeat visitation among non-legacy audiences.

Stakeholder Alignment

Visit Natchez is a highly unique destination market. Stakeholders include historical based entities, a culinary ecosystem, retail outlets, public/elected officials, and hospitality workers, among others. It is important the firm handling Visit Natchez tourism marketing be aware and have the capability to offer recommendations that bring alignment among all stakeholder audiences.



ENGAGEMENT AND PARTNERSHIPS

Visit Natchez reserves the right to award multiple marketing contracts to multiple firms. However, Visit Natchez prefers to deal with a “one-stop-shop” through which all marketing and advertising functions may be coordinated. There is no preference for all functions being handled in-house by a single firm, as the lead firm can and may partner with other qualified firms to provide optimal services in respective areas of expertise. In these terms, Visit Natchez’s preferred goals are two-fold:

- Retain a firm that will provide a single point of contact for all marketing, administrative, and accounting functions
- Identify the best partnership for firm(s) providing services, be it a single firm solution, or a partnership of firms coordinated by the leading firm

Visit Natchez does require full disclosure of any significant entities who are suggested as partners in execution of the terms of this RFP. Visit Natchez reserves the right to reject any partners the responding firm may suggest during any point during the execution of the marketing contract. Any agreements made by the selected firm with third party vendors are the sole responsibility of the selected firm in terms of payment, coordination, and quality control.



SCOPE OF SERVICES

Strategic Message Development

Visit Natchez is seeking a marketing partner that can move beyond generalized destination marketing frameworks and instead develop a strategic approach grounded in the specific realities of Natchez as a destination. This includes a demonstrated ability to interpret and apply visitor attribution data, visitor credit card expenditure insights, and web analytics to inform decision-making. The selected firm will collaborate with Visit Natchez staff and third-party consultants to identify not only visitor points of origin, but more importantly, which markets and audiences represent the greatest opportunity for increasing overnight stays, visitor value, and long-term sustainability.

NOTE: An updated strategic plan is currently in development for Visit Natchez. The selected firm will have access to this plan once completed, and will have access to collaborate with strategic plan consultant(s).

IMPORTANT: Strategic message development must reflect a clear understanding of Natchez's current position: a destination with strong historical tourism equity, but one that is under-leveraging emerging cultural, culinary, retail, and experiential assets. The firm should demonstrate how marketing efforts can better align with the actual product on the ground, including emerging developments such as the Forks of the Road investment, the luxury RV park, expanding in-market river cruise visitation to Natchez hospitality locations and assets, new air access, and evolving hospitality offerings.

Visit Natchez seeks strategic messaging recommendations that provide a clear, actionable roadmap, prioritizing high-value audiences, longer stays, and repeat visitation within a post-ARPA funding environment.



Creative Development

Visit Natchez is currently utilizing the “Experience Elevated” branding campaign. However, there is an acknowledged need to critically evaluate whether current creative assets are effectively reflecting the true energy and uniqueness of the destination.

Feedback from local leadership and stakeholders indicates that some recent marketing materials could potentially be more vibrant, emotionally focused, and reflect a more proprietary sense of place. The selected firm will be expected to evolve or make recommendations for development of creative assets with compelling, ownable narratives, totally unique to the Natchez experience.

Moving forward, Visit Natchez desires creative executions that emphasize people-centered storytelling, namely showcasing real people, real experiences, and the sensory richness that Natchez has to offer. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Food and dining experiences
- Music and cultural expression
- Social and experiential moments
- Mississippi River/Sunset event activations
- Experiential historical programming
- Unique local artisan/retail outlets

Visit Natchez also believes there is a significant opportunity to expand storytelling around Black history and cultural heritage, including Juneteenth programming and civil rights-related assets, in a way that is authentic, respectful, and engaging to broader audiences.

The winning firm should expect to develop creative assets that will not simply “promote” Natchez but will redefine how the destination is perceived, particularly among younger, experience-driven travelers.



To support this direction, Visit Natchez expects the development of a comprehensive suite of creative assets that can be deployed across paid, owned, and earned media channels. These assets should work together under a cohesive brand umbrella, while also allowing for flexibility across seasonal campaigns, audience segments, and marketing objectives.

At a minimum, the selected firm should anticipate developing:

- **Broadcast and Streaming Video Assets:** This includes :30 and :15 spots, as well as longer-form storytelling pieces that can be used across connected TV, digital platforms, and Visit Natchez interactive properties. These assets should capture the emotional tone of Natchez, incorporating real visitors and locals, and highlighting moments that encourage longer stays. Providing horizontal and vertical-oriented video assets is a requirement.
- **Short-Form and Social Video Content:** For use on platforms including Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, TikTok and emerging channels. This includes vertical video, reels, and episodic-style content that showcases specific experiences such as dining, live music, cultural events, and day-to-night transitions in the city.
- **Photography Library:** Featuring in-market shoots that prioritize people *and* places. These should include a mix of hero imagery and spatial content that can be used across digital, print, and public relations efforts. Particular emphasis should be placed on diversity, inclusivity, and real/candid interactions, and can be adapted for digital display and paid social content.
- **Website and Landing Page Experiences:** Includes refreshed or newly developed pages that elevate the destination's personality, drive, and support trip planning. This may include itinerary-based content, interactive storytelling, and conversion-focused experiences that encourage visitors to stay longer. This includes search optimization and site hosting.



- **Content Series and Editorial Storytelling:** Include themed video or written storytelling concepts. Examples include concepts such as “48 Hours in Natchez,” “A Weekend Without the Kids,” “Natchez After Dark,” “Going Under the Hill,” or culturally focused storytelling around Black heritage and Juneteenth welcomed. These should be designed to live across multiple channels and build a deeper narrative over time.
- **Public Relations and Media Assets:** This includes development of press kits, b-roll, curated itineraries, and story angles that support earned media outreach. These materials should align with the broader creative direction and provide media partners with compelling, ready-to-use content.
- **Seasonal and Event-Based Campaign Assets:** Of particular interest (but not limited to) key visitation periods such as Spring and Fall Pilgrimage, Christmas, and emerging opportunities like fall tourism and cultural events. These assets should create urgency and give visitors a reason to stay longer and/or return.
- **Experiential and On-the-Ground Concepts:** As appropriate given emerging opportunities, these concepts focus on enhancing the visitor experience and generating shareable content. This may include installations, activations, or partnerships that bring the brand to life within the destination.

Across all asset types, the expectation is that creative will not simply “promote” Natchez but will redefine how the destination is perceived. This includes shifting away from generic tourism messaging and toward a more distinctive, emotionally engaging portrayal that resonates with younger, experience-driven travelers while still respecting and retaining the legacy audience.



Public Relations/Earned Media

It is expected that public relations will play a central role in reshaping the narrative of Natchez and expanding its visibility beyond traditional tourism audiences. The selected firm and/or its partner will be expected to develop and execute a comprehensive earned media strategy that positions Natchez as a destination of cultural depth, authenticity, and evolving relevance to new/non-legacy audiences.

This will include proactive outreach to both leisure travel and meetings/conventions media, with a clear emphasis on storytelling that reflects the full spectrum of the Natchez experience. Visit Natchez wishes that particular focus be placed on:

- Cultural and heritage storytelling, including underrepresented narratives
- Historical tourism (with focus on experiential opportunities)
- Overall experiential tourism
- “Couples” and “Getaway” concepts
- Emerging assets (RV facility, river cruises, direct flights)
- Culinary ecosystem
- Retail ecosystem
- Seasonal and event-driven opportunities (including holiday tourism, festivals, and emerging programming)

PR efforts should be incorporated as part of the overall marketing/content calendar to ensure that media placements support key seasonal priorities such as Spring and Fall pilgrimage, as well as under-leveraged opportunities like Christmas and fall tourism.

The selected firm should demonstrate an earned media experience in generating meaningful coverage that not only increases awareness but contributes to changing perception and driving higher-value visitation.



Visit Natchez considers organic social media implementation and any recommended travel influencer implementations as falling under the PR/earned media segment of marketing efforts. In your response, please specify how your firm intends on handling/addressing these aspects, whether on an in-house basis, through a third party partner, or as a combination.

NOTE: If the responding firm is partnering with a third party for public relations/earned media/social media services, one additional applicable case study (in addition to the main respondent's case studies) may be submitted. The partner firm must be disclosed as the underlying service provider if this is the case.

Media Planning/Buying

The winning firm will be required to make recommendations on paid media planning, placement, and reporting for Visit Natchez in accordance with the destination's marketing objectives.

Visit Natchez is particularly interested in partners who can identify and invest in markets that demonstrate strong potential for overnight stays, longer stays, and higher visitor spend, rather than relying solely on traditional regional drive markets.

Media planning and buying should be based in a disciplined, data-informed approach that prioritizes impact over volume. The winning firm will be required to present media plan recommendations to Visit Natchez marketing staff and, upon approval, may be asked to present to the applicable Visit Natchez governing bodies as instructed by Visit Natchez staff.



The selected firm will be expected to develop a comprehensive annual media plan that aligns with strategic objectives, followed by detailed quarterly plans submitted no less than 60 days prior to campaign launch. These plans should reflect a clear understanding of seasonality, including the importance of pilgrimage seasons, holiday tourism, and event-based travel. These plans should also reflect recommendations for targeting meeting and convention planners.

Equally important is demonstrating the ability to remain flexible. The Natchez market is influenced by a range of factors: events and weather as well as unforeseen emerging opportunities. The contracted firm must be prepared to adjust media allocations in real time to maximize performance.

IMPORTANT: Respondents to this RFP should clearly state how media planning and buying efforts will align with, and in certain cases adapt to, changes that might occur in earned media, creative development, social media, experiential, and other marketing efforts.

IMPORTANT: All media efforts must be supported by transparent, actionable reporting that goes beyond impressions, clicks, and placements. While these are required, it will be important to demonstrate how media investment contributes to increasing length of stay, visitor value, and overall return on investment. In your responses, please provide a brief narrative of how your firm intends on addressing these aspects.

NOTE: Responding firms are asked to present an example of an annual media plan that has been planned/placed for a destination with a budget similar to Visit Natchez. The name of the destination and other proprietary information may be redacted in your response. This can be offered as an addendum to your main proposal response and will not apply against the page count.



ACCESSIBILITY & INCLUSION

Visit Natchez views accessibility not just as a compliance requirement, but also as a strategic opportunity to expand its audience and improve the overall visitor experience.

The selected firm will be expected to incorporate accessibility and inclusivity into marketing assets, including creative development, digital platforms, and strategic recommendations. This includes ensuring that marketing materials reflect a diverse range of visitors and experiences, and that digital assets (including interactive presence) meet recognized accessibility standards.

Beyond marketing, there is an expectation that the firm will provide guidance and recommendations on how accessibility can be enhanced across the destination itself, working in coordination with local stakeholders. This may include identifying opportunities to better serve travelers with mobility challenges, sensory sensitivities, or other accessibility needs.

By approaching accessibility as a growth strategy, Visit Natchez aims to position itself as a destination that is not only welcoming, but intentionally inclusive.



QUALITY CONTROL

The selected firm will be fully responsible for the accuracy, quality, and correct execution of all marketing deliverables. This includes coordination with any third-party vendors involved in production, media placement, file delivery, proofreading, and all other aspects of campaign implementation.

Given the public nature of Visit Natchez's work and the importance of maintaining trust with stakeholders, there is little room for errors, executional deficiencies, or workflow issues. Visit Natchez recognizes that unforeseen issues can and do arise, but also expects that the winning firm will have processes in place for corrective action to address such. The firm is expected to maintain rigorous internal quality control processes to ensure that all materials meet agreed-upon standards and specifications.

Visit Natchez reserves the right to refuse payment for any work that contains errors, fails to meet approved requirements, or does not align with the agreed upon scope of work. This expectation is not intended to be punitive, but rather to reinforce the importance of precision, accountability, reporting, and professionalism in all aspects of campaign development and implementation.



MARKETING BUDGET

Visit Natchez has established a total post-ARPA annual marketing budget of **\$385,000**. This is inclusive of all strategy, creative, paid media, public relations, third-party vendor charges, commissions, out-of-pocket costs, search engine optimization, website hosting, and associated marketing expenses that will be handled through the selected marketing firm.

PLEASE NOTE: This budget represents a not-to-exceed amount over the course of Visit Natchez's fiscal year. Any overages that occur within the agreed upon scope of work for the fiscal year are the responsibility of the selected firm. It is expected that the selected firm will complete all requirements of the agreed upon scope of work within the available budget.

If Visit Natchez initiates changes to the agreed upon scope of work, additional compensation negotiations will occur.

Visit Natchez is not bound or committed to spending the entire stated marketing budget amount during the fiscal year.



REPORTING/ACCOUNTABILITY

Visit Natchez operates in a highly accountable environment, with expectations for clear communication not only with staff, but with board leadership and community stakeholders. As such, the selected firm must demonstrate a commitment to transparency, consistency, and clarity in all reporting.

This includes the delivery of detailed, itemized monthly charges, as well as comprehensive media and campaign performance reports. These reports should not simply present data, but should interpret results in a way that informs decision-making by identifying what is working, what is not, and what adjustments are recommended.

Reports must be delivered in advance of monthly board meetings. Visit Natchez staff may ask the firm to be prepared to present reporting in a manner that is accessible and meaningful to a non-technical audience. Of particular value will be the ability of the selected firm to connect marketing performance to broader organizational goals, such as increased length of stay and economic impact.

Visit Natchez also maintains strict expectations around financial transparency and may request account auditing at any time. All expenditures must be fully documented, and the organization reserves the right to review records for up to three years following the conclusion of the contract.



SCORING MATRIX AND REVIEW PROCESS

Scoring

The following protocol will be used for scoring responses from all firms. Categories are scored on scale of 1 - 10 with 10 being the highest. Categories requiring simple acknowledgements automatically receive a 10 for a “yes,” and a zero for a “no” or a “not-acknowledged.”

CATEGORY	WEIGHT	FIRM(S) SCORE
Section 1 : General Information <i>(All information completed and required acknowledgement made)</i>	YES/NO	
Section 2: Experience/Vision <i>(Includes case studies which can be added as addendum)</i>	30%	
Section 3: Demonstrated Knowledge <i>(Relative to Natchez market)</i>	30%	
Section 4: Media Management	20%	
Section 5: PR/Organic Social Media	5%	
Section 6: Budget <i>(Exceptions may be included as an addendum to your response)</i>	YES/NO	
Section 7: Quality Control	15%	
Section 8: Acknowledgements	YES/NO	



Process

Visit Natchez reserves the right to award its advertising and marketing account based strictly on responses submitted as a result of this request for proposals. However, the organization may choose to interview a group of firms in person. In the event that Visit Natchez chooses to conduct interviews, scores and information from this portion of the review process may not necessarily be considered in the final decision. Final award of this account is left solely to the discretion of Visit Natchez, and the organization's governing entities. By responding to this request for proposals, you are affirming that your company understands and agrees to these terms. Any objections or qualifications can be offered as an addendum to your response, and will not count against the page limit.

The following is an anticipated schedule for review and evaluation of all responses to this request for proposals. Visit Natchez reserves the right to adjust any dates. All dates reflect calendar year 2026.

Request for Proposals issued:	07/21
Intent to Bid form due:	07/29
Pre-bid teleconference:	07/30, Time 2PM CST
Questions from respondents due:	07/31
Answers to questions posted:	08/07
RFP responses due:	08/14, 5PM CST
Winning firm/selected firms notified:	08/21
Selected firm presentations:	09/07 - 09/11 (if needed)
Contract negotiations:	09/14 - 09/18
Contract initiation:	10/01 (anticipated)

Please note, responding to this RFP does not bind Visit Natchez from choosing any responding firm(s) for the purposes of a marketing contract. Visit Natchez reserves the right to reject any and all proposals as the review committee or governing bodies see fit.



Submittal

This RFP will be issued via email to a select group of qualified marketing firms as identified by Visit Natchez, posted to the Visit Natchez website, and posted to the Request for Proposals section of the Mississippi Tourism Association website. This RFP is open to any firms that meet the qualifications outlined herein.

Visit Natchez prefers to receive all responses in electronic format. This may be via email, a link to the proposal posted on your firm's website, or a link to the proposal utilizing a cloud-based platform.

All proposals should be submitted to Lynsey Gilbert:

lynsey@visitnatchez.org

Subject line: Visit Natchez Marketing RFP Response from (name of your firm)

NOTE: Confirmation of receipt of your proposal falls strictly on the submitting firm. Visit Natchez is not responsible for proposals that are not received.

Please note that any and all information and materials submitted in response to this RFP becomes the property of Visit Natchez and will not be returned to the submitting firm.

All responding firms are solely responsible for any costs incurred in the response to this request for proposals.



RESPONSE STRUCTURE

The following is an outline by which to structure your response. We ask that you limit your response narrative to no more than 15 singled-sided, 8.5" x 11" pages. This limitation does not include case studies or the sample media plan. These may be submitted as an addendum to your main response document and should be clearly labeled as such.

NOTE: Any information that your firm and/or partner firms deem proprietary should be marked as such on each applicable response section. All proposals will become part of the public record of the city of Natchez and Adams County, and thus available for public review. Visit Natchez is not responsible for the public availability of any information not specifically marked as proprietary to the underlying respondent.



SECTION 1: FIRM INFORMATION

1.1 General Information

- Firm name and primary office address
- Any secondary office addresses
- Office address where primary work for Visit Natchez would occur
- Website URL
- Number of years in business
- Primary contact (name, phone, email, text if applicable)
- Accounting/billing contact (name, phone, email)

1.2 Staffing

- Total number of current full-time employees, including titles
- Identification of key staff anticipated to be assigned to Visit Natchez
- Qualifications of key staff, with emphasis on:
 - Destination marketing experience
 - Relevant category expertise

1.3 General Acknowledgements/Declarations

Please provide commentary on the following. These can be in the form of “yes,” “no,” “acknowledged,” or you may provide further narrative if needed.

- Is your firm currently registered to conduct business in the state of Mississippi and in good standing with the office of the Mississippi Secretary of State?
- Please disclose any and all outstanding lawsuits and/or legal actions currently pending with your firm.
- Please list any lawsuits/legal actions with which your firm or your ownership structure has been involved with within the past five years.



- Please indicate if any of your firm's current ownership group or employees have been convicted of a felony within the past five years.
- Please disclose any legal actions (including judgements and settlements) with which your firm and ownership group have been involved relative to the United States federal government, the state of Mississippi, Adams County, Mississippi, or the city of Natchez, within the past 10 years.
- Indicate any professional or personal relationships that your firm's ownership group or current employees hold that could be construed as a business conflict of interest with Visit Natchez, the city of Natchez, or governing bodies within Adams County, Mississippi.
- Please disclose any real estate or business holdings that your firm, ownership group, or employees currently have in Adams County, Mississippi.
- Please acknowledge that your firm has reviewed this Request for Proposals in its entirety and understands all terms and conditions set forth. If your firm takes exceptions to any terms or conditions, these can be listed in your response as an addendum, with rationale and justification.



SECTION 2: EXPERIENCE AND VISION

2.1 General Experience

Please provide:

- A complete list of all destination marketing and/or hospitality clients served in the past five (5) years, including years of service
- A list of all currently active destination marketing/hospitality clients and description of services provided for each
- A list of any destination clients served within the past five (5) years that are no longer active, including dates of engagement
- Relevant industry memberships
- Key industry partnerships and the nature of partnerships

2.2 Destination Marketing Philosophy

Please provide a brief narrative of your firm's philosophy of general destination marketing, particularly relevant to your knowledge of and experience with Visit Natchez. It is encouraged that you address how your philosophy for developing and implementing marketing assets and programs for Visit Natchez will be both similar to, and different from, other destinations with whom your firm has worked.

2.3 Post-ARPA

Please provide a brief narrative of how your firm anticipates developing and implementing an effective marketing program in a post-ARPA funding environment that addresses the objectives of Visit Natchez.



2.4 Top-line thoughts

Provide a brief list of top-line marketing assets, executions, and implementations that your firm believes could best benefit Visit Natchez in reaching or exceeding its leisure and meetings/convention tourism objectives. Please limit this section to no more than a single page.

2.5 Long term

Provide a brief narrative of where your firm envisions Natchez in the regional tourism ecosystem within the next five years, and how Visit Natchez tourism marketing can be instrumental in achieving such. Please limit this response to no more than a single page.

2.6 Case Studies

Provide three relevant case studies that best demonstrate your firm's capabilities, including:

- Campaign objectives
- Strategic approach
- Creative asset production
- Paid media placement and delivery
- Partner/vendor management
- Key performance indicators (KPIs)
- Measurable outcomes (visitation, engagement, revenue impact, etc.)

If available, please include an additional case study for a destination marketing campaign your firm has implemented that did not involve ARPA funding. If this is one of your three case studies, an additional one is not required.

NOTE: Case studies do NOT count against the 15-page response limit. Please offer case studies as an addendum to the main body of your response. Creative samples may be submitted via images within the body of the RFP addendum as well as links relative to multimedia assets.



SECTION 3: DEMONSTRATED KNOWLEDGE

3.1 Market

Please create a narrative demonstrating your firm's understanding of Natchez as a destination. Specifically you should address:

- A narrative assessment of Visit Natchez's current position relative to competitive markets
- Perspective on how Visit Natchez's marketing should evolve to meet stated objectives
- Identification of:
 - One area with the greatest opportunity for improvement
 - One area where Visit Natchez is currently performing effectively

3.2 Audience

Please provide three recommendations your firm identifies as untapped or underserved audiences for Visit Natchez leisure and/or meetings/conventions tourism.

Provide rationale for each, which may include:

- Demographic
- Psychographic
- Geographic
- Behavioral insights
- Event/activation based opportunities
- Emerging assets (e.g. flight markets)



SECTION 4: MEDIA/PROMOTION PLANNING/MANAGEMENT

4.1 Capabilities/access

Please list major media platforms and outlets especially relative to destination marketing with whom your firm maintains consistent relationships. Please list the nature of the outlet/platform (i.e. digital media, linear broadcast, out-of-home, AI, etc.).

4.2 Reporting and accountability

Please describe the media reporting platforms your firm utilizes in terms of planning, placement, and campaign performance, and provide an applicable reporting sample. This sample can be included as an addendum and will not count against the page limit.

4.3 Strategy

Please describe your suggested approach for Visit Natchez to prioritizing media placement utilizing available visitor attribution tools (e.g. Symphony), digital presence (Google Analytics, third-party reporting), and other third party tools to which you may have access. This should be based on visitor value, not just volume, and take into account overall branding as well as seasonal promotions and other activations.

4.4 Optimization

Please describe your firm and (if applicable) your partner(s) firm's approach to paid media optimization. This should include but is not limited to traditional media, digital media, search engine optimization, and AI-related platforms.



4.5 Platform content recommendations

Please provide a recommended annual content calendar, inclusive of all recommended media outlets and platforms, included but not limited to:

- Overall branding
- Niche campaigns
- Seasonal campaigns
- Meetings/conventions

This calendar can be submitted as an addendum and will not count against the page limit.

4.6 Sales Process

Please describe your firm's philosophy for development of a successful sales funnel driving travel decisions.

4.7 SEM/GEM

Please provide your firm or partner(s) firm's philosophy on effective implementation of search engine marketing and generational engine marketing. You may provide speculative thoughts on how this can apply specifically to Visit Natchez.



4.8 Partner recommendations

Visit Natchez prefers a “one-stop-shop” approach for a marketing partner. The organization also realizes that it is likely necessary that our primary marketing agency partner with other firms and media outlets to provide the best possible suite of services. Please provide a brief list of media partners you believe will provide the most value relative to Visit Natchez’s marketing campaign. Visit Natchez does not prefer a “white glove” approach when it applies to partnering with third party vendors.

NOTE: Visit Natchez will not necessarily hold the winning firm accountable to utilizing the third-party vendors you list in this section. Visit Natchez reserves all rights to approved or reject any third-party vendors suggested by the primary marketing partner.

4.9 Added Value

Please describe the added value that your firm and/or partner firms anticipate receiving for Visit Natchez in terms of media placement.



SECTION 5: EARNED MEDIA/PUBLIC RELATIONS/ORGANIC AND INFLUENCER SOCIAL MEDIA

5.1 Earned Media/Public Relations

Public relations efforts should be designed to reposition Natchez in the minds of prospective and repeat visitors, evolving beyond the traditional identity as a static historic destination and focusing on more diverse, cultural, and leisure experiences.

Please describe how your firm or partner firm(s) will be responsible for developing and executing proactive earned media strategies and placements. These may include:

- High-value media opportunities across leisure travel, cultural, culinary, and meetings/conventions segments
- Development of compelling story angles that reflect the full breadth of the Natchez experience, including food, music, culture, Black heritage, and experiential travel
- Alignment of earned media outreach with key seasonal opportunities, including:
 - Spring and Fall pilgrimage
 - Christmas tourism
 - Emerging fall and shoulder-season opportunities
 - Cultural events
 - Unique culinary and retail experiences
 - “Package” travel opportunities (e.g. long weekends, couples getaways, girls trips)

Please describe how your firm will approach development of editorial-ready assets. These include but may not be limited to itineraries, photography, b-roll, and story-ready narrative frameworks. The goal is to provide a suite of assets that make it easy for media partners to tell the Natchez destination story.



Public relations efforts should not be measured solely by placements, but by their ability to accomplish the following. Please describe your firm or partner firm's approach to:

- Influencing perception
- Reaching new and higher-value audiences
- Supporting longer stays and repeat visitation
- Identifying corresponding paid media value of earned placements

It is also expected that your firm will work with Visit Natchez to solicit and organize in-market media tours relative to key Visit Natchez tourism assets and events. Please provide brief examples of how your firm or partner firm(s) have accomplished such for other destinations or hospitality clients.

5.2 Organic Social Media

Visit Natchez plans to partner with the winning firm to jointly manage all organic social media implementation, coordinating with the content calendar and to provide a real-time expression of the Natchez experience.

Please demonstrate how your firm or partner firm(s) will collaborate to develop and manage a social media content strategy that:

- Showcases authentic, candid experiences within the destination
- Highlights real people: visitors, locals, business owners, and creators
- Reframe Natchez as a “getaway” destination, especially for couples and adult travelers without kids, and “girls trips”
- Showcase itinerary depth, encouraging visitors to imagine spending multiple days in market (at least 2 nights)
- Highlight underrepresented experiences, including:
 - Culinary offerings
 - Live music
 - Cultural and community-driven events
 - Day-to-night transitions
 - Seasonal changes



Please consider that Visit Natchez desires moving social media content beyond static imagery with a greater focus on short term video (vertical and horizontal), episodic storytelling, immersive, experiential and “insider”/locals perspectives.

5.3 Influencers/Creators

Visit Natchez views influencer and creator partnerships as a means of generating credible, experience-driven storytelling that resonates with target audiences. Please describe how your firm or partner firm(s) will develop a structured approach to influencer engagement that moves beyond one-off visits and instead focuses on strategic alignment with the overall marketing and paid media strategy.

Please address your strategy for:

- Identifying creators who align with both Visit Natchez’s legacy, emerging, and underserved target audiences
- Identifying creators/influencers who prioritize promoting experiential/immersive content over static content, and demonstrate a track record of strong storytelling ability
- Identifying creators/influencers who have verified authentic engagement beyond simple follower count
- Ensuring creators/influencers focus on curated itineraries that encourage multi-day experiences, highlight core and emerging assets, and (importantly) showcase the diversity of Natchez.
- Plan for measuring and reporting influencer/creator impact relative to overall Visit Natchez marketing objectives

NOTE: The selected lead firm will be charged with negotiation of all creator/influencer content, including royalty-free usage rights for Visit Natchez in perpetuity that may be applied across any and all media platforms, paid or earned.



SECTION 6: BUDGET/RESOURCE ALLOCATIONS

6.1 Percentage Allocations

As stated, Visit Natchez is operating from a post-ARPA annual marketing budget of \$385,000. This amount should cover a full 12-month period, and be inclusive of all aspects mentioned in the “Marketing Budget” section of this RFP.

Please provide your firm’s best recommendations on how to allocate these funds from a percentage standpoint for the initial year of this marketing contract, based on your current knowledge of Visit Natchez and existing Visit Natchez assets.

We ask that you be transparent with all suggested fees, commissions, out-of-pocket allocations, partner firm(s) costs, etc., to be best of your ability.

6.2 Partner Firm Compensation Structure

Please indicate if your firm agrees to the following basis for a compensation structure:

- **Billable rate: \$110/hour** (this is inclusive of all administration, account management, strategy development, asset production, etc.) Please note this same rate also applies to any third party firms with which your company may partner.
- **Media commission: 10%** This applies to all types of paid media, including to but not limited to:
 - OTT/CTV/video streaming/pre-roll
 - Digital display
 - SEM/GEM
 - Paid social
 - Print/Out-of-home (magazines, billboards, etc.)



- **Production commission: 5%** This applies to any collateral printing, merchandise production, or event-related production costs that your firm will handle that involve out-of-pocket costs. Visit Natchez will not pay commission on top of any production services handled in-house by your firm or partner firms, including equipment rental, contracted workers, props, lodging, meals, etc. Such aspects will be reimbursed on a pass-through basis. It is required the selected firm provide all underlying invoices, receipts, and other relative documentation for all pass-through costs.

NOTE: All anticipated pass-through costs should be taken into account as you develop your firm's budget allocation recommendations.

- **Mileage, lodging, meals, out-of-pocket: Pass through** Visit Natchez will reimburse any mileage accrued on pre-approved work-related trips based on current the federal mileage reimbursement rate at the time the mileage is incurred. Visit Natchez will not pay directly for any fuel or vehicle rental charges. All lodging, meals, and other related staff charges incurred during the performance of the scope of work will be reimbursed to the firm upon presentation of underlying receipts and invoices. Visit Natchez will follow the state of Mississippi's guidelines in terms of allowable reimbursements. Visit Natchez reserves the right to establish a *per diem* rate for meals and lodging dependent on the underlying project. All out-of-pocket expenses must be approved by Visit Natchez prior to expenditure to be eligible for reimbursement.
- **Awards: Pass through** Fees for award shows entered on behalf of Visit Natchez will be reimbursed to the entering firm on a pass-through basis. Entries must be approved by Visit Natchez in advance of entry, or reimbursement may not be applicable. Firms are allowed to submit for awards not approved by Visit Natchez but will not be reimbursed for such.



In response to section 6. 2, please submit a copy of the compensation terms as presented in 6.2, signed by two officers of your firm who have authority to agree to stated terms.

If you have any objections or qualifications to any of the compensation terms, please submit these as an addendum to your response. This will not count against the RFP page limit.



SECTION 7: QUALITY CONTROL

Please provide a description of how your firm ensures quality control aspects for processes and deliverables, including management of your partner vendors and subcontractors, and their related deliverables.

Visit Natchez considers the following aspects critical for quality control. Please address each in your response:

- Adherence to Visit Natchez brand standards, as directed by Visit Natchez marketing staff. This includes any updated/new brand standards developed by the selected firm and agreed upon by Visit Natchez across all promotional platforms. Brand standards include but are not limited to —
 - Logo treatment/placement
 - Color palette implementation
 - Text and language tone (paid and earned media assets)
 - Copy/text proofreading all materials
 - Press checking and all proofs of printed materials
 - Photograph and video composition tone adherence
 - Organic social media posts adherence
- Delivery of all assets, digital files, physical materials, and other advertising/promotional related components handled by the selected firm(s) and marketing partners in the correct formats as requested by Visit Natchez marketing staff.
- Timeliness, proactive and efficient planning, and ability to return requested assets with a minimum number of edits. Please note that Visit Natchez will require all projects reflect current and approved branding and styling (reflective from previous projects) unless otherwise directed from Visit Natchez staff.



- Accuracy of paid media plans based on strategic terms and advanced planning agreed upon by the selected firm(s) and Visit Natchez. All paid media plan recommendations should be certified correct by the selected firm prior to providing to Visit Natchez staff.
- Accuracy of all invoices with accompanying backup receipts as required by Visit Natchez.



SECTION 8: GENERAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Please provide a statement signed by two officers of your firm that you have fully read and understand all terms as set forth in this request for proposals.

Please provide a full list of any and all significant partner firms with whom you intent to engage in the fulfillment of the terms of this request for proposal. This may be done as an addendum and will not count against the 15 page limit.

Please provide an affirmation of your firm's financial stability, including an acknowledgement that your firm will be capable of paying for services contracted by all third party vendors (including paid media placement) as approved by Visit Natchez, with reimbursement/compensation payable to your firm based on a net of 45 business days.

Please provide a statement affirming that your firm has *not* engaged in any way with members of Visit Natchez governing bodies, public/elected officials of the city of Natchez or Adams County, or the state of Mississippi, for the purposes of obtaining this contract. Any such activities will automatically disqualify the responding firm.

Please disclose any personal, business, or financial relationships and associations that any of your staff have had with current or past (within two years) members of Visit Natchez governing bodies, Visit Natchez staff, public/elected officials of the city of Natchez or Adams County. Failure to disclose may result in disqualification.



INTENT TO BID

Please complete and email this form if your firm intends to bid on this RFP. Submission of this form does not compel your firm to complete the bidding process. Firms who do not submit this intent to bid form may be disqualified from the review process. Firms who do not submit this intent to bid form will not be able to participate in the pre-bid teleconference.

NAME OF FIRM _____

QUALIFIED FIRM OFFICER 1 _____
(First and last name)

QUALIFIED FIRM OFFICER 2 _____
(First and last name)

FIRM CONTACT INFORMATION _____
(email)

(phone and/or text)

DATE _____

Please submit signed form to:

lynsey@visitnatchez.org

Subject line: Visit Natchez Marketing Intent to Bid

Visit
NATCHEZ