

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

CREATIVE SERVICES

Please respond to the following Request for Proposal (RFP). Based on the written RFP submissions, finalists will be invited to make virtual presentations to the Destination DC/Events DC selection panel within a week of submission.

THE RFP PROCESS

1. The deadline for submission of the completed RFP is 5:00 PM (EST) on February 19, 2021. See page 7 for submission details.
2. Questions regarding this RFP should be submitted to AgencyRFP@washington.org using the subject line "Destination DC/Events DC CREATIVE AGENCY RFP."
3. All agencies responding to this RFP will receive a response from Destination DC/Events DC's regarding our intent to schedule a time to make a virtual presentation.
4. Agencies will be expected to develop and present proposed advertising campaign creative to fulfill the RFP objectives. In addition to the proposed advertising campaign, the presentation should also address the following:
 - Introduction of your proposed account team, their background and roles on the Destination DC/Events DC account;
 - A demonstration of your agency philosophy and how you define the ideal client-agency relationship; and
 - An overview of your agency's expertise in advertising strategy and creative development, along with the complete list of services you offer.

DISCLAIMERS

Destination DC/Events DC have issued this RFP to solicit proposals from potential agency partners. It is not an offer to contract. Only the execution of a written agreement and issuance of a Destination DC purchase order will obligate Destination DC in accordance with the terms and conditions contained in such an agreement.

All costs related to the submission of this RFP must be assumed by the submitting agency. No expenses will be reimbursed. All responses and their content will become the property of Destination DC/Events DC.

Destination DC/Events DC reserve the right to accept or reject any or all responses to this RFP, even if all of the stated requirements are met.

Destination DC/Events DC reserves the right to amend this RFP in any manner prior to contract award and reserves the right to cancel the proposed scope of work at any time prior to the execution of a written agreement and issuance of a Destination DC purchase order without any liability to Destination DC.

For purposes of the evaluation, Destination DC/Events DC reserve the right to make copies of your response.

ABOUT DESTINATION DC

Destination DC, the official destination marketing organization for the nation's capital, is a private, non-profit membership organization of 1,000 businesses committed to marketing the area as a premier global convention, tourism and special events destination with a special emphasis on the arts, cultural and historic communities. By developing and executing centralized and cohesive sales and marketing strategies, Destination DC generates economic development for the city through tourism and meetings.

ABOUT EVENTS DC

Events DC generates economic and community benefits for the residents and businesses of the District of Columbia by creating a premier event experience in the nation's capital, and through the promotion of Washington, DC as a world-class destination. As the official convention and sports authority for the District of Columbia, Events DC owns and manages some of the most visited venues across the nation's capital including the Walter E. Washington Convention Center, Nationals Park, Entertainment and Sports Area and DC Armory.

THE PURPOSE OF THIS REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

In 2019, Washington, DC saw a record 24.6 million total visitors—22.8 million domestic and 1.8 million overseas. These visitors spent \$8.2 billion, created 78,266 jobs and generated \$896 million in local tax revenue, supporting the important services residents rely upon from DC government.

As can be expected, the novel coronavirus' influence on worldwide travel has greatly impacted Washington, DC's economy. As of August 2020, Tourism Economics estimated that Washington, DC could expect fewer than 10 million domestic visitors in 2020, which is down more than 50% from 2019. The hospitality industry has been hit particularly hard—in December 2020, the number of hotel rooms sold was down 77.8% and revenue was down 82.5% over December 2019.

Destination DC/Events DC seek to enlist a creative agency with proven success developing multi-channel advertising campaigns in the travel and tourism space to conceptualize and produce a recovery campaign aimed at driving visitation to Washington, DC and resuscitating the city's struggling hospitality industry in the midst and wake of COVID-19.

Since the start of the pandemic, advertising creative from competing destinations has been fairly one-note: when you're ready to travel again, we'll be here for you. While we acknowledge the need to stay top-of-mind for future travel, we are specifically looking for **lower-funnel, conversion-driving, bolster-the-economy-right-now** advertising creative that differentiates DC in the marketplace and establishes the nation's capital as the go-to destination for leisure trips at **every phase** of COVID reopening and recovery.

The creative delivered for this campaign will be applied across a multi-channel, multi-platform media mix. We anticipate these creative assets to be used in drive and national markets across the US in 2021. The creative should compel consumers to experience Washington, DC immediately, as well as when the city moves further into Phase 3, and consider how the messaging can shift in a post-COVID environment.

In 2018/19, Destination DC's in-house marketing and creative team developed and launched *Discover the Real DC*, a campaign aimed at encouraging travelers to drop their preconceived notions of Washington, DC and explore a side of the city they may not know exists: Michelin-starred restaurants, exciting nightlife, major-league sports, a dynamic arts community and diverse neighborhoods. A complete overview of this campaign strategy and creative can be found here: <https://washington.org/real-dc/behind-the-campaign>

Before travelers can discover the real DC, they need to understand that DC is safe and, although the experiences may be slightly different than before, DC is open. We're looking for a creative agency to build a campaign that meets potential travelers where they are in this new, COVID-impacted marketing funnel.

RELATIONSHIP PROPOSAL: CREATIVE SERVICES

In order to launch a strategic recovery campaign for Washington, DC in 2021, Destination DC/Events DC are searching for an agency partner to provide the following creative services:

- Lead the creation of a multi-channel advertising campaign from conceptualization to final delivery of assets that fulfills the goals and objectives articulated in the enclosed creative brief (page 9)
- Conduct and/or interpret consumer research to better understand travel motivations of our target audience during this unprecedented time. This may involve identifying, recruiting and securing focus group participants for updated audience profile data in targeted, key markets (this work can be provided by a sub-contractor)
- Coordinate with Destination DC's media buying agency of record, MMGY Global, to ensure the advertising media mix complements the campaign strategy
- Produce all campaign creative assets—copy, print and digital ads, social assets, video, etc.—to fulfill the ad placements set by MMGY Global
- Partner with Destination DC's in-house marketing and creative teams to ensure the recovery campaign meets brand standards and runs parallel with already established digital, social and content marketing strategies

CLIENT-AGENCY RELATIONSHIP REQUIREMENTS

As a client, Destination DC will have fully integrated members of the team working to bring this COVID recovery campaign to life. The selected agency partner will be required to establish a creative review schedule and weekly status calls for the entirety of the project.

To develop a fully integrated campaign, the selected creative agency will need to work with Destination DC and Events DC to help fulfill the media strategy with the required assets.

Subcontracting of the project is acceptable, but only if the agency partner is willing to act as the prime contractor with full responsibility for its subcontractor(s) and to be the sole entity in direct contact with Destination DC and Events DC.

Destination DC, Events DC and the agency partner will also negotiate a statement of work incorporating portions of this RFP and the agency's response to it, a comprehensive listing of all services to be performed by the agency, all related deliverables, a Service Level Agreement, and a detailed service pricing list.

SELECTION CRITERIA

Destination DC and Events DC will select the creative services partner that best demonstrates relevant experience, willingness to work within established budgets, and proven ability to effectively develop a multi-channel advertising campaign that meets goals, objectives and established KPIs. Specifically, each response will be evaluated based on three aspects:

- **Your Organization and Creative Approach:** Company profile and background, taking into account the stability of your organization, your distinctive creative and strategic capabilities, how complete and sound your responses are, and the likelihood that your proposed advertising campaign will achieve Destination DC's objectives;
- **Agency and Account Team Experience:** Proposed account team and team member profiles, taking into consideration the quality of the staffing plan, qualifications of the proposed account team, relevant industry experience and quality of client references; and
- **Budget Management and Pricing:** Proposed fees and approach to work within available creative budgets, taking into account your ability to deliver the required services at the budget levels indicated in this RFP.

The selection team will include staff from Destination DC and Events DC.

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL RESPONSE REQUIREMENTS

Please submit your response to the following proposal questions in a zipped digital file by the RFP deadline of 5:00 PM (EST) on February 19, 2021. The file can be sent via email to:

AgencyRFP@washington.org

Please include the subject line: Destination DC CREATIVE AGENCY RFP

PLEASE RESPOND TO THIS RFP WITH THE FOLLOWING:

1. State your agency's interest in providing Destination DC/Events DC with creative services.
2. Please specify the compensation method rate(s)/fee(s) you would propose in exchange for providing creative services. Fees associated with creative services must include research (if deemed appropriate), creative concepting, development and final delivery of assets, and reporting. Include payment terms associated with your pricing.
3. Please identify all travel, operational and miscellaneous expenses to be incurred in performance of the requested services. Detail how expenses will be verified and the payment terms associated with them.
4. Please list any former (last three years) or current clients in the destination management/marketing or travel and tourism industries, as well as any clients where you believe the work was/is particularly relevant to the Destination DC assignment. Examples and descriptions of the work may be included with your response.
5. Provide references for these clients, including company name, contact name and title, phone number and email address.
6. Please include a copy of your most recent audited financial statement or similar evidence of financial stability, along with a letter from a certified public accountant stating that your organization has the economic resources to pay expenses in advance of reimbursement by Destination DC and that the company has sufficient working capital, positive net worth and has or can obtain a line of credit for the work described and proposed.
7. Please describe the composition of the proposed account team along with a short biography for each team member, including current position held, prior relevant experience and percentage of time to be dedicated to the Destination DC account. Please indicate whether account team members are employees of the agency or outside contractors.

8. Deliver a proposed advertising campaign to address the following scenario:

The goal of Destination DC's COVID-19 recovery campaign is to successfully market the nation's capital as a premier global destination in order to generate visitation and overall spending in the District in the midst and wake of the novel coronavirus pandemic. A forecast by Tourism Economics in summer 2020 estimated that we could expect fewer than 10 million domestic visitors to Washington, DC in 2020, down more than 50% from 2019. If the vaccine rollout is done in a timely manner, and if the recession does not deepen in a significant way, that estimate could rise to 20 million by 2022. Launching in spring 2021, this campaign should successfully drive visitation during all phases of recovery.

9. Campaign Parameters:

Budget: \$400,000

Creative Requirements:

- Please describe in detail the creative campaign messaging that fulfills the goals and objectives outlined in the attached creative brief (pg. 9).
- Creative is open to all media types, from video and digital ads to print and OOH; please provide at least one creative execution of your choosing.

10. Consider how audience profiles may need to shift based on COVID-19 consumer sentiment.

11. Other recommendations: Please be prepared to discuss any other campaign suggestions to Destination DC, outside of the exercise above, during your presentation. Suggestions can be related to research, media mix, flight timing, creative types, campaign optimization, etc.

COVID RECOVERY CAMPAIGN CREATIVE BRIEF

1. OBJECTIVE

To drive awareness of Washington, DC's unique offerings as a leisure destination, ultimately encouraging travel/overnight stays in an effort to resuscitate the District's economy and hospitality industry in the midst and wake of COVID-19.

2. AUDIENCE

- Leisure Travelers
- Primary: Local, Drive Market & National
- Secondary: International

Audience Personas:

In spring 2018, Destination DC partnered with Destination Analysts to identify eight personas of travelers most likely to consider Washington, DC for their leisure vacation. These personas may not be appropriate targets given COVID-19. **Please identify if new research is needed to be able develop a successful campaign.**

3. VALUE PROPOSITION AS A DESTINATION

(Data pulled from weekly Coronavirus Traveler Sentiment Index from Destination Analysts (DA), page 12)

- **Safety/Health**
 - **DA research as Jan. 22-24:** 74% of travelers are somewhat to extremely concerned about their personal health (up 71% from the previous week, and up from 67% in early December)
 - DC has been conservative when it comes to reopening and our COVID cases have been low, comparatively. Every city will sell "safety," but we have the numbers to back it up. This is a good selling point for travelers who are still very concerned about their safety.
- **Free Things**
 - **DA research as of Jan. 22-24:** 58% of travelers are somewhat to extremely concerned about personal finances (up from 57% from the previous week)
 - This is our biggest differentiator as a destination—there are so many free things to do, most of which are only-in-DC experiences (National Mall, Smithsonian Institution).
- **Outdoor Recreation**
 - **DA research as of Jan. 22-24:** 20% of respondents feel somewhat/very unsafe (down compared to 23% four weeks earlier)
 - Feeding into questions of health and safety, sentiment points to people feeling safer outside, compared to other sorts of activities (shopping, museums, sporting events)

- Within the city limits, we have major defining outdoor features in the National Mall, Rock Creek Park, the Potomac River and the Anacostia River, not to mention countless other outdoor offerings including national and neighborhood parks, gardens, drive-in movies and beer gardens. This is a major differentiator for DC compared to other urban destinations.
- **Family Friendly**
 - We assume that families are itching to get out of the house, given our own experience
 - DC has countless family-friendly activities that address our other key selling points of health/safety, free things and outdoor recreation.
- **Protest Tourism**
 - Black Lives Matter, a March on Washington, a presidential election and inauguration—DC is truly an exciting place to be during a time of change. This city is *the* place where you can actively practice your first amendment right, which is a key differentiator for us compared to other destinations.
 - It is especially important for us to amplify messaging and support of local Black-owned restaurants and businesses.

The list above is not meant to be all inclusive. Please feel free to use your own discretion to develop additional ideas.

4. KEY AUDIENCE TAKEAWAYS

“After all this time at home, I could use a vacation! Washington, DC is the perfect destination—there is so much to see and do, *safely*, without breaking the bank.”

Other derivatives of this takeaway are welcome. Please feel free to use your own discretion to develop additional ideas.

5. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPIs)

- **Web Traffic**
 - Website traffic, from advertising and otherwise, is an indicator that consumers in our target markets are ready to travel and considering DC as a destination for their leisure.
 - Destination DC’s goal is to increase unique visits and page views on washington.org month-to-month as consumers become more open to travel
 - Destination DC is looking to achieve an increase of 2-3% in website traffic each month after launch
- **Social Media Engagement & Interactions**
 - Both organic and paid social media engagement (interactions including link clicks, comments, shares, replies, follows) is an indicator that consumers in our target markets are ready to travel and considering DC as a destination for their leisure
 - Destination DC’s goal is to increase social media engagement from our leisure channels

month-to-month as consumers become more open to travel

- Destination DC is looking to achieve an increase of 2-3% in social media engagement each month after launch

6. CREATIVE CONSIDERATIONS

• Imagery

- Show experiences that can be had in the current phase of reopening
- Show only family units, couples, or friend groups of three or less
- Avoid images with large background crowds
- Selected imagery should be chosen based on data pulled from newly identified Covid-19 specific audience profiles
- Destination DC's complete library of images is available through our asset management system, iPR. To make an account and access these images, please follow the instructions in the attached "iPR How-To" document here: <https://we.tl/t-xXwiZtRZZz>

This list is not meant to be all inclusive. Please feel free to use your own discretion to develop additional ideas. More information about Mayor Bowser's reopening plan is at coronavirus.dc.gov

• Health & Safety

- Include "masked" Washington, DC logo on all creative while masks are still required. Logo is available for download here: <https://we.tl/t-FTX84Rs6Ax>
- Washington, DC brand materials can be found here: <https://we.tl/t-crA5CWIWWWh>

DESTINATION ANALYSTS CORONAVIRUS TRAVELER SENTIMENT INDEX—JAN. 22-24, 2021

- **TRAVEL SENTIMENT - OVERALL**
 - 55% excited to travel now (up from 50% last week)
 - 57% open to travel information (up from 53% last week), currently at its highest level since tracking began in March 2020.
- **HEATH & SAFETY**
 - Personal health: somewhat to extremely concerned: 74% (up from 71% last week, and up from 67% in early December)
- **FINANCES**
 - Personal finances: somewhat to extremely concerned: 58% (up from 57% last week)
- **SENTIMENT - TRAVEL TYPE**
 - **Traveling on a commercial airline:** 55% of respondents feel somewhat/very unsafe (down compared to 59% four weeks earlier)
 - **Bus travel (Greyhound, Bolt, Megabus, etc.):** 68% of respondents feel somewhat/very unsafe (down compared to 71% four weeks earlier)
 - **Train travel (Amtrak):** 60% of respondents feel somewhat/very unsafe (down compared to 64% four weeks earlier)
 - **Taking a road trip:** 21% of respondents feel somewhat/very unsafe (down compared to 26% four weeks earlier)
 - **Traveling in a taxi/Uber/Lyft:** 53% of respondents feel somewhat/very unsafe (down compared to 58% four weeks earlier)
- **SENTIMENT - OVERNIGHT STAYS**
 - **Staying in a hotel:** 38% of respondents feel somewhat/very unsafe (down compared to 43% four weeks earlier)
 - **Staying in an Airbnb or home rental:** 46% of respondents feel somewhat/very unsafe (down compared to 47% four weeks earlier)
- **SENTIMENT - ATTRACTIONS**
 - **Attending a performance:** 65% of respondents feel somewhat/very unsafe (down compared to 69% four weeks earlier)
 - **Attending a sports event – large venue (professional, minor league, college):** 65% of respondents feel somewhat/very unsafe (down compared to 69% four weeks earlier)
 - **Attending a sports event – small venue (school, youth, tournaments, league play):** 61% of respondents feel somewhat/very unsafe (down compared to 63% four weeks earlier)
 - **Visiting an indoor attraction:** 51% of respondents feel somewhat/very unsafe (down compared to 56% four weeks earlier)

- **Visiting an outdoor attraction:** 44% of respondents feel somewhat/very unsafe (down compared to 54% four weeks earlier)
- **Dining in a restaurant:** 43% of respondents feel somewhat/very unsafe (down compared to 50% four weeks earlier)
- **Going shopping:** 27% of respondents feel somewhat/very unsafe (down compared to 33% four weeks earlier)
- **Outdoor recreation (hiking, biking, etc.):** 20% of respondents feel somewhat/very unsafe (down compared to 24% four weeks earlier)

Download the complete Destination Analysts' *Coronavirus Traveler Sentiment Index* deck and watch the recording from January 26, 2021 here: <https://www.destinationanalysts.com/covid-19-insights/covid-19-webinars/january-26th-update-on-covid-19s-impact-on-american-travel/>