

Answers to Submitted Questions for EDA of Jones County RFQ for Advertising & PR Services

6/28/24

There are some conflicting dates and in order for us to build out our proposal we've got to understand the timeframe as to which we are basing our pricing. One area mentions the contract will end on December 2026, whereas another section specifically asks for the FY26 (10/1/25 - 9/30/26). Please confirm the actual dates of the contract.

December 2026 is deadline for all ARPA funds to be spent, so that time frame is in there to allow for any final projects that could be billed up to the final allowable term. We recognize that the budget and plan that the selected agency presents will be tweaked and adjusted before it is finalized. It would be ideal to line up the budget to cover at least through that fiscal year (Oct. 25-Sept. 26). If funds are available to keep some tactics active through December, please present that. We will have to make a new vendor selection FY27 for once ARPA funds are no longer available though, and it is ok if there is some overlap.

Are you actively seeking to make a change to a new pr agency?

We do not have an agency currently who manages a PR campaign.

What are the key elements that you are looking for to make an agency change?

N/A since we are not changing PR agencies.

What is your biggest challenge related to PR currently?

N/A since we are not changing PR agencies.

Who is your current PR AOR?

N/A since we are not changing PR agencies.

Understanding that the scope of work requires budget allocation, can you provide the historic budget breakdown from FY'24?

This is a little complicated to calculate since we are halfway through the year and have undertaken some large, one-time projects using ARPA funds. We have not made EOY budget line item adjustments yet, but I provided percentages below for each category as the budget stands currently FY24.

- Agency service fees budget - 0%
- PR OOP budget (media hosting, media travel, media events, conferences, etc.) - 8% (total PR budget, not just OOP) Keep in mind that we did not budget for a full year of PR services FY24
- Influencer OOP budget (influencer fees, hosting, etc.) - 3%
- Brochure Printing Budget and Quantities - 10%
- Advertising placement spend -54%
- Other (production, sponsorships, admin) – 25%

Can you share your paid media plan FY'24?

We are not prepared to share the full plan at this time. If you have a question about a specific tactic or something that is needed to be able to complete your quote, please submit that question.

What industry and / or media trade shows has EDA of Jones County attended in the past 12 months?

MTA Spring & Fall Conferences

What are your KPIs for PR success? None defined since a portion of these funds would be directed to a new PR campaign.

Hoping selected agency can guide us to specific KPIs. Overall goal would be to increase media coverage of Laurel & Jones County as a destination over and beyond the publicity that is already being generated and earned from HGTV's "Home Town" and its principles Ben & Erin Napier.

What are your high demand and need periods?

Late winter-early summer; fall-holiday season

What media outlets are "missing" from your recent coverage?

Limited coverage through "Home Town" and Napier's now, but would like to expand on that national publicity and reach niche markets as well—i/e bus groups, other regional pubs (i/e west coast, Midwest)

Are there any emerging demographics or markets you are looking to target?

See answer above.

Are there any destination brands or specific tourism campaigns that you admire?

Nothing specifically, but we prefer simple, clean campaigns vs campaigns that are flashy or overly modern/untraditional

Understanding that some preferences are given to locally registered companies, how important is the proximity of the selected agency to the destination?

That is not something that we will be looking at on the score sheet. We will be looking at how familiar an agency is Mississippi/the South as a whole so that we know they understand our general market, audience and "competitors"

Are scoring sheets from this RFP made public? If so, when would those be available?

They will not be made public.

The Scope says...Approximately 1/3 of the funds should be allocated to advertising in fiscal year 2026, Oct. 1, 2025- Sept. 30, 2026. The remaining funds may be allocated to public relations, collateral design and printing, and other marketing tactics throughout the contracts duration.

If those dates are correct the budget would break out like this...

Could it be that the 1/3 was meant to be spent Oct. 1 2024 – Sept. 2025? With the remainder to be spent Oct. 2025 – Sept. 2026?

The 1/3 was meant specifically for advertising for the FY26, Oct 25-Sept 26. The remaining budget could be allocated from when the contract begins (Aug 2024) throughout the entire length of the contract on other pieces of the scope of work. i/e PR, publication production and printing, additional ad/digital tactics.

Can you further define existing marketing campaigns and would those marketing campaigns include working with downtown Laurel, Visit Laurel, and Laurel M, etc entities?

The EDA/Visit Laurel & Jones County current campaign includes the following tactics:

Facebook/Instagram/Pinterest posts and ads, SEO, digital display ads, youtube ads, broadcast/streaming ads, monthly blogs. We coordinate with the City of Laurel/Visit Laurel so that each element of the respective campaigns enhance each other vs cancel each other out. We do not coordinate marketing campaigns with Laurel Main Street.

Approximately how many FAM trips are hosted in Jones County yearly?

We may host 1-2, but they are usually coordinated through Visit MS.

Is there an estimated number of how many travel publications you would like printed?

We print maps, rack cards and brochures currently. Between 10,000-20,000 of each, but that has been on a limited budget. We are hoping that ARPA funds allow us to print a higher quantity and take advantage of volume price breaks.

Will only an electronic submission of requirements and deliverables be adequate?

Printed copies are required for the submission to be reviewed.

Can you please provide a list of top drive markets where you have successfully placed advertisements?

Outside of MS: New Orleans, Mobile/Pensacola, Atlanta, Houston, Arkansas, Birmingham