

EASTERN BAND OF CHEROKEE INDIANS

# REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

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For an Advertising Agency of Record



July 24, 2017

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this Request for Proposals is to obtain proposals from qualified marketing and advertising agencies interested in becoming the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians' (EBCI) long-term partner and Agency of Record by providing strategic marketing and advertising planning and subsequent campaign development. Agencies may partner with other agencies or subcontractors to create a team that is suited to develop the plan and campaign. However, there must be a single "lead" agency that is responsible for strategic guidance and brand development that will be the guardian of that brand through all forms of communication. All billing will need to be managed through the lead agency such that the Tribe receives a single bill for all services.

## **General Information**

The Cherokee Indian Reservation, (also called the Qualla Boundary) is located in Western North Carolina at the southern entrance to The Great Smoky Mountains National Park and southern terminus the Blue Ridge Parkway, both of which are popular tourist destinations. Well in excess of 2.2 million people enter the Park through the Cherokee gate each year. There are also nearly 16,000 enrolled members of the EBCI, approximately 60 percent of who live on the Boundary, plus a daytime workforce on the Boundary approaching 6,000 people.

The overall economy of the Qualla Boundary is based on tourism. The Great Smoky Mountains National Park is the nation's most visited, with yearly visitation typically exceeding 9.4 million people. Harrah's Cherokee Casino and Hotel, located on US 19 in Cherokee, has over 1,100 rooms, and is the largest hotel in either North or South Carolina. Approximately 4.6 million people visit the casino and hotel each year, making the attraction the largest man-made tourist attraction in North Carolina.

The Tribal Government of the EBCI provides services to its citizens that are typical of those provided by most municipal governments. Headed by a popularly-elected Principal Chief, Vice Chief, and Tribal Council, the EBCI provides police, fire, public safety, EMS and sanitation services to its residents and business community. The Tribal government is responsible for water and sewer services, environmental planning, as well as road construction and maintenance. Additionally, housing assistance in many forms is provided to Tribal members either directly by the EBCI or through other Tribal entities. Finally, the EBCI conducts a proactive effort for economic development through the Division of Commerce.

## **Scope of Work**

The EBCI is looking for a marketing partner to create an advertising campaign for 2017-2018 that will build intent to visit and length of stay in Cherokee. The selected agency will collaborate with the EBCI Department of Commerce staff to create an integrated campaign strategy that may include, but certainly not be limited to:

- Television
- Radio
- Print
- Viral/mobile/social media campaigns
- Non-traditional and/or traditional out-of-home
- Strategic partnerships and sponsorships
- Grassroots efforts/tie-ins
- Online Advertising/Website

## **Annual Budget**

Based on a strategic advertising plan developed, the selected agency will work with the EBCI to develop budgets to implement the plan to meet the EBCI's goals and leverage its existing budget. At this time, the combined FY 2017/18 budget for both the general advertising campaign as well as a co-op with area businesses totals \$1,750,000. The budget includes all campaign elements, including planning, agency fees, production, events, technology, paid media, etc.

Agencies should be able to demonstrate good budget stewardship and success in leveraging modest budgets to achieve exponential results.

## **Agency Capabilities and Requirements**

To be considered for this campaign, responding agencies should have at a minimum (but not limited to) the following capabilities:

- Research
- Media negotiating and buying
- Creative development and execution in all media (including non-traditional media)
- Social media campaign planning and execution
- Website strategy and development, online marketing
- Budget management and reporting

Agencies may form partnerships or engage subcontractors as a team to respond to this RFP, but these relationships must be identified in the response.

## Questionnaire

Please answer the questions below within your proposal to provide us with insight into the capabilities, capacity and philosophy of your agency. Response must be limited to no more than (5) double-sided pages. No creative samples should be submitted at this time.

Please tell us about your agency and your team.

- How many full-time employees do you have?
- What is the tenure of each employee at your agency?
- Please provide employee bios and areas of responsibility for each of your staff members, giving us a thorough picture of how they have served your clients with specific examples.
- Please demonstrate your staff's experience with destination marketing accounts by offering several case studies you've created with relevant clients from the past two years (from August 15, 2015 to present). Please include within your demonstration, specific illustrations regarding the roles each staff member played, and how each staff member worked collaboratively to demonstrate real ROI within the last two years.
- Please list all employees (including position title) that would work directly on the EBCI account?
- What is your agency's overall vision and mission?

Please provide an overview of your agency's scope of services.

- Specifically describe your media planning and buying capabilities.
- Specifically describe your in-house creative capabilities.
- Specifically describe your in-house interactive capabilities.
- Do you plan to outsource any of your work on the EBCI account? If so, to whom? For what purpose? Specifically denote percentages of outsourcing to other vendors which would combine to a total of 100%.

Please tell us more about your work.

- Cherokee is seeking a full-service agency relationship, with the following capabilities (brand strategy, in house media strategy and media buying services, art direction and design, creative direction, copywriting, logo design, account coordination, public relations, SEO/SEM, digital banners—including conceptual capabilities and programming, research, web design and general web-related services, social media). Please demonstrate specific employees on your staff that would address these capabilities to serve destination marketing clients, and how, specifically.
- Please include a list of all your clients, in descending order of account size, including the timeframe in which you worked for them. Only experience within the last three years will be deemed relevant.
- Please provide a list of travel and tourism client references from the past two years. Include contact information, and specific staff in your agency along

- with what role they played in the service of these accounts.
- Please provide client contact information that we may use to inquire about how each of your staff members have contributed to the client's bottom line in individual and collaborative ways in the past two years (from August 15, 2015 to present).
  - Include a brief list of agency services provided for each client.
  - Include a list of standard agency hourly rates.
  - Include the names of clients added and lost since August 2015.

Describe your approach to creating a strategic advertising plan. Please include:

- How does your creative team work with account services?
- How do you solicit input?
- What role would your EBCI counterparts play in the development of a campaign?
- Can you describe how your agency evaluates the success of an advertising campaign?

Describe your recommendation for an Agency compensation proposal.

- Please provide an agency compensation proposal based on the current EBCI advertising budget of \$1,750,000.
- Include areas of agency income as applicable to your proposal, e.g., retainer, media and production commission, hourly charges, etc.
- Attach a list of agency standard billing rates.

### **Evaluation Criteria**

Proposals will be evaluated on the following criteria:

- Insight and approach to developing a strategic advertising plan. Based on agency experience, relationships and staff that have resulted in successful, results-oriented campaigns.
- Demonstrated ability to develop cutting-edge creative campaigns that utilize a unique mix of traditional and non-traditional media to engage audiences and achieve results.
- Qualifications, experience and fit of staff that would be assigned to the EBCI team.
- Cost structure, including cost-efficient use of vendors for campaign implementation.
- Availability and accessibility of agency resources and staff devoted to this campaign.
- Agency has the capabilities to service the EBCI campaign.

### **RFP Schedule of Events**

July 24, 2017	Issue RFP	Department of Commerce Office
August 7-11, 2017	Meetings to ask questions or address concerns, by appointment only	Department of Commerce Office  (Suite 149 in Ginger Lynn Welch Complex)
August 18, 2017	Proposal Submission Deadline (4:00 PM Eastern Time)	Department of Commerce Office  (Suite 149 in Ginger Lynn Welch Complex)
August 22, 2017	Review of Proposals	Department of Commerce Office  (Suite 149 in Ginger Welch Complex)
Week of August 28, 2017	Presentations from selected Agencies	TBD

### **Method of Selection**

The EBCI will select the firm that demonstrates the best qualifications for performing the Scope of Work. If no acceptable proposals are received, the EBCI reserves the right to reject all proposals.

Each firm will be notified as to whether its proposal is to be considered for final selection. Once the most desirable firms have been determined, interviews will be scheduled with firms to be considered for final selection.

### **Final Agreement**

After the final selection, the EBCI and the selected firm will enter into a mutually satisfactory agreement within 30 days or the EBCI shall have the right to negotiate with other firms. Upon submission of the Request for Proposal, the materials contained there within shall become property of the EBCI and may be used when and where EBCI officials deem necessary.

### **Proposal Submission**

Submit five (5) individually sealed copies of the proposal and related materials and one unbound sealed reproducible original. Completed proposals are due in the offices of the EBCI Office of Economic Development by the close of business on Friday, August 18, 2017. No fax copies, e-mail files, or copies delivered to any other offices of the EBCI will be accepted.

### **Contract Development**

#### **General**

Upon execution of the contract, a copy of this RFP will be attached to the contract and all conditions of this RFP will become conditions of the contract unless specific terms of the RFP are deleted by other terms of the contract.

#### **Financial Stability**

If requested, prior to contract negotiations and award, the selected firm may be required to furnish appropriate documentation to substantiate the financial stability of the firm to undertake this project. The firm and/or its principal administrators/managers/owner(s) will be subject to a background investigation for criminal or civil violations. The Contractor (if applicable) will be subject to an investigation of judgments or pending civil and criminal activity. A credit report will be requested. The Contractor will be required to hold appropriate automobile, workers compensation, and \$1,000,000.00 liability insurance. The Tribe will not contract without proof of the aforementioned insurance.

### **Applicable Laws and Processes**

The selected entity shall be required to follow any and all requirements of the Tribe, the Tribe's Employment Rights Office (TERO), United States Department of Agriculture and Bureau of Indian Affairs Rules, Regulations, Policy and Procedure and other applicable rules and regulations. These will be strictly adhered to where applicable.

As a federally recognized Indian tribe and a sovereign nation, the Tribe makes and enforces its own real estate, development and other business activity laws on tribal land. The RFP will include specific Tribal sovereign immunity language. Some of the law governing the EBCI can be found at [www.municode.com](http://www.municode.com). Click on "online library", then on "North Carolina", then on "Cherokee Indians Eastern Band Code of Ordinances" to get to the Cherokee code of Ordinances.

Key laws to be aware of in making your proposal:

- Cherokee Code Chapter 47, Real Property
- Cherokee Code Chapter 92, Article V, Tribal Business Preference Law
- Cherokee Code Chapter 105, Taxation
- Cherokee Code Chapter 106, Business Regulation

### **Proposal Contact**

For any additional information about this Request for Proposals, please contact:

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