



Central Maine Destination Development & Regional Branding Initiative

Request for Proposals

RFP Advertised: Friday, February 2, 2024

Proposals Due: Wednesday, March 6, 2024 at 3 p.m.

Main Street Skowhegan
65 Water St., Unit 1
Skowhegan, ME 04976
kristina@mainstreetskowhegan.org
MainStreetSkowhegan.org/bids

Central Maine Destination Development & Regional Branding Initiative Request for Proposals

Main Street Skowhegan (MSS), the Central Maine Growth Council (CMGC), and the Mid-Maine Chamber of Commerce, herein referred to as "Project Partners," are seeking proposals for a firm or consultant, herein referred to as "Proposer(s)," to develop a regional destination development vision and master plan, brand strategy, and marketing campaign for the Skowhegan/Waterville area to drive tourism and visits into the regional communities and economy.

I. Overview

The revitalization of the greater Waterville/Skowhegan area is gaining momentum, driven not only by the burgeoning sectors of recreation and tourism but also by the thriving arts and culture scene, contributing significantly to economic development. Downtowns are undergoing transformative redevelopment, with local property owners and new developers making substantial investments. Simultaneously, businesses and entrepreneurs recognize the region's potential, resulting in talent migration to the area.

Waterville stands out with its world-class arts and cultural experiences, providing a unique draw for tourists and residents alike. Skowhegan's future river park and trail development, coupled with its emphasis on outdoor recreation programming and gear, will diversify the range of activities available for families and adventure enthusiasts. Additionally, both communities offer distinctive boutiques and farm-to-table dining experiences, adding to the area's overall appeal.

The synergy between recreation and tourism, arts, and economic development creates a compelling narrative for the workforce. As the region becomes a magnet for tourists seeking enriching cultural experiences and outdoor activities, businesses find a supportive environment for growth. This influx of visitors and economic activity, driven by arts, recreation, and tourism, contributes to a vibrant local economy.

Collaborative regional planning ensures that the Waterville/Skowhegan area is positioned as a robust contender for attracting and retaining a diverse workforce. The combination of cultural richness, recreational opportunities, and economic vibrancy not only makes the region an attractive destination for tourists but also enhances its appeal to businesses looking to establish or expand their operations. This holistic approach to development fosters an environment that supports workforce attraction, retention, and the overall expansion of the local economy.

II. Project Goals & Objectives

Aligned with the Maine Office of Tourism (MOT), key goals for the Waterville/Skowhegan region focus on elevating economic prosperity through tourism. Emphasis is on outdoor recreation, arts, local food systems, and natural resources. We aim to drive visitors to downtown areas, bolstering hospitality, leisure, and food services. Concurrently, the strategy seeks to cultivate a robust regional outdoor, arts, and tourism economy, enhancing the region's attractiveness for businesses, entrepreneurs, and workforce talent.

The right firm/consultant will help us:

- A. Establish a shared regional destination development vision and master plan to unify development efforts.
- B. Increase awareness of the Waterville/Skowhegan area through a regional brand strategy and integrated marketing campaign.

III. Proposal Instructions & Requirements

All questions should be directed via email to Kristina Cannon, MSS President & CEO, at kristina@mainstreetskowhegan.org no later than Monday, February 19, 2024 at 3:00 PM. All questions and responses to questions will be shared with all Proposers.

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Proposals must be submitted via email to Kristina Cannon (kristina@mainstreetskowhegan.org) **no later than 3:00 p.m. on Wednesday, March 6, 2024**, to be eligible for consideration.

Complete proposals must include the following items:

- A. Statement of Qualifications**
- B. Project Approach**
- C. Cost Estimate**
- D. Proposal Attachments (see section IX)**

Proposals received after the deadline will be rejected.

A. Qualifications

Each proposal shall include a qualification statement that demonstrates experience in destination development and branding, and a history of professionalism, character, and integrity.

B. Project Approach

Each proposal shall include a detailed approach for achieving the goals and objectives.

C. Cost Estimate

The Cost Estimate shall include costs to complete the following:

1. Destination development vision and master plan
2. Brand strategy
3. Marketing Plan

VII. Selection Criteria

Each proposal shall be assessed based on the following criteria:

- A. *Project understanding (20%)* – Proposer shall provide a detailed response that demonstrates an overall understanding of the project's purpose, goals, and objectives.
- B. *Approach (25%)* – Proposer shall provide a detailed approach, including strategies and tactics for achieving project objectives, an anticipated timeline, and a plan for stakeholder engagement.
- C. *Experience of firm/past performance (20%)* – The Proposer will be evaluated on work experience and reference checks. Project Partners will seek answers to the following: does the Proposer have a record of delivering projects on schedule and on budget? Based on related project experience and resumes, does the Proposer have relevant and recent experience that is comparable to the project? Has the Proposer shown the necessary experience, knowledge, time management, resource allocation, etc. to complete the required work?
- D. *Staff capability (15%)* – Proposer shall provide staff resumes illustrating the specialty expertise and relevant project experience of individuals who will work on this project.
- E. *Cost & Budget Analysis (20%)* – High-scoring responses will demonstrate fiscal responsibility as it relates to this grant-funded project.

In addition to reviewing written proposals, Project Partners may hold interviews with one or more Proposers before making a final decision.

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VIII. Proposal Schedule

Project Partners expect this selection to follow the schedule listed below.

RFP Advertised	Friday, February 2, 2024
Written Questions Due from Proposers	Monday, February 19, 2024, 3:00 PM
Project Partners Respond to Questions	Friday, February 23, 2024, 3:00 PM
Proposals Due	Wednesday, March 6, 2024, 3:00 PM
Interviews with Finalists (If needed)	Week of March 18, 2024
Project Team Notifies Successful Proposer	Week of March 25, 2024

IX. Proposal Attachments

A. Insurance Certificate

An insurance certificate for professional liability must be included with the proposal.

B. Subconsultant Proposal

If a subconsultant will work on the project, the prime consultant must submit the subconsultant's qualifications as supporting documentation.

C. Debarment Certification

The proposal shall be signed by an officer of the submitting firm, and must have the following statement:

"By submitting to this RFP, I certify to the best of my knowledge and belief that the organization, its principals, and any subconsultants named in this proposal:

1. Are not debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, and declared ineligible or voluntarily excluded from bidding or working on contracts issued by any governmental agency.
2. Have not within three (3) years of submitting the proposal for this contract been convicted of or had a civil judgment rendered against them for:
 - a. fraud or a criminal offense in connection with obtaining, attempting to obtain, or performing a federal, state or local government transaction or contract.
 - b. violating federal or state antitrust statutes or committing embezzlement, theft, forgery, bribery, falsification or destruction of records, making false statements, or receiving stolen property;
 - c. are not currently indicted for or otherwise criminally or civilly charged by a governmental entity (federal, state or local) with commission of any of the offenses enumerated in paragraph (b) of this certification; and
 - d. have not within a three (3) year period preceding this proposal had one or more federal, state or local government transactions terminated for cause or default."

Failure to provide this certification may result in the disqualification of the proposal.

NOTE:

Project partners reserve the right to accept or reject any and all proposals or parts thereof, to accept the proposal which they deem to be in the best interest of the project partners and to waive any bid formality.