



Request for Proposals

**In-state media campaign promoting safe
travel**

for the Alaska Travel Industry Association

July 2021

Dear Prospective Bidders,

I would like to thank you in advance for your willingness to take the time to review our needs and expend your time and effort to assemble a thoughtful proposal. We are seeking a trusted partner to develop travel safely messaging for an instate education and media campaign using radio, television, and social media, to help support tourism businesses and communities to be resilient in the recovery of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Alaska Travel Industry Association (ATIA) is the leading statewide non-profit membership association for Alaska's tourism industry. With over 600 tourism business members and partners, ATIA is the leading voice for Alaska travel and tourism and also promotes Alaska as a top visitor destination. ATIA is the respected voice for the growth of Alaska's travel industry, while remaining attentive to care for the environment, recognition of cultures and Alaska's unique quality of life.

Our core values include community, leadership, integrity, positivity, resilience, respect, and stewardship. We hold these values dear, and we seek a partner that both aligns with these values and embraces our mission.

ATIA is committed to being the trusted resource for travel and tourism businesses and organizations statewide and will do this by:

- Providing the most current travel safe messages and resources to businesses and Alaska communities / residents
- Providing information and digital resources that include cultural messages and information appropriate for urban and rural Alaska
- Providing messages to both large- and small-scale business entities as a target audience
- Advocating for tourism to be treated as an important, sustainable, and resilient opportunity for economic and resource development

To help us deliver on this effort, ***we are seeking a partner (or partners) skilled in developing educational and/or media campaigns utilizing television, radio and social media platforms that penetrate throughout Alaska communities and affect change in both rural and urban areas.*** The ideal partner will *fit* well with our organization, collaborate nicely with our existing partners, understand our business, embrace our mission, share our values, and act as a strategic, trusted, consultative guide for the ATIA team.

ATIA is committed to always be smart with our budget and use these funds effectively.

Your recommended and creative approach will be fundamental to your proposal. Your proposed direction will guide the campaign deliverables and outcomes.

We are attempting not to be prescriptive, and ***we want to hear your approach to enhance or develop and produce a travel safely brand and messaging targeted to Alaska businesses and community partners statewide. Messaging must include current travel safe best practices, travel safe resources, and connect to ATIA's existing digital presence.***

We are seeking all proposals by 5:00 p.m. Alaska time, Friday, August 20, 2021. We have provided a complete timeline of the process within this document.

Thank you in advance,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sarah Leonard". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Sarah Leonard
ATIA President & CEO

1. Company Overview

The Alaska Travel Industry Association (ATIA) is the leading statewide, nonprofit, and member-based trade association for the travel industry in Alaska. With over 600 tourism business members and partners, ATIA is the leading industry organization promoting Alaska as a top visitor destination, communicating, and promoting the Alaskan tourism industry as one of the state's major economic forces, and the respected voice of the industry for the growth of the industry, while remaining attentive to care for the environment, recognition of cultures and Alaska's unique quality of life.

ATIA is governed by a member-elected Board of Directors. The ATIA Board guides the Association's priorities as the state's leading nonprofit membership association for the Alaska travel industry. The Board of Directors approves ATIA's annual budget and acts on issues important to tourism businesses and partners.

ATIA holds Board member elections annually. The ATIA Board is made up of members representing small and large tourism businesses and different sectors of the travel industry. The ATIA Board is also comprised of regional representatives, including elected directors from the Arctic, Interior, Southwest, Southcentral, and Southeast regions of the state. Directors also are elected to At-Large (statewide) and Outside seats. Additional information on our organization can be viewed on our website at www.alaskatia.org.

ATIA has a several standing committees, represented by tourism and community members. This includes a Membership Committee which is chaired by ATIA's elected board secretary. It is also made up of ATIA's Chapter officers, which represent different regions of the state - Juneau, Anchorage, Fairbanks, Ketchikan - as well as an Arts, Cultural and Heritage Chapter.

While ATIA manages and implements Alaska's statewide tourism marketing program: TravelAlaska, this request for proposal is for an in-state media campaign. The major audiences of the in-state media campaign are travel and tourism businesses operating in Alaska communities.

2. Contact

We are focused on working with your agency to answer any questions about the project as you prepare a proposal. Please direct questions and your proposal to:

Sarah Leonard, ATIA President & CEO
Email: sleonard@alaskatia.org

3. Budget

The total project funding is no more than \$465,000. We have initially estimated the campaign budget breakdown to be:

- Up to \$50,000 to develop messaging to be implemented in the campaign. This includes a travel safely brand, graphics, logo(s) as well as messaging targeted to Alaska businesses and community partners. This expense can include time to conduct stakeholder interviews of businesses, community partners, ATIA board directors, chapter and committee representatives and other partners.
- Up to \$350,000 for in-state radio and television advertisements. This budget may include filming and photography, production, script development and advertisement buys and placement, and potentially translation.
- Up to \$62,000 for social media to post, maintain, respond, and track social media messaging on various ATIA-owned platforms (i.e. Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Pinterest) as well as through e-newsletters.

We are looking to potential bidders to propose recommended budget details and breakdowns for each of the media campaign components listed above. Proposals should be tailored as cost reimbursable.

4. Timeline

- RFP Release: July 27, 2021
- Deadline for Questions from Prospective Partners: August 2, 2021
- Q&A Responses Provided by ATIA to all prospective bidders: August 4, 2021
- Deadline for Proposal Submission: August 20, 2021
- ATIA Proposal Review Committee Meets: August 23, 2021 – August 27, 2021
- Notification by ATIA of Partner Selection: August 31, 2021
- Proposed Campaign Kickoff Date: October 15, 2021
- Proposed Campaign End Date: April 15, 2022

5. Audiences

The in-state media campaign should be relevant and targeted to Alaska travel and tourism businesses and organizations and community partners involved in the tourism industry and economic development efforts.

- **Businesses** – This audience expects to see messages and information specific to business operations and resiliency. ATIA’s current business membership list, ATIA board of directors, ATIA committee and chapter members along with industry partners are included in this audience.

- **Members** – This audience has connected with ATIA throughout the pandemic to share COVID-19 resources and information. ATIA members number 600 plus, and are found operating in every region of the state, and in both rural and urban settings. Business members range from small “mom and pop” lodge owners to cultural attractions to cruise ship executives.
- **Community partners** – This audience includes, but is not limited to, ATIA destination marketing organization or DMO members. It also includes community partners through the Alaska Regional Development Organizations (ARDORs) and the Economic Development Districts. Additional partners include the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services, the Alaska Department of Commerce, Community & Economic Development and Alaska state-managed airports.

6. Resources

- a. Documents:
 - i. **Alaska Tourism Industry Protocols** (currently being updated):
http://www.alaskatia.org/wp-content/uploads/ATIA20Industry20Protocols20and20Guidelines6_2020.pdf
- b. Websites:
 - i. **ATIA Member Website.** www.AlaskaTIA.org
 - ii. **COVID-19 tab:** <https://www.alaskatia.org/coronavirus-guidance>
 - iii. **Center for Disease Control (CDC) Resources**
 - iv. **Travel Alaska:** ATIA’s largest traveler-oriented site. This is ATIA’s flagship website for advertisers and visitors. www.TravelAlaska.com

7. Challenges

- a. **Shifting Guidelines / Changing Situation** – Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, resources, and information about the disease, impacts to travel, health and safety and eventually vaccine-related information and availability changed constantly. While the pace of updates and information may have slowed slightly, the Alaska COVID-19 environment has shifted again with federal and state updates on new variants, changes to testing availability at local airports and loosening or tightening of guidelines in some communities. The in-state media campaign should be able to address the current situation as well as be flexible and promote messages related to ongoing business and community resiliency as we move to a path to recovery.
- b. **COVID-19 message fatigue** – We have all been in the COVID-19 pandemic world since March 2020, over a year filled with public health messages, vaccine promotions, shutdowns and “hunker down” modes, etc. Even as Alaska businesses and communities are beginning to see lower case rates and more vaccine availability throughout the state and U.S., the precautionary messages continue. People are understandably tired of hearing about and practicing coronavirus precautions. The successful bidder will be able to recommend messaging and campaign tactics that can penetrate this fatigue. The short-term media campaign should encourage businesses and community members to absorb lessons learned

from the pandemic and adopt reasonable COVID-19 safety measures until they become natural or “second nature.”

- c. **Capturing audience interest** – Not only are people tired of hearing about COVID-19 safety measures and how to continue to adapt toward recovery, but a multitude of media are also in the marketplace with COVID-19 messaging and information. The successful bidder will be able to recommend a campaign that captures the target audiences’ interest with an accepted “new normal” messaging that can make a lasting impression through creativity and repetition.
- d. **Personalization** – ATIA partners with business and organizations located in larger communities as well as very remote and rural areas. The tourism business community is one that is diverse and multi-cultural. A successful campaign will address rural messaging and provide safety information relevant to both urban and rural environments. Campaign components should be personalized for both an Alaska feel and can also include urban, rural, cultural themes.

8. Goals

The COVID-19 pandemic caused a massive shock to the Alaskan economy by crippling its tourism industry. In 2019, tourism was the second-largest private-sector employer in Alaska, supporting more than \$1.4 billion in direct wages and representing more than 50,000 indirect and direct jobs. Alaska’s tourism economy was worth \$4.5 billion to the State of Alaska in total economic impact, generating an over \$100 million return to the State’s general fund and more than \$88 million to local and borough budgets through taxes and fees attributable to visitors and travel¹.

The effects of the coronavirus on Alaska tourism businesses and communities are nothing short of cataclysmic. In December 2020, Alaska ranked 44th in the nation for job growth at -32 percent², a figure led by steep declines in travel and hospitality and related transportation employment. In a more recent study conducted for ATIA by McKinley Research Group, visitor industry employment is estimated to have declined 79 percent (April-December 2020) compared with the same period in 2019, reflecting a loss of 27,800 jobs. Visitor spending is estimated to have declined 78 percent (April -December 2020) compared to 2019, reflecting a loss of \$2.2 billion from Alaska’s economy.

Travel restrictions and health and safety mandates severely limited travel leading up to and through what was supposed to have been a year of record tourism in 2020. In an industry where more than 60 percent of visitors arrive via cruise ship, cruise companies cancelled 99.9 percent of their Alaska itineraries. Air travel – approximately 36 percent of Alaska visitor transportation volume – decreased drastically, and the Canadian border continues to be closed to non-essential

¹ www.alaskatia.org/wp-content/uploads/Visitor-Volume-Fall_Winter-2015-to-2018-8_31_18.pdf

² Alaska Department of Labor, *Trends*, September 2020. <https://labor.alaska.gov/trends/sep20.pdf>

In January 2021, the Department of Labor’s updated analysis reported Alaska had lost 9,600 jobs in the leisure and hospitality industry in 2020, 35 percent of Alaska’s total job losses. <https://labor.alaska.gov/trends/jan21.pdf>

traffic through August 9. Cruise ship travel resumed mid-July but will be operating with significantly fewer sailings and reduced capacity in 2021. Every transportation pathway for travelers to reach Alaska has been impacted and thousands of tourism businesses were left wondering if they would be able to reopen for business.

As vaccine availability becomes more widespread, and travel restrictions and COVID-19 health guidelines are updated, Alaska's travel and tourism industry is on the path toward recovery. The impacts of the pandemic on businesses -- lost spending, wages, and jobs -- can be long-lasting. An online survey by ATIA conducted in March 2021 demonstrated the wide range of COVID-19's effects, including on business operations. In that survey, businesses reported taking a wide variety of measures in reaction to the pandemic, including adopting new protocols and changing services.

If we are to recover fully – to restore jobs, generate revenue for Alaska's economies, and maintain people's livelihoods – it is imperative Alaska's tourism businesses keep health and safety as a primary goal for Alaska to be a safe and quality travel destination.

ATIA's goals, through this in-state media campaign, include strengthening the ability of the Alaska travel community to be economically resilient. The campaign will be informed by the outcomes of a working group of industry and stakeholders who will be discussing and updating ATIA's board of director approved industry protocols (see #6 Resources). Along with the media campaign, ATIA will be implementing training of the adapted statewide health and safety protocols through online and digital tools to reach Alaska businesses and community partners.

The in-state media and messaging will help Alaska's tourism industry businesses and communities that rely on tourism activity be prepared with longer-term adjustments that help our industry withstand future shocks. By providing tools for Alaska's tourism businesses and communities that rely on tourism, paired with information on travel safe practices, ATIA will help facilitate short- and long-term recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Through the in-state media campaign, ATIA's goals are to:

1. Educate communities and businesses statewide to become more resilient,
2. Disseminate safe travel messaging to educate businesses and community partners about State of Alaska and U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) protocols and local guidelines, and
3. Instill confidence by sharing safe travel tips and local guidelines and encourage responsible and safe behavior to promote public health of our residents and communities.

9. Requirements / Scope

To satisfy our goals and address our challenges, we have determined that we need to design, produce, and implement a short-term (6 month) in-state media campaign targeted to businesses and communities with COVID-19 travel safe messaging. We are open to creative and innovative approaches and partnerships between potential bidders to implement the work.

The campaign's goal will be to educate and encourage tourism businesses to look for information and tools to adapt and operate, and also provide the resources and imagery businesses can use in resuming tourism activities and safe operations. While this is intended to be a generic effort to reach any business and community that relies on tourism activities as part of their economic vitality, ATIA will work with our supporting partners on providing messaging and imagery that meets the needs of rural businesses and communities. Regardless of the proposals, the requirements below must be satisfied:

- a. **Campaign efforts adhere to federal and state health and travel mandates** and orders as well as individual community travel requirements and guidelines.

- b. A **"travel safely" brand** will be created including brand components of graphics, logo(s) and messaging targeted to Alaska businesses and community partners. Successful bidder(s) will work with the ATIA team to conduct stakeholder interviews of businesses, community partners, ATIA Board of Directors, chapter and committee representatives and other partners toward creative development of the brand. The brand will include high level messaging, along with a logo, colors, type, font, and graphic look. The campaign could potentially include versions of a travel safely logo and messaging for both businesses that operate in more urban areas and for those businesses and organizations that operate in more remote regions of Alaska, perhaps using place-based names and language as part of education efforts. The campaign components (logo(s), taglines, hashtags, etc.) will be made available to businesses and communities in downloadable online versions or in print, where applicable.

- c. **Social media messaging** with the brand messaging and imagery will be deployed through online posts and blogs on ATIA-owned channels like Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Alaskatia.org, TravelAlaska.com and through e-newsletters. The social media campaign will be used to amplify the safe travel message, encourage adaptation of safety protocols, and increase engagement by Alaska tourism operators as well as potential resident travelers, including those employed in the tourism workforce, in safe travel behavior. ATIA staff and the successful bidder(s) will post, respond, monitor messaging, and purchase paid postings, tracking on a monthly basis.

d. **Radio and in-state television advertisements and public service announcements (PSA)** will be produced and purchased through in-state media outlets, promoting travel safe messaging, graphics, trainings targeted to businesses and communities. ATIA staff and the successful bidder(s) will develop the radio scripts, narration, graphics and produce PSAs and radio advertisements, along with filming and producing a television advertisement. The successful bidder will purchase radio and in-state TV media buys and placements and will be negotiated and placed coinciding with the social media messaging and posts to better penetrate Alaska communities individually and statewide.

10. Engagement Specification and Terms

a. **Minimum qualifications**

All potential bidders must score at least 75 points to qualify for committee review (see #12. Evaluation Criteria).

b. **Contract term**

This term of the contract(s) begins on August 31, 2021 and ends on April 15, 2022.

c. **Contractor's compensation**

Compensation to the Contractor shall be based on the following items listed below.

i. *Direct Expenses*

Reimbursement by the issuing agency of direct expenses, as identified in the Contractor's proposal, and actually incurred by the Contractor in performance of the contract. There shall be no markup or increase to direct expenses and any discounts received by the Contractor shall be passed on to the issuing agency.

ii. *Travel Expenses*

Travel expenses are considered direct expenses for purposes of the proposed contract and shall be reimbursed at cost with no mark-up or increase.

iii. *Services Fees*

Payment by the issuing agency for time spent by the Contractor in performance of the Contract. This includes but is not limited to daily and hourly fees and/or rates for individuals as identified in the contractor's proposal. ATIA works on a service fee basis. Proposals should be tailored on a cost reimbursable basis.

iv. *Other Fees and/or Rates*

Payment by the issuing agency for other services based on specific fees and/or rates identified in the contractor's proposal.

v. *Indirect Expenses*

Indirect expenses, indirect rates, and/or a markup of direct expenses are not allowable or reimbursable under the proposed contract. Indirect expenses vary, depending on the nature of the proposed contract. Some typical examples of indirect

expenses are payroll and travel for administrative personnel, office space, equipment, local telephone, and insurance.

d. Conflict of interest and restrictions

During the term of the awarded contract, the successful bidder shall not enter into a contractual agreement for any other entity or organization if such service would create a substantial conflict between the interests of ATIA or the interests of the said other entity. If a contractor or contractor's employee, joint venture, subcontractor, or any individual working on the proposed contract may have a possible conflict of interest that may affect the objectivity, analysis, and/or performance of the contract, the contractor will advise, in writing, to ATIA immediately of any possible said conflicts of interest.

Conflicts may include existing contractual relationships with other tourism destinations and/or including but not limited to, competing tourism destinations or tourism business destinations and organizations. A conflict of interest also may exist when an interested party participates in a matter that has a direct and predictable effect on the interested party's personal or financial interests. A financial interest may include employment, stock ownership, a creditor or debtor relationship, or prospective employment with the organization selected or to be selected for a subaward. A conflict also may exist where there is an appearance that an interested party's objectivity in performing his or her responsibilities under the project is impaired. For example, an appearance of impairment of objectivity may result from an organizational conflict where, because of other activities or relationships with other persons or entities, an interested party is unable to render impartial assistance, services or advice to the recipient, a participant in the project. Additionally, a conflict of interest may result from non-financial gain to an interested party, such as benefit to reputation or prestige in a professional field.

An interested party includes, but is not necessarily limited to, any officer, employee, or member of the board of directors or other governing board of a non-Federal entity, including any other parties that advise, approve, recommend, or otherwise participate in the business decisions of the recipient, such as agents, advisors, consultants, attorneys, accountants, or shareholders. This also includes immediate family and other persons directly connected to the interested party by law or through a business arrangement.

e. Ownership of documents /intellectual property rights

All designs, drawings, specifications, notes, databases, research, raw data, artwork, and all other work product, including but not limited to feature copy, photography, footage, developed in the performance of the proposed agreement are produced for hire, remain the sole property of ATIA, may not be copyrighted by the contractor, and may be used by ATIA for any purpose without additional compensation to the contractor. The contractor will agree not to assert any rights and not to establish any claim under the design patent or copyright laws. The contractor will agree, for a period of three years after final payment under any contract signed with ATIA, to furnish and provide access to all retained materials at the request of ATIA.

f. Insurance

During the course of this agreement, the contractor shall, at its sole expense, procure and maintain insurance with mutually acceptable companies as noted below:

- Comprehensive General Liability Insurance with limits no less than \$1,000,000 per occurrence and \$2,000,000 in the annual aggregate;
- Commercial Auto Insurance covering all owner, non-owned and/or hired autos with limits no less than \$1,000,000 per accident;
- Workers' Compensation Insurance with Statutory limits and Employer's Liability limits no less than \$100,000 per accident, \$100,000 per employee in the event of disease, and \$500,000 policy aggregate in the event of disease, and;
- Professional Liability (if applicable) with limits no less than \$1,000,000.

g. Communication

The ATIA project manager is the President & CEO or her designee and will direct all project/campaign activities and communications.

h. Request for Proposals (RFP) qualifications

ATIA reserves the right to accept any proposal submitted for consideration. ATIA reserves the right to reject any and all proposals in whole or in part, to award in part, to waive technical defects, irregularities, and omissions, if in its discretion, the best interests of ATIA would be served. A proposal must be valid for a period of sixty (60) days from the deadline for submission of proposals. ATIA reserves the right to amend or cancel this RFP. ATIA reserves the right to correct inaccurate awards resulting from its clerical errors. ATIA is not responsible for any costs incurred by any party in responding to this RFP. ATIA reserves the right to contract with more than one proposer in association with this project. Anything included in the proposal may become part of the final contract.

i. Inclusions

The successful bidder will be required to be registered in the System of Award Management (SAM). Potential bidders must also submit form CD-512 Certification Regarding Lobbying indicating the potential bidder will not and has not used federal appropriated funds to pay any person or organization for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a member of Congress, officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a member of Congress in connection with obtaining any Federal contract, grant or any other award covered by 31 U.S.C. 1352. Each potential bidder must also disclose any lobbying with non-Federal funds that takes place in connection with obtaining any Federal award.

11. Proposal Submission

All proposals must follow the format outlined below, and requested information must be supplied electronically via email to sleonard@alaskatia.org by 5:00pm AST on August 20, 2021. The proposal must not exceed 10 pages in length. Incomplete proposals, proposal over the page limit and proposals arriving after the deadline will be automatically disqualified from consideration.

- **Cover Letter:** Include the name and contact information of the person authorized to commit the firm(s) to the terms specified in the proposal and clearly identify the specific components being included in the proposal.
- **Summary of Qualifications:** Describe the firm's relevant and technical experience, including past projects, number of years in business, understanding of Alaska's travel and tourism industry and communities, understanding of media campaigns, television and radio buys, social media campaigns, brand, and logo development, understanding of rural Alaska communities and/or multi-cultural communication, etc. If you are proposing to sub-contract or partner with another firm, this should be clearly stated, and the qualifications of both firms should be described in this section. Additionally, please describe engagements in which the firms have worked together in the past. (15 points)
- **Project Staff:** Briefly identify project manager, key staff, and contractors, and if applicable, their relevant experience, who will assist with the campaign. If multiple firms are included in the proposal, please list the staff from all firms, as well as the roles, responsibilities, and reporting relationships between them, especially across firms. (5 points)
- **Description of Your Approach:** Describe how your company understands the scope and your proposed approach to the campaign. Discuss the methodology, platforms, and metrics your company would use. Again, if you are proposing more than one firm to share the engagement, please help us understand how this affects the approach. (50 points)
- **Budget:** Include a detailed budget description of costs. Break out costs by the major work components and show estimated hard costs and service fees to implement each of them. Proposals should be tailored using a cost reimbursable model. (25 points)
- **References:** Provide three client references with current contact information and the name of the appropriate contact person (for each firm if multiple firms are proposed). Your references should represent a past client for which your firm has completed a comprehensive media campaign engagement. Include URLs if applicable. (5 points)

12. Evaluation Criteria

ATIA and the ATIA proposal review committee will evaluate proposals by the following criteria:

- **Up to 15 points** will be awarded based on how the potential bidder describes their organization and team experience related to advertising, marketing, or education / media campaigns.
- **Up to 5 points** will be awarded based on the description of the experience of the team members proposed to be assigned to this campaign, as well as the fit with the ATIA team.
- **Up to 50 points** will be awarded based on a potential bidder's understanding of the project, proposed project timeline, and approach to the scope of work. The review committee will

take into consideration creativity, innovation, diversity, and efficiencies in a potential bidder's approach to the campaign.

- **Up to 25 points** will be awarded based on the description of a potential bidder's detailed budget and cost items.
- **Up to 5 points** will be awarded to a potential bidder's submission of three client references as described above.