



3 YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN: REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

- APRIL 7, 2021

INTRODUCTION

Discover Lancaster is requesting proposals from qualified strategic planning firms to conduct a far-reaching and inclusive input process to develop a 3-year Strategic Plan and guide the organization's work over the next 3 years.

The selected firm will be responsible for assisting Discover Lancaster with the full scope of developing the Strategic Plan. Discover Lancaster is soliciting proposals for these services in accordance with the terms, conditions and instructions set forth in this Request for Proposal.

There is no expressed or implied obligation for Discover Lancaster to reimburse responding firms for any expenses incurred in preparing proposals in response to the request or for attending any meetings or conferences related to preparing or presenting proposals.

BACKGROUND

Discover Lancaster is a 501 (c)(6) organization and is the official tourism promotion agency serving Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. The organization promotes tourism and represents over 500 lodging, dining, shopping, and attraction properties in Lancaster County, PA. Discover Lancaster's current mission is to inspire people to visit and discover Lancaster. The key core values that guide the organization are integrity and innovation, with a guest-centric focus.

Lancaster has been long known and loved for our differentiator, the Amish community who live here. While the people themselves are not an "attraction," there are many ways to experience their history, and engage with them in various settings in Lancaster County. Lancaster has also become known for our thriving Downtown, which has become (like many other small towns across America) a foodie destination.

While we once nearly only promoted Lancaster for its Amish traditions, what truly makes Lancaster a top-tier small destination in the U.S. is the dichotomy of the old world Amish, who still ride in a horse & buggy, don't use electricity, and farm with mules pulling their tractors, and the hip & vibrant small towns with eclectic shops, art galleries, wineries & breweries, and delicious, award winning food.

The careful line we tread, as the keepers of the Lancaster brand, is to not swing the pendulum too far in either direction - either the modern Lancaster city, or only the Amish, who differentiate Lancaster from any other destination in the world.

In addition to marketing Lancaster County, we are currently evaluating the future of our Discover Lancaster Visitors Center. The current Visitors Center (7,014 total sq. ft.) is a place where people can stop for area information. Currently, our Visitors Center features a retail space (465 sq. ft.), theater (917 sq. ft.), information area (2,800 sq. ft.), and an art gallery (2,832 sq. ft.). Travel Consultants assist guests with inquiries at a large information desk, guiding them to local attractions and answering questions they may have.

We are located off a major highway, but are not in a walkable area of the county. Our Visitors Center sits on 5.5 acres of land, including a spacious parking lot that can accommodate both passenger cars and large tour buses.

PROPOSAL

The following information is required for the proposal submission to be considered:

- Firm name, address, contact name, title, phone number & email address
- Scope of Work including an outlined approach and strategy to complete the requested Scope of Work
- Cost estimate for the proposed Scope of Work, and any other project-related costs
- List of 3 references

SCOPE OF WORK REQUESTED

- Conduct a pre-meeting with Discover Lancaster and the Executive Board to clarify expectations and desired outcomes.
- Review relevant documents identified by the President & CEO and Board including mission/vision, bylaws, and Committees recaps/reports.
- Organize and facilitate meetings to encourage participation and gather insight regarding critical issues and priorities for Discover Lancaster.
- Work with the Discover Lancaster senior team to ensure that there is thorough board, staff and community engagement.

- Provide President & CEO and Executive Board with documentation of findings from stakeholder surveys/research/interviews, and preliminary direction for a Strategic Plan. Stakeholder group will include business leaders, community leaders, and elected officials.
- Provide initial draft to the President & CEO and Strategic Plan Committee the first week of August 2021.
- Provide a draft Strategic Plan at August 2021 Board Advisory Committee meeting.
- Attend and present the final report at Discover Lancaster November 2021 Board meeting.

PROJECT SCHEDULE

Proposals must be received no later than 5:00 p.m. EST on **April 30th**, 2021.

Discover Lancaster assumes no responsibility or liability for late delivery or receipt of responses. In order to be considered eligible for the project, the firm that would be assigned to the project, must be available in person or by phone/videoconference to respond to questions the week of **May 10th**, 2021.

The project will be awarded and terms finalized that week or thereafter. Discover Lancaster will negotiate contract terms upon selection.

A work session with the selected firm will take place with the Executive Board at the Discover Lancaster Board of Directors meeting on **May 20th**.

ELIGIBILITY, PROPOSAL CONTENTS AND REQUIREMENTS

Strategic Planning Firms should be experienced in working with organizations in the development of a strategic plan. In addition, experience working with both tourism/hospitality organizations and general businesses is preferred. The intent of the Request for Proposal is to garner proposals from qualified strategic planning companies to work in partnership with Discover Lancaster and key stakeholders. The successful proposer will work directly with the President & CEO and the Strategic Plan Committee to ensure all activities in this project are completed on time and within budget.

Cover Letter: Summarize the proposed team and approach. Include the firm name, address, contact person, and all applicable contact information.

Qualifications:

- Describe the background, experience and capabilities of your firm as it relates to the Scope of Work outlined above.

- Identify the name and title of the primary contact and any other key team members who will be assigned to this project.
- Provide the name, telephone number, and email address of at least three references that can attest to the quality and effectiveness of your work.

Budget Parameters:

- 2018 Previous Strategic Plan \$24,800– potential for flexibility in total budget

Send Proposals and questions to Kate Farbo, Office Coordinator, at kfarbo@discoverlancaster.com by **April 30th**, 2021.