



County of Cheshire and Greater Keene & Peterborough Chamber Request for Proposals

MARKETING FIRM for the MONADNOCK REGION COVID-19 RECOVERY MARKETING CAMPAIGN

The County of Cheshire is requesting a detailed proposal from qualified contractors or consultants to create a comprehensive branding and marketing strategy to attract people to the Monadnock Region of Southwestern New Hampshire.

Submissions and Timeline

1. RFP release date: **July 7, 2021.**
2. To receive RFP addendums, questions and answers, and any available additional documents to assist in preparing the proposals, please submit intent to apply notice by email containing name and email address to the grants manager at sbansley@co.cheshire.nh.us. Intent to apply notice is not required to apply.
3. Questions must be submitted in writing via email to the grants manager sbansley@co.cheshire.nh.us no later than 10:01am on **Monday, July 19, 2021.** Responses will be made available to all applicants within 5 business days.
4. **Project proposals are due by 12:01pm on Friday, August 6, 2021.** Proposals must be sent via PDF attachment to an email sent to sbansley@co.cheshire.nh.us.
5. Interviews of applicants will be scheduled between August 16-20, 2021.
6. The estimated date for selection of contract awardee is Monday, August 23, 2021.
7. The estimated start date for contract is Tuesday, September 7, 2021.

Background and Goals

The purpose of this Request for Proposal (RFP) is for Cheshire County and its partner, the Greater Keene and Peterborough Chamber (GKPC), to identify a full-service advertising/marketing firm – to conceive, design, and manage a branding and marketing campaign for the southwestern part of New Hampshire, often referred to as “The Monadnock Region.”

The intent of this process is to select an agency to work with, based on qualifications, philosophical compatibility, and pricing structure.

Although Cheshire County will hire and compensate the firm, the firm will interact primarily with the staff of GKPC and its Promoting the Region Committee.

While there have been attempts to brand and market the Monadnock Region, or parts of it, over many decades, the region does not currently have an organized, well-funded campaign in place, reflecting its desirability as a destination for tourism, residents, workers and students of higher education.

The campaign envisions a spotlight on the region that includes the City of Keene, the largest community in the region, as well 35 other picturesque New England towns.

About the Monadnock Region

What is generally considered “The Monadnock Region” – there is no precise definition – has a population of approximately 100,000, comprised of Cheshire County (approx. 76,000) and western Hillsborough County (approx. 25,000). The largest community in the region is Keene, the Cheshire County Seat, with a population of approx. 23,000. Keene serves as the region’s primary commercial and employment center and is home to Keene State College, with a full-time student population of approximately 3,500. The next largest towns in the region are Swanzey, adjacent to Keene (approx. 7,000), and Peterborough, 20 miles east of Keene (approx. 6,000). Antioch University New England, located in Keene, is well known for several graduate degree programs, and Franklin Pierce University in Rindge, has a student population of about 2,000.

The Monadnock Region enjoys a long legacy of advanced and precision manufacturing, quality schools, medical facilities, and a vibrant arts community. Its active and full-service general aviation airport is a five-minute drive from downtown Keene and boasts the third longest runway in the state. The region’s physical attributes include Mt. Monadnock, one of the most climbed mountains in the world, beautiful lakes and rivers, and an extensive biking and hiking rail trail system which incorporates historic railroad beds. People enjoy outdoor activities, from golf to gardening, and support local businesses by “buying local.”

Not serving as host to a major interstate highway, the region is somewhat isolated. It stands apart from the major attractions for tourists in New Hampshire: the White Mountains, the Lakes Region, and the Seacoast. In some ways the Monadnock Region shares more in common with adjacent counties in Massachusetts and Vermont than its in-state neighbors.

About the Greater Keene and Peterborough Chamber and its Task Force to Promote the Monadnock Region

The Greater Keene and Peterborough Chamber (GKPC) is the dominant chamber in the region, with nearly 700 member organizations from 40+ communities, including a few in Vermont and Massachusetts.

In early 2019, the GKPC board of directors formed a task force of representatives from around the region to assess the feasibility of a multi-year, multi-platform branding and marketing campaign, and to report back to the board. The task force developed a plan for the project and concluded that there was enough support from organizations in the region to collaboratively fund a branding campaign and an ongoing marketing campaign. Although stalled for a period by the Covid-10 pandemic, with Cheshire County as its sponsor and with financial support committed by local organizations, GKPC applied for and was awarded a grant from the US Economic Development Administration. The grant permits the Chamber to begin the project right away. The intent is to continue fundraising efforts to supplement the grant and contributions to-date.

Scope of Work and Technical Requirements

1. Conduct research inside and outside the region, develop a brand strategy, and create a comprehensive multi-year, multi-platform branding and marketing strategy package. The branding and marketing campaign will target those most predisposed to find travel and/or relocation to the region an enticing possibility. The goal is to attract a skilled workforce, more visitors, families, and higher education students to the region. Specifically, develop:
 - A plan to conduct extensive market research as input into the branding process. Validate the draft brand messaging internally and externally. Note: Recent research is available regarding Massachusetts and New Hampshire residents' awareness and perception of the Monadnock Region.
 - A brand strategy, including a brand promise/statement and common brand messaging that is compelling and distinguishes the region.
 - A visual identity for the brand, including logo, tagline, and images.
 - Marketing assets and materials that can be delivered through social media platforms and the internet, in print, on radio, and direct mail.
 - Brand guidelines and a tool kit of information to make it clear how to use the brand and marketing assets. Other marketers in the region will have access to the tool kit so they can promote the brand in their marketing.
2. Create a comprehensive marketing and communications strategy that is aligned with available budget and human resources that can be used for at least two years after the branding project is completed. NOTE: The firm is not expected to implement the marketing plan. GKPC staff will be responsible for implementation.
3. Create a plan to evaluate the success of the brand and the marketing to be conducted three years after the start of the project.
4. Project proposals must include ability to complete the project by the deadline of **Friday, May 20, 2022**.
5. Project proposals must include statements confirming the following:
 - a. The contractor will supply all equipment, materials, supplies, labor, and any other items or services necessary to complete the scope of work.
 - b. The contractor will complete and submit in a timely manner all documentation required by the county and/or the Greater Keene and Peterborough Chamber.
 - c. The contractor has or will obtain at its own cost general liability coverage with a limit of at least \$1,000,000 per occurrence and \$2,000,000 aggregate; professional liability coverage with limits of at least \$1,000,000 per occurrence and \$2,000,000 aggregate; and worker's compensation coverage meeting State of NH required limits and providing employer's liability coverage. The successful consultant/contractor must submit at the time a contract is executed a current certificate of insurance from a company licensed to issue such insurance in the State of New Hampshire.
 - d. The contractor is not debarred, suspended, or otherwise prohibited from receiving federal funds.

Proposal Content Requirements

1. Approach: Describe how your firm will approach this project and accomplish the scope of work in terms of preparation, research, work organization or delegation, procedures and process, communication with the county, and assurances that the work will result in a

high quality product or service and meet the specifications listed under Scope of Work and Technical Requirements.

2. Schedule/timeline: Provide a schedule with anticipated milestones from the execution of a contract through final completion of the project. Confirm that you are able to meet the project deadline.
3. Organizational description: Provide a description of your business's history, staffing (education and relevant work experience), and lines of work (projects or service programs) related to the scope of work in this RFP. Indicate whether the organization is a qualified disadvantaged business (DBE), women-owned, or minority-owned. Lack of relevant experience on the part of the consultant/contractor may be grounds for disqualification.
4. County responsibilities: Indicate what your expectations are for the county and/or Greater Keene and Peterborough Chamber in order for your firm to ensure a successful project.
5. Warranties/guarantees: Describe warranties and/or guarantees offered for the work, materials, and/or services.
6. Price Proposal: Provide a fixed all-inclusive price for completing the project according to the scope of services described above. The consultant/contractor may provide an additional separate price for an alternate approach if the consultant/contractor feels that there is a better solution that can be offered.
7. References: Provide a description and references for three (3) comparable projects your firm has undertaken over the past three (3) years. Reference information shall include names, addresses, telephone numbers, email addresses, dates, and brief description of the work performed.
8. Example work/portfolio: Provide one or more examples of work similar to the scope of work in this RFP. Example work may be provided in the form of an attachment to the proposal or as a web link to the source.
9. Disclose/list all subcontractors that you intend to use on this project, their scope of work, and the amount that is included in the price proposal to cover their work.
10. Submit 1 electronic file of the proposal in a single PDF file; all fonts shall be Times New Roman or Arial, 12-point font, and in sentenced case.

Eligibility Requirements

Only proposals that meet the following eligibility requirements shall be considered. Bidders shall address all of the following requirements in their proposal so that the review team can determine eligibility.

1. Firm is registered in good standing with the secretary of the state in which their business is located.
2. Firm and any key employees to work on the project are not debarred, suspended, or otherwise restricted from receiving federal funds.
3. Firm is able to meet deadline of Friday, May 20, 2022.
4. Firm has at least three years of experience in a relevant field and demonstration of solid experience with, and/or access to, market research, multi-platform messaging, and positioning development, corporate and/or destination identity/branding, and measurement/tracking of results.
5. The firm's expectations of the county and/or the Greater Keene and Peterborough Chamber are reasonable and manageable.
6. Proposal addresses and/or acknowledges all aspects of the scope of work and technical requirements.

7. Proposal contains all content required.

Selection Criteria

Before making its award or issuing a contract, the county shall consider the project proposal, work, and/or services or products delivered that best serves the needs and financial interests of the county. The county reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, to award any proposal, to waive as an informality any irregularities on proposals received, and to omit any item or items as it may deem to be in the best interest of the county. The decision of the county shall be final and not subject to review or appeal. The following criteria will be used to select the agency.

1. Strength of the proposal from the agency to:
 - a. Assure that the firm has a good reputation, track record, and relevant experience;
 - b. Assure that the people who will do the work are qualified, have the necessary knowledge and skills, and will be compatible with the project team;
 - c. Assure that the firm and the people doing the work have the capacity to take on and complete this project;
 - d. Plan and conduct research inside and outside the region as the basis for the brand work;
 - e. Articulate the brand promise, develop the brand messaging (including logo), and produce the creative assets to be used in advertising and communications;
 - f. Recommend the marketing plan to deploy the creative assets in advertising and communications and to promote the brand;
 - g. Create a plan to evaluate the success of the brand and the marketing to be conducted three years after the start of the project.
2. Cost considerations
3. Timeline/approach considerations

Award

1. Approval and award of a contract is contingent upon the continued availability of funding to accomplish the project.
2. This project is supported by the Economic Development Administration of the U.S. Department of Commerce as part of a FY2020 Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance Programs Notice of Funding Opportunity (FY20 NOFO) including CARES award totaling \$400,000 with 25% financed with non-governmental sources. The \$400,000 is intended to cover the cost of hiring of a part-time project manager, the branding campaign, and the marketing campaign (to follow the branding campaign) over a three-year interval. The contents of this RFP are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by the Economic Development Administration, Department of Commerce, or the U.S. Government.
3. Type of contract: firm fixed price.