

Formal Request for Qualifications

TITLE OF RFQ:	Iowa Tourism Strategic Plan Development		
Department:	Iowa Tourism Office (ITO), part of the Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA)		
State seeks to purchase:	IEDA is seeking proposals from bidders to assist the ITO with the development of a statewide tourism strategic plan.		
Initial term of the contract:	Approximately 12 months	Possible extensions: 2	
Anticipated Contract term - Beginning:	May 5, 2021	Ending:	May 5, 2022
State Issuing Officer:	Amy Zeigler, State Tourism Manager at IEDA		
Email:	amy.zeigler@iowaeda.com		
Address:	1963 Bell Avenue, Suite 200, Des Moines, IA 50315		
PROCUREMENT TIMETABLE—Event or Action:		Date/Time (Central Time):	
State Posts Notice of RFQ on TSB website:		March 3, 2021	
State Issues RFQ:		March 5, 2021	
Questions Due:		March 19, 2021 / 12:00 PM CDT	
IEDA Response to Questions on or before:		March 26, 2021 / 4:00 PM CDT	
Proposals Due Date:		April 7, 2021 / 4:00 PM CDT	
Anticipated Date to issue Notice of Intent to Award:		April 28, 2021	
Anticipated Date to execute contract:		May 5, 2021	
Internet website where Addenda to this RFQ will be posted:		http://bidopportunities.iowa.gov/	
Number of Copies of Proposals Required to be Submitted:			5
Firm Proposal Terms - Per Section 3.2.14, the minimum Number of Days following the deadline for submitting proposals that the Contractor guarantees all proposal terms, including price, will remain firm:			120

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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Purpose. The purpose of this Request for Qualifications (RFQ) is to solicit proposals from Responsible Contractors to provide the services identified on the RFQ cover sheet and further described in Section 2 of this RFQ to the Iowa Tourism Office, a part of the Iowa Economic Development Authority (herein referred to as ITO/IEDA). The IEDA intends to award a Contract(s) beginning on the date listed on the RFQ cover sheet, and the ITO/IEDA, in its sole discretion, may extend the Contract for up to the number of extensions identified on the RFQ cover sheet. The ITO/IEDA may award more than one Contractor under this RFQ.

1.2. Definitions. For the purposes of this RFQ and the resulting contract, the following terms shall mean:

1.2.1. "Proposal" means the Contractor's proposal submitted in response to the RFQ.

1.2.2. "Contract" means the contract(s) entered into with the successful Contractor(s) as described in Section 6.1.

1.2.3. "Contractor" means a vendor submitting Proposals in response to this RFQ.

1.2.4. "ITO" means the Iowa Tourism Office and "IEDA" means the Iowa Economic Development Authority and any other governmental body that purchases from the Contract. IEDA may also be referred to as "the Department".

1.2.5. "Responsible Contractor" means a Contractor that has the capability in all respects to perform the requirements of the Contract. In determining whether a Contractor is a Responsible Contractor, the ITO/IEDA may consider various factors including, but not limited to, the Contractor's competence and qualifications to provide the goods or services requested, the Contractor's integrity and reliability, the past performance of the Contractor and the best interest of the ITO, IEDA, and the State.

1.2.6. "Responsive Proposal" means a Proposal that complies with the material provisions of this RFQ.

1.2.7. "RFQ" means this Request for Qualifications and any attachments, exhibits, schedules or addenda hereto.

1.2.8. "State" means the State of Iowa, the ITO, the IEDA, and all state agencies, boards, and commissions, and any political subdivisions making purchases from the Contract as permitted by this RFQ.

1.3. Overview of the RFQ Process. Contractors will be required to submit their Proposals in hardcopy and electronically via flash drive/secure data transfer. It is the ITO/IEDA's intention to evaluate Proposals from all Responsible Contractors that submit timely Responsive Proposals and award the Contract(s) in accordance with Section 4, Evaluation and Selection.

1.4. Background Information. This RFQ is designed to provide Contractors with the information necessary for the preparation of competitive Proposals. The RFQ process is for the ITO/IEDA's benefit and is intended to provide the ITO/IEDA with competitive information to assist in the selection process. It is not intended to be comprehensive. Each Contractor is responsible for determining all factors necessary for submission of a comprehensive Proposal.

Iowa Tourism Office and Iowa Economic Development Authority

The mission of the Iowa Tourism Office is to make Iowa the place for both people and business. We do this by increasing awareness and consideration of Iowa's benefits as a place to visit, live and work and increasing visits and associated tourism expenditures within the state. The Iowa Tourism Office is part of the Iowa Economic Development Authority, which exists to promote economic development policies and practices which stimulate and sustain Iowa's economic growth. For more information about the ITO and the IEDA, visit our websites at www.traveliowa.com and www.iowaeda.com.

This RFQ is issued for the ITO/IEDA to seek proposals from bidders to assist the ITO/IEDA with development of a statewide tourism strategic plan for Iowa. Specific contents of the report are described in Section 2 of this RFQ.

The IEDA will act as the lead agency in overseeing the development of the plan. Other state agencies and offices with tourism-related functions will serve in an advisory and informational capacity during the plan development.

The Iowa Tourism Strategic Plan is a means to set state priorities, provide strategic guidance with decision-making and create a blueprint around which the State and tourism industry can unite to drive economic development growth. The Iowa Tourism Strategic Plan will provide an assessment of tourism assets and audiences, examine existing tourism partnerships, programs and policies, and identify emerging tourism challenges and opportunities. It would create a plan to improve industry collaboration and partnerships to encourage tourism spending and visitation growth through the goals and recommendations that will be formed during the planning process. The Iowa Tourism Strategic Plan will synthesize both the existing state tourism goals and strategies that are beneficial for the state, as well as identify new tourism goals and strategies to position Iowa for the future.

SECTION 2: SPECIFICATIONS

2.1 Overview. The successful Contractor shall provide the services to the ITO, the IEDA and other agencies using the Contract in accordance with the specifications as provided in this Section. The Contractor shall address each requirement in this Section and indicate whether it will comply with the requirement. If the context requires more than a yes or no answer or the section specifically indicates, Contractor shall explain how it will comply with the requirement. Proposals must address each requirement. Merely repeating the requirements may be considered non-responsive and may disqualify the Contractor. Proposals must identify any deviations from the requirements of this RFQ or requirements the Contractor cannot satisfy. If the Contractor deviates from or cannot satisfy the requirement(s) of this section, the ITO/IEDA may reject the Proposal.

2.2 Objectives. The successful Contractor shall provide services that meet the following objectives:

- a. Create a 5-year industry-led Tourism Strategic Plan that addresses the strengths of Iowa's current tourism assets and products and identifies areas for tourism product development, as well as segments for growth.
- b. Create a plan to improve industry collaboration and partnerships and recommend new or adjustments to existing tourism programs/policies to leverage marketing dollars for the greatest impact.

2.3 Proposed Scope of Work and Deliverables. Deliverables listed are the minimum expected from the Contractor. Additional information and deliverables based on Contractor's experience with similar projects are encouraged. The ITO/IEDA is seeking a Contractor to develop and provide the following:

Task 1: Conduct an assessment of Iowa tourism assets/product and audience.

- a. Perform situation analysis of Iowa's tourism assets. Evaluate the strength of these tourism products when compared to competitors. Identify and assess gaps in the tourism infrastructure and potential new or enhanced tourism demand generators and strategies to enhance existing attractions, events, or destinations.
- b. Perform situation analysis of current tourism visitation and audience. Recommend actions to increase visitor flow and spending, as well as identify tourism segments for growth (leisure, sports, business, meetings, groups, etc.)

Contractor's assessment may include but not be limited to data and analysis available from the ITO/IEDA which includes the following sources: Arrivalist, U.S. Travel Economic Impact Reports, ITO/IEDA Marketing Research and Results, STR Reports, website analytics and proprietary tourism reports and surveys. Additional data and assessment tools should be utilized by Contractor to provide a full assessment.

This assessment will be presented to the stakeholders as described in Task 3. Information from this assessment will be incorporated throughout the draft Iowa Tourism Strategic Plan, as necessary, to provide background and context on specific tourism topics.

Task 2: Conduct an assessment of existing tourism partnerships, programs, and policies.

Contractor shall review and assess existing tourism-related programs and policies, including but not limited to:

- a. Iowa Tourism Grant Program
- b. Marketing Co-op Program
- c. Regional Sports Authority District Program
- d. Community Attraction and Tourism Program and programs funded through the Enhance Iowa Fund
- e. Great Places Initiative

Contractor shall assess the usefulness and impact of these programs and their effect on industry collaboration and partnerships. Contractor will identify and assess potential changes or new programs to further generate collaboration and partnerships, as well as tourism spending and visitation as provided in the assessment on Iowa tourism products identified in Task 1.

This assessment will be presented to the stakeholders as described in Task 3. Information from this assessment will be incorporated throughout the draft Iowa Tourism Strategic Plan, as necessary, to provide background and context on specific tourism topics.

Task 3: Engage stakeholders and Working Groups

a. Engage ITO/IEDA in initial onboarding

Contractor will have individual meetings with representatives of state government and key members of the tourism industry to gather information and feedback on Tasks 1 and 2. Contractor will also collect input that may assist in Working Group formation and administration, as well as identification of partners in plan development.

b. Convene Working Groups

Working Groups will provide information and input to the Contractor, and Subcommittees will be formed for subtopics as deemed necessary.

The Working Groups will provide input on Tasks 1 and 2, review the results of Tasks 1 and 2, and help shape the goals, strategies, implementation steps and measurables of the Iowa Tourism Strategic Plan.

Proposed Working Groups will have representation from tourism verticals including but not limited to:

- Destination Marketing Organizations
- Convention & Visitors Bureaus
- Chambers of Commerce Organizations
- Main Street Districts
- Cultural & Entertainment Districts and Historic Districts
- Public Sector Economic Development Organizations
- Hotel and Lodging Properties
- Attractions
- Museums
- Art, Cultural and Performing Arts Institutions
- Event Venues and Facilities
- Restaurants & Dining Businesses
- Native Wineries, Breweries and Distilleries
- Retail Districts and Shops
- Gaming and Casino Representatives
- Airports
- Travel-related Government Agencies
- Group Travel Representatives
- Meeting/Event Travel Planners
- Travel Marketing Experts and Vendors
- Business Travel Planners
- Conservation and Natural Resource Organizations
- Film and Creative Businesses
- Travel and Hospitality Education Training Programs
- Others as deemed necessary

Proposed Working Group topics may include but are not limited to:

- a. Tourism Marketing
- b. Tourism Development
- c. Tourism Programming
- d. Industry Collaboration

Working Groups and their Subcommittees will have ongoing meetings throughout the Tourism Strategic Plan development.

Contractor will prepare agendas and informational materials in coordination with the ITO/IEDA and assist in facilitating meetings. Contractor will be expected to participate in-person, as public health recommendations allow, in all Working Group meetings as needed. ITO/IEDA will set up webinars when needed using its Microsoft Teams subscription.

c. Facilitate Tourism Forums

No fewer than 10 Tourism Forums will be conducted across Iowa, at least one in each of Iowa's designated travel areas. ITO/IEDA will be responsible for marketing of the Tourism Forums to a variety of stakeholders. The goal of Tourism Forums will be to share findings from the assessments produced in Tasks 1 and 2 and obtain feedback and input from a wide variety of Iowa tourism stakeholders.

Contractor shall prepare informational and visual display materials for these meetings, as well as summaries of each meeting. Contractor will facilitate public input on questions and subjects identified by the Working Groups. Contractor shall specify proposed approach in detail for facilitating these public input meetings.

The ITO/IEDA and Contractor will jointly develop an electronic survey to capture input of stakeholders attending the forums and those who are unable to attend.

Task 4: Develop Goals

Contractor shall facilitate meetings with Working Groups to develop tourism priorities and goals based on the stated Objectives for the strategic plan. Goals should be developed using the input gathered in Task 3, as well as analyses identified in Tasks 1 and 2. Contractor shall summarize and provide written document for approval by Working Groups, ITO and IEDA.

Task 5: Draft Tourism Strategic Plan

Contractor shall facilitate the creation of a draft of the Iowa Tourism Strategic Plan, including recommendations and implementation process, which expands upon goals as developed in Task 4.

Through Working Group meetings and guidance, the draft Tourism Strategic Plan shall include, but not be limited to:

- The assessment of tourism assets, visitation and audiences as described in Task 1.
- The assessment of existing tourism programs and policies as described in Task 2.
- Existing and proposed strategies that contribute towards reaching the goals of increasing tourism spending and visitation and other goals outlined in Task 4.
- Recommended implementation and industry engagement plan.
- Appendices for supporting information.

Contractor shall submit preliminary drafts of the Tourism Strategic Plan to Working Groups and ITO/IEDA for review and comment. A final draft will be submitted to ITO/IEDA, which reserves the right to edit, modify, and/or rearrange the draft Tourism Strategic Plan as it deems necessary.

Task 6: Finalize Tourism Strategic Plan and Provide Marketing Assistance

The ITO/IEDA will produce final document and be responsible for graphic design, incorporating visuals provided by Contractor such as graphs, tables, and photos. Contractor will produce PowerPoint slides, providing an overview of the Tourism Strategic Plan, conduct webinars and/or in-person presentations, including a presentation at the 2022 Iowa Tourism Conference.

Timeframes

May – July 2021

- Contractor shall coordinate scheduling of initial onboarding (virtual and/or in-person) and create a work plan for ITO/IEDA for approval.
- Contractor will outline a purpose and subtopics for all Working Groups and Subcommittees.
- In coordination with ITO/IEDA, identify Working Group and Subcommittee participants
- Contractor will begin analysis to produce draft assessments as described in Tasks 1 and 2, subject to further feedback and information from Working Groups and ITO/IEDA in subsequent months.
- Plan and schedule Working Group and Subcommittee meetings and Tourism Forums.

August – October 2021

- Conduct Working Group meetings.
- Conduct 10 Tourism Forums
- Prepare summary of input received from Working Group, Subcommittee and Tourism Forums.
- Produce draft assessments as described in Tasks 1 and 2 and present drafts to Working Groups and ITO/IEDA.

November 2021 – February 2022

- Continue conducting Working Group and Subcommittee meetings as necessary.
- Facilitate development of goals as described in Task 4.
- Facilitate the draft the Tourism Strategic Plan as described in Task 5 and provide written plan document.
- Working Groups and ITO/IEDA review draft of Tourism Strategic Plan, provide feedback, and revision requests to Contractor.

March 2022

- Contractor finalizes Tourism Strategic Plan.
- ITO/IEDA completes graphic design of Tourism Strategic Plan.

April 2022

- Contractor provides marketing assistance as described in Task 6.
- Contractor presents Tourism Strategic Plan and implementation plan to tourism industry and Iowa Tourism Conference.

SECTION 3: FORM AND CONTENT OF PROPOSALS

3.1. Instructions. These instructions prescribe the format and content of the Proposal. They are designed to facilitate a uniform review process. Failure to adhere to the Proposal format may result in the rejection of the Proposal.

3.1.1. The Proposal shall be printed on 8.5" x 11" paper and timely submitted in a sealed envelope.

The Proposal shall be divided into two separate parts: (1) the Technical Proposal and (2) the Cost Proposal. The Technical Proposal and the Cost Proposal shall be labeled as such. The envelope shall be labeled with the following information, all of which is available on the cover page of this RFQ:

Amy Zeigler, State Tourism Manager
RE: Iowa Tourism Strategic Plan
Iowa Economic Development Authority
1963 Bell Avenue, Suite 200
Des Moines, IA 50315

The Proposal shall also be sent to IEDA electronically via secure data transfer (SharePoint, Box, Dropbox, Google Drive, etc.). Secure data transfers should be shared with the email address amy.zeigler@iowaeda.com and labeled "Tourism RFP Response" to ensure it will not be opened/viewed prematurely. All password or download instructions should be provided for secure data transfer download and files should be available until at least December 31, 2021.

The IEDA shall not be responsible for misdirected packages or premature opening of Proposals if a Proposal is not properly labeled.

3.1.2. Five of both parts of the Proposal, in a sealed envelope, shall be timely submitted to the Issuing Officer.

3.1.3. If the Contractor designates any information in its Proposal as confidential pursuant to Section 5, the Contractor must also submit one (1) copy of the Proposal from which confidential information has been excised as provided in Section 5 and which is marked "Public Copy". IEDA shall make the final determination whether information may be treated as confidential under Iowa law.

3.1.4. Proposals shall not contain promotional or display materials.

3.1.5. Attachments shall be referenced in the Proposal.

3.1.6. If a Contractor proposes more than one solution to the RFQ requirements, each shall be labeled and submitted separately and each will be evaluated separately.

3.2 Technical Proposal. The following documents and responses shall be included in the Technical Proposal in the order given below:

3.2.1 Transmittal Letter (Required)

An individual authorized to legally bind the Contractor shall sign the transmittal letter. The letter shall include the Contractor's mailing address, electronic mail address, and telephone number. Any request for confidential treatment of information shall be included in the transmittal letter in accordance with the provisions of Section 5.

3.2.2 Table of Contents. The Contractor shall include a table of contents of its Proposal.

3.2.3 Executive Summary. The Contractor shall prepare an executive summary and overview of the services it is offering, including all of the following information:

3.2.3.1 Statements that demonstrate that the Contractor has read, understands, and agrees with the terms and conditions of the RFQ including the contract provisions in Section 6.

3.2.3.2 An overview of the Contractor's plans for complying with the requirements of this RFQ.

3.2.3.3 Any other summary information the Contractor deems to be pertinent.

3.2.4 Specifications. The Contractor shall answer whether or not it will comply with each requirement in Section 2 of the RFQ and explain the process and methodology it intends to utilize to address the topics identified in Section 2 and any additional topics that may be relevant to the RFQ. Where the context requires more than a yes or no answer or the specific requirement so indicates, Contractor shall explain how it will comply with the requirement. Merely repeating the Section 2 requirements may be considered non-responsive and result in the rejection of the Proposal. Proposals must identify any deviations from the requirements of the RFQ or requirements the Contractor cannot satisfy. If the Contractor deviates from or cannot satisfy the requirement(s) of this section, the IEDA may reject the Proposal.

3.2.5 Vendor Background Information. The Contractor shall provide the following general background information:

3.2.5.1 Name, address, telephone number, and e-mail address of the Contractor including all d/b/a's or assumed names or other operating names of the Contractor and any local addresses and phone numbers.

3.2.5.2 Form of business entity, i.e., corporation, partnership, proprietorship, limited liability company.

3.2.5.3 State of incorporation, state of formation, or state of organization.

3.2.5.4 The location(s) including address and telephone numbers of the offices and other facilities that relate to the Contractor's performance under the terms of this RFQ.

3.2.5.5 Number of employees.

3.2.5.6 Type of business and Dunn's number if available.

3.2.5.7 Name, address and telephone number of the Contractor's representative to contact regarding all contractual and technical matters concerning the Proposal.

3.2.5.8 Name, address and telephone number of the Contractor's representative to contact regarding scheduling and other arrangements.

3.2.5.9 Name, contact information and qualifications of any subcontractors who will be involved with this project the Contractor proposes to use and the nature of the services the subcontractor would perform.

3.2.5.10 The successful Contractor will be required to obtain a Dunn's number and to register to do business in Iowa before payments can be made. For vendor registration documents, go to: <https://das.iowa.gov/procurement/vendors/how-do-business>

3.2.6 Experience. The Contractor must provide the following information regarding its experience:

3.2.6.1 Number of years in business.

3.2.6.2 Number of years of experience providing the types of services sought by the RFQ.

3.2.6.3 The level of technical experience in providing the types of services sought by the RFQ.

3.2.6.4 A list of all services similar to those sought by this RFQ that the Contractor has provided to other businesses or governmental entities.

3.2.6.5 Letters of reference from three (3) previous customers or clients knowledgeable of the Contractor's performance in providing services similar to the services described in this RFQ and a contact person and telephone number for each reference.

3.2.7 Personnel. The Contractor must provide résumés for all key personnel who will be involved in providing the services contemplated by this RFQ. The following information must be included in the resumes:

3.2.7.1 Full name.

3.2.7.2 Education.

3.2.7.3 Years of experience and employment history particularly as it relates to the requirements of the RFQ.

3.2.8 Financial Information. The Contractor must provide the following financial information

3.2.8.1 Audited financial statements for the last 3 years.

3.2.8.2 A minimum of three (3) financial references.

3.2.9 Termination, Litigation, Debarment. The Contractor must provide the following information for the past five (5) years:

3.2.9.1 Has the Contractor had a contract for services terminated for any reason? If so, provide full details regarding the termination.

3.2.9.2 Describe any damages or penalties assessed against or dispute resolution settlements entered into by Contractor under any existing or past contracts for services. Provide full details regarding the circumstances, including dollar amount of damages, penalties and settlement payments.

3.2.9.3 Describe any order, judgment or decree of any Federal or State authority barring, suspending or otherwise limiting the right of the Contractor to engage in any business, practice or activity.

3.2.9.4 A list and summary of all litigation or threatened litigation, administrative or regulatory proceedings, or similar matters to which the Contractor or its officers have been a party.

3.2.9.5 Any irregularities discovered in any of the accounts maintained by the Contractor on behalf of others. Describe the circumstances and disposition of the irregularities.

Failure to disclose these matters may result in rejection of the Proposal or termination of any subsequent Contract. The above disclosures are a continuing requirement of the Contractor. Contractor shall provide written notification to the ITO/IEDA of any such matter commencing or occurring after submission of a Proposal, and with respect to the successful Contractor, following execution of the Contract.

3.2.10 Acceptance of Terms and Conditions. The Contractor shall specifically agree that by submitting the Proposal, the Contractor is accepting all terms and conditions stated in the RFQ. However, if the Contractor objects to any term or condition, the Contractor must specifically refer to the RFQ page and section number and provide the reason for the objection. Objections or responses that materially alter the RFQ may be deemed non-responsive and result in rejection of the Proposal.

3.2.11 Certification Letter. The Contractor shall sign and submit with the Proposal, the document included as Attachment #1 (Certification Letter) in which the Contractor shall make the certifications included in Attachment #1.

3.2.12 Authorization to Release Information. The Contractor shall sign and submit with the Proposal the document included as Attachment #2 (Authorization to Release Information Letter) in which the Contractor authorizes the release of information to the ITO and IEDA.

3.2.13 Firm Proposal Terms. The Contractor shall guarantee in writing the services offered in the Proposal are currently available and that all Proposal terms, including price, will remain firm 120 days following the deadline for submitting Proposals.

3.3 Cost Proposal. The Contractor shall provide its cost proposal separately for the proposed services using the form in Attachment #3.

SECTION 4: EVALUATION AND SELECTION

4.1 Introduction. This section describes the evaluation process that will be used to determine which Proposal(s) provides the greatest benefit to the State. ITO/IEDA will not necessarily award the Contract to the Contractor offering the lowest cost to the ITO/IEDA. Instead, the ITO/IEDA will award the Contract whose Responsive Proposal the ITO/IEDA believes will provide the best value to the State.

4.2 Evaluation Committee. The ITO/IEDA intends to conduct a comprehensive, fair, and impartial evaluation of Proposals received in response to this RFQ. The ITO/IEDA will use an evaluation committee to review and evaluate the Proposals.

The evaluation committee will make a recommendation to the Iowa Economic Development Authority Board which must approve the recommendation if the total cost is equal to or greater than \$50,000. In such case, the Board will select the Contractor to receive the award. The Board is not bound by the evaluation committee's recommendation, and either the Board or the ITO/IEDA may opt not to award a contract to any vendor.

4.3 Overview of Evaluation. All Technical Proposals will be first evaluated to determine if they comply with the requirements provided in Section 2. The evaluation committee will fully evaluate and score all Responsive Proposals submitted by Responsible Contractors in accordance with this Section.

4.4 Evaluation Criteria. Evaluation of Proposals will be based on the following criteria, which are not listed in any particular order of importance.

4.4.1 Cost of services.

4.4.2 Contractor's professional experience and performance record.

4.4.3 Financial stability of Contractor

4.4.4 Expertise in tourism and economic development subject matter

4.4.5 Expertise in planning processes utilizing stakeholder input

4.4.6 Compliance with RFQ and contract terms and conditions and Proposal format.

4.4.7 Contractor's proposed work plans.

4.4.8 Demonstrated quality of proposed services.

4.4.9 Compliance with ITO/IEDA information security policies. State of Iowa Security Standards can be found at <https://ocio.iowa.gov/standards> under the Security section.

SECTION 5: ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

5.1 Issuing Officer. The Issuing Officer identified in the RFQ cover sheet is the sole point of contact regarding the RFQ from the date of issuance until a Notice of Intent to Award the Contract is issued.

5.2 Restriction on Communication. From the issue date of this RFQ until a Notice of Intent to Award the Contract is issued, Contractors may contact only the Issuing Officer. The Issuing Officer will respond only to written questions regarding the procurement process. Questions related to the interpretation of this RFQ must be submitted as provided in Section 5. Oral questions related to the interpretation of this RFQ will not be accepted. Contractors may be disqualified if they contact any State employee other than the Issuing Officer about the RFQ except that Contractors may contact the IEDA's Targeted Small Business Program Manager on issues related to the preference for Targeted Small Businesses.

5.3 Downloading the RFQ from the Internet. The RFQ and any addenda to the RFQ will be posted at <http://bidopportunities.iowa.gov/>. The Contractor is advised to check the website periodically for Addenda to this RFQ, particularly if the Contractor downloaded the RFQ from the Internet, as the Contractor may not automatically receive addenda. It is the Contractor's sole responsibility to check periodically for addenda to posted documents and to determine the frequency with which it will check for addenda to posted documents.

5.4 Procurement Timetable. The dates provided in the procurement timetable on the RFQ cover sheet are provided for informational and planning purposes. The ITO/IEDA reserves the right to change the dates. If the ITO/IEDA changes any of the deadlines for Contractor submissions, the ITO/IEDA will issue an addendum to the RFQ.

5.5 Questions, Requests for Clarification, and Suggested Changes. Contractors are invited to submit written questions and requests for clarifications regarding the RFQ. Contractors may also submit suggestions for changes to the requirements of this RFQ. The questions, requests for clarifications, or suggestions must be in writing and received by the Issuing Officer before the date and time listed on the RFQ cover sheet. Oral questions will not be permitted. If the questions, requests for clarifications, or suggestions pertain to a specific section of the RFQ, Contractor shall reference the page and section number(s). The ITO/IEDA will send written responses to questions, requests for clarifications, or suggestions received from Contractors on or before the date listed on the RFQ cover sheet. The ITO/IEDA's written responses will become addenda to the RFQ. If the ITO/IEDA decides to adopt a suggestion that modifies the RFQ, the ITO/IEDA will issue an addendum to the RFQ.

The ITO/IEDA assumes no responsibility for oral representations made by its officers or employees unless such representations are confirmed in writing and incorporated into the RFQ through an addendum.

5.6 Amendment to the RFQ. The ITO/IEDA reserves the right to amend the RFQ at any time using an addendum. The Contractor shall acknowledge receipt of all addenda in its Proposal. If the ITO/IEDA issues an addendum after the due date for receipt of Proposals, the ITO/IEDA may, in its sole discretion, allow Contractors to amend their Proposals in response to the addendum.

5.7 Amendment and Withdrawal of Proposal. The Contractor may amend or withdraw and resubmit its Proposal at any time before the Proposals are due. The amendment must be in writing, signed by the Contractor and received by the time set for the receipt of Proposals. Electronic mail and faxed amendments will not be accepted. Contractors must notify the Issuing Officer in writing prior to the due date for Proposals if they wish to completely withdraw their Proposals.

5.8 Submission of Proposals. The ITO/IEDA must receive the Proposal at the Issuing Officer's address identified on the RFQ cover sheet before the "Proposals Due" date and time listed on the RFQ cover sheet. **This is a mandatory requirement and will not be waived by the ITO/IEDA. Any Proposal received after this deadline will be rejected and returned unopened to the Contractor.** Contractors mailing Proposals must allow ample mail delivery time to ensure timely receipt of their Proposals. It is the Contractor's responsibility to ensure that the Proposal is received prior to the deadline. Postmarking by the due date will not substitute for actual receipt of the Proposal. Electronic mail and faxed Proposals will not be accepted.

Contractors must furnish all information necessary to enable the ITO/IEDA to evaluate the Proposal. Proposals that fail to meet the mandatory requirements of the RFQ will be rejected. Oral information provided by the Contractor shall not be considered part of the Contractor's Proposal unless it is reduced to writing.

5.9 Proposal Opening. The ITO/IEDA will open Proposals after the deadline for submission of Proposals has passed. The Proposals will remain confidential until the Evaluation Committee has reviewed all of the Proposals submitted in response to this RFQ and the ITO/IEDA has issued a Notice of Intent to Award a Contract. See Iowa Code Section 72.3. However, the names of Contractors who submitted timely Proposals will be publicly available after the Proposal opening. The announcement of Contractors who timely submitted Proposals does not mean that an individual Proposal has been deemed technically compliant or accepted for evaluation.

5.10 Costs of Preparing the Proposal. The costs of preparation and delivery of the Proposal are solely the responsibility of the Contractor.

5.11 No commitment to Contract. The ITO/IEDA reserves the right to reject any or all Proposals received in response to this RFQ at any time prior to the execution of the Contract. Issuance of this RFQ in no way constitutes a commitment by the ITO/IEDA to award a contract.

5.12 Rejection of Proposals. The ITO/IEDA may reject outright and not evaluate a Proposal for reasons including without limitation:

5.12.1 The ITO/IEDA determines there is no longer a need to procure the services.

5.12.2 The Contractor fails to deliver the cost proposal as a separate document.

5.12.3 The Contractor acknowledges that a mandatory requirement of the RFQ cannot be met.

5.12.4 The Contractor's Proposal changes a material requirement of the RFQ or the Proposal is not compliant with the mandatory requirements of the RFQ.

5.12.5 The Contractor's Proposal limits the rights of the ITO/IEDA.

5.12.6 The Contractor fails to include information necessary to substantiate that it will be able to meet a requirement of the RFQ as provided in Section 3 of this RFQ.

5.12.7 The Contractor fails to timely respond to the ITO/IEDA's request for information, documents, or references.

5.12.8 The Contractor fails to include Proposal Security, if required.

5.12.9 The Contractor fails to include any signature, certification, authorization, stipulation, disclosure or guarantee as provided in Section 3 of this RFQ.

5.12.10 The Contractor presents the information requested by this RFQ in a format inconsistent with the instructions of the RFQ or otherwise fails to comply with the requirements of this RFQ.

5.12.11 The Contractor initiates unauthorized contact regarding the RFQ with state employees.

5.12.12 The Contractor provides misleading or inaccurate responses.

5.12.13 The Contractor's Proposal is materially unbalanced.

5.12.14 There is insufficient evidence (including evidence submitted by the Contractor and evidence obtained by the ITO/IEDA from other sources) to satisfy the ITO/IEDA that the Contractor is a Responsive Contractor.

5.12.15 The Contractor alters the language in Attachment 1, Certification Letter or Attachment 2, Authorization to Release Information letter.

5.13 Nonmaterial Variances. The ITO/IEDA reserves the right to waive or permit cure of nonmaterial variances in the Proposal if, in the judgment of the ITO/IEDA, it is in the State's best interest to do so. Nonmaterial variances include but are not limited to: minor failures to comply that do not affect overall responsiveness, that are merely a matter of form or format, that do not change the relative standing or otherwise prejudice other Contractors, that do not change the meaning or scope of the RFQ, or that do not reflect a material change in the requirements of the RFQ. In the event the ITO/IEDA waives or permits cure of nonmaterial variances, such waiver or cure will not modify the RFQ requirements or excuse the Contractor from full compliance with RFQ specifications or other Contract requirements if the Contractor is awarded the Contract. The determination of materiality is in the sole discretion of the ITO/IEDA.

5.14 Reference Checks. The ITO/IEDA reserves the right to contact any reference to assist in the evaluation of the Proposal, to verify information contained in the Proposal and to discuss the Contractor's qualifications and the qualifications of any subcontractor identified in the Proposal.

5.15 Information from Other Sources. The ITO/IEDA reserves the right to obtain and consider information from other sources concerning a Contractor, such as the Contractor's capability and performance under other contracts, the qualifications of any subcontractor identified in the Proposal, the Contractor's financial stability, past or pending litigation, and other publicly available information.

5.16 Verification of Proposal Contents. The content of a Proposal submitted by a Contractor is subject to verification. If the ITO/IEDA determines in its sole discretion that the content is in any way misleading or inaccurate, the ITO/IEDA may reject the Proposal.

5.17 Proposal Clarification Process. The ITO/IEDA reserves the right to contact a Contractor after the submission of Proposals for the purpose of clarifying a Proposal. This contact may include written questions, interviews, site visits, a review of past performance if the Contractor has provided services to the State or any other political subdivision wherever located, or requests for corrective pages in the Contractor's Proposal. The ITO/IEDA will not consider information received from or through Contractor if the information materially alters the content of the Proposal or the type of services the Contractor is offering to the ITO/IEDA. An individual authorized to legally bind the Contractor shall sign responses to any request for clarification. Responses shall be submitted to the ITO/IEDA within the time specified in the ITO/IEDA's request. Failure to comply with requests for additional information may result in rejection of the Proposal.

5.18 Disposition of Proposals. All Proposals become the property of the State and shall not be returned to the Contractor. Once the ITO/IEDA issues a Notice of Intent to Award the Contract, the contents of all Proposals will be in the public domain and be available for inspection by interested parties, except for information for which Contractor properly requests confidential treatment and IEDA or a court of competent jurisdiction determines that the contents shall be treated as confidential or according to exceptions provided in Iowa Code Chapter 22 or other applicable law.

5.19 Public Records and Requests for Confidential Treatment. The ITO/IEDA will treat all information submitted by a Contractor as public records unless the Contractor properly requests that specific parts of the Proposal be treated as confidential at the time of submitting the Proposal. The ITO/IEDA's release of public records is governed by Iowa Code Chapter 22. Contractors are encouraged to familiarize themselves with Chapter 22 before submitting a Proposal. The ITO/IEDA will copy and produce public records as required to comply with Chapter 22 or other applicable law.

Any request for confidential treatment of specific information must be included in the transmittal letter with the Contractor's Proposal. In addition, the Contractor must enumerate the specific grounds in Iowa Code Chapter 22 or other applicable law which support treatment of the material as confidential and explain why disclosure is not in the best interest of the public. Pricing information cannot be considered confidential information. The request for confidential treatment of information must also include the name, address, and telephone number of the person authorized by the Contractor to respond to any inquiries by the ITO/IEDA concerning the confidential status of the materials.

Any Proposal submitted which contains information for which Contractor is requesting Confidential treatment must be conspicuously marked by the Contractor on the outside as containing confidential information, and each page upon which confidential information appears must be conspicuously marked as containing confidential information. Failure to properly identify specific information as confidential shall relieve ITO/IEDA or State personnel from any

responsibility if confidential information is viewed by the public or a competitor, or is in any way released. If Contractor identifies its entire Proposal as confidential, the ITO/IEDA may reject the Proposal as non-responsive.

If the Contractor designates any portion of its Proposal as confidential, the Contractor must submit a copy labeled as "Public Copy" from which the confidential information has been excised. This excised copy is in addition to the number of copies requested in Section 3 of this RFQ. The confidential material must be excised in such a way as to allow the public to determine the general nature of the material removed and to retain as much of the Proposal as possible.

If ITO/IEDA receives a request for information that includes information Contractor has marked as confidential, ITO/IEDA will give written notice to the Contractor at least seven calendar days prior to the release of the information to allow the Contractor to seek injunctive relief pursuant to Section 22.8 of the Iowa Code. After seven calendar days, the ITO/IEDA will release the information marked confidential unless a court of competent jurisdiction determines the information is confidential under Iowa Code Chapter 22 or other applicable law.

The Contractor's failure to request confidential treatment of material will be deemed a waiver of any right to confidentiality the Contractor may have had.

5.20 Copyright Permission. By submitting a Proposal, the Contractor agrees that the ITO/IEDA may copy the Proposal for purposes of facilitating the evaluation of the Proposal or to respond to requests for public records. By submitting a Proposal, the Contractor consents to such copying and warrants that such copying will not violate the rights of any third party. The ITO/IEDA shall have the right to use ideas or adaptations of ideas that are presented in Proposals.

5.21 Release of Claims. By submitting a Proposal, the Contractor agrees that it will not bring any claim or cause of action against the ITO/IEDA based on any misunderstanding concerning the information provided in the RFQ or concerning the ITO/IEDA's failure, negligent or otherwise, to provide the Contractor with pertinent information in this RFQ.

5.22 Evaluation of Proposals Submitted. Proposals that are timely submitted and are not rejected will be reviewed in accordance with Section 4 of the RFQ. The ITO/IEDA will not necessarily award a contract resulting from this RFQ to the Contractor offering the lowest cost. The ITO/IEDA will award the Contract(s) to the Responsible Contractor(s) whose Responsive Proposal the ITO/IEDA believes will provide the best value to the ITO/IEDA and the State.

5.23 Award Notice and Acceptance Period. Notice of Intent to Award the Contract(s) will be sent to all Contractors submitting a timely Proposal and may be posted at the website shown on the RFQ cover sheet. Negotiation and execution of the Contract(s) shall be completed no later than thirty (30) days from the date of the Notice of Intent to Award or such other time as designated by ITO/IEDA. If the successful Contractor fails to negotiate and deliver an executed Contract by that date, the ITO/IEDA, in its sole discretion, may cancel the award and award the Contract to the remaining Contractor the ITO/IEDA believes will provide the best value to the State.

5.24 No Contract Rights until Execution. No Contractor shall acquire any legal or equitable rights regarding the Contract unless and until the Contract has been fully executed by the successful Contractor and the ITO/IEDA.

5.25 Choice of Law and Forum. This RFQ and the Contract shall be governed by the laws of the State of Iowa. Changes in applicable laws and rules may affect the award process or the

Contract. Contractors are responsible for ascertaining pertinent legal requirements and restrictions. Any and all litigation or actions commenced in connection with this RFQ shall be brought in the appropriate Iowa forum.

5.26 Restrictions on Gifts and Activities. Iowa Code Chapter 68B restricts gifts which may be given or received by State employees and requires certain individuals to disclose information concerning their activities with State government. Contractors are responsible to determine the applicability of this Chapter 68B to their activities and to comply with its requirements. In addition, pursuant to Iowa Code section 722.1, it is a felony offense to bribe or attempt to bribe a public official.

5.27 No Minimum Guaranteed. The ITO/IEDA does not guarantee any minimum level of purchases under the Contract.

SECTION 6: CONTRACTUAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS

6.1 Contract Terms and Conditions. The Contract that the ITO/IEDA expects to award as a result of this RFQ shall comprise the specifications, terms and conditions of the RFQ, written clarifications or changes made in accordance with the provisions of the RFQ, the contract terms and conditions contained in the standard state of Iowa contract for services, the offer of the successful Contractor contained in its Proposal, and any other terms deemed necessary by the ITO/IEDA. No objection or amendment by a Contractor to the provisions or terms and conditions of the RFQ shall be incorporated into the Contract unless the ITO/IEDA has explicitly accepted the Contractor's objection or amendment in writing. All costs associated with complying with these requirements should be included in any pricing quoted by the Contractor.

By submitting a Proposal, each Contractor acknowledges its acceptance of the RFQ specifications and the contract terms and conditions without change except as otherwise expressly stated in its Proposal. If a Contractor takes exception to a provision, it must state the reason for the exception and set forth in its Proposal the specific RFQ or contract language it proposes to include in place of the provision. Exceptions that materially change the contract terms and conditions or the requirements of the RFQ may be deemed non-responsive by the ITO/IEDA, in its sole discretion, resulting in possible rejection of the Proposal. The ITO/IEDA reserves the right to either award a Contract(s) without further negotiation with the successful Contractor or to negotiate Contract terms with the successful Contractor if the best interests of the State would be served.

6.2 Contract Length. The term of the Contract will begin and end on the dates indicated on the RFQ cover sheet. The ITO/IEDA shall have the sole option to renew the Contract upon the same or more favorable terms and conditions for up to the number of extensions identified on the RFQ cover sheet. The ITO/IEDA reserves the right to make adjustments to begin and end dates if, in the judgment of the ITO/IEDA, it is in the State's best interest to do so.

6.3 Insurance: ITO/IEDA reserves the right to require the winning Contractor to secure professional liability coverage, general liability, standard liability business rider, personal injury, property damage coverage and any necessary workers' compensation and employer liability insurance, as required by Iowa law with no additional cost to the state beyond Contractor's original bid. The State of Iowa and ITO/IEDA shall be named as additional insureds or loss payees, or the

Contractor shall obtain an endorsement to the same effect, as applicable. ITO/IEDA may require the winning vendor to provide a copy of the insurance certificate to ITO/IEDA.

6.4 Terms. The ITO/IEDA shall use a services contract for services procured under this RFQ. The Contractor shall be expected to execute that contract upon award of the contract. A sample of that contract is available upon request.

Attachment # 1
Certification Letter
Alterations to this document are prohibited, see section 5.12.15.

[Date]

Amy Zeigler
State Tourism Manager
Iowa Tourism Office / Iowa Economic Development Authority
1963 Bell Avenue, Suite 200
Des Moines, IA 50315

Re: State of Iowa's Name of RFQ PROPOSAL CERTIFICATIONS

Dear Staff member:

I certify that the contents of the Proposal submitted on behalf of [Name of Contractor] _____ (Contractor) in response to the Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) for Request for Qualification for the State of Iowa's Name of RFQ are true and accurate. I also certify that Contractor has not knowingly made any false statements in its Proposal.

Certification of Independence

I certify that I am a representative of Contractor expressly authorized to make the following certifications on behalf of Contractor. By submitting a Proposal in response to the RFQ, I certify on behalf of the Contractor the following:

1. The Proposal has been developed independently, without consultation, communication or agreement with any employee or consultant to the IEDA or with any person serving as a member of the evaluation committee.
2. The Proposal has been developed independently, without consultation, communication or agreement with any other contractor or parties for the purpose of restricting competition.
3. Unless otherwise required by law, the information found in the Proposal has not been and will not be knowingly disclosed, directly or indirectly prior to IEDA's issuance of the Notice of Intent to Award the contract.
4. No attempt has been made or will be made by Contractor to induce any other contractor to submit or not to submit a Proposal for the purpose of restricting competition.
5. No relationship exists or will exist during the contract period between Contractor and the IEDA or any other State agency that interferes with fair competition or constitutes a conflict of interest.

Certification Regarding Debarment

6. I certify that, to the best of my knowledge, neither Contractor nor any of its principals: (a) are presently or have been debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from covered transactions by a Federal Agency or State

Agency; (b) have within a three year period preceding this Proposal been convicted of, or had a civil judgment rendered against them for commission of fraud, a criminal offense in connection with obtaining, attempting to obtain, or performing a public (federal, state, or local) transaction or contract under a public transaction, violation of antitrust statutes; commission of embezzlement, theft, forgery, falsification or destruction of records, making false statements, or receiving stolen property; (c) are presently indicted for or criminally or civilly charged by a government entity (federal, state, or local) with the commission of any of the offenses enumerated in (b) of this certification; and (d) have not within a three year period preceding this Proposal had one or more public transactions (federal, state, or local) terminated for cause.

This certification is a material representation of fact upon which the IEDA has relied upon when this transaction was entered into. If it is later determined that Contractor knowingly rendered an erroneous certification, in addition to other remedies available, the IEDA may pursue available remedies including suspension, debarment, or termination of the contract.

Certification Regarding Registration, Collection, and Remission of Sales and Use Tax

7. Pursuant to Iowa Code sections 423.2(10) and 423.5(8) (2011), a retailer in Iowa or a retailer maintaining a business in Iowa that enters into a contract with a state agency must register, collect, and remit Iowa sales tax and Iowa use tax levied under Iowa Code chapter 423 on all sales of tangible personal property and enumerated services. The Act also requires Contractors to certify their compliance with sales tax registration, collection, and remission requirements and provides potential consequences if the certification is false or fraudulent.

By submitting a Proposal in response to the (RFQ), the Contractor certifies the following: (check the applicable box)

Contractor is registered with the Iowa Department of Revenue, collects, and remits Iowa sales and use taxes as required by Iowa Code Chapter 432; or

Contractor is not a “retailer” or a “retailer maintaining a place of business in this state” as those terms are defined in Iowa Code subsections 423.1(42) and (43).

Contractor also acknowledges that the IEDA may declare the Contractor’s Proposal or resulting contract void if the above certification is false. The Contractor also understands that fraudulent certification may result in the IEDA or its representative filing for damages for breach of contract in addition to other remedies available to IEDA.

Sincerely,

[Name and Title]

Attachment #2
Authorization to Release Information Letter
Alterations to this document are prohibited, see section 5.12.15.

[Date]

Amy Zeigler
State Tourism Manager
Iowa Tourism Office / Iowa Economic Development Authority
1963 Bell Avenue, Suite 200
Des Moines, IA 50315

Re: State of Iowa's Analysis Name of RFQ AUTHORIZATION TO RELEASE INFORMATION

Dear Staff member:

[Name of Contractor] _____ (Contractor) hereby authorizes the Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) or a member of the Evaluation Committee to obtain information regarding its performance on other contracts, agreements or other business arrangements, its business reputation, and any other matter pertinent to evaluation and the selection of a successful Contractor in response to Request for Qualifications (RFQ) entitled: State of Iowa's Name of RFQ.

The Contractor acknowledges that it may not agree with the information and opinions given by such person or entity in response to a reference request. The Contractor acknowledges that the information and opinions given by such person or entity may hurt its chances to receive contract awards from the State or may otherwise hurt its reputation or operations. The Contractor is willing to take that risk.

The Contractor hereby releases, acquits and forever discharges the State of Iowa, the IEDA, their officers, directors, employees and agents from any and all liability whatsoever, including all claims, demands and causes of action of every nature and kind affecting the undersigned that it may have or ever claim to have relating to information, data, opinions, and references obtained by the IEDA or the Evaluation Committee in the evaluation and selection of a successful Contractor in response to the RFQ.

The Contractor authorizes representatives of the IEDA or the Evaluation Committee to contact any and all of the persons, entities, and references which are, directly or indirectly, listed, submitted, or referenced in the Contractor's Proposal submitted in response to RFQ.

The Contractor further authorizes any and all persons and entities to provide information, data, and opinions with regard to its performance under any contract, agreement, or other business arrangement, its ability to perform, business reputation, and any other matter pertinent to the evaluation of the Contractor's Proposal. The Contractor hereby releases, acquits and forever discharges any such person or entity and their officers, directors, employees and agents from any

and all liability whatsoever, including all claims, demands and causes of action of every nature and kind affecting the Contractor that it may have or ever claim to have relating to information, data, opinions, and references supplied to the IEDA or the Evaluation Committee in the evaluation and selection of a successful Contractor in response to RFQ.

A photocopy or facsimile of this signed Authorization is as valid as an original.

Sincerely,

[Printed Name of Contractor Organization]

[Name and Title of Authorized Representative]

Date

**ATTACHMENT # 3
Cost Proposal**

The costs shall be provided per task or deliverable described in section 2.2 of this RFQ. Contractor's Cost Proposal shall include an all-inclusive, itemized, total cost in U.S. Dollars (including all travel, expenses, etc. in prices). Pricing to be inclusive of all costs of travel, photography, printing, data, supplies and other expenses necessary to carry out all tasks. Net 60 Days Payment Terms. Per Iowa Code 8A.514 the State of Iowa is allowed sixty (60) days to pay an invoice submitted by a vendor. The following template is required. Please use additional pages to provide any additional narrative support for the costing information.

Task or Deliverable	Professional fees / costs in US Dollars
[Add or modify as appropriate]	
TOTAL COST:	