

RFP: Public Relations Agency



Intro

The Washington County/Greater Zion Convention & Tourism Office (Greater Zion) seeks to retain a qualified public relations agency to assist with further development and implementation of the Greater Zion brand and tourism promotion, while crafting a partnership for long-term success. Ultimately, you'll be joining us in our mission to maximize the revenue generated by visitors to create a superior experience for visitors and residents.

We're looking for:

- An experienced and qualified public relations firm to support our communications and programs.
- A strong reputation for excellent public and media relations work in the U.S. and established connections to leisure, adventure, sports and travel trade media.
- Demonstrated familiarity with and passion for Greater Zion's tourism brand, partners and industry.
- Leadership in proactive and reactive PR direction and initiatives, up on the latest trends and best practices – and the ability to think out of the box.
- Flexibility, organizational skills and innovation.
- An extension of our team to build on our current success and open doors to greater opportunity.
- Familiarity with local media and community relations, conveying the value of tourism.
- Exceptional writers with strong communication skills.
- Strong vision, strategy and talent to engage with us and lead us, while also listening to and collaborating with us openly.
- Support for all verticals of Greater Zion – leisure, sports and adventure, meetings and conventions, international, destination development and business travel.
- Ability to be nimble, act quickly and be responsive to Greater Zion, media and stakeholders.

We hope to:

- Increase brand awareness.
- Further define Greater Zion, showcase us as an all-inclusive adventure destination.
- Employ data driven decision-making.
- Get new eyes on Greater Zion.
- Locally, demonstrate the value of tourism and establish the industry as an essential pillar of the local economy.
- Create a buzz-worthy PR program.
- Professionally communicate results – tell the story of the story we're telling.
- Create responsible, measurable outcomes to drive quality visitation.

- Craft multi-purpose content to be used across the multiple Greater Zion verticals.
- Communicate to more than just media.
- Maximize existing partnerships and strategize new ones.

Our intent is to award the RFP to the company(s) that demonstrates the ability to best provide the quality, results and service we are seeking in a cost-effective and efficient way.

Core Services

Tasks of the agency will include:

STRATEGY

Establish overall robust strategy and KPIs/measures against which to deliver.

Develop a strategic plan and creative strategy for 2024 that includes support of:

- Active soft adventure (national/state parks, hiking, e-biking, etc.)
- Adventure enthusiast (mountain biking, ATVing, canyoneering, climbing, via ferrata)
- Entertainment, arts and culture
- Meeting & convention marketing/sales
- Sports marketing/sales
- International marketing/sales
- Lodging offerings
- Destination development
- Website initiatives within the current platform
- Signature events and Greater Zion involvements/support

MEDIA RELATIONS

Provide ongoing media relations support representing Greater Zion's unique story and targeted media opportunities.

Maintain strong relationships with a diversity of U.S. media across multiple channels in the tourism, adventure, lifestyle, and relevant sectors, as well as local, community media.

Review, analyze and act upon incoming U.S. media inquiries.

Proactively pitch Greater Zion and its offerings to leisure, adventure and travel trade media, as well as traditional media, to generate coverage and inclusions in established and new markets.

Secure journalists to visit Greater Zion either individually or in groups.

Organize and execute media events and familiarization (fam) tours.

Arrange and manage media appointments for Greater Zion staff, stakeholders and spokespersons.

Communicate with local media concerning Greater Zion messaging, value of tourism, stewardship and other community relations. Liaise with local media to facilitate access to Greater Zion staff and/or stakeholders.

CONTENT CREATION & DISTRIBUTION

Create and share relevant media materials and messaging.

Monitor the content being created by Greater Zion; collaborate when appropriate.

Develop tourism content as it relates to Greater Zion's or tourism's events and projects and campaigns, including, but not limited to: press releases, backgrounds, story idea pitches, press materials, key messages, speeches, etc.

Identify appropriate distribution channels such as newswires, trade shows, distribution lists, networks, etc. and manage content distribution across these channels.

Develop value-of-tourism content for non-media audiences, like community members, local government officials, etc.

INFLUENCERS/CONTENT CREATORS

Provide ongoing influencer/creator relations support representing Greater Zion's unique story and targeted influencer/content opportunities.

Develop recommendations and execution of influencer and content creator strategy.

Maintain strong relationships with a diverse selection of influencers/creators in the adventure, lifestyle, and specific-activity spaces (e.g. golf, outdoor adventure, ATV, mountain biking, etc.).

Review, analyze and act upon incoming inquiries and opportunities presented by influencers/creators.

Proactively pitch Greater Zion and its offerings to aligned influencers/content creators, targeting specific results aligning with tourism goals.

Secure and contract with influencers/creators to visit Greater Zion either individually or in groups and to produce clearly defined and valuable products.

Organize and execute influencer/creator itineraries, tours, events and familiarization (fam) tours.

REPORTING

Outline consistent reporting mechanisms, which include quarterly presentations at our office to update our team with your interpretation of pertinent data and recommendations for strategy adjustments.

Reports detailing general coverage, where St. George (and surrounding communities) and Greater Zion are being talked about and the value of said coverage; overall, painting a comprehensive picture of how our story is being told.

Media clipping service – monitoring and cataloging mentions and placements across all media outlets – including social (influencers, bloggers).

Monthly and timely reporting of accomplishments, placements and connections. Effectively communicate the results, impact and opportunities available from these efforts, as well as how to celebrate this work with our stakeholders.

Define key performance indicators and processes for measuring results and return on investment.

Reports and presentations to the Tourism Advisory Board as requested.

Research and report on industry and media trends, making recommendations for future action and/or strategy adjustments.

Add metrics to existing Greater Zion reporting dashboards.

Media monitoring to alert Greater Zion of placements or other organic mentions – both good and bad – and assist with response as needed.

ADDITIONAL ASSIGNED DUTIES

Cooperation with the Utah Office of Tourism and their public relations efforts.

Occasional collaborative meetings with other agency partners.

Stakeholder relations – work with partners to showcase their latest and greatest, coordinate for fam tours and share our work with them.

Crisis and issue communications – build a stand-by plan for crisis communication needs.

Agency travel including hosting fams, strategic meetings/updates, support for large events, etc.

Possible media coaching/training for employees and/or stakeholders.

Account administration and overhead – including invoicing and monthly reports, detailed backup and appropriate receipts for all monthly expenses related to billable services, and out-of-pocket purchases.

Project Timeline

The successful agency will enter into a contract for services with Greater Zion with an expected start date of April 1, 2024, terminating on March 31, 2025. The agency reserves the right to renew its agreement prior to the end of each contract term, providing funding to do so is appropriated for this purpose in subsequent annual budgets. Proposed renewals will be assessed based on program direction, funding and consistency of price and scope of work continuity. Greater Zion's fiscal year runs from Jan. 1 through Dec. 31.

About Us & Current Campaign

In southwest Utah, there is a rare wonder that people are drawn to. From near and far, generation after generation, they come for reasons they can't explain, compelled by a feeling that comes from deep within. And, in this extraordinary place, a collection of communities, filled with optimism and purpose, have grown and thrived. On their own, they are good, but together they are greater. Working as one, their differences beautifully blend to challenge your adventurous spirit and immerse you in the impossible. Here, you can dive in the middle of the desert, walk among giants, hike through a dragon's lair and climb to where angels land. Here, we are reminded of what it's like to be curious, carefree, and completely in awe of the world around us. This place is greater than just one park. This place is greater than just one passion. **This place is Greater Zion.**

Greater Zion is a destination that offers more than 2,400 square miles of adventure and inspiration. Zion National Park, the third-most visited National Park in the United States, is the premier attraction, but Zion is only the beginning. Four state parks and a multitude of year round recreational lands set the stage for a burgeoning mountain biking scene, some of the best off-highway vehicle riding in the country, scenic and challenging play at 14 top-rated golf courses, world-class cultural performances at Tuacahn Center for the Arts and so much more. The vibrant communities of St. George, Springdale, Hurricane, Ivins and towns in between offer a wide range of lodging options, dining experiences and access to outdoor pursuits through local outfitters and tour companies. Home to the 2021 and 2022 IRONMAN 70.3 World Championship, and the 2021 IRONMAN World Championship, Greater Zion also is a world-class destination for sporting events, conferences and meetings.

The Greater Zion Convention & Tourism Office is a transient-room-tax-funded entity of Washington County, Utah. For more information, please visit GreaterZion.com.

OUR VISION

Inspire Greater. Experience Greater. Live Greater.

OUR MISSION

Our mission is to maximize the revenue generated by visitors to create a superior experience for visitors and residents.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. INSPIRE GREATER

Our job is to compel travelers to explore this extraordinary place and encourage discovery of “a feeling that comes from deep within.”

2. EXPERIENCE GREATER

At every turn, we aim to create, deliver and sustain an exceptional tourism product, as well as engage in, and embrace, the experiences available here.

3. LIVE GREATER

We demonstrate the benefits of tourism to residents, businesses, and communities, and work to enrich those benefits. We rally enthusiasm for our communities and support efforts that will enhance the experiences and provide opportunities for more vibrant and dynamic living. We enjoy the opportunities for more vibrant and dynamic living. We enjoy the opportunities of living here. We appreciate what we have. We cultivate an optimistic future.

Washington County has evolved from what early explorers called a “poor and worthless place” to a world-renowned outdoor adventure destination. The evolution from a lonely gas stop on a desolate highway, to one of the nation’s top ten golf and retirement communities, to a hiking, mountain biking and OHV playground, to what is now the fastest growing metro area in the country, has been amazing to witness. Visitors of all ages come to soak in the year-round sunshine and explore the striking terrain - and once they’ve experienced it, they typically come back for more.

As National Parks and adventure travel have gained popularity in recent years, we have seen a surge in visitation. Zion National Park is now the third-most visited National Park in the country, but Zion is only one of the reasons people come to our corner of southern Utah. The brilliant landscapes, beautiful weather and friendly communities make this an ideal location for Sporting Events, Meetings and Conventions and family getaways. From Kayenta Art Village to Springdale’s many shops and galleries to the Tuacahn outdoor amphitheater, we have an incredible amount of art, culture, museums and history to dive into. We also have some amazing facilities that draw people here in droves. The Dixie Convention Center, 14 golf courses, destination spas, and world-class sports venues, all play an important role in our identity and in bringing people to the area.

We have observed that even with such a diverse range of tourism-related activity, the core elements of adventure and exploration seem to be at the heart of just about everything this area provides. The rewards that come on the trail of discovery are the key ingredients in our secret sauce. The concept of breaking free from the ordinary, pushing the boundaries and discovering something new and unique, seems to be a common thread here. Whatever the activity, we invite people to reach out a little, stretch

the possibilities, find inspiration, discover what they're capable of, and marvel at the reward every step of the way.

CURRENT CAMPAIGN

Our current ad campaign plays on the phrase "Land of (fill in the blank)." It calls on the feelings that activities and the land here evoke. It's a soft sell that invites visitors to try something new and adventurous, while feeling those feelings. Throw out the old, boring, stale vacations and take on the challenge and wonder of something new!

Greater Zion is a place of striking contrasts. The rugged terrain is playfully captivating; the cozy communities are refreshingly spirited; the character of the people is welcoming and their heritage is intriguingly inspirational.

ANTICIPATED MEDIA STORIES/FOCUS AREAS

- Major events' economic impact and overall economic impacts of tourism
- Destination development story/stories (TBD)
- Film Commission (premier of Kevin Costner's Horizon)
- IRONMAN announcement(s)
- Zion National Park (tunnel & other user management decisions)
- The Year of Golf – PGA, LPGA Epson Tour, and the LPGA Senior Championship (and LPGA in 2025)

ONGOING TACTICS

- Foster Utah Office of Tourism (UOT) Relationship
- Partner relations
- Awards + accolades
- Crisis communication
- Administrative – monthly meetings, reports, media monitoring
- Bi-monthly or quarterly media roundtables with local media
- Stewardship (per Greater Zion direction)
- Agency travel

EXISTING ASSETS

[Press Kit Assets & More](#)

[Brand Guidelines](#)

THE RFP PROCESS

One electronic (PDF) version on thumb drive and six printed copies of the complete proposal in a sealed envelope must be mailed or hand-delivered to:

Sara Otto, Marketing Manager
Greater Zion Convention & Tourism Office
ATTN: Public Relations Agency RFP
111 E Tabernacle Street
St. George, UT 84770

Proposals must be received no later than 5 p.m. on Jan. 16, 2024* at the address set forth above. Proposals received after 5 p.m. on Jan. 16, 2024, will not be considered. Faxed or emailed proposals cannot be accepted as this is a sealed bid process.

All questions, interpretations, or clarifications concerning this RFP should be directed by email to sara@greaterzion.com no later than 5 p.m. on Monday, Jan. 8, 2024. Responses to questions, interpretations, or clarifications concerning this RFP will be posted online via addendum to this document to ensure equal awareness of important facts and details.

Vendors are precluded from contacting any other Washington County employee and/or representative regarding this RFP and/or the RFP Process.

Washington County and the Greater Zion Convention & Tourism Office reserves the right to terminate this RFP/solicitation process for any reason and at any time prior to entering into any agreement with any qualified firm pursuant to this Request for Proposal, and by responding hereto, no firms are vested with any rights in any way whatsoever. Moreover, Washington County and the Greater Zion Convention & Tourism Office may decide not to enter into a contract with any vendor to provide the materials and/or services sought through this RFP.

QUALIFICATION OF BIDDERS

To be considered for award of this contract, the applicant must meet the following minimum qualifications:

- Five (5) years experience in strategic public relations, specifically related to the hospitality/tourism industry.
- Demonstrated relationships with national and regional print and broadcast media, including travel trade media.
- Experience with accounts in excess of \$500,000, and the ability to work within smaller budgets (~\$200,000).
- Evidence of substantial knowledge and experience in developing plans, brands, and identities with local government organizations.

Required Submissions

Your response to the RFP should be submitted in the following format:

Statement of Qualifications

Provide a written statement of your agency's qualifications for providing the work as described in Core Services

Tourism Experience

Provide a written statement of your involvement in the tourism industry, specifically with DMO clients, industry membership and resources

Organization, Ownership and Management

- Include name, address, email and telephone number(s) of the entity that will be contracted with and all trade names to be used.
- Name, address, phone numbers and emails of the company's principal officers and other owners.
- Name, title and contact info of the person(s) authorized to answer questions about the proposal.
- Provide an organizational chart of the company, including any subcontractors who will work with Greater Zion.
- Total number of employees, including full-time, part-time and contract workers.
- A short history of the company.
- Hours of operation that staff will be available.

Organization's Experience

- Three to five relevant case studies that show project goals with measurable results and KPIS, as well as any creative work that was used and crafted for the campaign.
- If not included in case studies, include examples of press releases and other content created, influencer and content-creator work; big-win placements.
- Examples of local/community PR initiatives, placements and wins.
- Explain or demonstrate your approach to market all aspects of our destination marketing organization, including, but not limited to:
 - Meetings and conventions
 - Sports and events
 - Leisure travel
 - International travel
 - Group travel
 - Film industry
 - Destination development
 - Value of tourism in the community
- Provide a sample detailed report from a past public relations campaign.

Project Approach/Methodology

- Provide a narrative describing the approach/methodology you provide to provide said services
- What is required of Greater Zion as a client of yours?
- Describe how the agency would work to understand our destination, products, and what you will do to facilitate input from stakeholders.

- Detail your process for selecting media targets and influencers, content creators.
- What does success look like for you and Greater Zion?
- Explain your point of view on the future of public relations, its trends, and how you'll prepare Greater Zion for these changes.

Tactics

- Outline your intended tactics to execute the core services required, as well as those that may be considered.
- Provide us your stretch goals for PR for Greater Zion.
- Include proposed reporting cadence and reporting mechanisms for team updates and strategy adjustments.

Client Information

- List of current clients, in declining order of size.
- List accounts lost, resigned during the past three years.
- Name of any travel/tourism clients and current status.
- List any possible conflicts of interest that could be created by contracting with the Greater Zion Convention & Tourism Office (i.e. other clients in similar tourism space, etc.) and define how you will address those conflicts if awarded the contract.

Budget

Provide a proposed budget based on design, development, strategy execution, account management and estimated costs that correspond to those detailed in your proposal. Base your proposal on the 12-month contract period.

Method of Award

Greater Zion shall assemble a committee for the purpose of reviewing and evaluating the proposals. Proposals shall be opened in private by the evaluation committee to avoid disclosure of contents to competing applicants. The ultimate award will be made to the applicant whose proposal is determined to be professionally and technically complete and financially competitive. The selection process may, however, include a request for additional information and/or an oral presentation to support the written proposal.

Greater Zion/Washington County reserves the right to award this contract not necessarily to the applicant with the lowest price, but to the respondent that demonstrates the best ability to fulfill the requirements of the RFP.

Any vendor that enters into a contract with Washington County and the Greater Zion Convention & Tourism Office as a result of this RFP shall be an independent contractor and have no authority, express or implied, to bind Washington County or the Greater Zion Convention & Tourism Office to any agreements, settlements, liability, or understanding whatsoever with any third party and shall have no interest in any benefits provided by Washington County to its employees.

PROCEDURE

Proposals are due by 5 p.m. on Jan. 16, 2024.* Proposal opening will happen at the Washington County Clerk's Office at 10 a.m. on Jan. 17, 2024.* Our goal is to award the project by March 1, 2024.

Submitted proposals will be reviewed by a Selection Committee. Respondents who are deemed fully qualified and best suited among those submitting proposals may be requested to participate in discussions regarding their proposals.

Discussion will cover cost, methods of operation and all other relevant factors. At the conclusion of discussions, the Respondents will be ranked based on selection criteria, and final negotiations will be conducted with the selected agency.

The successful applicant shall commence work only after the transmittal of a fully executed agreement and after receiving written notification to proceed from Washington County/Greater Zion. The successful respondent will perform all services indicated in the proposal in compliance with the negotiated contract.

Greater Zion/Washington County reserves the right to reject any or all proposals for any reason, in whole or in part, received in response to this RFP. Greater Zion/Washington County will not pay for any information herein requested, nor is it liable for any costs incurred by the proposer.

Contract Terms and Budget

Costs for the initial portion of the RFP will be determined by the bidder. These costs are for 12-months of work as outlined above.

The estimated budget for the 2024 overall marketing program is anticipated to be \$300,000. This figure includes all expenses of our PR program. The selected agency may be responsible for collaborating and communicating with incumbent agencies and organizations to cultivate, update and manage existing assets and contract commitments.

LENGTH OF CONTRACT

Pending commission approval, available funding, and direction from funding partners, the agency contract will begin April 1, 2024 and be valid through March 31, 2025. The contract may be renewed for additional periods at the discretion of both parties, based on adequate performance measurements. The terms of the contract will be negotiated at least 90 days prior to the expiration date of each contract period. The new terms, if any, will be incorporated upon renewal.

Both parties will be required to give 90-day written notice if either wishes to terminate the contract prior to its expiration. All amounts are subject to change based on annual budget appropriation, creative needs and monies received by Washington County/Greater Zion. Washington County/Greater Zion

reserves the right to work with partners and other local providers to obtain marketing services not included in the agency's annual budget allocation.

Notes

* Realizing the **original proposal deadline of January 15** fell on a federal holiday, the deadline has been pushed to **Tuesday, January 16, 2024** at 5 p.m. Thus, proposal opening will happen at the Washington County Clerk's Office at 10 a.m. on Jan. 17, 2024.

RFP Questions & Answers

(questions and answers from Greater Zion will appear here as they arise.)

Q: What date was the RFP for PR Agency Services released?

A: The RFP was released and first distributed on November 27.

Q: Is our work with {insert destination} a conflict?

A: Please state any of your **potential** conflicts in your proposal, sharing why or why not it would be considered a conflict.

Q. Will you be responding to any questions ahead of the question deadline or will you post all responses after January 8?

A: All questions will be answered as they are received.