



Brainerd Lakes Regional Airport

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Marketing/Communication Services

DUE DATE: October 15, 2021

DUE TIME: 4:30 pm (local)

INTRODUCTION

The Brainerd Lakes Regional Airport Commission (BRD) is looking for an experienced marketing/advertising partner that can provide results-oriented, efficient, cost-effective, customized marketing and advertising with creative design and tactical implementation for BRD. BRD has a great track record with over 75 years of continuous commercial air service and general aviation services focused on providing a superior guest experience for the Brainerd Lakes Region – and beyond.

The Airport is regulated through a six-member board, appointed through the City of Brainerd and Crow Wing County, and managed by a staff of eight. The Airport currently supports approximately 90 based employees with 13 companies to provide air service, travel amenities and assistance to the Brainerd Lakes Region. Over the past five years, BRD has positioned itself for growth.

BRD's market showed the resiliency of our region by returning to record-breaking travel levels after the COVID-19 pandemic. In a matter of days, traffic increased almost 1,200% after governmental and airline capacity restrictions were lifted. Commercial passengers began to fill all available seats within the Brainerd Lakes Region commercial aircraft. As the flying public begins to re-engage, there is an opportunity to share the continued commitment to restore confidence and rebuild both leisure and business travel.

SOLICITATION AND PROJECT SCHEDULE

ACTIVITY	DATE
RFP Issue Date	September 7, 2021
Question Deadline	October 1, 2021
Submission Due Date	October 15, 2021
Contractor Selection	November 4, 2021

BRD reserves the right to modify the deadline set forth in the above table in its sole discretion. Any such modifications will be stated in an addendum.

WORK SCOPE

The selected firm will work alongside an internal team as well with external communications agencies to provide marketing and advertising services, management, and support to the Airport. The selected firm should have a strong background in brand management, creative services, consumer analytics, media buying and campaign strategy.

Short-term scope

BRD is looking for an agency to build upon a Communications Plan and an established marketing and advertising campaign: *Fly BRD-#WorthIt*, which is designed to educate the public of the various benefits BRD offers. Initial work has already begun from a public relations, internal branding, and social media perspective. The successful partner would be expected to augment initial efforts through traditional and digital advertising, content and collateral development and other guest interaction points.

Outlook for this campaign would initially be through 2022, with adjustments made based on market conditions. The selected firm will help provide a creative and analytical approach to best reach potential guests. The firm should be willing to jump right into this project and be ready for a quick turnaround of implementation.

Long-term scope

Simultaneous to the *Fly BRD-#WorthIt* campaign, work will be done to better align the Airport's current marketing efforts with an emphasis on refining our approach and delivery to target markets. The selected firm would be responsible for:

- **Market Segmentation:** Understanding BRD's target market(s), including demographic and geographic data, guest personas (both business and leisure travelers), targeting segments for enhanced growth within Central Minnesota and pinpointing markets for growth beyond the Brainerd Lakes Region.
- **Marketing Strategy:** Augment the Airport's research and marketing strategy development to create a comprehensive program that will work in coordination with public relations and internal communications initiatives. This will include development of a formal written plan, including objectives, audience description, strategies, tactics, and budgets.
- **Advertising Plan:** A coordinated advertising campaign to support overall marketing efforts that will include print, broadcast, digital, online, email, experiential media, etc. This will include development of a formal written plan, including objectives, audience description, strategies, tactics, budgets and creative development.
- **Media Planning and Buying:** Media negotiations, client meetings, phone calls and correspondence related to specific media plans/buys.
- **Creative Review:** An audit of the BRD brand to understand inconsistencies and areas of improvement across all communication channels. (Please note, a complete re-brand is not being requested at this time.) From the audit, recommendations on creative strategy and design creation of collateral, reports, advertising and visual display, broadcast or social media materials and other vehicles as needed. This will include concept development, including graphic design, copywriting and editing. Depending on findings of the audit, a refresh to current brand guidelines may be considered.

BRD is relying on the selected firm to be a strategic partner and bring creativity, flexibility, and a proven track record of results to the table. If a firm feels there is a better approach to achieving the above objectives, it should provide insights and processes into how they would achieve similar outcomes. In addition, the firm should be able to recommend strategies to expand the impact of advertising/marketing campaigns allowing for the broadest possible exposure to the target markets within the available budget.

The selected firm should be able to clearly articulate the goals(s), objectives, audiences, strategies, budget, and measurement prior to the launch of a campaign. The selected firm must demonstrate the ability to strategically plan, integrate, manage, and execute an assortment of marketing projects. New and emerging technology opportunities are consistently being introduced and the selected firm must be able to identify, evaluate, recommend, develop, execute and/or manage the execution of these opportunities.

- **Account Management & Reporting**
 - Meet with BRD staff as needed for the purposes of carrying out initiatives
 - Maintain internal procedures that ensure budget control, prompt billing and quality control for campaigns
 - Secure BRD's approval of all expenditures regarding authorized advertising by submitting preproduction estimates
 - Prepare cost schedules and project sheets for advertising expenditures and other related costs
 - Understand trademark, copyright and other applicable intellectual property protections and work with the Airport to safeguard its brand
 - Provide ongoing status reports, or as otherwise requested, to BRD updating the progress of all projects
 - Provide monthly, quarterly, and annual performance cost analysis for investment
 - Develop analytical data reports and key performance indicators, or KPIs, in collaboration with BRD leadership to measure overall effectiveness and performance, and provide detailed reports monthly

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Firms will be evaluated on the following criteria:

Background & Experience:

- Summarize the successful production of results for organizations with tangible outcomes such as new customers, new markets, increased brand awareness, new revenues, etc.
- Describe how the firm elevated public brands utilizing audience data to grow and build loyalty for an organization
- Define the firm's ability to develop and use consumer insights to connect stakeholders with relevant messages
- Implementation of other large-scale marketing plans supported by sophisticated advertising efforts

Strategic Vision:

- Clearly articulate plan and campaign goals, objectives, messages, and budget, with an eye to results
- Review current efforts and provide strategic guidance and recommendations
- Provide new insights, direction and approaches to marketing and advertising efforts to best position BRD

Creativity:

- Demonstrate a creative approach to problem solving, offering unique, tailored solutions to best elevate the BRD brand
- Display strong competence in design, providing strong visuals to help tell and enhance the BRD story
- Educate Airport employees and Airport stakeholders approach problems through a new lens

Personality/cultural fit:

- Show an awareness of regional efforts with an ability to collaborate with internal stakeholders and outside vendors, creating a pleasant work experience that contributes to overall organization goals
- Understanding of BRD's role in both creating a transportation hub for the region as well as its importance in the local economy
- Availability for in-person meetings and accessible to the Brainerd Lakes Region (when it is safe to do so)

Value:

- Provide cost-effective, yet creative and relevant solutions
 - Currently BRD has \$100,000 budgeted annually for marketing, creative services, and advertising

SUBMISSION FORMAT

Submissions should be submitted in the format outlined below:

Agency Overview:

- Provide a brief background on your agency, including why your agency is unique and your fresh perspective
- Share accomplishments, capabilities, areas of competency and similar experience
- Explain how the account would be staffed, including team members and account structure; for any work intended to be outsourced to other companies, please describe how these relationships are managed
- Explain your philosophy and how you approach new clients, your strategic planning process, and any additional information relevant to process
- Demonstrate how your agency develops a holistic approach to marketing, integrating traditional, digital, and emerging media to create a comprehensive strategy
- Show how your agency has evolved with consumer trends and how your agency has adapted to best utilize new and emerging channels
- Describe your media buying process: How do you determine where, when, and how to purchase media, what you charge for agency mark-up, etc.

Examples:

Provide examples of client work, including the problem/directive and how you approached the project with solutions that delivered results.

Analytics:

Provide an overview of how you determine success, including analytical tools you use, what types of information you would typically report back and any other philosophies you have on reporting.

References:

List a representative sample of clients and the types of work performed, with a focus on items relevant to this RFP; Provide a minimum of three (3) relevant references, preferably for projects of similar scope and complexity.

Cost:

Prepare and submit your best pricing offer and cost sheet, including how you track time and provide detailed billing reports. Pricing may be provided in the most suitable format and may be presented in either a monthly retainer breakdown or hourly rates based on work performed (menu pricing).

Pricing should include, but not limited to, the following categories:

- Short-term efforts for *Fly BRD - #WorthIt*.
- Strategic planning
- Media planning, negotiation, buying
- Content creation
- Creative development
- Digital management
- Production (including video production for website content)
- The price(s) quoted should be inclusive

If your price excludes certain fees or charges, you must provide a detailed list of excluded fees with a complete explanation of the nature of those fees

If the execution of work to be performed by your company requires the hiring of subcontractors, you must clearly state this in your proposal. Sub-contractors must be identified and the work they will perform must be defined.

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

Responses should be delivered electronically capable of being read by assistive screen reader technology. To be considered, complete submissions must be received as a single PDF document to:

info@brainerdairport.com

Electronic submissions shall be named with a form or portion of the firm's name as part of the document name.

The firm certifies the response submitted has not been made or prepared in collusion with any other respondent and the prices, terms or conditions thereof have not been communicated by or on behalf of the respondent to any other respondent prior to the official opening of this request. This certification may be treated for all purposes as if it were a sworn statement made under oath, subject to the penalties for perjury. Moreover, it is made subject to the provisions of 18 U.S.C. Section 1001, relating to the making of false statements.

Submissions may be withdrawn by written request only if the request is received on or before the opening date and time.

Submissions not meeting these criteria may be deemed non-responsive.

BRD is not liable for any costs incurred by any prospective firm prior to the awarding of a contract, including any costs incurred in addressing this solicitation.

Each submission must be signed by a person authorized to sign contracts on the behalf of the firm. The name of the person signing must be followed by title.

REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

Questions regarding this solicitation are to be submitted in writing to stevenwright@brainerdairport.com prior to 2 p.m. on October 1, 2021.

BRD reserves the right to publish and respond to an inquiry, (respond directly to the inquirer without publishing or not respond to the inquiry) at its sole discretion.

It is the firm's responsibility to become familiar with and fully informed regarding the terms, conditions, and specifications of this solicitation. Lack of understanding or misinterpretation of any portions of this solicitation shall not be cause for withdrawal after opening or for subsequent protest of award.

Addendums will only be published by Airport Administration and available for review at www.brainerdairport.com.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

BRD reserves the right to require that its standard terms and conditions apply to any actual order placed in response to a firm's submission. No attempt to modify BRD's Standard Terms and Conditions shall be binding; absent agreement on such modification in writing and signed by BRD.

No payment shall be made to the Respondent, for any extra material or services, or of any greater amount of money than stipulated to be paid in the contract, unless changes in or additions to the contract requiring additional outlay by the Respondent shall first have been expressly authorized and ordered in writing by contract amendment or otherwise furnished by BRD.

The intent of these specifications is to promote a properly designed and all-inclusive response. Any requirements not in the specifications, but which are needed for such a response, are to be included in the submission.

The Respondent shall not discriminate against an employee or applicant for employment with respect to hire, tenure, terms, conditions or privileges of employment, or a matter directly or indirectly related to employment, because of race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex, height, weight, marital status, or disability that is unrelated to the individual's ability to perform the duties of a particular job or position.

The Respondent shall observe and comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, ordinances, rules, and regulations during the completion of any contract with BRD.

The terms of this request shall be interpreted, construed, and enforced pursuant to the laws of the State of Minnesota, and the Parties irrevocably consent to the jurisdiction of the federal and state courts presiding in Minnesota.

BRD is tax-exempt under joint ownership of the City of Brainerd and Crow Wing County.

Vendor Representation and Warranty Regarding Federal Excluded Parties List: The Respondent acknowledges that BRD may be receiving funds from or through the Federal Government; such funds may not be used to pay any Respondent on the Federal Excluded Parties List (EPLS). The Respondent represents and warrants to BRD that it is not on the Federal EPLS. If the Respondent is in non-compliance at any time during execution or term of this agreement (including any extensions thereof), the Respondent shall be in

breach and BRD shall be entitled to all remedies available to it at law or equity, specifically including but not limited to recovery of all moneys paid to the Respondent, all consequential damages (including the loss of grant funding or the requirement that grant funding be returned), and attorney fees (including the costs of in-house counsel) sustained as a result of the Respondent's noncompliance with this warranty and representation.

Termination For Cause: Should the firm fail to perform the Work as required by and in accordance with the schedule or time requirements, or otherwise violate any of the terms set forth in the Solicitation Request, it shall constitute breach of the Contract. Other than in force majeure situations, Respondent shall have five (5) calendar days to cure a breach of the Contract (the "Cure Period") following issuance of BRD written notice. Failure to cure a breach of the Contract within said Cure Period shall allow BRD to, without further notice to the Respondent, declare the Contract terminated and proceed with the replacement of the Respondent and BRD shall be entitled to all remedies available to it at law or in equity including a claim against any required payment/performance bonds. **Termination Without Cause:** Notwithstanding any other provision, at any time and without cause, BRD shall have the right, in its sole discretion, to terminate the contract by giving sixty (60) days written notice.

Although it is the intent to contract with one provider, BRD reserves the right to contract with alternate sources if the Respondent is unable or unwilling to service its obligation, or it is deemed by BRD to be in its best interest to use alternate sources.

Assignment: Neither party shall assign or delegate any of its rights or obligations under this Agreement without the prior written consent of the other party.

Respondent warrants that they are an authorized provider of products or services of his/her submission.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT

Information submitted in this solicitation is subject to the Freedom of Information Act and may not be held in confidence after the Respondent's submission is opened. A submission will be available for review after the project has been awarded.

BRD cannot assure that the information submitted as part of or peripheral to the Respondent's submission will be kept confidential. Any Respondent submission language designated as confidential is considered automatically invalid and void. BRD is subject to the Freedom of Information Act, which prohibits it from concealing information on or associated with responses, successful or unsuccessful, once they are opened.

EVALUATION, STATUS UPDATES/AWARD NOTIFICATION

The Commission reserves the right to request additional information it may deem necessary after the submissions are received.

As part of the evaluation process, Respondents may be requested to make an oral presentation, at the Respondent's expense, to an evaluation committee. Key staff to be assigned to this project must participate in this presentation unless otherwise waived by the Commission. The presentation may be followed by a question-and-answer session.

The Commission reserves the right at its discretion to waive irregularities of this solicitation process.

In the event of extension errors, the unit price shall prevail and the Respondent's total offer will be corrected accordingly. In the event of addition errors, the extended totals will prevail and the Respondent's total will be corrected accordingly. Respondent must check their submission where applicable. Failure to do so will be at the Respondent's risk. Submissions having erasures or corrections must be initialed in ink by the Respondent. Respondents are cautioned to recheck their submissions for possible errors. The Respondent shall not be allowed to take advantage of error, omissions, or discrepancies in the specifications.

The Commission, at its sole discretion, reserves the right to award to the Respondent whose response is deemed most advantageous to the Commission. The Commission, at its sole discretion, shall select the most responsive and responsible Respondent, and evaluate all responses based on the requirements and criterion set forth in this solicitation, while reserving the right to weigh specifications and other factors in the award. The Commission reserves the right to reject submissions as a result of this solicitation.

The Commission reserves the right to award by line item when applicable and to accept or reject any or all parts of a submission.

Accelerated discounts should be so stated at the time of submission. If quick-pay discounts are offered, The Commission reserves the right to include that discount as part of the award criterion. Prices must, however, be based upon payment in thirty (30) days after receipt, inspection, and acceptance. In all cases, quick-pay discounts will be calculated from the date of the invoice or the date of acceptance, whichever is later.