



2024 Request For Proposals

Website Usability

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I. Summary

Experience Olympia & Beyond (EOB) is the official destination marketing organization for Thurston County. Our mission is to reveal Thurston County's most iconic experiences for the world to discover. We are seeking the professional services of a Contractor to lend their technical expertise conducting a Website Usability Study to determine the overall effectiveness of experienceolympia.com, an essential resource for visitors, residents and stakeholders accessing information about Thurston County. We hope the study will help cement a plan to ensure a positive and equitable experience for users with varying abilities and needs, in keeping with our commitment to DEIA.

In 2023, EOB has seen solid website performance with:

- Approximately 360k unique website visits of which nearly 250k were engaged sessions
- An average session duration of 02:13
- Strong organic traffic

In 2024, EOB aims to increase unique visits to the website by 15% over 2023. However, in May 2024, unique visits to the website were down -3.0% compared to May of 2023. EOB uses research data as part of a strategy to increase visitation to experienceolympia.com. Baseline statistics are obtained using tools like GA4 and SEMrush to evaluate metrics and data trends but are not able to fully address why website users are visiting the site and if the content is meeting their needs. Userway was also recently added to the site, allowing online visitors to choose user profiles and tools to help ensure an accessible and equitable experience.

This will help support the EOB team fulfill the strategic objectives initiatives included in the EOB 3-Year Strategic Plan:

- Identify ways to extend overnight stays
- Clarify target markets and expand geographical reach
- Identify new niche markets for leisure and groups
- Continue focus on data analytics for marketing ROI
- Ensure accessibility and equity to all website visitors

As highlighted in the EOB 2024 Business & Marketing Plan, unique website visits to the website should increase by 15% over 2023.

Further, in the EOB 2024 Business and Marketing plan/ Tactical Plan, the website is used as a primary tool to promote Thurston County as a place to visit and supports strategies including advertising and content creation.

II. Contractor Qualifications

The desired qualifications of the vendor to complete a Website Usability Study based on in-depth interviews includes:

- Have a background in tourism research with the knowledge and ability to conduct Website Usability in-depth interviews. This includes all aspects of the project from recruitment of individuals, knowledge of tourism websites, expertise in qualitative research and ability to convey key insights to EOB that will guide strategy in relation to travel and tourism.
- Provide a solid methodological approach to this research and deliverables that allows EOB to:
 - Assess the overall appeal and user experience of experienceolympia.com.
 - Gather feedback on content and relevancy.
 - Examine engagement with the site, content and features.
 - Generate ideas for potential features, functions and content.
 - Examine specific pages and/or functionality and accessibility.
 - Understand the potential effectiveness of the website as a tourism promotion tool.



III. Agency & Proposal

Each proposal must contain the following components:

1. Notice of Intent to Bid

- Applicant Agency Name
- Federal tax ID number
- UBI number – If you don't have, apply [here](#). You must submit a screenshot of your pending application
- W-9
- Contact Person
- Physical Address
- Mailing Address
- Website
- Email
- Phone
- Date
- Signature

2. Agency Information

- Primary team members working on our account and their roles and backgrounds
- Number of employees in your company
- Date of company formation
- Notice of intent to hire subcontractors in order to complete our project's scope of work--please list all companies and/or individuals that would participate in the project, their location, unique skills and work to be performed
- Proof of insurance
- List of all tourism-related clients for whom you have contracted in Washington State and Oregon during the past 12 months and certify that there is no conflict of interest between any existing contract, client relationship and the ability of your company to represent the needs of Experience Olympia & Beyond

- Roster of your team members, their experience, individual roles and personal bios
- Detailed account of what makes your agency unique. Why should we choose your agency over the competition?

3. Scope of Work

Contractor must note how it will implement a detailed methodological approach, include the number of in-depth interviews they will complete along with the length of time of each interview. (Project must be completed within three months). Contractor must include plans for project reporting.

4. Budget Estimate & Billing Structure

Project proposals must include an all-in maximum budget of \$20,000 and include fee allocations including but not limited to:

- Project management
- Participant recruiting
- Interview moderation
- Fulfillment of participant incentives
- Research analysis and report development

Please include your billing structure (how and when you prefer to be paid) as well as any billing conventions you employ: retainer, hourly rates, etc.

5. Portfolio & References

- Please include contact information of no fewer than three (3) references.
- Please include a minimum of (3) examples of similar research projects that you've completed in the past 24 months (via link, shared drive and/or pdf).



IV. Timing

Once the Contractor is selected, initial meetings will be set between the Contractor and EOB Director of Research & Information Systems. The Contractor should anticipate that the Scope of Work begins in August and ends no later than November 15, 2024.

- Month 1: Initial meeting between Contractor and EOB. The Contractor develops discussion guide and recruit individuals for qualitative interviews.
- Month 2: Contractor begins qualitative interviews. Midway through, the Contractor sends a summary of findings to EOB.
- Month 3: Contractor develops final report of findings.

All timeline dates listed below reflect deadlines of 5 p.m. on the dates noted:

- RFP(s) Issued June 13, 2024
- Vendor Questions Emailed to EOB By: June 21, 2024
- Questions Answered Via Email By: July 1, 2024
- Proposals Due By: July 8, 2024
- Contract Signed By: July 15, 2024
- Winner Announced By: July 22, 2024



Proposal must be delivered via email in PDF to the attention of Melissa Elkins, Director of Research & Information Systems at melissa@experienceolympia.com.

This RFP does not commit EOB to award a contract. EOB reserves the right to reject any or all proposals received in response to this RFP and to negotiate with any of the vendors or other firms in any manner deemed to be in the best interest of EOB. Costs for developing proposals are the responsibility of the Vendor and shall not be reimbursed by EOB.

V. Selection Process

The Experience Olympia & Beyond Marketing Team will evaluate all proposals received and candidates will be notified by phone or email once a final selection has been made.

Proposal Evaluation Criteria

All proposals submitted will be evaluated using the following criteria:

- Adherence to RFP requirements 25%
- Methodology 30%
- Budget 20%
- Body of Tourism-Related Work/Portfolio 15%
- References 10%

VI. Questions

Candidates may send any questions that they have about the project to Melissa Elkins, Director of Research & Information Systems at Experience Olympia & Beyond via email at melissa@experienceolympia.com.

All questions should be submitted by June 21, 2024.

Answers will be provided via email no later than July 1, 2024.

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