



BRAND
USA

Brand USA
REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

Corporate Website Development & Maintenance
September 2025

INTRODUCTION

As the destination marketing organization for the United States, Brand USA's mission is to increase incremental international visitation, spend, and market share to fuel the nation's economy and enhance the image of the USA worldwide.

Established by the Travel Promotion Act of 2009 as the nation's first public-private partnership to spearhead a globally coordinated marketing effort to promote the United States as a premier travel destination and communicate U.S. visa and entry policies, Brand USA began operations in May 2011.

As one of the best levers for driving economic growth, international travel to the United States currently supports 1.2 million American jobs* and benefits virtually every sector of the U.S. economy. Since its founding, Brand USA has worked with more than 900 contributing organizations to invite the world to explore travel experiences and destinations available in the United States.

For industry and partner information about Brand USA, please visit TheBrandUSA.com.

For information about travel experiences in the United States, please visit Brand USA's consumer website at VisitTheUSA.com.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Request for Proposal (RFP) is to identify the appropriate vendor to help reimagine Brand USA's corporate website at www.theBrandUSA.com and maintain it once the redesign is complete.

BACKGROUND

Brand USA recently completed a comprehensive redevelopment of our consumer website experience, integrating cutting-edge technology to create a first-in-class national destination marketing organization (DMO) site that inspires international visitors to visit the USA. This redevelopment included the integration of advanced technologies such as:

- **AI Trip Planner by Mindtrip** - Providing personalized travel recommendations and itinerary planning
- **Website Personalization by DemandScience** - Delivering tailored content and experiences based on user behavior and preferences
- **AI-Powered Translations with Weglot** - Ensuring seamless multilingual accessibility for international audiences

As part of this consumer site transformation, we successfully migrated from a Drupal content management system to WordPress, significantly improving our content management capabilities and user experience.

In addition, we've completed an audit of the corporate website and identified the following topline issues:

- Lack of consistency in UI
- Navigation needs clarity
- Need for greater mobile responsiveness
- Add context to page introductions and create strong hooks with CTAs
- Address technical SEO errors, warnings and notices
- Deepen our first impression by using imagery strategically
- Upgrade our press room

Building on the success of our consumer site redevelopment, we are taking the same strategic, technology-forward approach with our corporate website. Our goal is to integrate innovative technologies that effectively tell Brand USA's story across key audiences:

- **Key opinion leaders**
- **Destination stakeholders, trade associations, and existing and potential partners**
- **Members of the media**

This background informs our approach to selecting a vendor who can deliver technological sophistication and innovation for our corporate digital presence.

OBJECTIVES

- **Strategic Storytelling** - Own Brand USA's story, emphasizing economic impact (local and national)

- **Improved User Experience** - Make the site intuitive and accessible
- **Future-Ready Platform** - Build something scalable, modern, responsive and inclusive (i.e. mobile friendly, 508 compliant and AI-ready).
- **Stakeholder Value Creation** - Demonstrate positive returns for the American people/ communities
- **Industry Leadership** - Position Brand USA as the go-to resource for all things international travel and innovator of new solutions
- **Integrated Digital Ecosystem:** Seamlessly connect the content on the corporate website, like the state pages, to the Partner Success Portal and wwbrandusaevents.com to create a cohesive and interconnected digital experience for all users.

SCOPE OF WORK

The selected vendor will:

- Provide services for maintenance, technical support, content uploading, web development and training.
- Develop website features and infrastructure as needed, including front and back-end coding; integration of third party APIs; testing/quality assurance; content, layout, structure and navigation.
- Manage project roadmaps.
- Assist with SEO implementation. Ensure that pages are properly showing up in Google search after they are created.
- Ensure there is a strong technical foundation to ensure AI models can efficiently understand and trust the website. Using structured data (schema markup) to explicitly define content and building a clear site architecture to facilitate easy crawling.
- Update budgets on a monthly basis, tracking allocated hours and rolling over unused time into the following month. (Final roll-over will be negotiated in contract).
- Provide weekly status reports.
- Work collaboratively with other agencies responsible for Brand USA's other digital platforms including Passport (our intranet), Partner Success Portal (which houses our research and success metrics of our partner programs), state-by-state activities and results, and brandusaevents.com (powered by Cvent), ensuring these elements are properly connected to the website.
- Work collaboratively with our research and analytics team to ensure that data from the site is ingested into our data warehouse and that new functionality is properly developed from an analytics perspective.

FUNCTIONAL REQUIREMENTS

- Advanced architecture expertise with modern content management systems, informed by testing, analytics and best practices.
- Superior design with the ability to consistently match pre-existing content.
- Ability to meet technical specifications with flexibility to tailor the product to meet Brand USA needs.

QUALIFICATIONS

The selected vendor will have a minimum of five years' experience with:

- Content management system development with multi-language sites
- Tourism-related clients – previous or existing work with DMOs is a plus.
- Website design and hands-on content management implementation
- Solid company with proven financial backing
- Project management

Special Note

Hosting, acceleration and security is typically handled by Brand USA, however, if economies of scale can be achieved by coming under an existing contract, we would want to know that. Experience working with cloud-based hosting solutions is a plus.

Brand USA will provide a brandstyle guide.

Brand USA will manage analytics. While reporting is not a requirement, analytics development is required.

QUESTIONS

Please address:

- What are typical support response times? What are your after-hours response times?
- Do you use third-party vendors for any services you would provide to Brand USA? If so, who are these supporting vendors?
- Will you provide full service during regular eastern time zone business hours?
- What is your maintenance schedule?
- How do you meet custom requirements?
- What is your development approach/methodology?

- What are your hourly rates for development beyond the original master services agreement?

PROPOSAL FORMAT AND SPECS

Proposal format is open to presentation style and delivery of the proposing team, but it must include the following information:

- At least four links to responsive websites that your company has created.
- Case studies (minimum of two) with demonstrated results relevant to Brand USA (travel, or scale similarity in another industry).
- Team roles with supporting resumes and hourly rates.
- Company history and background.
- Illustration of how we will interact for planning, development, execution and optimization.
- Unique selling proposition over competitors.
- Maximum of 15 slides or pages with an appendix

BUDGET

Based on the RFP requirements, the proposer must submit a detailed and realistic budget, along with an estimated execution timeline. **The total budget for development and maintenance work in FY26 is \$200,000. This includes strategy, development and maintenance. Depending on the proposed strategies, we may be able to increase the budget cap.**

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

Proposals may be rejected if they do not include all deliverables. Proposers wishing clarification of this RFP must submit questions in writing to Brand USA, no later than **September 29, 2025 (due by 5:00 PM EDT)** and sent by e-mail to RFPadmin@TheBrandUSA.com. Questions will not be answered on calls, with the exception of meetings with scheduled finalists during, or after the meeting. Company names will be removed from the published question/answer document. Duplicative questions, irrelevant questions and questions already addressed in this RFP may not be published. Pitches will be not be accepted outside the RFP process.

Costs for developing proposals are entirely the responsibility of the proposer and shall not be reimbursed by Brand USA.

1. **Notice of Intent to Bid** must be received by **September 30, 2025 (due by 5:00 PM EDT)**.

The notice shall be sent by e-mail to RFPadmin@TheBrandUSA.com. The NOTICE OF INTENT TO BID, is nonbinding; however, it ensures the receipt of all addenda related to this RFP. Proposals will be accepted only from applicants who submitted a timely NOTICE OF INTENT TO BID.

2. **RFP Responses** must contain the following information:

- a. Executive Summary.
- b. No Conflict of Interest: Client relationships that could potentially be considered a conflict of interest must be listed.
- c. Contract Manager/Team: identify one individual on the proposer's account team who will manage the event. Include resumes, or descriptions of anyone to be involved with the contract
- d. Case Studies.
- e. Working Links: Provide at least two working links of websites currently being managed.
- f. Direct answers from the "Questions" section. Include the question and your answer. Do not assume we will locate answers to these questions spread throughout your proposal. Failure to provide direct answers may negatively impact your submission.
- g. Monthly Budget (See Special Notes)

3. **Certification Form**: Must be signed and accompany all RFP Response submissions.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

This tentative schedule may be altered at any time at the discretion of Brand USA. Brand USA reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, or any part thereof; waive an informality in the proposals and accept the proposal that best meets the needs of Brand USA.

- A. Proposal Released – **September 15, 2025**
- B. Written Questions (due by 5:00 PM EDT) – **September 19, 2025**
- C. Written Questions Answered and posted to Brand USA website – **September 26, 2025**
- D. Notice of Intent to Bid Due (due by 5:00 PM EDT) – **September 30, 2025**
- E. Proposal Due (due by 5:00 PM EDT) – **October 10, 2025**
- F. Evaluation by scoring committee – **October 17, 2025**
- G. Notification and Scheduling of Finalist Interviews – **October 20, 2025**
- H. Finalist Presentation/Interviews – **October 27 – 31, 2025**
- I. Interview evaluation by scoring committee – **November 4, 2025**
- J. Notice of Intent to Award Contract and Public Posting – **November 12, 2025**

DELIVERY OF PROPOSAL

Proposals should be e-mailed to RFPAadmin@TheBrandUSA.com. We will acknowledge receipt, so if you do not receive a receipt notification within two business days, please contact us. If the file size of your proposal is too large to email, or send via a FTP service, contact us and we will make arrangements. **Proposals should not exceed 25 pages. You can add extra pages, but there is no guarantee that they will be read.**

EVALUATION AND CONTRACTING

All proposals satisfying the requirements of this Request for Proposals will be evaluated to establish which of the providers best fulfills the needs of Brand USA and this project. This Request for Proposals in no way commits Brand USA to award a contract, to pay any costs in preparation of a proposal, or to contract for the goods and/or services offered.

Brand USA reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals received as a result of this request, to negotiate with all qualified providers or to cancel this Request for Proposals. After awarding the contract, the schedule will include a period of collaboration between Brand USA and the selected Contractor to better define, elaborate upon, and fix the Contractor's final Scope of Work and general Terms and Condition

ATTACHMENT 1**NOTICE OF INTENT TO BID**

Due: [Date]

SEND TO: rfpadmin@thebrandusa.com

NAME OF BIDDER / COMPANY:
CONTACT PERSON:
MAILING ADDRESS:
TELEPHONE:
FAX:
E-MAIL ADDRESS:
SIGNED:

ATTACHMENT 2

CERTIFICATION

Please include this statement as part of the Proposal

Certification Statement

By submission of this proposal and authorized signature below, Proposer certifies that the undersigned corporate officer has authority to bind the bidder to the terms of this Proposal and hereby certifies on behalf of the bidder that:

1. He/she has read and understands all commitments and terms of this Proposal.
2. The information contained in this Proposal is accurate.
3. Proposer's quote is valid for at least 120 days from the date of proposal's signature below.
4. Proposer understands that if selected as the successful Proposer, he/she will have ten (10) business days in which to complete contract negotiations, if any, and execute the final contract document. Date of execution can be extended by mutual agreement of contractor / Brand USA.

Authorized Signature

Typed or Printed Name

Title

Date

Official Contact

Brand USA requests that the Proposer designate one person to receive all communications for clarification and verification of information related to this proposal. Please identify this point of contact below:

Official Contact Name

Phone Number

Official Contact Title

Facsimile Number

Email Address

Street, City, State,

ATTACHMENT 3

FOR BRAND USA USE ONLY

Bid/Proposal: _____

Evaluated By: _____

Date: _____

Proposal Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation committee will judge each written proposal based on the following criteria:

	MAX. POINTS	SCORE
Technical Expertise & Web Development Success: • Demonstrated web development success with similar projects • Advanced CMS expertise (preferably WordPress) • Quality assurance capabilities across browsers and devices • SEO implementation experience	25	
Design & Creative Capabilities: • Appealing design examples and portfolio quality • Ability to match and enhance existing brand standards • User experience design expertise	20	
Integration & Technical Innovation: • Experience integrating with multiple platforms and systems • Knowledge of modern web technologies and APIs • Ability to create seamless user experiences across platforms • Understanding of personalization and AI integration	20	
Project Management & Team Qualifications: • Qualified project management approach and methodology • Dedicated account management structure	15	

• Team experience and qualifications • Communication and reporting capabilities		
Industry Experience & Understanding: • Relevant experience with travel/tourism industry • Understanding of DMO/NTO requirements • Case studies demonstrating similar scale and complexity	10	
Cost Effectiveness: • Realistic and detailed budget breakdown • Value proposition within budget constraints	10	
TOTAL POINTS	100	