



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
Tourism Marketing
8 Small Towns in Northwest CT

INTRODUCTION

The Northwest Hills Council of Governments (NHCOG) is seeking a qualified tourism marketing consultant to draw regional residents and visitors to eight small Northwest Connecticut towns- Canaan, Cornwall, Goshen, Kent, North Canaan, Norfolk, Salisbury, and Sharon. The goal of this project is to draw visitors to support local businesses, encourage investment in our towns, and keep the 8 towns’ village centers vital.

The total budget for this 21-month project is \$39,000 supported by a State grant and town contributions. This budget includes funding for hosting and maintenance of the existing tourism website (www.discovernwct.com) and marketing campaigns.

TASKS

The scope of work for this project consists of the following major tasks:

- Plan and carry out targeted, **results driven** social media and promotional marketing strategies including media placement and promotional advertising.
- Carry out search engine marketing and search engine optimization for www.discovernwct.com
- Generate new, fresh content and stories for the website, press releases, and Secret Corner Facebook page, create e-blasts, and promote monthly special events.
- Reinforce regional “Secret Corner” brand identity and awareness by deploying marketing tools such as the visitor website, brochure, and collateral marketing materials (sandwich board signs, window stickers, coasters).
- Coordinate marketing activities with State and regional level tourism marketing efforts to maximize outcomes and use resources efficiently.
- Coordinate efforts with the “8 Town Shared Economic Development Consultants”, Goman+York including promoting sales and special events in the 8 towns.
- Create a realistic plan for how ongoing outreach and marketing efforts can be sustained with limited funding by utilizing local economic development commission or Chamber staff or volunteers, interns, and partnering with other regional and State organizations.

ANTICIPATED WORK PRODUCTS

The products resulting from this project will include:

- Monthly written summary reports describing outcomes of marketing efforts (such as the number and source of new visitors to the website, new Facebook likes, and media).
- New, fresh content and stories/blogs for the website, press releases, and Secret Corner Facebook page.
- Plan for how ongoing outreach and marketing efforts can be sustained with limited on-going funding and coordinated with other State & regional organizations, delivered during month 12 of this project. During months 13-21 we would begin to implement this plan.

PROJECT SCHEDULE AND OVERSIGHT

The project will be initiated and completed between April 1, 2015 and December 30, 2016. The consultant's work will be overseen by the NHCOC's Community & Economic Development Director, Jocelyn Ayer. Outcomes from this marketing effort will be shared with stakeholders in the 8 towns.

QUALIFICATIONS AND SELECTION OF CONSULTANT

The consultant must have experience with WordPress websites and Google Adwords campaigns. A selection committee will review the responses to this request for proposals and will likely request interviews with the top ranked consultants following review of the written responses. The recommendation of this selection committee will be forwarded to the NHCOC board for selection of a consultant. The following criteria will be used in evaluating proposals:

1. Previous experience in the services required and overall qualifications of the consultant.
2. Quality of the proposal response.
3. Reasonable proximity to the Northwest Hills Region and knowledge of the region and the 8 towns stakeholders.

SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS

1. Name and address of firm or individual and contact name.
2. Resumes of proposed personnel.
3. Typical hourly fee rates for proposed personnel.
4. Statement of understanding of the project tasks and goals.
5. Description of similar projects completed and contacts for professional reference.
6. Statement of capability to perform the required work within the required time frame.
7. Writing sample of event/tourism related blog or Facebook post or media article.
8. Description of how consultant would promote the Salisbury Ski Jumps utilizing marketing materials and techniques under the budget restraints of this project to attract visitors and support local businesses. Event

website: <http://www.jumpfest.org>). Describe how marketing outcomes from this effort would be measured.

To be considered, consultant proposals must be submitted in electronic form by email to jayer@northwesthillscog.org and be received by 3:00 pm on March 18, 2015.

All questions or inquiries about this Request for Proposals must be in writing and addressed to Jocelyn Ayer, NHCOC Community & Economic Development Director at jayer@northwesthillscog.org. All responses to questions received will be sent to all consultants that have responded to this Request for Proposals.

NHCOC is an Affirmative Action Equal Opportunity Employer. M/F/V/H/EOE

NHCOC retains the right to reject any submittals, request additional information, or re-issue this RFP.