



Request for Qualifications: Outsourced Services RFP

The Illinois Destinations Association (IDA) is accepting proposals for outsourced public affairs, public policy and lobbying services.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The IDA is the leading voice for destination leadership and the tourism industry in the State of Illinois. An association of thirty-eight organizations which strive to bring economic development, brand visibility, and quality of life value to their respective communities and Illinois, IDA is seeking a firm and partner that can help strongly position it for the future.

Due to the economic conditions caused by the global pandemic, State of Illinois and local government revenues have sharply declined which has adversely impacted destination marketing organizations and the multiple business sectors they support. However, prior to the public health crisis, 2019, saw its 9th consecutive year of record statewide tourism results:

- \$43.1 billion in visitor spending
- 111 million visitors experienced Illinois
- Visitor expenditures supported 344,100 jobs

IDA and its membership are a critical force for economic recovery and growth. Now, more than ever, the association needs to strengthen its relationship with the Governor's Office, the Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity (DCEO), the Office of Tourism (IOT), and the Illinois General Assembly to ensure travel and tourism continue to be recognized as a driver of the state's economy. Travel and tourism are vital economic development drivers for Illinois and IDA must consistently reinforce this core message with the State of Illinois.

Since its inception in the early 1980s, IDA has built and fortified positive relationships with the State Legislature and its individual members and now finds itself in a position of redefining its purpose and realigning its public affairs goals. The following outlines the leading public policy/affairs goals of the association:

1. Sustain and grow state-sources of revenue for IDA member organizations.
2. Create a more meaningful relationship with the Governor's Administration and state agencies as a strategic ally for economic development.
3. Identify potential partner organizations and strategic alliances that will bring value to IDA members and the association.
4. Develop on-going advocacy and public affairs initiatives that positively position IDA (and by extension the tourism industry) with elected leadership, the Administration, and state agencies.

DESCRIPTION OF LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The Board of Directors governs IDA. The Board is comprised of eleven (11) voting members and three

(3) ex-officio members. These members are CEOs for their respective organizations. There are standing committees: Legislative Affairs, Meet in Illinois, Tour Illinois, Sports Illinois, Market Illinois, Education, and Finance & Administration. At times, IDA develops Ad Hoc Committees to address specific association business.

BACKGROUND

Mission Statement: To enable members to be more effective and efficient in attracting visitors to their communities. The Association provides educational opportunities in order to raise the level of professionalism in the travel industry, and it provides a forum for networking and cooperative action between the members.

Vision Statement: Illinois' CVB's will effectively generate economic wealth for their communities, while valuing IDA as an indispensable industry resource and the recognized voice for destination marketing in Illinois.

About: Working together with the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) and its Illinois Office of Tourism, IDA delivers the following to its members and partners as a common voice for tourism:

1. A central source for legislative information and issues
2. Legislative advocacy at the state-level, with focus on the State Legislature
3. A forum to alert members to trends and changes in the tourism industry
4. Opportunities for cooperative action
5. An environment for the exchange of information and ideas between members
6. A medium for educational opportunities for members
7. A strong communication link between the Illinois Office of Tourism and members
8. Sales and promotional initiatives to enhance efforts in group, tour, convention and sports markets
9. A clearing house for effective communication and the promotion of tourism
10. Opportunities to communicate and network with industry public and private partner

DATES OF SERVICE

IDA is accepting materials demonstrating qualifications for outsourced services effective August 15, 2024, and continuing, initially, through June 30, 2025. It is anticipated that the selected firm will be retained beyond June 30, 2025 and as such proposals will be accepted with options including Fiscal Year renewal in 12-month increments beyond June 30, 2025.

The IDA Legislative Affairs Committee has specific objectives which include:

- A. Develop and deliver a coherent, resonating message that communicates the value of tourism and destination marketing organizations (also known as convention & visitors bureaus) in Illinois to members of the Administration and General Assembly.
- B. Strengthen alliances with influential organizations, state agencies, and businesses throughout the State.

- C. Protect Illinois tourism marketing funding model, including the Local Tourism Fund, International Tourism Fund and Tourism Promotion Fund.
- D. Advocate for additional funding to strengthen the industry statewide.

PROGRAM OF WORK

The scope of services for the proposal are as follows:

- Intelligence gathering, monitoring and direct advocacy on legislative, executive and regulatory agency issues impacting IDA.
- Strategic advice to IDA key leaders to assure IDA is known and recognized as a leader on tourism in Illinois.
- Communications to the IDA leaders, as requested, on issues of interest to IDA pending before the Illinois legislature and providing them with accurate, timely information and advice on how to best deliver the Associations message.

SCOPE OF WORK: ADVOCACY, MONITORING, TRACKING AND REPORTING

- Assist in designing and implementing a comprehensive plan of action to accomplish IDA's legislative priorities, as approved by the Board of Directors.
- Identify, analyze, and monitor legislative proposals/bills of interest to the IDA.
- Provide timely status reports during the legislative session on bills being monitored for IDA, highlighting and analyzing issues that are priorities of the Association.
- Identify and recruit support of key legislators and other policy makers to advocate for issues supported by the IDA.
- Communicate with other lobbyists and related constituencies to ensure that the IDA's interests are known and keep Association leaders briefed on those groups' activities.
- Review materials, such as legislative committee, subcommittee and staff reports and studies concerning issues of interest to the IDA.
- Maintain regular, formal contact with key legislators and their staff on issues of interest to the IDA.
- Participate in and prepare presentations for necessary IDA's meetings, as requested.
- Monitor the action of state regulatory bodies to ensure that matters of interest to the IDA are fully represented.
- Provide input, direction, and support for IDA's annual lobby day activities in Springfield and any other legislative events as determined by the committee.

REPORTING

- Selected firm will report directly to the IDA Legislative Chair, who reports to the Board.
- The Legislative Committee, comprised of approximately 5-7-member agency executives, oversees the work of the contracted firm/lobbyist.

DESCRIPTION OF MEETINGS

The Legislative Committee meets at a minimum monthly via teleconference call, sometimes less when the General Assembly is not in session. The Board of Directors convenes once a month, typically by teleconference call. The general membership typically meets in the fall, winter, and spring. Membership meetings are hosted by local association member at various locations around the state.

It is the expectation of IDA that the selected firm would attend monthly teleconference committee and board meetings to provide legislative updates and would attend general membership meetings. Additional communication/meetings will be required with the Legislative Chair and legislative committee as work requires. In addition, the firm would organize meetings with the Governor’s Administration, state agencies, and elected leaders concerning travel and tourism related matters, as necessary.

SUBMISSION & TIMELINE

- Submissions should be sent electronically.
- Submissions should outline the firm’s capabilities, clients served, overview of approach in public policy advocacy, notation of any known or anticipated conflicts of interest that could arise in representing IDA vis-a-vi other client.
- Submissions should note the key principals of the firm and their experience and explicitly state which team members IDA will work closely with.
- All submissions of qualifications must include professional references of current or prior clients.
- Proposals are welcome from individual firms or partnerships between one or more firms. However, please note which firm is in the lead will hold the contract and ultimate accountability in delivering services.
- Submissions do not need, at this phase, to include budget or fee schedules for services as that will be worked out during an interview/negotiation process.

The following timeline will apply to this process:

Final receipt of all submissions:	Friday, July 12, 2024, at 5 p.m. CST
Interviews with selected firms, final selection and negotiation of contact specifics:	July 15-August 9, 2024
Formal start date:	August 15, 2024

CONTACT & SUBMITAL INFORMATION

For questions regarding the RFP and for proposal submittal, please contact the following:

Mr. Cory M Jobe
Chairman, IDA Legislative Affairs Committee
President and CEO, Great Rivers & Routes Tourism Bureau
cjobe@riversandroutest.com

Please include “IDA RFP” in email subject lines, no phone calls please. For general information please use the website address: www.ildestinations.org

IDA reserves the right to alter this RFP and timeline, with or without notice. If the RFP or timeline changes, the IDA Legislative Affairs Committee will post updates at <https://www.ildestinations.org/advocacy/>

IDA reserves the right to accept or reject proposals and to waive any and all requirements at its sole discretion.