



BRAND
USA

Brand USA
REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

Australia and New Zealand PR Representation

October 1, 2025

INTRODUCTION

As the destination marketing organization for the United States, Brand USA's mission is to increase 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 supports more than 1 million American jobs and benefits virtually every sector of the U.S. economy. The international segment of the travel economy is especially high-value because visitors from abroad on average spend more time and money and visit more destinations than domestic travelers. Since its founding, Brand USA has worked with thousands of partner organizations to invite the world to explore the exceptional, diverse, and virtually limitless travel experiences and destinations available in the United States of America.

According to studies by Oxford Economics, over the past 12 years, Brand USA's marketing efforts have generated 10.3 million incremental visitors, nearly \$35 billion in incremental spend, more than 40,000 incremental jobs supported each year, nearly \$10 billion in federal, state, and local taxes, and nearly \$76 billion in total economic impact. Importantly, approximately half the jobs supported are outside the travel and tourism industry, including manufacturing, construction, finance, retail, and more.

Brand USA's operations are supported by a combination of nonfederal contributions from destinations, travel brands, and private-sector organizations plus matching funds collected by the U.S. government from international visitors who visit the United States under the Visa Waiver Program.

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

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

PURPOSE

The purpose of this RFP is to identify the appropriate public relations and communications firm (Representative Firm) to represent Brand USA in Australia and New Zealand. The selected Representation Firm will be considered Brand USA's in-market expert, with the purpose of helping to build and maintain top-of-mind awareness of the USA as a premier travel destination to increase international visitation, spend, and market share for the U.S. As an extension of the Brand USA team in market, the Representation Firm will ensure all in-market activity represents Brand USA in ways that support the organization's strategies and mission, while protecting and preserving our integrity and brand.

BACKGROUND

Brand USA is the United States' destination marketing organization that promotes international tourism to the United States. Australia and New Zealand remain one of the most vital international markets for the United States, consistently ranking among the top sources of overseas visitors and playing a crucial role in driving tourism-related economic impact. This PR activity aims to raise awareness of travel offerings in the U.S., encourage travel to the U.S., and further strengthen Brand USA's position as a leading global travel destination for travelers from Australia and New Zealand.

The organization's public relations strategy focuses on promoting the entirety of the U.S. and Brand USA's international marketing initiatives through a variety of earned media initiatives, Brand USA owned events and brand partnerships. A comprehensive media and public relations plan in Australia and New Zealand is an integral part of Brand USA's overall effort to promote the wealth and breadth of experiences and range of destinations available in the United States, as well as to support key marketing messages, initiatives and the international storytelling pillars.

OBJECTIVES

- **Increase awareness** of the United States as a travel destination among consumers, travel professionals, and media in Australia and New Zealand.
- **Position Brand USA** as the leading resource for travel planning and inspiration to the U.S.
- **Drive engagement** and conversion of Australian and New Zealand travelers in key regions across the country.
- **Highlight diverse U.S. destinations**, experiences, and cultural offerings that appeal to audiences across Australia and New Zealand.

SCOPE OF WORK

A. Media Relations

- **Strategic Media Outreach & Media Relations Building:**
 - Develop and execute a targeted media outreach plan to build relationships with Australian and New Zealand journalists, secure feature placements, and drive coverage of Brand USA's destination offerings and campaigns.
 - Devise a communications strategy that addresses visitation to the USA including its gateways and 'beyond the gateways,' to showcase the plethora of travel opportunities for Australian and New Zealand visitors.
 - Amplify Brand USA's programs, partnerships and initiatives in the Australian and New Zealand market with an eye toward generating 'earned media' coverage and elevating interest in the USA as a travel destination.
- **Press Materials:**
 - Create tailored/bespoke press releases, fact sheets, press kits, and media advisories. Amplify announcements and releases also provided by Brand USA's global communications team at head office.
 - Highlight the diversity of U.S. tourism offerings, seasonal promotions, and new initiatives from Brand USA.

B. Media Tours & Press Trips

- Organize and coordinate **media familiarization trips** for Australian and New Zealand journalists, bloggers, and influencers to visit U.S. destinations. The objective is to generate firsthand content and authentic coverage.
- **Press Trip Coordination:** Coordinate and manage all logistics for Australian and New Zealand journalists attending U.S.-based media events, familiarization trips, and influencer campaigns, in collaboration with head office.

C. Influencer Partnerships

- Identify and engage with Australian and New Zealand influencers (social media, travel bloggers, vloggers, and content creators), **particularly those who are U.S.-based**, with strong followings in the travel, lifestyle, and family niches, etc. (note: The Agency will be expected to work in close partnership with Brand USA's social media team when there is overlap, and additive in nature, especially as it relates to supporting Brand USA's Visiting Journalist program).
- Provide influencers with content guidelines and Brand USA messaging to ensure alignment with overall brand strategy.

D. Event Marketing

- **Host Media Events/Pop-ups/Activations:** Coordinate press events, activations, media and influencer pop-ups, media roundtables, or influencer meet-and-greet sessions in key cities across Australia and New Zealand to create buzz about Brand USA's latest offerings. Drive and maximize media interest for any Brand USA sponsored events including B2B, travel trade events and consumer-facing events. (This could include IMM Australia and in-market trade missions).

F. Crisis Communications & Media Monitoring

- Work with head office in the event of a crisis and ensure proactive media relations in case of unforeseen events impacting the U.S. travel market.
- Provide ongoing **media monitoring** and reporting, tracking coverage, key media mentions, and sentiment analysis across all platforms.

QUALIFICATIONS

1. Experience in Travel & Tourism PR:

- **Expertise in Tourism Marketing:** A firm with a proven track record in destination marketing and tourism-related campaigns are highly preferred. They should have experience handling travel and tourism accounts, ideally at an international level, including working with destinations, airlines, travel booking providers, other travel-related brands.
 - **Account Team:** provide an overview of the proposed account team along with the accompanying resumes/CVs to demonstrate their qualifications. Please be specific and include recent accomplishments and achievements.
 - Staffing recommendation: at least one PR account director dedicating 100% of their time to the account. And a secondary account manager dedicating 50% of their time to the account.
- **Relevant Case Studies:** The firm should be able to provide examples of successful campaigns that demonstrate their ability to drive tourism, enhance destination awareness, and generate media coverage in both traditional and digital spaces.

2. Understanding of U.S. Tourism and -U.S. Relations Between Australia and New Zealand

- **Familiarity with U.S. Tourism Policies:** The PR firm must have a strong understanding of Brand USA's goals, objectives, and strategies, as well as any federal or regional tourism initiatives that impact U.S. travel.

3. Media Relationships in Australia and New Zealand

- **Strong Media Network:** The PR firm must have established relationships with key media outlets, journalists, influencers, and bloggers across Australia and New Zealand. These connections should span the travel, lifestyle, pop culture, tourism, and business industries, and cover a range of platforms including print, digital, and broadcast. This would include major outlets in cities with high outbound traffic to the U.S., along with any U.S. correspondents. The preferred agency will maintain a presence in both Australia and New Zealand, ideally in Sydney and Auckland. Nonetheless, fixed staff locations in both countries are not a prerequisite.
- **Proven Media Results:** The firm should be able to showcase past successes in securing earned

media placements in major Australian and New Zealand outlets and publications that target travelers from both countries.

4. Cultural Sensitivity

- **Cultural Competence:** The Agency must demonstrate a strong understanding of cultural nuances between the U.S., Australia and New Zealand, and tailor communications accordingly to effectively engage local audiences.

5. Digital and Social Media Expertise

- **Influencer Engagement:** The firm should be skilled in identifying and working with Australian and New Zealand influencers who have audiences interested in U.S. travel. They should be able to launch and manage influencer marketing campaigns and measure their impact on tourism.

6. Strategic Planning and Crisis Management

- **Strategic Marketing and Communication Plans:** The firm must be able to develop and execute strategic communications and marketing plans that align with Brand USA's mission and goals.
- **Crisis Management:** Experience in crisis communication or managing sensitive issues related to tourism, such as travel advisories, border restrictions, or natural disasters, is valuable.

7. Local Knowledge and Network

- **Regional Insights:** A PR firm in Australia and New Zealand with deep local knowledge of key regions and the ability to develop and execute region-specific strategies is ideal. Understanding local preferences, media landscapes, travel behaviors, and seasonality trends will be critical in crafting effective communications campaigns tailored to the market.
- **Partnerships and Alliances:** The firm should have a network of local industry stakeholders, including tourism boards, associations, hotels, attractions, and transportation partners (e.g. airlines), which could be leveraged to help elevate Brand USA's visibility. Brand USA is open to PR-driven brand partnerships that encourage urgency and visitation to the United States. These collaborations should require minimal financial investment and demonstrate clear return on impact. Past examples can be provided upon request.

8. Measurement and Reporting

- **Proven Measurement Tools:** The PR firm must demonstrate their ability to measure campaign success using both traditional and digital KPIs. Metrics should include media impressions, engagement rates, website traffic, and leads generated for U.S. tourism businesses.
- **Reporting and Analytics:** The firm should provide clear, actionable reports that measure the return on investment (ROI) and performance of PR campaigns for Brand USA.

9. Alignment with Brand USA's Mission

- **Mission Alignment:** The PR firm must show that they understand and align with Brand USA's mission to increase international travel to the U.S. and foster a positive image of the country as a diverse and welcoming destination for tourists.

BUDGET

Based on the RFP requirements, the proposer must submit a detailed, realistic budget with an estimated execution timeline. For the period of January 1, 2026, through September 30, 2026, a retainer of \$135,000 USD has been allocated, along with an additional activation budget of \$45,000 USD. PR activations can include media deskside meetings, press trips, PR partnerships, and tourism pop-ups/events promoting the USA destination to key media and influencers.

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 October 8, 2025, 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 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 **October 22, 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. Proposal submission length should not exceed 30 pages.
- 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 Australia and New Zealand PR agency review. Include resumes, or descriptions of anyone to be involved with Brand USA Australia and New Zealand PR Agency review
- d. Case Studies.
- e. Direct answers from the "Questions for You" 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.
- f. Specific Monthly/Annual Budget.

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	Oct. 1, 2025
B. Written Questions (due by 5:00 PM EDT)	Oct. 8, 2025
C. Written Questions Answered and posted to Brand USA website	Oct. 15, 2025
D. Notice of Intent to Bid Due (due by 5:00 PM EDT)	Oct. 22, 2025
E. Proposal Due (due by 5:00 PM EDT)	Nov. 10, 2025
F. Notification and Scheduling of Finalist Interviews	Nov. 17, 2025
G. Finalist Presentation/Interviews	Week of Dec. 1
H. Notice of Intent to Award Contract and Public Posting	Dec. 8, 2025
I. Contract Begins	Jan. 5, 2026

DELIVERY OF PROPOSAL

Proposals should be e-mailed to RFPadmin@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.

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 Conditions.

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, Zip

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:

[Template note: Evaluation criteria should be aligned with deliverables.]

	MAX. POINTS	SCORE
Demonstrated success leading and managing in-market PR representation for Brand USA with deep experience in tourism/lifestyle PR	30	
Demonstrated success with media relations, influencer engagement, creative pitching, event management for PR activations, and other communications related activity supporting Brand USA's PR, consumer marketing and trade activities.	15	
Qualified staff to manage the PR requirements	25	
Cost effectiveness	20	
TOTAL POINTS	100	