

## Request for Proposals: Research Tourism Opportunities and Impact Vincent City Convention and Visitors Bureau

*Disclaimer:* This case study for business research methods courses is a fictional request for proposals inspired by real convention and visitors bureaus and actual past requests for proposals from similar tourism organizations.

**Background:** The mission of the Vincent City Convention and Visitors Bureau (VCCVB) is to attract significant events to the greater Vincent City area to stimulate local businesses and local economic opportunities. The events we bring to Vincent City include, but are not limited to, business and industry conferences; athletic events; musical, theatrical, and artistic performances; and festivals.

**Objective:** There is a severe lack of data on the economic impact that these events bring. We seek to fund research projects that investigate where visitors come from, what types of local businesses benefit from these events, and what local employment benefits come from these events. Research proposals that investigate other issues related to tourism and economic impact are also invited.

**Awards:** VCCVB has a budget of \$50,000 to split among several research project applicants. Awards for individual projects will be in the range of \$5,000 to \$20,000. Higher valued awards are expected to have a greater impact.

**Format:** Research proposals should be 2-4 pages, single-spaced with blocked paragraphs (i.e. space in between paragraphs), and should include section headings, tables, bulleted lists, and/or other writing devices to make the proposal easy to scan and read.

Proposals should clearly communicate the following issues:

- *Objective:* As concisely and specifically as possible, state the objective of your proposed research project.
- *Background and/or literature:* What is already known in the field of your research project, and how does your research project fit into existing knowledge?
- *Methodology:* What methods and/or tools will you use to achieve your objective. Include what information, variables, or characteristics will you collect; what population you will draw information from; what type of analysis will you conduct.
- *Impact:* Answer the following: What knowledge will you create upon completing your research project? What individuals or businesses in the Vincent City area will this benefit? How will they benefit? Be specific.
- *Deliverables:* What will you create as a result of the research project? This may include but not be limited to a report, presentation, database, list of recommendations, etc.
- *Budget:* Provide a detailed budget of expenses. If asking for reimbursement for labor time, include estimates of time commitments and appropriate hourly or salary compensation.

**Criteria:** Awards will be selected based on the following criteria, given in no particular order:

- *Mission:* The degree to which the project contributes to the mission and current needs of the VCCVB.
- *Focus:* How specific is the objective and the description of the impact? More focus helps the VCCCB better understand the nature and value of your contribution. Too narrow a focus may imply lesser value of the project.
- *Value to local businesses and economy:* Does the objective and impact describe an economic impact to the business community?
- *Consistency:* Does the impact match the objective? Does the methodology match objective?
- *Marginal contribution:* How does the impact fit within and make extensions to existing knowledge?
- *Feasibility and reliability:* How likely are the researchers able to conduct what is described in the methodology and how likely are the researchers able to produce the deliverables they describe? More specific description of the methodology is likely to convince the VCCVB that the researchers have thought through feasible methods and are knowledgeable of the tools to conduct these methods.
- *Budget:* Is the budget specific and feasible, and how does the total cost compare to the value of the project?

**About Us:** The Vincent Convention and Visitors Bureau is a non-profit, member financed, organization with the mission to bring major tourism events to the greater Vincent City area in an effort to boost local economic opportunities for businesses and citizens.

We have two classes of memberships: non-profit organizations and for-profit businesses. Our business members pay an annual fee and receive in exchange exclusive access to local economic data and trend analysis, networking and professional development activities, and marketing exposure in VCCVB materials that are distributed at the local and state level. Non-profit organizations pay a significantly lower annual fee, contribute significantly to the mission of the VCCVB as part of their own mission, and participate in the same networking and professional developing activities with local businesses.

We work closely with a number of small and large conferences and events that are hosted in Vincent City. Some of the more visible events we work with include the following:

- Vermont State Annual High School Baseball Championship Series
- Celebration of Independence Summer Festival (including parade, performances, and carnival)
- Celebration of Winter: Sports Competitions
- Local and Regional Artist Festival

**Proposal Submission:** Submit your research proposal by November 3, 2017 to James Murray, Director of the Vincent City Convention and Visitors Bureau.