



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

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Agenda Date: 10/15/2015

In Control: City Council A Session

DEPARTMENT: San Antonio Convention & Visitors Bureau

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Casandra Matej

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: City-Wide

SUBJECT:

Professional Research Services for San Antonio Tourism and Meeting Industry

SUMMARY:

An Ordinance authorizing a three-year Research Services Agreement with The Experience Institute for professional research services assisting the San Antonio Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB) to promote and better position the City as a destination of choice by leisure and convention visitors, in a total amount not to exceed \$124,800.00, with an option to renew for one additional two-year term in a total amount not to exceed \$79,200.00, subject to City Council approval.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The San Antonio hospitality industry has an economic impact of \$13.4 billion, bringing in 31 million visitors, employing more than 122,500 workers and has a \$2.5 billion payroll. The CVB is the entity primarily charged with promoting and marketing San Antonio as a premier leisure and convention destination.

One of the important tasks for destination management and marketing organizations is to identify opportunities for differentiating a city and further growth. The CVB vision for this initiative is to identify potential opportunities that (1) help to set apart the destination, (2) enhance the visitor experience, and (3) provide for smart growth of the various assets and resources affecting the visitor industry. This is a new initiative for the CVB and is intended to help differentiate and better position San Antonio as a destination of choice by leisure and convention visitors by affording research and information on an ongoing basis on the appeal of the

destination.

The Finance Department, Purchasing Division on behalf of the CVB, issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) to solicit responses from qualified Respondents interested in assisting in determination of San Antonio's overall visitor appeal as it relates to the tourism and meeting industry. A five-member evaluation committee with representatives from the CVB leadership team performed a thorough review of the written responses from three firms. The evaluation of each proposal response was based on a total of 100 points; 25 points allotted for experience, background, qualifications; 40 points allotted for proposed plan and 5 points allotted for respondent's price schedule. The Emerging Small Business Enterprise Prime Contract Program and Minority/Women-Owned Business Enterprise Prime Contract Program were each allotted five (5) and ten (10) points, respectively, in addition to 10 points allotted for the Local Preference Program and 5 points for the Veteran-Owned Small Business Preference Program. After evaluation committee review and discussion, the aggregate scores were presented and the committee shortlisted the top-ranked firm for an interview. The Evaluation Committee reconvened to interview and evaluated the qualifications of the top-ranked respondent based on their experience, background and approach in leading the project. The Committee recommends The Experience Institute, LLC (TEI) for award as the firm receiving the highest collective score from the evaluation categories. In addition, the Convention & Visitors Commission has been briefed on this research initiative and is in full support of this recommendation.

The research provided by TEI will assist and guide the CVB in formulating strategic direction of San Antonio's tourism and meeting industry. Specifically, TEI has studied the industry, visitor needs, and destination stakeholder objectives in order to develop the industry's first consumer-driven standards. These standards have been tested and have proven successful in aligning destination stakeholders to monitor key metrics in order to prioritize destination initiatives that fuel positive experiences. Key objectives of this partnership are (1) provide a framework to solicit and publish uniform consumer feedback regarding user/visitor experiences, (2) develop and advance inter-industry destination standards for service delivery and positive destination experiences, and (3) establish criteria to enable CVB to objectively measure progress on the visitor experience.

With the development and participation of this program, TEI and the CVB team will provide an activation plan to hospitality industry partners to build buy-in and educate stakeholders and industry personnel on the importance of measuring and shaping the total visitor experience. TEI will work with the CVB team to establish a technology system interface for ongoing data capture and report generation. TEI will develop signage for the program and work with the CVB team to incorporate San Antonio brand elements. In addition, TEI will also provide digital files and print ready copy of the signage which will be circulated to participating businesses. Throughout the program, quarterly conference calls and facilitated sessions will occur between CVB team and local stakeholders to review results of visitor/consumer data and stakeholder input, review current scores/indicators and discuss destination-wide initiatives and objectives.

ISSUE:

To assist in staying competitive within the hospitality/tourism industry and to improve the visitor experience to our destination, the CVB is requesting authorization to award a professional research services agreement to TEI. TEI was selected through a competitive Request for Proposals, following City standards for similar RFPs. If approved by City Council, the partnership with TEI and the CVB would begin in October 2015.

The Small Business Economic Development Advocacy (SBEDA) Program was applied to this evaluation process. However, highest ranked firm is not an Emerging Small Business Enterprise or a Minority/Women Business Enterprise and did not receive the available SBEDA preference points.

The Local Preference Program was applied in the evaluation of responses received for this contract; however the highest ranked firm is not a local business.

There were no proposals submitted from veteran-owned small business respondents for this contract; therefore, the Veteran-Owned Small Business Preference Program was not applied.

ALTERNATIVES:

Alternatives to approving the agreement as presented with TEI would be to approve the contract with changes in the scope of work, or to postpone or deny approval. Postponement or failure to approve this ordinance request limits the opportunity for insightful research that could assist our local tourism and business community in delivering positive experiences for citizens and visitors to San Antonio. The CVB does not recommend any of these alternatives. The terms and conditions of this proposed agreement have met the expectations of the CVB in providing the City with professional research services.

FISCAL IMPACT:

This ordinance authorizes the execution of a three-year agreement with TEI, with an option to renew for one additional two-year (2) term, in an amount not to exceed \$124,800.00 for the first three years. The fee for the additional two-year renewal period will not exceed \$79,200.00 and such renewal period will be subject to City Council approval. Funds for the first year are available within the CVB FY 2016 Budget funded by the Hotel Occupancy Tax.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the award of a professional services agreement to TEI for research services that would assist the CVB in promoting and better positioning San Antonio as a destination of choice by leisure and convention visitors.