

Request for Proposal



July 16, 2026
Louisville Tourism

401 West Main Street, Suite 2300
Louisville, Kentucky 40202

Request for Proposal

[Louisville Tourism Annual Gala & ROSE Awards Catering]

Introduction

Purpose

The Louisville & Jefferson County Visitors & Convention Commission, doing business as Louisville Tourism, is requesting Proposals to provide catering for the 2026 Louisville Tourism Annual Gala & ROSE Awards. Using this Request for Proposals ("RFP"), Louisville Tourism intends to contract with a vendor who will be available to provide the product or service during the contract term. Louisville Tourism may select and contract with one or more vendor(s) to provide all products or services described in the Scope of Services.

Vendors interested in assisting Louisville Tourism with the product or service as defined above must prepare and submit a response in accordance with the Submission Requirements and Procurement Schedule in this RFP. Louisville Tourism will review proposals from those vendors that submit a proposal, which includes all information required to be included as described herein.

Definitions

"Respondent(s)" refers to the interested individual(s) and/or firm(s) that submit a response to this Request for Proposal.

"RFP" refers to this Request for Proposals, including any amendments, supplements or addendums thereto.

"Proposal" refers to the complete responses to this RFP submitted by the Respondent(s).

Business Overview & Background

Overview of Louisville Tourism

Louisville Tourism was formed under the laws of the Commonwealth of Kentucky and has been established pursuant to provision of 91A.350(1) and 91A.370 of the Kentucky Revised Statutes for the purpose of promoting recreational, convention and tourist activities in Louisville and Jefferson County, Kentucky. Louisville Tourism is governed by a nine-member Board of Commissioners, three of whom are appointed by the Governor and six of whom are appointed by the Mayor.

Louisville Tourism's mission is to support the local economy's growth by driving tourism to the city and region. The agency serves as the leading voice for Louisville's hospitality industry to unite other sectors of the community, both private and public, in partnership to make the destination attractive to visitors and investment. In pursuit of its mission, Louisville Tourism generates increased visitor spending, local tax receipts, and job development.

Louisville Tourism encourages participation by minority, women, and disability owned businesses in the procuring of supplies and services.

Scope of Services

Areas of Specialized Services

Date & Time: Wednesday, November 18, 2026

Location: The Louisville Palace

Expected Attendance: 600

Event Start / End: 4:00 PM - 9:00 PM

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Food & Beverage Needs

- **ROSE Finalist Reception (4:00 - 5:00 PM):** An exclusive pre-event gathering for finalists and their guests, featuring access to artfully arranged charcuterie boards and/or grazing-style food, passed appetizers, and non-alcoholic refreshment stations. Proposals should allow for approximately 130 attendees unless otherwise noted.
- **Main Cocktail Reception (5:30 PM - 6:30 PM):** A vibrant reception for all attendees with multiple food stations spread across both floors of the Louisville Palace, offering appetizers and a selection of passed hors d'oeuvres served by staff.
- **Awards Program (6:30 PM - 7:30 PM):** Food service should be paused or scaled appropriately during the awards program, with stations prepared to reopen promptly afterward.
- **After Party (7:30 PM - 9:00 PM):** A relaxed, social post-show experience featuring beautifully presented desserts and upscale late-night bites that hold up well during the awards program. Food quantities should be scaled to accommodate the remaining crowd of approximately 50% as many attendees depart after the main event.

Sponsorship Opportunity

Louisville Tourism welcomes in-kind sponsorship proposals as an optional component of your submission. While not required, participating sponsors will receive enhanced visibility through our promotional efforts, including social media, digital communications, and event-related marketing. Our team is committed to recognizing partners who contribute meaningfully to the success of this signature event.

Catering Budget

The total budget allocated for catering services should not exceed \$48,000. Proposals should include detailed cost breakdowns and demonstrate how the proposed services will remain within this budget while meeting the event's quality and service expectations.

Term

The contract should commence or become effective on or as soon thereafter as the contract may be awarded. The term is subject to Louisville Tourism's satisfaction with the services performed, may be intermittent over the term, and may be cancelled at any time.

Form of Contract

If selected to provide services, the successful Respondent may be required to execute a form contract, which includes indemnification, insurance and termination provisions if applicable as well as the compensation provisions. The successful Respondent must also accept and agree to abide by Louisville Tourism Terms and Conditions.

General Procurement Information

Procurement Process

The Evaluation Committee shall evaluate proposals, interview top applicants if it deems interviews to be helpful, and complete its evaluation based on the best interests of Louisville Tourism.

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Procurement Schedule

The RFP process commences upon the issuance of this RFP. The steps involved in the procurement process and the anticipated completion dates are as follows:

Procurement Activity	Tentative Date
Issuance of Request for Proposals	July 16, 2026
Deadline to Submit Questions	July 24, 2026
Deadline to Submit Proposals	July 31, 2026
Completion of Evaluation	August 5, 2026
Notification of Selection	August 7, 2026

Obtaining Procurement Documents

This RFP packet can be obtained via Louisville Tourism's website at <https://www.gotolouisville.com/about-us/rfps/>. All addenda, amendments, or written responses to this RFP will only be available through Louisville Tourism's website. Louisville Tourism will not provide or be responsible for verbal responses.

Statement Submittal

To be given consideration, Respondents must submit one (1) electronic copy of the proposal, including all attachments.

Proposals must be received no later than Friday, July 31, 2026, at 5:00 P.M. Eastern Standard Time. Proposals must be sealed and addressed to:

Melissa Sparks
Director of Strategic Alliances
Louisville Tourism
401 West Main Street, Suite 2300
Louisville, Kentucky 40202
Phone: 502-560-0015
Email: msparks@gotolouisville.com

Proposals will not be accepted by facsimile transmission, and no more than one Proposal from any Respondent will be considered. In addition, all Proposals and all related information must also be stapled or bound and signed by a responsible party with authority to bind the Respondent.

Addenda or Amendments to RFP

During the period provided for the preparation of the responses to the RFP, Louisville Tourism may issue addenda, amendments, or answers to written inquiries. All such addenda, amendments, or answers will be posted/issued as noted in "Obtaining Procurement Documents" herein and shall constitute a part of the RFP. Respondents are encouraged to view the listed website regularly for any issued addenda, amendments or answers, as it is the responsibility of the Respondent to obtain the same. Any failure to so acknowledge such changes will make the proposal non-responsive, and it will be rejected.

Inquiries

Any requests for information or other inquiries should be directed in writing to the attention of Melissa Sparks, Director of Strategic Alliances, by 5:00 P.M., Eastern Standard Time, by July 24, 2026. Questions will be answered via Addenda and posted to Louisville Tourism's website. Respondents should not contact any other Louisville Tourism representative for information and/or to inquire about the status of this procurement prior to the submission of Proposals, or their proposal may be disqualified.

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Proposal Format

Each proposal must conform to the following outline. The proposal should be concise, but include enough detail so that each Respondent's capabilities are properly evaluated as to the provision of Louisville Tourism's required services.

Proposal Content

Respondents must provide the following information to be considered responsive. In addition, in order to expedite evaluation of submittals, the Respondent's information must be organized in the following sequence:

- A. Executive Summary** - Each proposal must be accompanied by an executive summary, signed by an officer authorized to enter into a contractual relationship with Louisville Tourism on behalf of the firm. The executive summary shall include a brief statement of the company's experience and qualifications, an approach to the work, an understanding of the scope of services, and objectives.
- B. Financial Stability** - Respondent is required to provide information pertaining to the firm's financial integrity, which may include financial statements, recent quarterly financial reports, credit reports, or other sufficient financial information. Respondent may mark the financial statement as "Confidential". Louisville Tourism will maintain the confidentiality of the statements to the extent permitted by law.
- C. Experience/Past Performance** - Respondent must provide no less than three (3) client references for similar services performed within the last five (5) years. Include client name and address, client contact name and telephone number, and the name and title of team members assigned to Louisville Tourism who worked with the client reference. Respondent must also include a statement authorizing Louisville Tourism to contact Respondent's references in conjunction with the evaluation.
- D. Respondent Firm and Staff Qualifications** - Provide a brief summary of the Respondent's history and locations. Provide a brief narrative documenting the experience and qualifications of each member who will be assigned to Louisville Tourism.
- E. Cost Proposal** - Louisville Tourism's goal relating to the Cost Proposal is to obtain an overall view of the Respondent's pricing standards for the Scope of Services outlined herein. Total proposal cost must not exceed \$50,000. Provide the cost for Respondent to provide the Scope of Services, including frequency of billing and a distinction between all types of fees charged. State whether ancillary expenses, such as travel, are included in the proposed fee or billed separately. If billed separately, provide an estimate of such charges.

Evaluation Process

The appropriate Louisville Tourism personnel will review responses that meet the criteria outlined herein and may or may not choose to hold oral interviews prior to making a final decision. Should interviews be held, it will be imperative that the lead representative for Louisville Tourism's engagement be in attendance. Only those individuals directly involved with the presentation should attend the interview.

All responses should be valid for a 90-day period from the due date of the RFP and should be signed by an individual authorized to bind the firm. Louisville Tourism reserves the right to reject any and all proposals.

Evaluation Criteria

The Committee will review all Proposals to determine if the Respondent has satisfied the criteria described in this RFP. The following criteria will be considered in selecting the successful Respondents:

- The ability to provide the requested services, including relevant experience.
- Qualifications of staff assigned to the engagement.
- Proposed fees and compensation.
- Quality and conciseness of responses.
- Client references, if applicable.

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- The value of any service suggestions, or other new ideas and enhancements.

Special Terms and Conditions

Rights Reserved

All materials submitted to Louisville Tourism in response to this RFP will become the property of Louisville Tourism, which reserves the right at its sole discretion, to use, without limitation, all information, concepts, and data contained therein.

Louisville Tourism reserves the right to reject any and all submittals, to waive any informality or irregularity in any response, and to make an award to the Respondent or Respondents deemed, in the sole discretion of Louisville Tourism, to be the most suitable to Louisville Tourism.

This RFP does not commit Louisville Tourism to award a contract to any Respondent, or to pay any cost incurred in preparation of materials filed in response to this RFP.

Louisville Tourism reserves the right to negotiate with any Respondent, to award multiple contracts or portions of the specified services, or to cancel in part or in its entirety this RFP, if it is deemed, in the sole discretion of Louisville Tourism, to be in the best interest of Louisville Tourism.

Equal Employment Opportunity

The Respondent shall agree not to discriminate against any employee or applicant because of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, citizenship status, age, protected disability status, sexual orientation, genetic information, uniformed service and/or Vietnam-era or special disabled veteran.

Code of Conduct

The Respondent shall agree to avoid situations, which could be considered either a conflict of interest, or detrimental to the operation or reputation of Louisville Tourism.

Future Work

Louisville Tourism may, at its discretion, negotiate with the successful Respondent to include further services not identified in this RFP.

Disclosure of Proprietary Information

The Respondent may attempt to restrict the disclosure of proprietary information that is contained in the Proposal by marking each applicable page prominently with the words "Proprietary Information". After either a contract is executed pursuant to the RFP, or all submissions are rejected, if access to documents marked "Proprietary Information" is requested under the Kentucky Open Records Act, Louisville Tourism will notify the Respondent of the request and it shall be the burden of the Respondent to establish that such documents are exempt from disclosure under the law.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, in response to a formal request for information, Louisville Tourism reserves the right to release any documents if Louisville Tourism determines that such information is a public record pursuant to the Kentucky Open Records Act. Louisville Tourism shall have no liability to any Proposer or anyone else for releasing any Proprietary Information of a Proposer.

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Laws and Regulations

Louisville Tourism requires that all responses to this RFP, and any contract that may result, be in accordance with all applicable laws, ordinances, rules, and regulations of the Commonwealth of Kentucky, Metro Louisville, and Louisville Tourism.

Any contract developed as a result of this RFP shall be governed by the laws of the Commonwealth of Kentucky with venue and jurisdiction in Jefferson County, Kentucky.

Louisville Tourism is committed to providing high quality, cost-effective services as described herein and engages outside partners in this endeavor. Respondent is expected to represent Louisville Tourism with integrity, professionalism, competence, and due diligence in providing the described services, and to make all efforts to deliver those services as efficiently and cost effectively as possible.

1. Form of Contract. Louisville Tourism may retain selected Respondent through a written contract. If applicable, selected Respondent must properly execute the original contract and return it to Louisville Tourism, along with any additional documents or information the contract requires.

2. Conflicts of Interest. Prior to engagement, the selected Respondent shall perform a thorough check for actual or potential conflicts of interest, as defined by applicable rules of professional conduct, which may arise from selected Respondent's representation of Louisville Tourism. Any conflict must be promptly disclosed and discussed with Louisville Tourism's Chief Financial Officer ("CFO").

3. Communication. Selected Respondent shall keep Louisville Tourism's CFO informed of all material developments and must provide regular, timely, and effective communication as applicable.

4. File Retention. Selected Respondent shall retain all documents, papers, accounting records and other work product pertaining to this contract for a period of no less than five (5) years after the date of final payment.

5. Confidentiality. Selected Respondent may gain access to non-public and confidential information and must maintain the confidentiality of such information both during and after the course of its representation of Louisville Tourism.

6. Invoices. Selected Respondent shall submit detailed invoices within thirty (30) days of the conclusion of the billing period. Louisville Tourism will not be responsible for late fees or other administrative charges.

7. Travel/Meals/Lodging. If applicable, travel, meals, lodging and other related costs require approval of Louisville Tourism's CFO and shall be reimbursed in accordance with applicable Louisville Tourism travel policies and/or guidelines.

8. Media. Selected Respondent shall not make any statements to the media on behalf of Louisville Tourism or relating to Louisville Tourism matters. All media inquiries must be immediately reported to Louisville Tourism's CFO, or as otherwise directed.