REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
PLAY COASTAL MISSISSIPPI TRAVEL GUIDE

Proposals due on or before 12:00 p.m. CST on November 19, 2026

INTRODUCTION

The Mississippi Gulf Coast Regional Convention and Visitors Bureau, d/b/a Coastal Mississippi (the "Bureau" or "Coastal Mississippi"), is a political subdivision of the State of Mississippi charged with attracting and serving visitors by communicating and facilitating the Coastal Mississippi experience. It is governed by 15 Commissioners appointed by the Boards of Supervisors of Hancock, Harrison, and Jackson Counties, and its fiscal year runs from October 1 through September 30. The Coast covers three counties and 12 cities, with a tourism economy built on beaches, gaming, seafood, culinary, outdoor recreation, arts and culture, and history.

Coastal Mississippi is seeking proposals from qualified destination marketing publishers to produce the Play Coastal Mississippi Travel Guide, the organization's flagship consumer publication and primary printed tool for converting interest into visitation. The selected publisher will be responsible for design, editorial, photography, printing, advertising sales, distribution, and a digital edition hosted on coastalmississippi.com.

OBJECTIVE

This Request for Proposals (RFP) seeks proposals from qualified destination marketing publishers with working knowledge of the tourism industry and demonstrated experience producing a destination travel guide for a leisure travel market.

Coastal Mississippi requires a publication produced at no cost to the organization that also returns revenue to the organization through royalties or commissions on advertising sales. Proposals that do not include a guaranteed royalty to Coastal Mississippi will not be considered responsive.

Proposals must be submitted in accordance with the conditions outlined in this RFP. Although Coastal Mississippi intends to contract with the person or company that best meets the qualifications to complete the scope of work, Coastal Mississippi may terminate negotiations if the parties are unsuccessful in reaching an agreement on all matters, including scope of work and cost.

In compliance with federal and state statutes, Coastal Mississippi encourages small, minority, and women-owned businesses to respond to this RFP. This RFP will be posted on MS PTAP, on the Bureau's website, and published in a newspaper of general circulation at the time of publication.

GOAL

Through the Play Coastal Mississippi Travel Guide, Coastal Mississippi aims to:

- Reach critical audiences with content that resonates
- Build awareness and interest in the brand
- Drive traffic to coastalmississippi.com
- Ultimately, drive visitation to the destination

The publication will be attractive, inviting, and easy for visitors to use. The guide must make a striking first impression through high-quality photography and print production standards. It will combine photography with editorial: short stories, articles, and sidebars, alongside standard items such as maps and listings. The publisher is responsible for developing all editorial and copywriting for the guide.

Beyond the personas below, the guide serves group, meeting, and sports planners, residents, and local businesses. Content will include dining, shopping, outdoor recreation, hotels, gaming, beaches, and arts and culture.

TARGET AUDIENCE

Coastal Mississippi markets to three personas, weighted by opportunity. Editorial, photography, and guide structure should reflect that weighting. The publisher should address in its proposal how the guide serves each persona.

Persona 1: The Drive-Market Couple

Primary audience, approximately 60 percent of the opportunity.

These empty-nest and pre-retiree couples, ages 50 and up and within a one-to-four-hour drive, treat the Coast as a recurring long-weekend getaway, booking lodging close to travel, dining out, and visiting casinos and attractions, so the message, "Close enough to come often," leads with accessibility, the short drive, and last-minute weekend value.

Persona 2: The Fly-Market Explorer

Secondary audience, high-value niche.

These slightly younger, more affluent travelers arrive by air for longer, planned trips of five to six days, with lower volume but higher per-trip spend, so the message, "A coastal escape worth the trip," leads with discovery, distinctiveness, and a fuller multi-day experience.

Persona 3: The Event and Activity Traveler

Behavioral overlay, conversion accelerator.

A behavioral layer across the first two personas, these travelers are pulled to the destination by a named event that becomes the reason to book now, while in-destination experiences carry the trip decision, so the message, "Come for the event, discover the Coast," uses the event as the hook and then extends the stay.

SCOPE OF WORK

Project Development and Requirements

The Play Coastal Mississippi Travel Guide must meet the following criteria:

- Provide accurate, current, and comprehensive information about Coastal Mississippi's three counties and 12 cities in a visually appealing, user-friendly manner
- Create an easy way for audiences to interact with Coastal Mississippi tourism partners, including telephone number, email address, and website address for every listing
- Effectively market the region as a travel destination, including tourism-related businesses, attractions, recreation, history, and other assets
- Include area maps that help visitors navigate the Coast
- Point visitors to coastalmississippi.com throughout the publication
- Deliver a digital edition that lives on coastalmississippi.com and is fully downloadable
- Place all advertising with the approval of Coastal Mississippi's Director of Marketing

Publication Specifications

- Format size: two options proposed, 8.5" x 11" and a version no smaller than 6" x 9"

- Pages: minimum 48 pages plus a 4-page cover
- Stock: recommend stock for front and back cover and for interior pages
- Text: all content developed by the publisher, subject to Coastal Mississippi approval
- Photography: provided by the publisher, subject to Coastal Mississippi approval. Coastal Mississippi will share images with photo releases where available. Photo credit is required on any image not owned by Coastal Mississippi.
- All edits are at the discretion of Coastal Mississippi prior to final approval

PUBLISHER RESPONSIBILITIES

The publisher shall:

- Handle all advertising sales, outreach, invoicing, collections, and advertiser communication, identifying itself as the authorized sales agent for the guide and never as Coastal Mississippi staff
- Develop a media kit and rate card and sell advertising only at approved rates
- Sell only to advertisers located in or actively operating within Hancock, Harrison, or Jackson County; regional or state advertisers require written approval
- Provide a prospect list and sales schedule
- Pay Coastal Mississippi a royalty equal to a stated percentage of gross advertising sales, with a guaranteed minimum per edition at least equal to the full production and freight cost of Coastal Mississippi's allocation, payable whether or not sales targets are met
- Provide a complete sales report for each edition listing advertiser, ad size, gross rate, discounts applied, net collected, and royalty owed, with a final reconciliation within 60 days of print delivery
- Disclose house ads, trade and in-kind placements, and barter, none of which count toward gross advertising sales unless approved in writing
- Provide Coastal Mississippi's allocation of printed guides at no cost, including freight to the Bureau office in Biloxi and any additional drop points
- Produce a digital edition hosted or embedded on coastalmississippi.com (a link to a publisher-owned domain alone does not qualify) that is fully responsive, offers a downloadable PDF, uses selectable and SEO-indexable text rather than image-only page-turners, includes live links with UTM parameters where requested, meets WCAG 2.1 AA, and stays live from print delivery through the full edition cycle
- Provide monthly digital analytics, including views, unique users, page depth, time on guide, PDF downloads, and click-throughs by advertiser, passable to Coastal Mississippi's Google Analytics 4 property, and coordinate implementation with Coastal Mississippi's website vendor
- Develop and fact-check all editorial and copy, sourcing partner information from coastalmississippi.com or the partner's own website; unverified statistics or claims will not be accepted
- Design the guide with its professional staff, in collaboration with Coastal Mississippi and in accordance with the Coastal Mississippi Brand Standards and Style Guide
- Deliver print-ready and web-ready files at the conclusion of each edition
- Share advertiser contact information with Coastal Mississippi and not sell it or use it for unrelated publications without written approval

COASTAL MISSISSIPPI RIGHTS AND APPROVALS

Coastal Mississippi shall:

- Approve in writing, before release, the media kit and all advertising pricing, including the rate card, ad sizes, premium positions, bundles, multi-edition packages, digital add-ons, incentives, and partner or nonprofit rates, as well as any negotiated pricing or mid-cycle rate change
- Approve all advertising placements and reserve the right to refuse any advertiser or ad creative; all advertising must be in good taste and appropriate for all audiences
- Approve all content, photography, and edits prior to final approval
- Identify priority tourism partners and excluded categories as needed
- Share images with photo releases where available; photo credit is required on any image Coastal Mississippi does not own
- Own the final approved editorial content and the Play Coastal Mississippi name, logo, and brand marks, which may be used only as approved
- Reserve the right to audit advertising sales and collection records upon reasonable notice, and to adjust the budget and related services

PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

The proposal shall state:

- Total project cost to Coastal Mississippi, if any, and any additional costs, such as travel, clearly defined
- The royalty percentage, the guaranteed minimum royalty per edition as a dollar figure, and the per-copy production and freight cost used to calculate it
- The guaranteed gross advertising sales figure for each edition and the royalty payment schedule
- How bad debt and uncollected accounts are handled and whether they reduce the royalty owed
- Total print quantity, recommended edition cycle, and Coastal Mississippi's allocation as a percentage of the print run
- Freight and delivery terms, reprint pricing, and the publisher's distribution plan, including in-market racks, drive market, out-of-state placement, welcome centers, and fulfillment partnerships
- Advertising rates, ad sizes, bundles, and discounts; the ratio of editorial content to advertising; and the ad design, proofing, and approval process
- Paper quality, binding method, and file delivery deadline to the printer
- Whether the digital edition is included at no cost and whether digital advertising revenue counts toward the royalty
- Photography licensing terms, including whether and for how long Coastal Mississippi may reuse publisher-supplied images
- Payment and remittance terms

Any costs invoiced to Coastal Mississippi must be received by the 20th of the month for payment the following month, on the publisher's letterhead, with details of work completed and all third-party back-up.

TIMELINE

This tentative timeline may be altered at any time at the discretion of Coastal Mississippi. Award is subject to approval by the Coastal Mississippi Board of Commissioners.

MILESTONE	DATE
RFP released and published	October 14, 2026
Final day to submit questions regarding this RFP	By 5:00 p.m. CDT, October 29, 2026
Questions answered and posted publicly	By 5:00 p.m. CST, November 5, 2026
Proposals due	By 12:00 p.m. CST, November 19, 2026
Proposals evaluated by RFP committee	November 20 through November 25, 2026
Finalist presentations and interviews	December 1, 2026
Publisher selected and contract negotiations begin	December 9, 2026
Contract executed, work begins	December 10, 2026
Project kick-off meeting and production timeline set	December 2026

SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS AND DELIVERABLES

Your response to this RFP must be submitted in the following format and labeled accordingly:

A. Statement of Qualifications

Provide a written statement of your qualifications for performing the work described in the Scope of Work.

B. Tourism Experience

Provide a written statement of your involvement in the tourism industry, specifically with destination marketing organization clients, industry memberships, and resources.

C. Organization, Ownership, and Management

1. Name, address, and telephone of the entity that will be contracted with and all trade names to be used
2. Name, address, and telephone numbers of the organization's principal officers and other owners

D. Organization's Structure and Experience

1. Organizational chart, including any subcontractors who will work with Coastal Mississippi
2. Total number of employees, including full-time, part-time, and contract workers
3. Summary of employees who will work on the account including name, title, qualifications, and main role
4. Hours of operation that staff will be available and any satellite offices
5. Advertising sales team structure, including whether sales staff are in-house or contracted, and how territories are covered

6. Experience as it relates to creative content, print layout, messaging, print publishing, print distribution, digital guide production, and ad design. No more than three relevant case studies, including project goals with measurable KPIs and results. Creative work should be included for each case study.

E. Advertising Sales and Revenue Performance

1. Documented advertising sales results for at least two comparable destination guides, including guaranteed versus actual gross sales
2. Documented royalty or revenue share paid to those destination marketing organization clients
3. Sample media kit and rate card from a comparable publication

F. Digital Guide Capability

1. Live links to at least two digital guides you currently produce, with a description of hosting, analytics, and accessibility compliance

G. Client Information

1. Current clients in descending order of size
2. Your two most recent past clients and reason for termination
3. Any travel and tourism clients and their current status

H. Account Gain and Loss

1. Indicate whether the organization has had a contract terminated for non-performance over the last five years, with either litigation determining fault or no litigation due to inaction on the part of the organization
2. List of accounts gained over the last two years and why your organization was awarded the work
3. Three references that are current accounts with contact names, email addresses, and phone numbers

I. Conflicts of Interest

The proposer must declare and provide details of any actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest.

J. Certification Form

The Certification Form must be signed and accompany all RFP response submissions.

K. Pricing and Royalty Proposal

Provide the complete pricing proposal described above, including the guaranteed royalty to Coastal Mississippi and the guaranteed gross advertising sales figure. Although Coastal Mississippi's fiscal year begins October 1 and ends September 30, please base your proposal on a 12-month period.

CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION

1. Submittals in response to this request and respondents' participation in the process shall be at no cost or obligation to Coastal Mississippi. Coastal Mississippi reserves the right, at any time, to abandon or terminate its efforts to contract for any or all of said services without obligation to any respondent.
2. Responses to this request and other materials submitted shall become the property of Coastal Mississippi and will not be returned.
3. Respondents shall not contact any Coastal Mississippi personnel or staff after this request has been advertised, except to ask questions as specified below under Questions. Such contact will be considered cause for disqualification.
4. Coastal Mississippi may waive any informalities or minor defects, or reject any and all submittals.
5. Coastal Mississippi reserves the right to reject any submittal if the evidence submitted by, or investigation of, such respondent demonstrates that the respondent or its subcontractors, in Coastal Mississippi's opinion, is not properly qualified to carry out the obligations of the contract or to complete the work enumerated or implied to fall under the scope of work.

6. All applicable laws, ordinances, and the rules and regulations of all governmental authorities having jurisdiction shall apply to the contract throughout. All legal matters shall be adjudicated by the state courts of competent jurisdiction in Harrison County, Mississippi, and shall comply with all relevant federal and state laws, regulations, and ordinances.
7. By executing a signature on the submittal, the respondent certifies that neither the respondent nor any of its team members is currently debarred from submitting proposals or entering into contracts issued by any political subdivision or agency of the State of Mississippi or the federal government.

EVALUATION AND SELECTION

Coastal Mississippi will establish a committee to evaluate and rate all proposals based on the criteria prescribed. Bids will be opened by an Officer of the Board of Commissioners, the Chief Executive Officer, and the Director whose department the RFP falls under, who will report the results to the Board of Commissioners.

Selection Process, Step 1

Proposals meeting all requirements of the RFP will be evaluated by a review committee and ranked on the following criteria. Top respondents will advance to Step 2.

CRITERIA	WEIGHT
Qualifications to execute the scope of work	35%
Guaranteed advertising sales and royalty returned to Coastal Mississippi	25%
Tourism industry and destination marketing organization experience	15%
Evaluation of prior work, print and digital	15%
References from past clients	10%

Selection Process, Step 2

The top two respondents will be invited to present in person or via video conference. Presentations will be ranked on the following criteria.

CRITERIA	WEIGHT
Editorial, design, and production approach for the guide	40%
Advertising sales strategy, media kit, and guaranteed revenue to Coastal Mississippi	35%
Digital guide functionality and integration with coastalmississippi.com	25%

Selection Process, Step 3

A contract will be awarded to the organization whose proposal is the most advantageous to Coastal Mississippi, considering the criteria set forth in this RFP. Upon completion of the selection process, Coastal Mississippi will notify the winning proposer and all other proposers who were not selected. Consistent with Title 25, Chapter 61 of the Mississippi Code, Coastal Mississippi will not provide any additional documents outside of this RFP without a formal public records request.

After the contract is awarded, Coastal Mississippi and the selected publisher will collaborate to finalize the Scope of Work and General Terms and Conditions.

DELIVERY REQUIREMENTS

Please submit two hard copy responses and a digital version of the proposal on a hard drive or USB drive. All proposals should include a clear, concise narrative. The proposal format is open to presentation style but must include the items listed above.

Printed submissions must be marked "RFP: Play Coastal Mississippi Travel Guide" and delivered to:

Coastal Mississippi
Attn: Kendra Simpson, Director of Marketing
2350 Beach Boulevard, Suite A
Biloxi, Mississippi 39531

Submittals received in any manner not specifically set forth above shall not be accepted or considered. The delivery date and time will be recorded upon receipt, and submittals received after the deadline will not be considered. Coastal Mississippi will not be responsible for late or incomplete responses due to mistakes or delays of the respondent or carrier, or weather delays. A postmark will not be considered proof of timely submission.

QUESTIONS

All answers to questions and requests for clarification regarding this RFP will be responded to publicly on the Coastal Mississippi website, consistent with the schedule above, to ensure that all respondents have the same information. Each proposer should designate one person to receive all communications regarding this RFP. No calls, please.

For additional information, please email tami@coastalmississippi.com.

ADDENDUM 1

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS: PLAY COASTAL MISSISSIPPI TRAVEL GUIDE

Publication Date: November 25, 2026

Coastal Mississippi extends the proposal submission deadline for the above-referenced Request for Proposals to **9:00 a.m. CST on December 9, 2026**. The following revised timeline supersedes the timeline published in the original RFP. All other terms and requirements remain unchanged.

REVISED RFP TIMELINE

MILESTONE	DATE
RFP released and published	October 14, 2026
Final day to submit questions regarding this RFP	By 5:00 p.m. CDT, October 29, 2026
Questions answered and posted publicly	By 5:00 p.m. CST, November 5, 2026
Addendum No. 1 published	November 25, 2026
Proposals due	**By 9:00 a.m. CST, December 9, 2026**
Proposals evaluated by RFP committee	December 10 through December 15, 2026
Finalist presentations and interviews	December 21, 2026
Publisher selected and contract negotiations begin	January 29, 2027
Contract executed, work begins	**Following publisher selection**
Project kick-off meeting and production timeline set	**February 1, 2027**