



501 South Water Street | Elizabeth City, NC 27909

Request for Proposal
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Consultant
Responses due by 3:00pm EST on June 14, 2021

CONTACT INFORMATION

Corrina Ruffieux

Executive Director

Visit Elizabeth City

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*PLEASE DIRECT ANY AND ALL CORRESPONDENCE AND QUESTIONS **IN WRITING** TO CORRINA RUFFIEUX ONLY.*

RFP OVERVIEW

The Elizabeth City-Pasquotank County Tourism Development Authority (TDA) is a North Carolina Public Authority under the Local Government Budget and Fiscal Control Act with funding allocated from the local occupancy tax. The official name of the Authority is the Elizabeth City-Pasquotank County Tourism Development Authority, doing business as Visit Elizabeth City.

As a Destination Marketing Organization (DMO), our primary role is to tell the story of Elizabeth City by informing, educating and advising potential visitors in collaboration with our community partners. For the community, the role of Visit Elizabeth City is to support and promote. We are here to provide services and promotion for all events and businesses that encourage tourism and drive economic impact including but not limited to restaurants, lodging, events, state parks, museums and more.

We are seeking proposals from qualified Diversity, Equity and Inclusion consultants to provide a comprehensive DEI assessment and develop an action plan that will guide VEC in developing, planning and implementing programs and messaging to increase diversity, equity and inclusion in the tourism space.

CURRENT CLIMATE IN ELIZABETH CITY

It has been a little over a month since Andrew Brown Jr tragically lost his life. This tragedy has impacted our entire community in so many ways, from our large institutions, each of us as individuals, as business owners, as community leaders and even tourism.

Our community is hurting, there is significant division between varying cohorts, our leaders are not speaking to each other, and there is very little listening or hearing taking place. In order to do what we can within the tourism space to help the healing process and allow us to move forward with our mission and vision, our Board has committed to learn more about immediate challenges related to diversity, equity and inclusion including community partnerships and community engagement.

The desired scope of work should include, but is not limited to, the below components. We welcome proposals that recommend additional or different actions that promote DEI values than those mentioned below.

PROPOSED SCOPE OF WORK

1. Conduct a community assessment and audit assessing the perspectives and experiences of our community, including leaders and residents. Conduct a diversity, equity, and inclusion survey to a sampling of community members. It is important to VEC to understand the overall sentiment of the community to proactively develop action steps that may address DEI concerns locally and ultimately for visitors. Through outreach to and communication with key community partners on issues related to diversity, equity, and inclusion that also connect to travel, tourism and economic impact:
 - Develop a baseline report for current feelings about and level of DEI awareness
 - Review and finalize a DEI Statement of Intent, to enhance the VEC's ability to execute its mission, operations, and strategic direction.
 - Provide insight and knowledge on DEI best practices in travel and tourism

2. Develop a three to five year DEI Action Plan including prioritized recommendations on initial strategies for VEC to implement
 - Suggest appropriate metrics on where we are today and develop benchmarks on what we should set as targets to measure progress
 - Collaborate with the VEC Board and possible tourism strategic consultant to revise our [existing organizational strategic plan](#) through the DEI lens

3. Provide ongoing DEI consulting services and advice throughout the FY 2021-2022 period.
 - Possibly attend Board meetings
 - Serve as a guiding member of a proposed public relations outreach steering committee
 - Other insight and guidance as suggested

SUMMARY

Our goal is to promote the Elizabeth City region as an overnight destination, and to implement programs and campaigns that help us work towards achieving our mission and vision. We further are committed to creating a culture that is inclusive and developing programs that support diversity, equity and inclusion.

For more information about the Elizabeth City – Pasquotank region, go to [VisitElizabethCity.com](https://www.visitelizabethcity.com)

FEE PROPOSAL

Please provide a breakdown of the agency fees as it relates to the work above. Include costs for each of the three proposed work areas and a proposed payment schedule.

PROPOSED TIMELINE (subject to change)

June 4, 2021	RFPs published
June 14, 2021	Responses Due
June 18-19, 2021	DEI Committee interviews finalists
June 24, 2021	Recommendation on consultant to hire made to full BOD
July 1, 2021	Contract begins

PROPOSAL PACKAGE

In no more than five pages in length, please provide the following information in the order listed below:

- 1) Business Profile- including location of main office and any branch offices, and year established
- 2) Brief summary of company background / history
- 3) Professional DEI Experience (with a minimum of 2 recent references)
- 4) Personnel (identify lead and support roles including relevant experience)
- 5) Firm Experience and Qualifications:
 - a. Please provide one case study that demonstrate through the DEI assessment process how your firm helped an organization grow and evolve.
 - b. Share your experience working in the travel & tourism and/ or economic development space
 - c. Provide samples of your firm's community benchmarking analysis process.
 - d. Include a timeline to complete the items in the proposed scope of work
 - e. Briefly describe your knowledge and understanding of the Elizabeth City region and Visit Elizabeth City and how your firm would propose to work with us.
 - f. What alternative DEI efforts would you suggest we consider that help meet our mission and vision?
- 6) Total Cost (including a breakdown of services)

Your proposal will form an integral part of the contract.

SELECTION PROCESS & CRITERIA

Proposals will be evaluated by the Visit Elizabeth City Executive Director and DEI Steering Committee, in consultation with the EC-PC TDA Board of Directors. During the evaluation process, Visit Elizabeth City reserves the right to request additional information or clarifications from those submitting proposals.

Based on the number of responses, a short-list may be selected for virtual interviews. Visit Elizabeth City may interview none, one or all agencies who submitted proposals. The final selection decision rests with the Executive Director.

Visit Elizabeth City reserves the right to negotiate modifications to proposals that it deems acceptable, reject any and all proposals, and to waive minor irregularities in the procedures.

RESPONSE GUIDELINES

- Written proposals must be submitted on or before June 14, 2021 before 3:00 pm Eastern Standard Time for consideration. **Late proposals cannot be accepted.**
- Team must be available to present virtually, if required.

Please submit one electronic version of your proposal via WeTransfer or other file-sharing means to:
Corrina@VisitElizabethCity.com