



Ticketing System & Event Management Provider Request for Proposals (RFP)

Birthplace of Country Music, Inc. (BCM)

Project Manager:

Project Manager Email Address: bids@birthplaceofcountrymusic.org

BCM Mailing Address: PO BOX 1927 Bristol, VA 24203

BCM Website: birthplaceofcountrymusic.org

RFP Issue Date: March 6, 2023

Due date for receipt of questions regarding this RFP: March 27, 2023

Due date for sealed proposals: April 17, 2023



Table of Contents

Introduction.....	Page 3
Notice to Prospective Contractors.....	Page 4
Scope of Work.....	Page 5
Proposal Evaluation Team.....	Page 5
Contractor Selection Process.....	Page 5
Proposal Requirements.....	Page 7
Appendices.....	Page 10
• Appendix A – Scope of Work	
• Appendix B – Numerical Proposal Evaluation Criteria	



Introduction

The Birthplace of Country Music (BCM) has initiated a Request for Proposal (RFP) process to identify a vendor qualified to provide a ticketing system capable of facilitating online and in-person ticket fulfillment for concerts and special events held at the Birthplace of Country Museum, events hosted by BCM offsite throughout the year, and during BCM's annual three day music festival: Bristol Rhythm and Roots Reunion. Additionally, BCM requires the selected vendor to provide onsite assistance during the Festival. Refer to Appendix A for the Scope of Work for a description of the work to be performed. BCM intends to award a contract to a firm that will meet the qualification criteria and has successfully performed services on similar projects in the past. The successful firm will be required to enter into a contract with BCM for the services requested in this RFP within a reasonable time after award. A firm submitting a proposal must be prepared to use BCM's standard contract form rather than its own contract form. The contract will include terms appropriate for the scope of work.

About the Birthplace of Country Music

The Birthplace of Country Music is a 501(c) (3) nonprofit organization that seeks to perpetuate, promote, and celebrate Bristol's rich musical heritage; to educate and engage audiences worldwide regarding the history, impact, and legacy of the 1927 Bristol Session; and to create recognition, opportunities, and economic benefit for our local and regional communities.

BCM accomplishes this mission through its three primary branches (Birthplace of Country Music Museum, Bristol Rhythm & Roots Reunion, Radio Bristol), special projects and events, and a multitude of community and educational outreach programs. A brief description of the three primary entities follows:

- Birthplace of Country Music Museum – The Museum, an affiliate of the Smithsonian Institution, opened on August 1, 2014. The Museum is 24,000 sq. ft. on two levels. In addition to core exhibits, the Museum also houses a large space for special exhibits, a performance theater, a radio station, a learning center, and The Museum Store. The core exhibits are highly interactive and feature a number of video experiences as well as various text panels and artifacts relating to the 1927 Bristol Sessions and other aspects of Bristol's musical legacy. The performance theater is a 96 seat "acoustically perfect" venue where BCM hosts events weekly. The Museum has received numerous awards, including the highest awards in its state organizations, and has been recognized for Leadership in History by the American Association of State and Local History.
- Bristol Rhythm & Roots Reunion – The annual music festival began in 2001 and has been a part of BCM since December 2012. While BCM produces the festival, it is made possible by the support of volunteer committees, hundreds of individual volunteers, numerous community organizations and various departments of the two cities. A 2015 economic impact study showed that visitors to the Festival from outside the region had a \$16.1 million impact on the region. The Festival hosts over 100 bands on up to 18 stages in downtown Bristol, typically the second weekend in September. Each year the festival sells between 6,000 and 10,000 wristbands but has more than 45,000 attendees (this number includes staff, volunteers, sponsors, security, etc.) all of which require a wristband (or lanyard identification) to enter the festival "footprint". In addition, the Festival accepts approximately 100 food and craft vendors to sell their products on



the footprint of the event each year. Among its many accolades, the Festival has been named as one of Rolling Stone's "Top 20 Tours and Festivals", and has won a Grand Pinnacle Award from the International Festival and Events Association.

Radio Bristol – The station went live broadcasting from the Museum on August 27, 2015. Radio Bristol features a low power FM channel, three channels streaming different but related genres of music, and one channel streaming video. Streaming stations can be accessed online or using the Radio Bristol App on mobile devices. Radio Bristol is garnering attention from radio, cultural, and business organizations for its unique and innovative approach to history, music, and media. The station has listeners throughout the United States and in more than 140 countries. One major monthly ticketed event hosted by BCM is Radio Bristol's *Farm and Fun Time*. *Farm and Fun Time* is a live show produced in the BCM performance theater and harkens back to the days of classic live radio. It features today's top traditional country, bluegrass and old-time artists and is now syndicated to three PBS markets – Blue Ridge PBS, East Tennessee PBS, and PBS North Carolina, reaching nearly 20 million viewers across the coverage area in five states, with plans for expansion to new PBS markets in the future.

Independently, each of these branches strives for excellence in bringing the arts to wide audiences. Together, the entities interact synergistically through collaboration, mutual support, and the ability to bring innovative thinking to important arts programming. The result is fulfillment of the BCM Mission and progress toward its Vision.

Notice to Prospective Contractors

Prospective contractors should carefully review this solicitation for defects and questionable or objectionable matter. Comments concerning defects and questionable or objectionable matter must be made to the Project Manager at the e-mail address on the cover page and must be received prior to the deadline for written questions also shown on the cover page. Questions concerning the specifications must be posed through the same e-mail address. Any questions submitted in response to this RFP in any other way (including telephone) are not acceptable. The date limitation for posing questions will permit BCM to issue any necessary corrections and/or addenda to this RFP in time for all prospective contractors to react by adjusting, if needed, their proposals. Prospective contractors are required to make all inquiries concerning this RFP via e-mail to the Project Manager. A summary of all questions from prospective contractors and responses to those questions will be posted to BCM's website, also identified on the cover page. It is the prospective contractor's responsibility to ensure that all addenda have been reviewed and, if need be, signed and returned or noted in the proposal.

Prospective contractors are prohibited from communicating directly with any BCM employee except as specified in this RFP, and no BCM employee or representative other than the Project Manager is authorized to provide any information or respond to any question or inquiry concerning this RFP. Prospective contractors may contact the Project Manager solely via e-mail.

The Project Manager may provide reasonable accommodations, including the provision of informational material in an alternative format, for qualified prospective contractors with a disability. Prospective contractors requiring accommodation shall submit requests in writing, with supporting documentation justifying the accommodation, to the Project Manager. The Project Manager reserves the right to grant or reject any request for accommodation.



Proposals will be treated confidentially until the contract is either awarded or recommended for award. Prospective contractors are advised that they should endeavor to submit responsive, error-free proposals since failure to do so might result in rejection of their proposal.

Prospective contractors that become aware of this RFP from the BCM website or from any source other than the Project Manager, and wish to assure receipt of any addenda or additional materials related to this RFP, should immediately contact the Project Manager and provide their contact information so that RFP addenda and other communications related to this procurement can be sent to them.

Receipt of sealed proposals for furnishing the services described herein is due no later than the date indicated on the RFP cover page. SEND ALL PROPOSALS DIRECTLY TO THE ADDRESS AS SHOWN ON THE COVER PAGE.

Scope of Work

The Scope of Work describes the work to be performed by the contractor and is contained in Appendix A – Scope of Work.

Proposal Evaluation Team

BCM's Proposal Evaluation Team consists of individuals approved by BCM to participate in the Ticketing System and Event Management Provider RFP proposal evaluation and final selection process. The Proposal Evaluation Team will consist of the following members: Director of Operations (also designated as Project Manager), Development & Group Tour Specialist, Managing Director, Director of Marketing, and Director of Administration.

Contractor Selection Process

The following is a general description of the process by which a contractor will be selected for award of a contract to perform the services described in this RFP:

1. Request for Proposals (RFP) is released to prospective contractors.
2. To help ensure that all prospective contractors are treated consistently during the selection process, all questions regarding this RFP, as well as BCM's responses to the questions, will be posted on BCM's website. A deadline for the receipt of written questions has been established (see the cover sheet of this RFP for deadline date). After issuance of an RFP by BCM and prior to the date and time for receipt of proposals, persons or entities who intend to respond to such RFP by submission of a competitive proposal may wish to pose questions, objections, or requests for information, and/or request clarification or for an interpretation regarding terms, provisions, or requirements of the RFP. In this event, prospective contractors shall not attempt to communicate with, in writing, electronically or orally with any BCM official or employee other than the Project Manager. The Project Manager may be reached at the e-mail address on the RFP cover page. Prospective contractors shall not contact any other BCM officials in an attempt to gather information regarding this RFP, or in an attempt to influence the BCM's consideration of its proposal. All inappropriate communications with BCM officials or employees will be forwarded to the Project Manager as well as the Proposal Evaluation Team. Inappropriate communications by a prospective contractor may, at the discretion of the Project Manager,



constitute grounds for disqualification of that prospective contractor's proposal. Alternatively, the proposal evaluation team may, at its discretion, consider such inappropriate communications when evaluating and scoring proposals.

3. Proposals are required in a sealed envelope or package from each prospective contractor. Each original proposal shall be signed and dated by an official authorized to bind the contractor. Unsigned proposals may be rejected. In addition to the paper copy of the proposal, prospective contractors shall submit one **complete and exact** copy of the technical proposal digitally via email. Prospective contractors shall make no other distribution of its proposal to other BCM officials or consultants. Each proposal page shall be numbered for ease of reference.
4. All proposals must be received by the BCM no later than the date and time specified on the cover sheet of this RFP.
5. Following the date and time when proposals are due, the envelope or package containing the proposals from each responding firm will be opened by BCM's Proposal Evaluation Team. **The opening of the proposals is not open to prospective contractors or the public.** Proposals are subject to change, clarification and negotiation following the receipt date; therefore, the proposals will be treated as confidential until the resultant contract is awarded or when a recommendation is made to award the contract.
6. BCM's Proposal Evaluation Team expects to take the following actions to determine the relative merits of the proposals that are submitted:
 - a. Review the proposals to determine whether they are responsive to the RFP and that they were submitted by responsible companies. Responsive proposals are those proposals that satisfactorily address all requirements specified in the RFP. Certain omissions or variances may be resolved through discussions to make the proposal responsive. An example of an omission or variance that could be resolved through discussions is a proposed period of performance that would not result in completion of the work within the required timeframe. Should discussion with the contractor result in an adjustment to the period of performance that will result in completion with the required timeframe, the proposal then may be deemed to be responsive. However, prospective contractors are urged to submit fully responsive proposals because nonresponsive proposals may be rejected. Responsible contractors are those possessing the management, technical, financial, equipment, and human resources available to ensure adequate performance of the work described in the solicitation.
 - b. If there are six or more responsive proposals from responsible companies, the Proposal Evaluation Team will review the proposals, according to the criteria included in this RFP and assign scores to each criterion using a color coded scheme with green being assigned to proposals that are among the best of the proposals, yellow for the average proposals, and red for the marginal proposals. This color-coded rating system will be used to narrow the number of proposals to three or fewer.
 - c. The three, or fewer, finalists will then be subjected to a more stringent evaluation that will require The Proposal Evaluation Team to rank each criterion. In the event that there are three proposals amongst the finalists for the ranked criteria, each team member will



- assign a 3 to the highest ranked proposal, 2 to the penultimate ranked proposal and 1 to the lowest ranked proposal. The Numerical Proposal Evaluation Criteria worksheet is shown in Appendix B.
- d. The Proposal Evaluation Team will then meet to discuss their rankings and the related rationale. Following this meeting, the team members may elect to modify their rankings based upon those discussions. The team members will then turn in their evaluation sheets.
 - e. Each Proposal Evaluation Team member's rankings will then be combined and averaged to provide a single score for each of the finalist prospective contractors.
 - f. The single combined scores will then be adjusted according to the weights assigned to the criterion to obtain combined weighted scores.
 - g. Final decisions may **not** be solely based on final numerical point scores.
7. At the option of the Proposal Evaluation Team, the evaluators may request oral presentations, discussions, or negotiations with any or all prospective contractors for the purpose of clarification or to amplify the materials presented in any part of the proposal, or make adjustments to the details of the proposals. The evaluators may also request best and final offers (BAFOs) from one or more prospective contractors. However, prospective contractors are cautioned that the evaluators are not required to request clarification or conduct negotiations and may award a contract based on the original proposal. Therefore, all proposals should be complete and reflect the contractor's most favorable terms.
8. Prospective contractors are cautioned that this is a request for proposals, not a request to contract, and BCM reserves the unqualified right to reject any and all proposals, for any reason at the sole discretion of BCM, when such rejection is deemed to be in the best interest of BCM.
9. BCM reserves the right to:
- a. Reject any or all submittals;
 - b. Request clarification of any submitted information;
 - c. Waive any informalities or irregularities in any proposal;
 - d. Not enter into any contract;
 - e. Not select any firm;
 - f. Cancel this process at any time;
 - g. Amend this process at any time;
 - h. Interview firms prior to award;
 - i. Enter into negotiations with one or more firms, or request a best and final offer (BAFO) or BAFOs;
 - j. Award more than one contract if it is in the best interests of BCM;
 - k. Issue similar solicitations in the future; or
 - l. Request additional information from prospective contractors.

Proposal Requirements

Proposals shall be prepared on 8 ½ X 11 paper; however, larger foldouts are acceptable for milestone charts and similar documentation. The font size shall be 10 point or larger.

Required Sections:



1. Title Page
 - a. A title page of the proposal must include company's name, website address, corporate address, and telephone number. Also include principal contact's name and email address.
2. Table of Contents
3. Executive Summary
 - a. Provide a high-level summary discussing your company's ability to perform the required duties.
4. Company Information
 - a. Description of company and core services
 - b. Organization capacity (staff size, location)
 - c. Years in business
 - d. Outline the company's strengths and distinguishing skills/capabilities as they relate to the required duties
 - e. Resumes of key team members who will work on the account
 - f. Three professional references
 - g. Statement about company's liability insurance and worker's compensation coverage
 - h. Indicate whether or not the contractor had any contract terminated for default in the past five years; if no such termination for default has been experienced by the prospective contractor in the past five years, this fact should be stated in this summary
 - i. Disclose any relevant conflicts of interest and/or pending lawsuits
5. Work Plan
 - a. Describe in detail how your company would carry out the responsibilities listed within the scope of work
 - b. Describe how your business would approach setting up a ticketing system with the Birthplace of Country Music; including meeting schedules, reporting, major milestones, training, and evaluations
 - c. Include schedule/timeline of deliverables, such as major milestones and beta testing timeline
 - d. Provide an overview of the reports available through the ticketing and event management system; including any customization of the reports and whether that is a function provided by the ticketing company upon request
 - e. Provide an overview of the financial reporting processes as related to sales and payouts; specifically as to how your company handles and organizes various fees
 - f. Provide an overview of backend coding and tracking conversions for marketing analytics and measurement
 - g. Provide an overview of how your ticketing company handles event cancellations and/or ticket refunding; including details on refund notifications, fees retained by ticketing system vs. fees returned to BCM
 - h. Provide any additional features available through your ticketing system or event management system that was not covered in RFP; include any cost or fees
6. Life Cycle Cost
 - a. Personnel costs (including job titles, hourly rates, and total hours)
 - b. Travel and subsistence expenses
 - c. Subcontractor costs (if any)



- d. Other costs (e.g., office expenses, wristbands, etc.) shall be identified by the nature of the costs
 - e. Schedule of fees for the ticketing requirements discussed in the Scope of Work
 - f. Not-to-Exceed price (A total Not-to-Exceed (NTE) price representing the maximum amount for all work to be performed by the contractor and any subcontractors must be clearly indicated under this heading.)
7. Statement of Authorization to Bid
- a. Must be signed by a principal of the responding company



Appendix A: Scope of Work

This section describes the work to be performed by the contractor.

Definitions

The list below defines certain words to ensure understanding and certain acronyms so those can be used for lengthy names and terms that appear repeatedly.

- Admission Tax- Tax imposed by the Commonwealth of VA towards admissions to any amusement or entertainment venue. Reporting the admission tax must be calculated and recorded separately from all other fees and taxes.

Timeline

- March 6, 2023- RFP is released
- March 27, 2023- Due date for receipt of questions regarding RFP
- April 17, 2023- Due date for sealed proposals
- May 29, 2023- New ticketing system contract is finalized and signed
- June 1, 2023- Former ticketing system is informed of changes
- August 1, 2023- New ticketing system is on boarded and staff training begins
- October 2, 2023- New ticketing system becomes Primary event management source
- October 9, 2023- Data collection from former ticketing system begins
- October 21, 2023- Contract ends with current ticketing system

Responsibilities

General

- Sell and process tickets and/or wristbands for all BCM events online, and in person at multiple locations including the BCM Administrative Office and BCM Museum
- Provide landing page for online ticket sales
 - Capture customer information including name, mailing address, email address
 - Include mailing and print-at-home delivery options
 - Process payments (Cash, Check, MasterCard, VISA, Discover, American Express) using BCM processing company
 - Provide check out process that is safe and secure but **does not** require passwords or logins to purchase a ticket
 - Process donations or roundup options during check out process
 - Send customizable purchase confirmation email to customer
 - Send customizable shipping confirmation email to customer
 - Provide backend coding and tracking conversions for marketing analytics and measurement
- Provide platform for Festival vendor application process
 - Create fillable vendor application form based on our needs
 - Provide a platform for vendor applicant's to submit form
 - Provide custom reporting of applicant information
 - Send acknowledgement email when an application is submitted
 - Send customizable acceptance or decline email
 - Process vendor payment online upon acceptance



Support

- Full onboarding training for BCM staff prior to use of the ticketing system
- Online/Phone support during the year, including after-hours and weekends
- In-person support during Festival weekend; support personnel will assist BCM with addressing issues at the multiple Festival tickets booths and entry/exit points

Hardware/Equipment

- Easy to use equipment for processing tickets/wristbands at multiple ticket booths and entry/exit points during the Festival (e.g. RFID scanners for wristbands, QR codes for print-at-home tickets)
- Additional equipment as necessarily for promotional events hosted by BCM throughout the year (e.g. Black Friday)

Marketing

- Gather patron data from ticket sales so that BCM Marketing Team can incorporate it into e-marketing and social media
- Improve patron ticket sales retention rate
- Ensure the online site is fully optimized, responsive, and mobile friendly
- Design a responsive and visually appealing website that will mimic BCM's branding
- Ensure the online site is customizable by BCM staff
- Provide Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) – Ticket platform will need to help us track key KPIs to ensure ticketing success:
 - Sales by ticket type (early bird, general admission, single days, VIPs)
 - Sales by marketing source (determine which marketing channels yield the most ticket buyers for the Festival)
 - Website conversion rate
 - E-Mail marketing conversion rates (opens, click throughs, and unsubscribe rate) – BCM uses MailChimp as our email marketing platform
 - Attendance rate – number of people who bought or were issued tickets vs. had how many wristbands were scanned at the Festival; Also, the number of days a ticket holder attended festival
 - Total ticket revenue
 - New vs. returning attendees (current year vs. past year)

Analytics and Reporting

- Ensure reports can be pulled quickly and easily
- Ensure reports have online viewing, sorting, and exporting capabilities
- Provide detailed ticket sales, marketing, and financial reports that includes at a minimum:
 - Ticket Sales
 - Daily ticket sales report for event (breakout by ticket type)
 - Event Manifest
 - Gross Sales
 - Sales by Date Range
 - Marketing
 - Sales by ticket type
 - Sales by marketing source
 - Website conversion rates



- Email marketing conversion rates
- Attendance Rate
- Total Ticket Revenue
- New vs. Returning Attendees
- Finance
 - Sales by payout for month delineating by category (fees included)
 - Admissions tax by month
 - Event specific sales report delineating between paid, complimentary, and payment plan tickets sold
 - All in ticketing (including fee breakout)

Deliverables

- Ticket landing page
- Accurate and sales repo
- Support contacts
- Vendor application form platform

Expected Outcomes

- Smooth, organized, and timely ticket sales from start to finish
- Regular communication and timely response when assistance is needed
- Accurate, useful, and transparent reporting
- User-friendly experience for ticket purchasers

Administration

- Undergo required annual evaluation: Annual performance evaluations conducted by the Proposal Evaluation Team



Appendix B: Numerical Proposal Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated according to the criteria indicated below.

EVALUATION				
Criteria	Possible Points	Points Awarded	Multiplier	Total Points
1. Cost	0 - 10		30%	
2. Reporting Capabilities	0 - 10		15%	
3. Ticketing Process	0 - 10		15%	
4. Meet RFP Guidelines	0 - 10		20%	
5. Overall Impression	0 - 10		20%	