

**Appalachian Regional Commission
Request for Proposals**

Development of a Tourist-Oriented Mapguide of Appalachia

**Proposals are due on or before the close of business
September 12, 2012**

Appalachian Regional Commission
1666 Connecticut Ave., NW, Suite 700
Washington, DC 20009-1068

Attention: Kostas Skordas, Regional Planning and Research
kskordas@arc.gov
202-884-7720

Appalachian Regional Commission Request for Proposals

Development of a Tourist-Oriented Mapguide of Appalachia

I. OVERVIEW

The Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) invites proposals from professional design firms, tourism consulting companies, or other organizations to develop and produce a tourist-oriented mapguide highlighting distinctive food destinations throughout Appalachia. The purpose is to increase tourism to the Appalachian Region by showcasing the breadth and depth of its food heritage and agritourism offerings. Examples of destinations and activities to be featured on the mapguide include local farms and agritourism operations; farm-to-table restaurants and distinctive culinary destinations; farmers markets and other retail outlets selling locally raised/grown products; and food-related events and festivals.

The scope of work for this project includes the following activities:

- Develop and implement an online system for gathering content for the mapguide via user-submitted nominations.
- Conduct a review of all submitted nominations to verify accuracy and evaluate appropriateness, and compile a list of tourism sites and activities recommended for inclusion on the mapguide. After final selection of sites and activities for the mapguide, write descriptive text for each; and, as needed, obtain photographic images of the sites.
- Design a mapguide of Appalachia, using compelling design elements and a “look and feel” that will appeal to tourists. The mapguide will include approximately 200-250 icons and symbols throughout the Appalachian Region representing food-related destinations and activities. It will also include state boundaries, topographical information, key transportation networks, major cities and towns, and key geographical features as needed to orient travelers. If requested, ARC can provide vendor with a base map that includes geographic information.
- Write, develop and produce the final product: an approximately 20” x 28” double-sided, tourist-oriented, illustrated map that folds to approximately 7 ½” x 10.” The mapguide will be printed and distributed as an insert in *American Heritage* magazine and may also be distributed as a standalone printed piece to targeted travelers. Note that vendor is not responsible for a large-run printing of the final product. Final deliverables include files prepped for offset printing, a PDF of the final product, and 25 full-size, high-quality printed and folded copies of the mapguide.

Note that some content featured on the printed mapguide (selected sites, text, and photographs) will be used to update www.visitappalachia.com as a companion Web site to the mapguide, through a separate contract outside of the scope of work of this RFP.

This project requires extensive collaboration with ARC project staff and the ARC Tourism Advisory Council, a group that includes the ARC Federal Co-Chair and 13 tourism experts from the Appalachian states. Vendor will be required to attend one project planning meeting and three project review and discussion meetings with ARC staff and the ARC Tourism

Advisory Council in Washington, D.C. Vendor will be required to provide at least ten full-size printed copies of the mapguide for each review meeting.

ARC anticipates selecting one vendor to guide, develop, and complete the final mapguide over the course of the next 12-14 months, with a target completion date of December 2013, for release in early 2014.

II. BACKGROUND

Appalachian Regional Commission

The Appalachian Region, as defined in ARC's authorizing legislation, is a 205,000-square-mile region that follows the spine of the Appalachian Mountains from southern New York to northern Mississippi. It includes all of West Virginia and parts of 12 other states: Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, Mississippi, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia. Forty-two percent of the Region's population is rural, compared with 20 percent of the national population.

ARC is a regional economic development agency representing a unique partnership of federal, state, and local government. The Commission is composed of the governors of the 13 Appalachian states and a federal co-chair, who is appointed by the president. Grassroots participation is provided through multi-county local development districts with boards made up of elected officials and other public and private local leaders. Each year, Congress appropriates funds that ARC allocates among the Appalachian states. The governors, consulting with local development districts, draw up state Appalachian development plans. Once those plans meet final approval, the funds are released to implement ARC projects that are consistent with the state plan. The broad objective of these projects is to provide the basic building blocks that enable Appalachian communities to create opportunities for self-sustaining economic development and improved quality of life. For more information on ARC, please visit www.arc.gov.

ARC's Tourism Development Programs

Appalachia's natural, cultural, structural, and leadership resources play a critical role in building a strong and sustainable economy in the Appalachian Region. Within this context, tourism development is often an important part of a community's strategy for building a sustainable economic future. Many Appalachian communities have developed successful tourism strategies based on the Region's cultural heritage, history, and natural beauty.

Activities under tourism development include building and rehabilitating facilities and infrastructure to make the Appalachian Region more accessible and attractive to visitors; training artists and artisans to improve their business skills; developing strategic plans and feasibility studies to help communities maximize the potential of their cultural assets; and investing in products and technologies that create better experiences for travelers. While specific projects have specific and community-based goals, all contribute to the overall impact of tourism as a key component in building long-term economic health in Appalachia. In 2002, ARC formed an advisory council to help leverage regional collaboration to increase tourism in the Appalachian Region. The ARC Tourism Advisory Council works to identify and conduct activities that add value to Appalachian states, attract multiple partners, and

economically benefit Appalachian communities. Recent successful activities have included heritage promotion campaigns with partners such as the National Geographic Society and American Heritage Publishing. For more information about ARC's Tourism Development programs and its Tourism Council see www.arc.gov/tourism.

ARC's Role in Local Food Systems

In the spring of 2009, ARC convened the editors of the award-winning *Encyclopedia of Appalachia* for a series of conversations to identify emerging assets and think creatively about how these assets might best be used for economic development and enhanced quality of life in the Appalachian Region. One area that received enthusiastic attention was Appalachia's agricultural heritage and local food economy. Identified assets in Appalachia included an on-going tradition of small farming and home gardening; the region's vast food diversity, knowledge of seed saving and cultivation of heirloom varieties of local foods; an emerging infrastructure of farmers markets, food processing facilities, shared-use kitchen incubators, and community canneries; a growing trend of chefs using locally grown ingredients in their menu offerings; a rich heritage of culinary foodways and of craft, music, storytelling, literature, and custom related to food; and the presence of some of the nation's most important leadership in the sustainable, local foods movement.

This conversation with the editors led ARC to launch an exhaustive assessment of food system development in the 13 states and 420 counties of the Appalachian Region. The assessment identified numerous organizations and leaders involved in the local food movement throughout Appalachia, examined the depth and breadth of activity in various parts of the Region, synthesized best practices and available resources, and identified the needs to be addressed in order to support this growing sector of the economy. The assessment revealed a vigorous and growing regional food economy with the potential to create increased employment opportunities, improve economic vitality and quality of life, and become a sustainable and healthy part of Appalachia's future economic and community development.

To help expand the role of food assets in local economic development in Appalachia, ARC in April 2012 hosted a forum on local food systems and sustainable agriculture in Asheville, North Carolina. The forum provided an opportunity for community leaders; economic development officials; farmers; food producers, processors, and distributors; and public and private funding partners to share ideas and learn practical ways local food systems can increase employment opportunities, spark entrepreneurial ventures, and build local wealth in Appalachian communities.

The fast-growing interest and demand from consumers for distinctive local food destinations provides an opportunity to showcase the abundance and diversity of Appalachia's food heritage as part of a broader tourism program that attracts national and international visitors. The Region's food assets provide a taste of authentic local culture and heritage that today's travelers seek. Promoting these varied food and farm destinations helps local communities attract visitors, foster destination stewardship, diversify their economies, and create jobs in rural areas. For more information on ARC's role in local food systems, including a copy of the report "Assessing the Landscape of Local Food in Appalachia," see www.arc.gov/localfood.

III. SCOPE OF WORK

The goal is to produce a tourist-oriented mapguide featuring distinctive and compelling food and farm destinations within the Appalachian Region that can be used to increase tourism to Appalachia and to promote agritourism and local food assets as an economic development strategy for communities.

The mapguide is intended to showcase destinations that highlight Appalachia's significant and ongoing contributions to America's culinary heritage and agricultural traditions. This broad-based theme offers the opportunity to celebrate these distinctive destinations as engaging experiences of interest to a number of audiences. The vendor will work closely with ARC staff to develop a final product that is culturally appropriate, visually appealing, and highly compelling to travelers. ARC will encourage the selected vendor to be creative in project design and production.

Task 1: Planning Meeting

Vendor will attend a meeting with ARC staff to discuss project goals, confirm roles, establish communication flows, and agree upon timelines for each task and benchmarks for progress.

Task 2: Gathering Content.

In collaboration with ARC and the ARC Tourism Advisory Council, vendor will determine basic criteria for selecting the sites and events that best reflect the "Appalachian food heritage" theme. This will result in a baseline understanding of principles for soliciting and evaluating assets and activities for inclusion in the final product.

Vendor will then develop and implement an online system for collecting nominations of sites and events to be included in the mapguide. Vendor should propose an effective process and timeline for soliciting, researching, and evaluating nominations received. Content gathering should be done electronically for efficiency and ease of outreach. Vendor may select other sources (research documents, tourism web sites, local food organizations) from which to supplement submitted nominations.

Once nominations are received, vendor will conduct an initial review for accuracy and appropriateness for inclusion on the mapguide. This may require additional guidance from ARC staff and the ARC Tourism Advisory Council to clarify and/or enhance nominations from each Appalachian state. Vendor must research and assess the nominations submitted and develop a recommended list of tourism sites and activities for inclusion on the mapguide. This will result in a prioritized list of 200-250 food destinations to showcase on the mapguide. Care should be taken to recommend sites throughout the entire Appalachian Region, considering the map size and scale.

Once sites are selected for the map, the vendor will write text for each site in a compelling style best suited to attract tourists to that destination.

ARC and the ARC Tourism Council will provide a limited number of food and agriculture-related photographs and images for possible inclusion in the mapguide. However, additional photographs and images will most likely be needed. It is the responsibility of the selected

vendor to obtain compelling images of sites and events where necessary for use in the mapguide.

Note that the content of the print map will be used to update the tourism Web site www.visitappalachia.com. The selected vendor is not responsible for updating this site as part of this RFP.

Task 3: Design

Vendor will develop three design concepts that best enhance the theme of the guide, each of which will have a different “look and feel.” The design concepts are to include both photos and text, but are for design direction only and are not required to include actual site photos and information. Vendor will present the three design concepts to ARC staff and state representatives for selection of the final design concept before proceeding to the next task. Modifications to the selected design concept may be requested by ARC.

Task 3: Production

Using the design concept approved by ARC and its partners, vendor will create a customized map of Appalachia.

The mapguide will include approximately 200-250 icons and symbols and approximately 15-20 compelling photographs (farms, food, restaurants, markets, scenic landscapes, etc.) throughout the Appalachian Region meant to engage and interest the general traveler. It will also include state boundaries, topographical information, key transportation networks, major cities and towns, and key geographical features as needed to orient travelers. If requested, ARC can provide vendor with a base map that includes geographic information.

It is anticipated that up to three rounds of proofs will be required during this phase, and three meetings with ARC staff and the ARC Tourism Council to discuss map revisions and comments. Vendor should anticipate supplying up to 10 full-size printed color proofs of the map for each of these meetings.

Task 4: Final Deliverables

Once final proof is approved, vendor will create final files for use in offset printing. These files should be layered Adobe Illustrator files. Vendor must also provide a high-resolution Adobe PDF file of the mapguide. Note that vendor is not responsible for a large-run printing of the mapguide. However, at the conclusion of the contract, vendor must provide 25 high-quality folded printed mapguides for preliminary distribution. In addition, vendor must provide print management for offset printed maps, including writing print specifications and recommending printers.

As currently envisioned, the final mapguide will be an approximately 20” x 28” double-sided, tourist-oriented, illustrated map that folds to approximately 7 ½” x 10.” The mapguide will be inserted in the Spring 2014 issue of *American Heritage* magazine and will also be distributed individually to targeted consumers. It is anticipated that up to 500,000 copies of the map will ultimately be printed and distributed to travelers. Final content of the mapguide (sites, activities, text, photographs) may be used in other ARC print and online projects.

IV. TIMING AND RESOURCES

ARC expects the selected vendor to complete the final product over the course of the contract period (12-14 months).

The mapguide will be developed with considerable input from ARC representatives, including ARC staff and the ARC Tourism Advisory Council. This will require four in-person meetings at ARC's offices in Washington, DC. Meetings will be held during the day (10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.) to avoid overnight travel and related costs. Proposals should discuss the organization's resources and ability to implement the project within the given time frame.

V. COPYRIGHTS

Please note that ARC reserves a royalty-free, nonexclusive, and irrevocable license to reproduce, publish or otherwise use, and to authorize others to use, for federal government purposes, any work developed under this contract.

VI. PROPOSAL CONTENTS

The contents of the proposal should include the following items:

1. Statement of Work

Detail an approach to be used to accomplish tasks, achieve the performance targets, and to address issues raised in this RFP. Identify any likely difficulties anticipated in the completion of this undertaking and describe a plan for overcoming them. If any work in connection with the project is to be performed by any subcontractor, the subcontractor must be identified and its efforts described as a part of the statement of work.

2. Key Personnel

Profile the persons who will have responsibility for developing, designing and producing the mapguide and include their resumes (and, in the case of graphic designers, portfolio samples) in the proposal. Focus on their skills, knowledge, and relevant experience. Provide a staffing plan and schedule that describes the estimated time commitment of key personnel needed to implement the project. The selected vendor will be required to commit the services of those persons identified in the proposal. *ARC staff must approve any changes in key personnel, which includes subcontractors.*

4. Relevant Prior Experience

Provide examples of the three most similar projects undertaken by the applicant's organization and the extent to which performance goals were stated and achieved. Provide associated organization names, addresses, names of contact persons, and telephone numbers for reference.

5. Contractual Requirements

Identify any special contractual requirements that the applicant wants included in the contract.

6. Cost Proposal

Specify project costs on the basis of milestones and target accomplishments. Please include both hourly and daily contract rates of key personnel. If relevant, include requisite overhead

costs related to development and production of the mapguide. Additional cost-related information may be required from vendors prior to selection of winning bid.

VII. PROJECT BUDGET

The Commission anticipates that the project budget required for this activity is up to **\$100K**. The contract awarded for this project will be a **FIRM FIXED-PRICE CONTRACT** for specifications in this RFP. However, if work beyond the scope of this RFP is requested by ARC, it will be paid based on hourly rates for writing, design, production and creative services as specified in the proposal.

VIII. EVALUATION OF PROPOSALS

A review panel consisting of ARC staff and its partners will be convened to evaluate proposals based on the following key criteria:

- Demonstrated skills and successful track record designing and producing consumer-oriented tourist maps and/or related media tools
- Knowledge of and relevant work experience in illustrated mapping and graphic design
- Cost-effectiveness of proposal
- Skills and experience working with multiple partners on one project
- Quality of previous work
- Responsiveness and flexibility of vendor

Please submit up to three references from previous clients as appropriate.

IX. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

Submit one original and three hard copies of your proposal to:

Kostas Skordas, Regional Planner
Regional Planning and Research Division
Appalachian Regional Commission
1666 Connecticut Avenue, NW; Suite 700
Washington, DC, 20009-1068
kskordas@arc.gov

Proposals are due at ARC's offices on or before **close of business September 12, 2012**.

E-mail submissions are acceptable, but must be received no later than RFP deadline at kskordas@arc.gov. Attachments should be no larger than 10 MB.

After proposals are reviewed, finalists may be invited for interviews (either in person or via phone) before a selection committee. ARC estimates selecting the winning bid within two weeks of the RFP deadline.

For more information on this RFP, please contact Kostas Skordas at 202-884-7720 or kskordas@arc.gov.