



Creative Campaign Development & Media Buy RFP

TIMELINE

Deadline to Submit Questions and Intent to Respond	July 1, 2026
Deadline to Submit Proposals	July 24, 2026
Selected Agency Presentations	August/September 2026

APPENDICES

- Appendix A: Brand Playbook
- Appendix B: List of available research

Inquiries/questions should be sent to Rafael Hernandez at rafael@visitcumberlandvalley.com or (717) 240.7194.

CAEDC OVERVIEW

Cumberland Area Economic Development Corporation (CAEDC), a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation, was founded in 2005 by the Cumberland County Board of Commissioners. CAEDC is the County's authorized agency charged with leveraging and promoting Cumberland Valley's economic development and tourism assets to drive growth, create jobs and improve the quality of life.

The Cumberland Valley Visitors Bureau (CVVB) is the tourism arm of CAEDC. CVVB is the official destination marketing organization of Cumberland Valley, responsible for marketing the area to visitors and assisting local businesses with tourism development. CAEDC and CVVB work together to advance the development of Cumberland Valley.

Destination Marketing - CAEDC is tasked with marketing Cumberland Valley, Pennsylvania ("Cumberland Valley") as a travel destination, attracting visitors to the area, enhancing the visitors' experience, and encouraging overnight stays.

Economic Development - CAEDC acts as a catalyst to support business development, retention, and expansion in Cumberland County PA.

1.0 CUMBERLAND VALLEY BRAND POSITIONING

Cumberland Valley, PA is where the mid-Atlantic comes to breathe. Nestled between South Mountain and the Blue Ridge, our region offers an outdoor recreation scene that rivals destinations twice our size: world-class fly fishing, hiking and cycling trails, including the mid-point of the Appalachian Trail, water recreation, and open landscapes that feel increasingly rare.

But Cumberland Valley isn't just the outdoors. We're home to a rich layering of history and culture, from colonial-era landmarks to vibrant arts communities, that gives visitors something to discover around every corner. And our food and beverage scene, anchored by local farms, craft breweries, and independent restaurants, reflects a region that takes genuine pride in what it produces.

What ties it all together is a philosophy we call Recreational Recovery. Quality over quantity. We're not competing with the big city for nightlife or luxury. We're offering something harder to find: a real connection to nature, to neighbors, and to a pace of life that reminds people what they've been missing, and no shortage of authentic stories to tell.

2.0 PROJECT OVERVIEW

CAEDC is seeking the professional services of a single marketing agency of record (AOR) to develop, implement, and evaluate a comprehensive advertising program to promote Cumberland Valley as a destination to our leisure audiences (see section 3.0). It is preferred to have an agency with previous destination marketing experience. This RFP is to identify the most qualified agency to carry out all aspects of Cumberland Valley's destination marketing advertising, including creative campaign development, media buying, planning, and management. The agency will be asked to support CAEDC-initiated earned media and influencer marketing efforts.

Cumberland Valley competes in a crowded and competitive regional destination landscape. CAEDC is looking for an agency that can develop a creative approach that is distinctly ours, one that a viewer could identify without seeing our name, and that resists the temptation to look and sound like every other destination marketing organization in the mid-Atlantic region.

While building brand awareness is foundational to our strategy, CAEDC's goal is to move prospective visitors through the full funnel from awareness to active consideration and ultimately to conversion; and our agency partner should bring demonstrated experience doing the same.

This RFP is open to agencies of all sizes and locations, with preference given to PA-based agencies. Please note

that the scope is limited to destination marketing services for the CVVB and does not extend to CAEDC's other service areas.

CAEDC reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, waive informalities, modify or cancel the RFP, negotiate with one or more applicants, and is not obligated to award based on the lowest cost.

3.0 LEISURE AUDIENCES

This RFP was prompted out of a need to attract more primary leisure visitors. Currently, CVVB generally handles secondary and tertiary leisure audiences in-house, as well as all business audiences, and would look to the AOR to handle the primary audiences. However, there may be times when the AOR will be asked to assist with campaigns targeting secondary audiences.

Leisure	Type of Leisure Visitor	CAEDC Action
Primary	The Drive-Market Family Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Washington DC, Baltimore	Build brand awareness and engagement; driving consumer planning activity and overnight stays.
	The Drive-Market Couple Without Kids Primarily older empty nesters from Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Washington DC, Baltimore	
Secondary	Anyway Travelers Older Millennials, Gen X and Baby Boomers, ages 34-60, coming to Cumberland Valley for leisure (mostly visiting friends and family) or business. These are not first-time visitors.	Encourage visitors to break out of their usual activities and explore/try something new in the Valley, extending their stay.
	Nearby Travelers Out-of-market travelers visiting from our eight-county region.	Build brand awareness and engagement; encourage an experience in Cumberland Valley.
	Destination Sales a. Youth Sports Tournaments b. Small Market Meetings of 250 or less attendees	Increase bookings to our hotels through swim and other youth sport tournaments. Increase bookings to our hotels through SMERF meetings from regional groups and associations.
Tertiary	Local Stakeholder	Inform residents of things to do so they can act as brand ambassadors when speaking with visitors or visiting friends and family.
	Local Resident	

4.0 SCOPE OF WORK

4.1 Media Planning, Buying and Optimizing – Strategy development, scheduling, planning, placing, monitoring, measuring and optimizing of comprehensive media schedules, which are currently comprised of digital, OOH, OTT, print and other miscellaneous communication channels. AOR will need to determine the most effective way to target primary audiences using supplied research and branding materials (see Appendix A for brand materials and Appendix B for available reports). Monthly digital reporting, analysis and optimization will be required. AOR must demonstrate experience with

negotiating, purchasing, designing and trafficking media buys in print, social, outdoor and online, giving examples of campaigns as evidence.

Special Considerations:

- AOR will be asked to review Primary Audience Geographies to determine if changes in target-markets should be made.
- SEM and SEO contracts are already in place and are handled outside of this RFP.
- We are often presented with cooperative advertising opportunities from partners. If the opportunity becomes available, AOR will need to evaluate, plan and manage the budget for the cooperative advertising.

4.2 Creative Campaign Development and Production of Advertising Materials - Using and building on our current brand, AOR will need to develop creative paid and earned campaigns for the primary audience. The campaign is expected to have a shelf life of three years, with optimizations made each year based on the past year's results. As needed, the AOR should plan to collect campaign assets during this span to support the campaign, including travel to designated areas in Cumberland Valley to set up, direct, and shoot high quality photography and videography, as well as assist in talent scouting.

4.3 Competitive Analysis - Annually audit the competitive set to determine changes in strategy, tactics and consumer interest and if and how it changes our strategy.

4.4 Performance Outcomes - CAEDC measures success across the full visitor journey: awareness (ad reach, impressions, brand recall), consideration (website sessions, newsletter sign-ups, experience trail enrollments), and conversion (overnight visitation, advertising attribution to visitor activity). Agencies should demonstrate in their proposal how their recommended strategy would move these metrics and what reporting and benchmarking methods they would use to track progress.

4.5 Additional Considerations - CAEDC presents additional opportunities for applicants to consider and address as part of their proposal.

- **Target Geography Expansion** - Using available research and their own market knowledge, applicants should assess whether our current primary drive markets (Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Washington DC, Baltimore) remain the strongest opportunity, and/or whether emerging markets warrant consideration and activation.
- **Audience Segmentation and Message Differentiation** - While our primary audiences share geographic proximity, they differ meaningfully in motivations, travel behaviors, and media consumption. Applicants should propose how creative and messaging would be tailored across audience segments rather than relying on a single executional approach across all primary audiences. Applicants should provide evidence from past campaigns where audience segmentation meaningfully informed both creative and channel strategy.

4.6 Vendor Vetting - In instances where highly specialized production (e.g., large-scale film shoots) is required beyond internal agency capabilities, the AOR will vet and recommend local production contractors to ensure quality, budget and brand alignment. All subcontractors shall be the sole responsibility of the Applicant.

4.7 Intellectual Property - Upon payment in full, all final creative assets, photography, videography, advertising materials, and related work-product developed specifically for CAEDC under this engagement shall become the property of CAEDC, subject to any third-party licensing restrictions disclosed in advance by the AOR.

5.0 REFERENCES & CASE STUDIES

Customer References:

- a. Description of experience in the tourism industry.

- b. Current or recent creative and advertising case studies – preferably within the tourism industry.
- c. References for at least two current clients and two past clients the firm has served within the last two years, preferably tourism accounts.
- d. Identification of the proposed account team, including roles, responsibilities, relevant experience, and the percentage of time each team member is expected to devote to the account.

6.0 BUDGET

Please provide pricing for year one. Multi-year fee structures and any anticipated annual adjustments may be addressed in your proposal narrative or during presentations. Agency fees should be quoted as fixed costs. Third-party expenses (travel, production vendors, talent, etc.) will be reimbursed at cost with prior written approval from CAEDC. If your price excludes certain fees or charges, you must provide a detailed list of excluded fees with a complete explanation of the nature of those fees. For media planning and buying services, applicants must identify whether media purchases are billed at net cost or include agency compensation and disclose any commissions, markups, rebates, incentives, value-added placements, or other compensation received from media vendors. Applicants will not be reimbursed for any costs incurred in preparing a proposal, interviews, presentations, travel and negotiations.

Agencies submitting an intent to respond may request supporting research and materials, including market overview, estimated economic impact data, current media plans, and creative, by contacting Rafael Hernandez at rafael@visitcumberlandvalley.com by the intent to respond deadline.

List pricing separately for:

1. Account Management
2. Strategic Planning/Annual Competitive Analysis
3. Campaign Development
4. Campaign Production
5. Earned Media (strategy only; pitching handled by CAEDC team)
6. Media Planning (identify if you work off a retainer or commission model)
7. Media Buy
8. Specialty Projects
9. Any additional costs, onboarding, third party expenses, travel, etc.

7.0 CONTRACT TERMS & LENGTH OF CONTRACT

CAEDC will negotiate contract terms upon selection. All contracts are subject to review by the staff, board, and legal counsel, and a project will be awarded upon signing of an agreement or contract, which outlines terms, scope, budget and other necessary items.

The anticipated length of the contract is up to three years, with customary provisions for early termination based on performance, including that either party may terminate the agreement upon thirty (30) days' written notice, subject to completion and payment of approved work in progress. The initial contract may be extended beyond the original contract period on a year-to-year basis.

This RFP, proposal, submission, selection or negotiations do not create a binding contract until a written agreement is fully executed.

8.0 EVALUATION CRITERIA

Criterion	Weight
Creative approach and strategic thinking	30%
Proposed budget and cost structure	20%
Relevant tourism/destination marketing experience	20%
References and case studies	15%
Agency team qualifications	10%
Geographical proximity to Cumberland County, PA (Pennsylvania-based agencies preferred; familiarity with the Cumberland Valley region a plus)	5%

9.0 REQUIREMENTS

Agencies wishing to submit a proposal are encouraged to submit a notice of intent to respond by July 1, 2026. Submission of intent to respond will provide access to supplemental research materials, if requested, and ensure agencies receive responses to all submitted questions.

Please e-mail the proposal to rafael@visitcumberlandvalley.com **and** mail six (6) copies of the proposals to:

CAEDC, Attn: Rafael Hernandez, 230 S. Sporting Hill Rd, Ste 100 Mechanicsburg, PA 17050

Proposals should be no more than 50 pages in length.

Digital copies should be received by email no later than 1:00pm EST July 24, 2026.

Printed copies should be received by mail no later than July 24, 2026.

CUMBERLAND VALLEY

PENNSYLVANIA

Inventory of Research

The following research has been undertaken in order to understand audiences, competitors, stakeholder interests and market performance for the destination.

CURRENT RESEARCH		
Research Program	Vendor	Frequency
Smith Travel Research – Multi Segment Report	Smith Travel Research (STR)	Monthly, since 2006
VRBO & Air BnB Lodging Data	AirDNA	Monthly
Device data – trips, visitor days, points of interest, origin markets, and more	Datafy	On-demand, since 2018
Economic Impact of Tourism in PA (2024)	Tourism Economics/DCED	Annual

PAST RESEARCH		
Research Program	Vendor	Frequency
Consumer Awareness and Perception Study <i>Consumer awareness, visitation and perceptions (Brand Print)</i>	Brand Revolt, 2023	One-time
Brand Lift Study	Brand Revolt, 2025	One-time