

## **REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL**

### **Event Marketing and Public Relations**

The 2023 NCAA Men's Final Four Houston Local Organizing Committee is interested in receiving proposals from marketing and public relations firms for the purposes of evaluating the potential hiring of an agency to assist with the media buys and public relations of the 2023 NCAA Men's Final Four fan and community events.

*\*\*Please note that we the primary objectives are to move the local public to attend the Men's Final Four ancillary and community events listed below.*

#### **OBJECTIVES:**

The agency will be responsible for planning, leading and coordinating all media buys and public relations efforts for the primary fan events surrounding the Final Four, specifically FanFest presented by Capital One, March Madness Music Festival, Final Four Friday presented by Reese's, as well as other official youth oriented events and community service initiatives [e.g. Read to the Final Four, The Dribble presented by Buick, etc]. The agency will provide a detailed/fully comprehensive advertising and PR plan that the NCAA and HLOC can use to engage Houstonians and surrounding regions and motivate them to attend or participate in these various events and initiatives, as well as the estimated 60,000 out-of-town visitors.

Please include your plan on how to receive the most impressions from the right audience at the best cost and the strategy behind the media buy campaign. Share in detail the most effective ways to reach audiences for the 2023 Men's Ancillary and Community events and how the media buy will support the strategy.

PR coordination should be fully integrated into the media buy plan and should include detailed monitoring and reporting (monthly status reports with story clips, sound bites and video footage), solid local media relationships, the development and execution of ideas/stories that generate interest in the Final Four and its various activities/events, the writing of news releases and media alerts, coordination of interviews with HLOC executive team and onsite coordination of the media at the various events for the Final Four.

The agency or agencies must be willing to work within the HLOC structure, reporting to the Marketing Manager and Vice President of External Operations as well as the assigned NCAA staff liaison, becoming a part of the marketing committee (made up of local marketing experts who volunteer their time), facilitate ideas brought forward by the committee members, utilizing committee member relationships to further the marketing and PR for the event. The agency should be able to view and work with the committee as an extension of PR efforts.

In your proposal, please include such information as:

- Proposed schedule for monthly, bi-weekly updates on plans and initiatives as well as what the structure will be with regards to agency staffing, reporting and communicating with the NCAA and HLOC.
- All PR plans and initiatives (paid, unpaid, viral/grassroots) as well as media buys, the strategy behind them understanding that these plans and initiatives must be reviewed and approved in advance by the NCAA/HLOC (and/or marketing committee).
- How your agency can ensure negotiating the most favorable rates for the NCAA/HLOC. Please provide us with your annual book of business and how you will be able to leverage and secure the most favorable ad/media rates when placing media buys through the year or during our buying season.
- Grassroots marketing ideas that work alongside the media buys to promote the fan and community events via other local events as well as relationships your agency may be able to bring as potential partners in marketing efforts.
- Outline your company's approach to staff commitments for press and promotional events leading up to and during the Final Four. This would include overseeing any live media stand ups and controlled media access at Fan Fest, March Madness Music Festival, Read to the Final Four, The Dribble and other fan events where promotional and media opportunities will take place.
- PR ideas for stories that help keep the event at the forefront for the year leading up to the Final Four (not just the final months).

#### **TARGETED AUDIENCES:**

Given the Greater Houston area's population of 5,000,000+ and the diversity of it, please address specifically how your agency would market to various targeted audiences.

In addition, please also provide your level of understanding of what the "Final Four" is as well as references and samples of past work/projects related to an event of this magnitude.

#### **ITEMS TO NOTE:**

- All branding and graphics will come from the NCAA's graphics partners. Graphic design will NOT be needed in this process and will not be provided via the local firm that may be engaged.
- Social media buys are not needed for the plan as the NCAA has a partner who oversees this. Social media as a part of a package offered by a potential advertiser in their proposed plan is perfectly fine.

#### **GOALS:**

"Success" will be determined in the form of attendance at the various events. The NCAA and the HLOC have established certain attendance goals for certain events. They are:

- Highest attendance and participation recorded for these events in recent NCAA Final Four History:
  - 25,000 at Final Four Friday
  - 80,000 at Fan Fest
  - 4,000 children at The Dribble
  - 165,000 + at March Madness Music Festival
  - 85,000 at Tip Off Tailgate
  - Great participation and attendance at various community events (to be determined) leading up to March Madness and the week of the Final Four.
  
- Success would be having over 350,000 Houstonians (who do not have game tickets) and out-of-town Final Four visitors the opportunity to participate in Final Four festivities.

#### **ACCOUNT MANAGEMENT:**

The NCAA is a not-for-profit organization based in Indianapolis, Indiana. The HLOC is a not-for-profit organization located in Houston, Texas. In your proposal, please indicate how you will and/or have worked with these types of organizations, including any work you've conducted working with a volunteer Marketing and/or Public Relations Committee.

#### **PROPOSED BUDGETS:**

Based on proposals received and continued evaluation of the Houston marketplace, the NCAA and the HLOC will determine a final marketing budget. Please prepare your response on how you would develop and execute a marketing and public relations plan across all mediums to accomplish the aforementioned objectives and goals based on the following potential budgets:

- A) \$200,000
- B) \$250,000
- C) \$350,000

In addition to the budget, the NCAA may make some Final Four game tickets available. Please indicate how your agency might use Final Four tickets to augment the budgets listed above and the benefits associated with using those tickets with media outlets. In the event that the HLOC, NCAA and/or any other constituents secure retail partners, please provide any additional information regarding your agency's experience with promotions.

Please identify any agency fees that would be payable and how compensation is structured and please include them within the aforementioned budgets.

## **RFP TIMELINE & PROTOCOL:**

- All proposals should be submitted no later than midnight of November 10, 2021.
- Proposals should be submitted electronically to:
  - Mahoghani Johnson  
[mjohnson@houstonports.org](mailto:mjohnson@houstonports.org)
- All written questions and inquiries will be answered in writing. In order to speed the RFP process, HLOC requests that all questions regarding the RFP be submitted by October 29, 2021 to:
  - Mahoghani Johnson  
[mjohnson@houstonports.org](mailto:mjohnson@houstonports.org)

Responses to questions will be shared with all companies/agencies involved in the RFP process in order to ensure the communication of the HLOC's needs as clearly as possible.

- Please hold Tuesday, November 16<sup>th</sup> for potential in-person presentation to the HLOC with regards to your proposal. After proposal submission, we will be in contact with you as to whether you are one of the agencies in the final part of the process.
- Please be aware that the NCAA/HLOC is NOT committed to any course of action as a result of its issuance of this RFP and/or its receipt of a proposal from you or other firms in response to it.