



VisitTheUSA.com

Brand USA

Request for Proposal

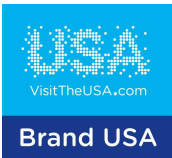


Brand USA

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

AI Trip Planning Chatbot

January 27, 2025



INTRODUCTION

As the destination marketing organization for the United States, Brand USA's mission is to increase incremental international visitation, spend, and market share to fuel the nation's economy and enhance the image of the USA worldwide.

Established by the Travel Promotion Act of 2009 as the nation's first public-private partnership to spearhead a globally coordinated marketing effort to promote the United States as a premier travel destination and communicate U.S. visa and entry policies, Brand USA began operations in May 2011.

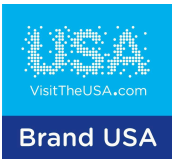
As one of the best levers for driving economic growth, international travel to the United States currently supports 1.2 million American jobs* and benefits virtually every sector of the U.S. economy. Since its founding, Brand USA has worked with more than 900 contributing organizations to invite the world to explore the exceptional, diverse, and virtually limitless travel experiences and destinations available in the United States of America.

According to studies by Oxford Economics, over the past seven years Brand USA's marketing initiatives have helped welcome 7.5 million incremental visitors to the USA, benefiting the U.S. economy with nearly \$55 billion in total economic impact, and supporting more than 50,000 incremental jobs each year.

Brand USA's operations are supported by a combination of nonfederal contributions from destinations, travel brands, and private-sector organizations plus matching funds collected by the U.S. government from international visitors who visit the United States under the Visa Waiver Program.

For industry and partner information about Brand USA, please visit TheBrandUSA.com.

For information about exceptional and unexpected travel experiences in the United States, please visit Brand USA's consumer website at VisitTheUSA.com.



PURPOSE

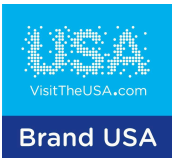
The purpose of this Request for Proposal (RFP) is to identify and select a qualified partner to provide Brand USA with a conversational AI solution for potential international travelers. The selected partner will be responsible for delivering a service that aligns with Brand USA's vision of enhancing user experiences through innovative travel technology solutions while maintaining strict privacy standards.

BACKGROUND

Brand USA seeks a SaaS (software-as-a-service) innovative solution that uses conversational AI to guide users in discovering and planning travel to the United States through messaging platforms, with WhatsApp as the primary channel.

The primary goals:

- Enhance the travel planning experience through natural conversation.
- Leverage AI for personalized, dynamic, and accurate travel suggestions.
- Support various travel styles including road trips.
- Collect valuable first-party data while maintaining user privacy.
- Enable travelers to create realistic, personalized U.S. itineraries that match their interests with America's unique travel experiences, with the ability to save and access their itineraries through vendor-managed user accounts.



SCOPE OF WORK

The selected partner will be responsible for:

1. Development

- Implementing WhatsApp as the primary messaging channel
- Optional integration with additional platforms (WeChat, Instagram Messenger, Facebook Messenger)
- Ensuring global accessibility and performance
- Providing both dashboard and API access to analytics

2. AI Integration

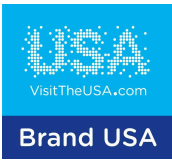
- Implementing conversational AI for natural interaction
- Leveraging anonymous data for continuous improvement
- Maintaining market-specific understanding and preferences

3. Functionality

- Real-time recommendations for destinations and experiences
- Integration with Brand USA content where appropriate
- Vendor-maintained destination content and data sources
- Supporting multiple languages and markets
- Comprehensive analytics dashboard
- Full-featured API for data access

4. Design

- Natural conversational flow
- Intuitive user experience
- Accessibility compliance
- Privacy-first approach



5. Destination Partnerships

- Integration of existing U.S. Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) content (with permission)
- Access to destination-specific analytics and performance reporting for participating DMOs
- Content update protocols for DMO partners
- Optional partner program to offer discount or bulk licensing options to US DMOs

6. Testing and Quality Assurance

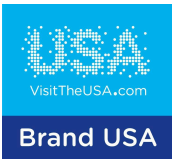
- Comprehensive testing plan
- Performance monitoring
- Security validation

7. Support and Maintenance

- 24/7 system monitoring
- Regular updates and improvements
- Technical support

8. Build in Public Process

- Bi-weekly video podcast participation
- Conference speaking opportunities
- Public Q&A through podcast format

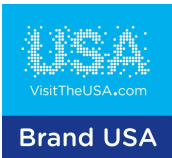


PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

1. Vendor Qualifications
 - Demonstrated conversational AI expertise
 - Experience in travel industry applications
 - Case studies of similar projects
 - Market/language capabilities
2. Project Approach
 - Technical architecture
 - Content sourcing and maintenance
 - Market coverage strategy
 - Development timeline to June 1 launch
3. Financial Proposal
 - Development costs with hourly rates
 - Ongoing service fees
 - Additional service costs
4. Additional Requirements
 - Data privacy approach
 - Dashboard capabilities
 - API specifications
 - Support services



1. This is a trip planner for U.S. destinations only.
2. No PII should be exposed to Brand USA employees through any interface.
3. Must support multi-destination and road trip planning.
4. Content should primarily come from vendor's data sources while incorporating itineraries from VisitTheUSA.com.
5. Vendors may submit proposals for both this RFP and our companion RFP for a website itinerary builder. Brand USA reserves the right to select the same or different vendors for each solution based on the strengths of the proposals received.
6. Vendors are encouraged to propose partnership models that incentivize U.S. DMOs to participate in the platform, either through preferential pricing or other benefits. Brand USA supports a collaborative approach that leverages existing DMO relationships and content while providing clear value to participating destinations.



QUESTIONS FOR YOU

Data & Technical

1. What technologies and frontier models power your solution?
2. Detail your data sources with licensing and update frequency.
3. Describe your first-party data collection approach.
4. What metrics will be available via dashboard/API?
5. How do you ensure data privacy and security?
6. What is your approach to bookings? What partners does your platform currently use, and is it possible to customize booking partners or turn bookings off entirely?

Market Understanding

7. What markets/languages do you currently support?
8. How do you handle market-specific preferences?
9. What is your content localization process?
10. How do you maintain local context accuracy?

Implementation

11. Detail your WhatsApp integration approach.
12. What optional messaging platforms can you support?
13. Describe your dashboard capabilities.
14. Detail your API specifications.
15. What is your system monitoring approach?

Partnership Approach

16. Detail your existing DMO relationships.
17. How will you incorporate existing DMO content from US destinations into this product?
18. What analytics will be available to DMO partners?
19. Describe your proposed DMO incentive program, if applicable.



Based on the RFP requirements, the proposer must submit a detailed, realistic budget with an estimated execution timeline.

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

Proposals may be rejected if they do not include all deliverables. Proposers wishing clarification of this RFP must submit questions in writing to Brand USA, no later than **February 3, 2024 (5:00 PM EST)**, and sent by e-mail to RFPadmin@TheBrandUSA.com. Questions will not be answered on calls, with the exception of meetings with scheduled finalists during, or after the meeting. Company names will be removed from the published question/answer document. Duplicative questions, irrelevant questions and questions already addressed in this RFP may not be published. Pitches will not be accepted outside the RFP process.

Costs for developing proposals are entirely the responsibility of the proposer and shall not be reimbursed by Brand USA.

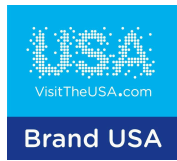
1. **Notice of Intent to Bid** must be received by **February 7, 2025** (due by 5:00 PM EDT).

The notice shall be sent by e-mail to RFPadmin@TheBrandUSA.com. The NOTICE OF INTENT TO BID, is nonbinding; however, it ensures the receipt of all addenda related to this RFP. Proposals will be accepted only from applicants who submitted a timely NOTICE OF INTENT TO BID.

2. **RFP Responses** must contain the following information:

- a. Executive Summary.
- b. No Conflict of Interest: Client relationships that could potentially be considered a conflict of interest must be listed.
- c. Contract Manager/Team: Identify one individual on the proposer's account team who will manage the event. Include resumes, or descriptions of anyone to be involved with the AI Trip Planning Chatbot.
- d. Case Studies.
- e. Direct answers from the "Questions for You" section. Include the question and your answer. Do not assume we will locate answers to these questions spread throughout your proposal. Failure to provide direct answers may negatively impact your submission.
- f. Specific Monthly/Annual Budget.

3. **Certification Form**: Must be signed and accompany all RFP Response submissions.



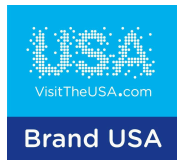
TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

This tentative schedule may be altered at any time at the discretion of Brand USA. Brand USA reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, or any part thereof; waive an informality in the proposals and accept the proposal that best meets the needs of Brand USA.

A. Proposal Released	January 24, 2025
B. Written Questions (due by 5:00 PM EDT)	February 3, 2025
C. Written Questions Answered and posted to Brand USA website	February 7, 2025
D. Notice of Intent to Bid Due (due by 5:00 PM EDT)	February 10, 2025
E. Proposal Due (due by 5:00 PM EDT)	February 18, 2025
F. Notification of Finalist Interviews	March 12, 2025
G. Finalist Presentation/Interviews	March 19 & 20, 2025
H. Notice of Intent to Award Contract and Public Posting	March 21, 2025
I. Development Phase	March 21 - May 21, 2025
J. Testing Phase	May 22 - June 23, 2025
K. Launch	September 2025

DELIVERY OF PROPOSAL

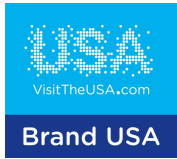
Proposals should be e-mailed to RFPadmin@TheBrandUSA.com. We will acknowledge receipt, so if you do not receive a receipt notification within two business days, please contact us. If the file size of your proposal is too large to email, or send via a FTP service, contact us and we will make arrangements.



EVALUATION AND CONTRACTING

All proposals satisfying the requirements of this Request for Proposals will be evaluated to establish which of the providers best fulfills the needs of Brand USA and this project. This Request for Proposals in no way commits Brand USA to award a contract, to pay any costs in preparation of a proposal, or to contract for the goods and/or services offered.

Brand USA reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals received as a result of this request, to negotiate with all qualified providers or to cancel this Request for Proposals. After awarding the contract, the schedule will include a period of collaboration between Brand USA and the selected Contractor to better define, elaborate upon, and fix the Contractor's final Scope of Work and general Terms and Conditions.



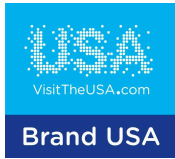
ATTACHMENT 1

NOTICE OF INTENT TO BID

Due: February 7, 2025

SEND TO: rftadmin@thebrandusa.com

NAME OF BIDDER / COMPANY:
CONTACT PERSON:
MAILING ADDRESS:
TELEPHONE:
FAX:
E-MAIL ADDRESS:
SIGNED:



ATTACHMENT 2

CERTIFICATION

Please include this statement as part of the Proposal

Certification Statement

By submission of this proposal and authorized signature below, Proposer certifies that the undersigned corporate officer has authority to bind the bidder to the terms of this Proposal and hereby certifies on behalf of the bidder that:

1. He/she has read and understands all commitments and terms of this Proposal.
2. The information contained in this Proposal is accurate.
3. Proposer's quote is valid for at least 120 days from the date of proposal's signature below.
4. Proposer understands that if selected as the successful Proposer, he/she will have ten (10) business days in which to complete contract negotiations, if any, and execute the final contract document. Date of execution can be extended by mutual agreement of contractor / Brand USA.

Authorized Signature

Typed or Printed Name

Title

Date

Official Contact

Brand USA requests that the Proposer designate one person to receive all communications for clarification and verification of information related to this proposal. Please identify this point of contact below:

Official Contact Name

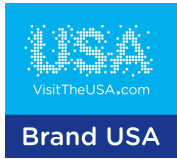
Phone Number

Official Contact Title

Facsimile Number

Email Address

Street, City, State, Zip



ATTACHMENT 3 FOR BRAND USA USE ONLY

Bid/Proposal: _____

Evaluated By: _____

Date: _____

Proposal Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation committee will judge each written proposal based on the following criteria:

	MAX. POINTS	SCORE
Solution Quality & User Experience: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interface design and usability • Quality of recommendations • Multi-market functionality • Performance and reliability 	35	
Technical Capability: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • System architecture • Data management • API/Dashboard quality 	25	
Privacy & Security: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data protection • Privacy-first design • Security measures • Compliance standards 	20	
Cost Effectiveness: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development costs • Ongoing fees • Value for money 	15	
Build in Public Commitment	5	
Finalists Only Oral Presentation	50	
Finalist Only Total	150	