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Request for Proposals (RBFF-C-23-518)

The Recreational Boating & Fishing Foundation (RBFF) is soliciting proposals from qualified service providers to conduct research to better understand the psychology of attrition in fishing and boating and identify ways to retain those participants.

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Attachments:

1. Proposal Cover Page

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I. REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RBFF-22-C-493)

This request for proposals (RFP) is to hire a qualified service provider to to conduct research to better understand the psychology of attrition in fishing and boating and identify ways to retain those participants.

II. SOLICITATION

Name/Address of Issuer:

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SVP, Marketing & Communications
Recreational Boating & Fishing Foundation
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Please contact Stephanie Vatalaro with any questions you may have regarding this RFP.

Date of Issuance: March 14, 2023

Closing Date and Time: March 31, 2023 @ 5:00 pm Eastern Time

III. BACKGROUND

RBFF is an independent, not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization. Our organizational mission is to implement an informed, consensus-based national outreach strategy that will increase participation in recreational fishing and boating and thereby increase public awareness and appreciation of the need for protecting, conserving, and restoring this nation's aquatic resources.

In recent years a shared concern has emerged in the fishing, boating and conservation communities. Participation in recreational fishing and boating is changing, and in some cases declining. Projections of demographic trends indicating that in the next 25 years significant population growth will only be occurring among groups who have not traditionally been as involved with boating and fishing. This portends obvious economic impacts in both private and public sectors, with additional considerations in the areas of resource stewardship and quality of life issues.

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RBFF's challenge is to maintain and increase participation among those groups where fishing and boating have always played an important role in their cultural heritage, while diversifying to include a wider representation—building new traditions for all in the 21st century.

RBFF's funding is administered through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (the "Agency") pursuant to a cooperative agreement between the Agency and RBFF. The original source of the funds, the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund, is comprised of excise taxes paid by manufacturers of fishing tackle and a consumer tax on motorboat fuel.

Stakeholders are vital to the success of RBFF. RBFF's mission can best - and arguably only - be accomplished through successful collaborating and partnering among stakeholders. In so doing RBFF intends to build ownership of its efforts, and outcomes, among a broad array of key stakeholder groups.

Stakeholder groups include:

- Fishing and boating industry, including manufacturers, distributors, wholesalers and retailers as well as service providers such as marinas, guides, etc.;
- State and federal natural resources agency personnel, including those involved with aquatic education, license sales and marketing, fisheries management, parks/access site management, communications and information management;
- State, federal and local law enforcement agencies with mandates in the boater safety, access and education arenas;
- Tourism agencies, parks and recreation agencies, convention and visitor bureaus and businesses relying on aquatic resource-based recreation;
- Outdoor and environmental educators;
- Recreation providers, youth and family advocacy and service organizations;
- Non-governmental advocacy or public interest groups such as:
 - Conservation organizations
 - Fishing and boating organizations
 - Safety organizations
 - Media and outdoor communications groups

RBFF is governed by a 26-member Board of Directors representing the various stakeholder groups listed above. We actively involve stakeholders in the development and implementation of our programs via several volunteer task forces and advisory groups.

RBFF works directly with state fish and wildlife agencies to implement marketing programs to increase national participation and license sales. According to the [2016 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation](#) conducted by the U.S.

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Fish & Wildlife Service, fishing participation was up 8% between 2011 and 2016, and license sales were also on the rise.

For more details on participation, please see the [2022 Special Report on Fishing](#).

For more information about RBFF, please visit our organizational web site at <http://takemefishing.org/general/about-rbff/>.

IV. PROJECT NEED

In June 2022, RBFF board and staff met to develop a strategic plan for the next three fiscal years (FY24-26). While key metrics are being achieved and results overall have never been better, the Special Report on Fishing has documented a concerning 5-year upward trend in attrition or churn rate.

RBFF has historically been charged with the recruitment of new participants, however, given the increase in churn (there were 5.6 million lost anglers in 2017 vs. 14 million in 2021) and its effect on overall participation, RBFF engaged the board in dialogue around how it might best support retention efforts.

The RBFF board and staff came to consensus that we first needed to gain a better current understanding of why people lapse and what motivates them to keep participating year-over-year, looking at audience demographics, geography and more. A literature review was conducted in the fall of 2022 (Attachment 2) providing a summary of all relevant research to-date on fishing and boating attrition and research gaps needed to gain actionable insights.

In February 2023, the RBFF Board approved RBFF's recommendation to dive deeper into the psychology of churn as a next step. According to the Literature Review, the psychology of churn in fishing and boating participation is not well understood. Much of the research on this market question is conducted by private firms that are in the business of selling their services. There is not a great deal of research on the psychology of attrition and ways to retain those participants.

V. PROJECT SCOPE

This new research should help RBFF and its stakeholders better understand why people are dropping out of fishing and boating, and identify opportunities to decrease churn.

The main objectives of this research are to:

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- Dive deeper into the psychology of attrition in fishing and boating participation in the U.S. via quantitative and qualitative (focus group) research. It should identify (1) The triggers for leaving fishing and boating, (2) What people are doing after they drop off, and (3) Opportunities for keeping fishing and boating participants in the activities. The research should answer questions such as:
 - Is it about...Competition from other activities?
 - Too few invitations to go fishing or boating?
 - Solid but not overwhelming interest in continuing to fish or boat?
 - Why do some people try fishing or boating, enjoy themselves, but not pick it up again?
 - Is “no time” just an excuse?
 - How are people choosing to spend their time when they drop out of fishing and boating?
 - How can the boating and fishing community help casual or sporadic participants become more avid in their participation?
- Segment findings by demographics including age, gender, culture, life stage, etc., along with U.S. geography.
- Develop personas for those most likely to drop out that can be used by both RBFF and its stakeholders in retention-related outreach.
- Provide actionable insights and recommendations that stakeholder audiences can use to implement in their own retention efforts.

VI. CONTRACTOR QUALIFICATIONS

Contractor must demonstrate high levels of expertise in the following areas:

1. **Prior Experience:** The successful research partner will have demonstrable expertise in both qualitative and quantitative marketing research. Please provide a brief summary that details your experience in marketing research, particularly driven by a complex business problem that required not only market research expertise but also the ability to help the client apply what was learned.
2. **Industry experience.** Describe experience in the recreational boating or fishing industry or similar industries such as outdoor sports, recreation, etc.
3. **In-house capability.** Describe any in-house capabilities that would have a direct impact on quality. Indicate in your proposal if any portion of the project will be subcontracted and describe the subcontractor relationship.

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4. Working within a multi-disciplinary team to get the job done. Contractor may work with RBFF board and task force members, marketing agency(s), RBFF senior managers, etc.
5. Demonstrated ability to meet tight deadlines and produce deliverables according to timeline.
6. Other Experience: Describe other experiences that may be relevant such as experiences in the area of cause marketing or in the nonprofit sector.

VII. DELIVERABLES AND TIMELINE

The following deadlines apply to this request for proposals:

Issue RFP:	March 14, 2023
Proposal Due Date:	March 31, 2023 @ 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time
Final decision and vendor notification:	April 10, 2023
Contractor begins work:	April 17, 2023

VIII. PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

At a minimum, the proposal should include the following elements:

1. Completed Proposal Cover Page (Attachment 1).
2. Description of how your corporation/organization/team fulfills the “Contractors Qualifications” outlined in Section VI. Examples of previous work that is similar to the work required here are requested.
3. Include a list of clients for whom you have performed similar work within the last two years. Please provide 3 client references that RBFF may contact.
4. Background on your corporation/organization/team, including history, staff size and experience, and other relevant information. If subcontracting is required, indicate whether you intend to subcontract with small businesses, minority-owned firms, and women’s business enterprises.

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Applicants must submit an electronic copy of their proposal. Proposals should be prepared simply, providing a straightforward, concise description of the Contractor's ability to meet the requirements of the RFP.

The proposal must be received by **March 31, 2023 at 5:00 p.m. Eastern time** for consideration. Late proposals will not be accepted.

IX. EVALUATION FACTORS FOR AWARD

Basis for Award

The award will be made to the applicant that conforms to the RFP's requirements and is judged to represent the best value to RBFF. Best value is defined as the proposal that presents the best overall value to RBFF, cost and other factors considered, and which presents the most advantageous offer. Such offer may not necessarily be the proposal offering the lowest cost or receiving the highest technical rating.

Evaluation Criteria

Applicants are cautioned that this is a best-value procurement and that best-value concepts apply to this solicitation. In making its best-value determination, RBFF may award a contract resulting from this solicitation to the responsible applicant whose offer conforming to the solicitation will be the most advantageous to RBFF, price and other factors considered. RBFF shall give due consideration, as appropriate, to the overall merits of the proposal (including the relative advantages and disadvantages to RBFF), the experience of the Contractor, the cost of the proposal, and the needs of RBFF. Preference, to the extent practicable and economically feasible, shall be given for products and services that conserve natural resources and protect the environment and are energy efficient.

Applicants are cautioned that discussions may not be held and that RBFF may award the contract solely on the initial proposals. Accordingly, applicants should put forth their best efforts in their initial submission. However, RBFF reserves the right to conduct discussions if later determined by RBFF to be necessary. RBFF may reject any or all offers if such action is in the best interest of RBFF; accept other than the lowest offer; and waive informalities and minor irregularities in offers received.

X. SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS

Federally Imposed Obligations

RBFF has entered into a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, the general provisions of which are the Administrative and Audit Requirements and Cost Principles for Assistance Programs cited in the "Uniform Administrative Requirements,

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Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards” set forth in CFR Title 2, Subtitle A, Chapter II, Part 200 (2 CFR § 200.0 *et seq.*), including the appendices thereto. Inspection, acceptance and procurement are governed by these requirements and principles. The successful applicant will be required to assume all applicable pass-through obligations imposed by the cooperative agreement, such as compliance with federal equal employment opportunity requirements and debarment and suspension certifications.

Accounting Records

All accounting records of the successful applicant relating to its performance under this award shall be kept in a manner that is consistent with generally accepted accounting principles as well as and all applicable provisions of the “Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards” set forth in CFR Title 2, Subtitle A, Chapter II, Part 200 (2 CFR § 200.0 *et seq.*), including the appendices thereto. Upon reasonable notice to Contractor, RBFF, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, the Comptroller General of the United States, and any of their duly authorized representatives shall have access to any books, documents, papers and records of Contractor that are pertinent to this award and have the right to audit and copy such materials during the term of this award and for a period of three (3) years after its termination or expiration.

Applicant Reimbursement and Compensation Policy

RBFF will not reimburse or compensate applicants for any time, fees and costs incurred while developing their proposals. Additionally, if an applicant is asked to present its proposal in person, RBFF will not reimburse or compensate the applicant for any fees related to the presentation, including but not limited to staff time, travel and out-of-pocket costs. RBFF will not compensate any applicant for time or fees incurred while negotiating a contract.

Use of Metric System

To the extent practicable and economically feasible, all accepted products and services shall be dimensioned in the metric system of measurement.

Ownership of Work Product

- A) The successful applicant will be required to acknowledge that it has been ordered or commissioned to create or prepare a work consisting of the work effort and work product set forth herein and agree that this work is a “work made for

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hire,” and that the applicant shall have no rights to title or interest in and to the work, including the entire copyright in the work or all rights associated with the copyright. The applicant will further be required to agree that to the extent the work is not a “work made for hire,” the applicant will assign to RBFF ownership of all right, title and interest in and to work, including ownership of the entire copyright in the work and all rights associated with the copyright, and will execute all papers necessary for RBFF to perfect its ownership of the entire copyright in the work. The applicant will not have rights to or permission to use the work without the prior written permission of RBFF.

- B) By responding to this RFP, the applicant acknowledges and agrees that all deliverable documentation under this RFP (and subsequent contract) will be transferred to the U.S. Government in accordance with RBFF’s government contract. If the applicant intends to submit a notice of limited rights in technical data regarding any delivered technical data to RBFF, the notice shall include sufficient information to enable RBFF to identify and evaluate the applicant’s assertions.

Original Work

The successful applicant will be required to represent and warrant that the work the applicant creates or prepares for RBFF will be original, will not infringe upon the rights of any third party, and will not have been previously assigned, licensed or otherwise encumbered.

Public Releases

Except as required by law or regulation, no news release, public announcement or advertising material concerning any subsequent contract awarded pursuant to this RFP shall be issued by any applicant without the prior written consent of RBFF; such consent shall not be unreasonably withheld.

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PROPOSAL COVER PAGE (ATTACHMENT 1)
(All applicants must submit this completed form with their proposal.)

RFP Number	
Company Name	
EIN or Social Security Number	
Contact Name & Title	
Mailing Address	
Telephone	
Facsimile	
E-mail address	
Website address	
Proposed cost	