

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)**  
**Direct Mail Marketing Campaign**  
**Columbus Zoo and Aquarium, Zoombezi Bay**  
**and The Wilds**

**4850 W. Powell Road P.O. Box 400**  
**Powell, Ohio 43065-0400**

**September 4, 2023**

## **1. SUMMARY AND BACKGROUND**

The Columbus Zoo and Aquarium is accepting proposals for direct mail membership campaigns at the zoo, its water park, Zoombezi Bay, as well as its conservation center, The Wilds, collectively known as CZA.

The purpose of this Request for Proposal (RFP) is to solicit proposals from various candidate organizations, conduct a fair and extensive evaluation based on criteria listed herein, and select the candidate who best represents CZA's preferred direction.

The Columbus Zoo and Aquarium and Zoombezi Bay are regional attractions located in Powell, Ohio. The Wilds is located in Zanesville, Ohio.

Excluding 2020, attendance for both the Zoo and Zoombezi Bay over the past five years has ranged from 2.3 – 2.6 million guests. Wilds attendance during the same period has ranged from 58,000 – 68,000 guests. Over the next few years, CZA expects to continue to see growth as more exhibits and attractions are planned.

The Columbus Zoo and Aquarium currently has a member base of 81,970 households. For 2023, Zoombezi Bay had 17,909 Season Pass and Gold memberships. The Wilds has 3,027 households.

## **2. PROPOSAL GUIDELINES**

This Request for Proposal represents the requirements for an open and competitive process. Proposals will be accepted until October 6, 2023 at 3:00pm. Any proposals received after this date and time will be returned to the sender. All proposals must be signed by an official agent or representative of the company submitting the proposal.

If the organization submitting a proposal must outsource or contract any work to meet the requirements contained herein, this must be clearly stated in the proposal. Additionally, costs in the proposal must be all-inclusive to include any outsourced or contracted work. If outsourcing or contracted work is required, CZA will need a list of those companies that will be doing the work and some background information on them including principles. Third party, or subcontracted parties, will be held to the same guidelines and requirements as the company of record.

Any and all costs associated with the RFP proposal are the sole responsibility of the company submitting the bid.

Contract terms and conditions will be negotiated upon selection of the winning bidder for this RFP. All contractual terms and conditions will be subject to review by CZA legal, operations, and finance departments and will include scope, budget, schedule, and other necessary items pertaining to the proposal.

### **3. PROJECT PURPOSE AND DESCRIPTION**

**The purpose of this project is as follows:**

CZA uses direct mail campaigns throughout the year as a tool to increase membership sales. Using a list of internal prospects such as lapsed members and ticket purchasers, as well as prospect lists from the chosen firm, we use both postal mailings and targeted electronic communications to increase membership sales for both lapsed members and prospects.

**Project Description:**

CZA is seeking a vendor to design, print, and mail four separate membership campaigns, two for the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium, one for Zoombezi Bay, and one for The Wilds, in order to increase membership sales for each park. Campaigns should have both a postal mail and a digital component, and contain both in house lists as well as prospect lists supplied by the firm.

Detailed information regarding each campaign can be found in the project scope.

### **4. PROJECT SCOPE**

CZA seeks a firm to design attractive, accessible, and relevant campaigns designed to retarget lapsed members and engage prospect audiences through various channels.

CZA would like a quote for the following quantity of mailed pieces:

- 200,000 pieces Zoo Spring campaign
- 25,000 pieces Zoo Fall campaign
- 125,000 pieces Zoombezi Bay Spring campaign
- 25,000 pieces Wilds Spring Campaign

In general, we utilize a single fold post card mailing - standard size 8 1/2" x 12" when open, 8 1/2" x 6" when folded.

CZA requests a single mailing for each campaign, with target postal mail dates as follows:

- Zoo Spring campaign – mid-March
- Zoo Fall campaign – early September
- Zoombezi Spring campaign – mid-April
- Wilds Spring campaign – mid-April

CZA requests the design and distribution of at least three targeted emails to both in house and prospect lists throughout the duration of each campaign.

CZA desires the following additional criteria:

- Design of campaign branded marketing materials for social media platforms or targeted digital advertisements.
- Detailed schedule from start to finish of each campaign outlining entire scope of the project, as well as responsibilities for both CZA and the firm.
- Detailed summary of each campaign and its performance in real time, as well as campaign completion.
- Full analysis of campaign to report results and offer suggestions on how to increase revenue in future campaigns.

Be advised that the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium and The Wilds are tax-exempt non-profit, while Zoombezi Bay is a for-profit LLC. Campaigns will need to be quoted and invoiced separately for each park. The RFP should be structured as such.

CZA desires the following questions to be answered, with answers included in the RFP response:

- Detailed and itemized budget summary including any and all fees including but not limited to creative, production, digital marketing, data, list acquisition, merge-purge process, printing, and postage to give a total estimated expense for each campaign.
- Overview of work that CZA will be required to perform.

## **5. REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL AND PROJECT TIMELINE**

### **Request for Proposal Timeline:**

All proposals in response to this RFP are due no later than 3pm EST October 6, 2023.

A short list of potential bidders will be selected and they will be contacted for any clarifications as necessary. If at any time during this RFP process, your company decides not to go forward, please notify us as soon as possible. The selection decision will be made no later than the end of October 2023. Notifications to bidders who were not selected will be completed by the end of October 2023.

### **Project Timeline:**

See project scope.

## **6. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

All proposals must include proposed costs. All expectations should be clearly defined as being the responsibility of CZA or of the bidder.

## **7. BIDDER QUALIFICATIONS**

Bidders should provide the following items as part of their proposal for consideration:

- Name, address, telephone number and email address of a contact person with authority to answer questions about the proposal.
- Name, address, telephone number and email address of a contact person to be notified regarding contractual issues.
- Identification of the firm as a corporation or other legal entity.
- Description of experience in completing successful membership drive campaigns for the amusement, water park, and/or zoo industries.
- Provide a minimum of three references of major clients using the firm in the amusement, water park, and/or zoo industries.
- Anticipated resources you will assign to this project (total number, role, title, experience).
- Brief background on staff expected to be assigned to each campaign.
- Overview of research methodology and approach.
- Project management methodology.

## **8. PROPOSAL EVALUATION CRITERIA**

CZA will evaluate all proposals based on the following criteria. To ensure consideration for this Request for Proposal, your proposal should be complete and include all the following criteria:

- Overall proposal suitability: proposed solution(s) must meet the scope and needs included herein and be presented in a clear and organized manner.
- Organizational Experience: Bidders will be evaluated on their experience as it pertains to the scope of this project.
- Previous work: Bidders will be evaluated on examples of their work pertaining to other amusement parks, water parks, and/or zoos.
- Technical expertise and experience: Bidders must provide descriptions and documentation of technical expertise and experience.
- Financial terms: Bidders will be considered based on certain financial terms, such as cost to purchase the product(s).

Each bidder must submit two copies of their proposal to Jenny Terman, Membership Manager, at the address below by October 6, 2023 at 3pm EST as well as one electronic version sent to [jenny.terman@columbuszoo.org](mailto:jenny.terman@columbuszoo.org).

Columbus Zoo and Aquarium

4850 W. Powell Road  
P.O. Box 400  
Powell, Ohio 43605-400  
Attention: Jenny Terman