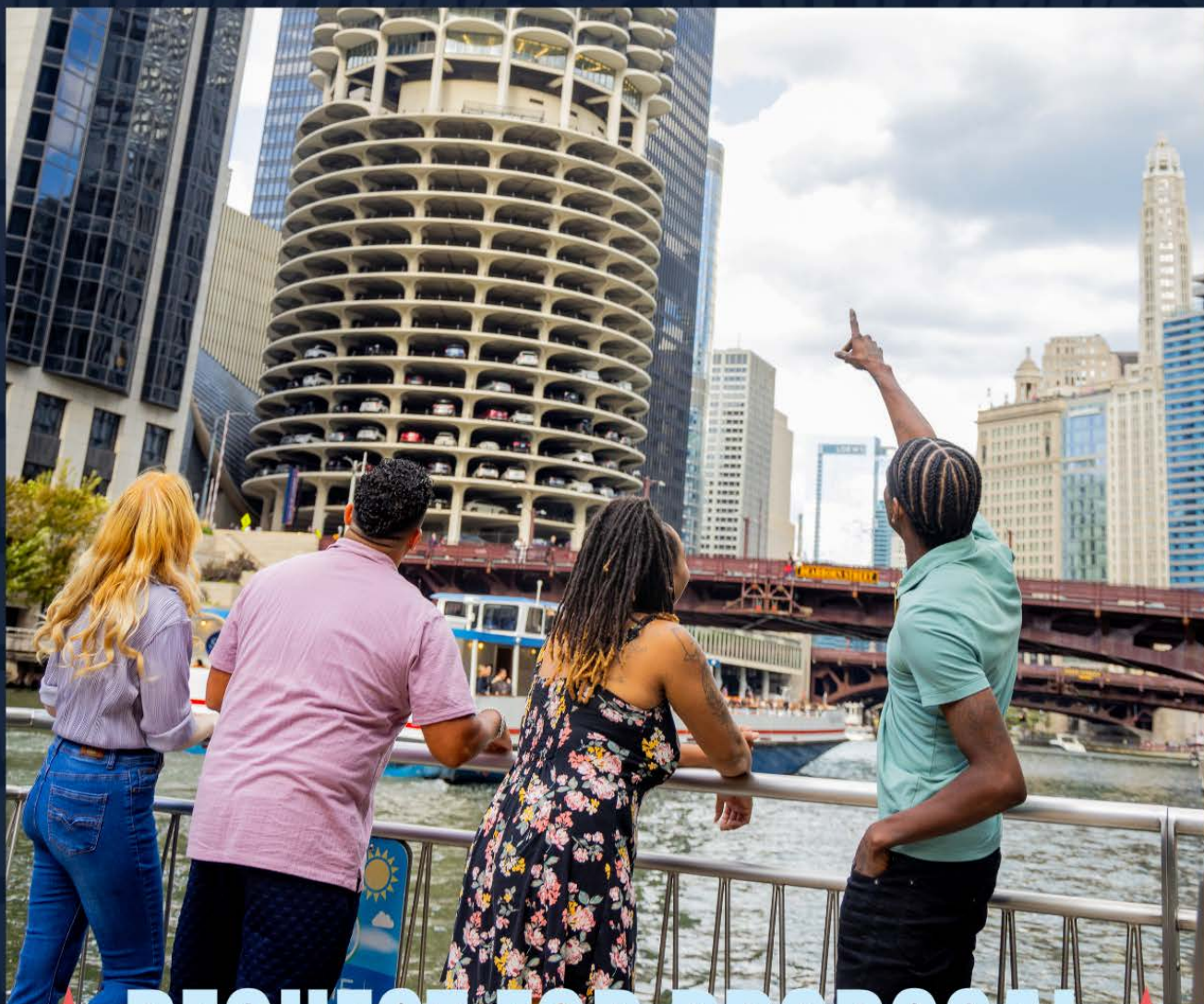




★ REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL ★

MEDIA BUY: FALL 2026

chicago
CHOOSE CHICAGO

CHOOSE CHICAGO | 301 E. CERMAK RD., CHICAGO, IL 60616 | CHOOSECHICAGO.COM

INTRODUCTION

Choose Chicago is a private, nonprofit 501c(6) organization with an affiliated 501c(3) Foundation, both of which have a calendar year end of December 31st.

We are the destination marketing organization tasked with promoting the greater Chicago area as a top destination for both business and leisure travelers. Choose Chicago is contracted by the City of Chicago and the Metropolitan Pier and Exposition Authority to serve as the official sales and marketing agency for the city and McCormick Place Convention Center. Our efforts are overseen by a Board of Directors, and we receive funding from both public and private sources.

We are a partnership-driven organization representing the entire hospitality, travel and tourism industry, from leisure travel to meetings and events of all sizes, including diverse sectors like sports and public tradeshow. Our partners include city hotels, restaurants, museums, attractions, theaters, event and meeting venues, chambers of commerce, community leaders, and more.

Chicago is a world-class destination, celebrated for its dynamic arts and cultural scene. From internationally acclaimed museums and iconic architecture to legendary music, theater, comedy, dance, public art, and festivals, the city's creative energy is woven throughout Chicago and is a defining part of the visitor experience. Choose Chicago has undertaken a robust strategy to elevate and promote the city's extraordinary arts and cultural offerings, showcasing renowned cultural institutions, acclaimed performing arts organizations, public art, architectural landmarks, and the artists and creative experiences that define Chicago's cultural identity. Through these efforts, Choose Chicago continues to reinforce the city's reputation as the best big city in the world.

[About us Company Resources](#)

[Choose Chicago Strategic Plan](#)

[Choose Chicago Annual Report](#)

Social handles: IG/Twitter/Pinterest/Facebook/Linked In: choosechicago

[Mission](#)

Enrich our community by attracting meetings, events and leisure travelers

[Vision](#)

Elevate the brand of Chicago as a must-experience global destination

[Business Diversity Commitment](#)

Choose Chicago seeks to identify the best vendors and suppliers, support our core value of Excellence, ensure partner satisfaction, increase our sustainability, and promote diversity while

reflecting, supporting, and maintaining a positive impact on the communities we serve.

Choose Chicago also actively promotes inclusive diverse business spending throughout the organization. As part of this initiative, Choose Chicago requests that if a non-diverse business secures the bid, good faith efforts will be made to award 15% of the contract, when possible, to a diverse owned business, preferably local.

OUR TEAM

Our Marketing team works collaboratively to achieve common goals, the selected vendor's primary points of contact will be Angela Hearn, Vice President of Marketing and Delaney Klundt, Director of Grants and Compliance.

Choose Chicago is committed to equity, diversity and inclusion and offers resources and initiatives fostering a welcoming and inclusive culture.

We recognize and appreciate the importance of creating an environment in which employees feel valued, included, and empowered to do their best work.

Each employee's unique experiences, perspectives and identity add significance to our ability to deliver an equitable destination experience, for clients, partners and the local community. It is expected that any vendors Choose Chicago works with hold the same values and commitment within their own organizations.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Request for Proposal (RFP) is to procure a provider of multi-channel marketing and media purchasing in order to support the launch of the Fall 2026 arts and culture campaign, If It's Art, It's Here. Designed to drive traffic and highlight arts and culture in every neighborhood across the city, If It's Art, It's Here will showcase Chicago's music, dance, theater, comedy, architecture, museums, public art and beyond.

SCOPE OF WORK

Choose Chicago is seeking proposals from a qualified agency and group of media planners versed in local, regional, and national advertising that will be responsible for strategic media planning based on research and audience insights, as well as media buying across traditional and digital platforms, which may include: Programmatic Display & Video, Paid Social, Connected TV, Print, Radio, and OOH. The selected agency will provide rate negotiation and placement in addition to providing real-time performance reporting and post-campaign reporting with ROI analysis. This agency will coordinate with Choose Chicago and its other agencies to ensure that asset delivery meets specifications and deadlines, as well as alignment with the "Never Done, Never Outdone" campaign framework.

QUALIFICATIONS

1. Vendor must have familiarity with Chicago, media buying, channel experience, and creating strategic, research-based media plans.
2. Vendor must provide strategies that incorporate Chicago neighborhoods, arts, and culture.
3. Vendor must demonstrate a comprehensive approach to inclusive media planning, including strategies for engaging M/WBE-owned media partners, culturally relevant audience targeting, and the use of geofencing. Proposals should also outline demographic targeting capabilities, with specific consideration for reaching family audiences.
4. Vendor must be able to complete the contracted services by Fall 2026 and is aligned with the proposed timeline.

BUDGET

The budget for this project will not exceed \$400,000 including agency fees. Distribution of funds will be determined with the selected vendor as agreed upon with the vendor, Choose Chicago, and the Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events.

VENDOR SELECTION

Proposals will be reviewed, evaluated, and scored by the Choose Chicago Inclusive Tourism & Community Engagement team in close collaboration with the broader Marketing team.

REQUIREMENTS

Proposals must address each item listed, giving specific details of techniques to be used in achieving these requirements. Proposals may be rejected if minimum requirements are not met. All proposers wishing clarification of this RFP must submit questions in writing to Choose Chicago, no later than July 16, 2026 (due by 5:00 pm, CST), and sent by email to dklundt@choosechicago.com.

Any costs for developing proposals are entirely the responsibility of the proposer and shall not be reimbursed by Choose Chicago.

RFP Proposals must contain the following information:

- a) Executive Summary
- b) Services and activities including elements noted in scope of work: Provide description of the nature of the organization's services and activities. Note when the business was established, brief history and location. List the location(s) of the office(s) from which the primary work on this contract would be performed.
- c) Conflict of Interest: Client relationships that could potentially be considered a conflict of

interest must be listed.

- d) Contract Manager/Team: Identify one individual on the proposer's account team who will manage the contract work. Identify the role of each member who will service the account. Current resumes must be attached for each person who would in any way be associated with this account.
- e) Outline of proposed fees associated with account management and other duties mentioned in the scope of work including your account management fee.
- f) References: Provide at least two references.
- g) MBE/WBE Commitment - Please note your diverse business classification & certification (if applicable) in your proposal as well as the opportunity to award part of the contract to a diverse owned business. (Refer to Attachment Tier 2 Diverse Spend Template)
- h) Agency Approach: Please describe your agency's philosophy and approach to media planning and buying, inclusive of any media ratings/analysis tools used.
- i) Channel/Partner Experience: Briefly describe your experience working across a range of media channels, including OOH, OTT, programmatic, partner direct, paid social, and paid search.
- j) Two (2) client case studies from the last four (4) years that illustrate how your agency created strategic, research-based media plans targeting consumers that met or exceeded client KPIs.
- k) One (1) example of an attribution model you've used to demonstrate how digital media supported a client's KPIs.
- l) Describe your negotiating process, including the research that is conducted to feed rationale behind recommended media investment. Include how you obtain lowest possible rates and added value.
- m) Describe your approach to both analytics and reporting. Items to showcase include tools, screenshots of reports expected for ROI, frequency of analytics, and manner with which reports are presented.
- n) Competitive Advantage: Describe what sets you apart from the competition and aligns well with our organization. Any unique capabilities or resources that we should know about? What does a successful client relationship look like to you?

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

This tentative schedule may be altered at any time at the discretion of Choose Chicago. Choose Chicago 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 Choose Chicago.

Proposal Release	July 9, 2026
Proposal Due by 5:00 pm CST	July 23, 2026
Proposal Evaluation by scoring committee	August 6, 2026
Notice of Intent to Award Contract	August 13, 2026

PROPOSAL SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

Please submit your proposal by July 23, 2026 to:

Email: dklundt@choosechicago.com

Subject Line: RFP for Media Buy for If It's Art It's Here: Fall 2026

Any questions or requests for clarification regarding this RFP should be directed to dklundt@choosechicago.com

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 Choose Chicago and this RFP. This Request for Proposals in no way commits Choose Chicago to award a contract, to pay any costs in preparation of a proposal, or to contract for the goods and/or services offered. Choose Chicago 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 Choose Chicago and the selected Contractor to better define, elaborate upon, and establish the Contractor's final Scope of Work and general Terms and Conditions.