



## FLWC RFP Q&A

### **What is the biggest opportunity facing the organization with this transition?**

FLWC views this transition as a pivotal moment to strengthen how the organization supports the regional wine and tourism economy. It creates an opportunity to sharpen strategic focus, elevate the destination brand through more integrated marketing, and ensure that investments are closely aligned with measurable outcomes.

### **What is the biggest challenge that the organization is facing this year?**

FLWC is currently navigating an organizational transition while ensuring consistent marketing performance and industry support across the region. Maintaining brand momentum and operational continuity during this evolution is a key focus.

The organization also continues to balance available funding with ambitious marketing objectives, while demonstrating measurable value to stakeholders and investors.

Like many destination organizations, FLWC is also adapting to rapidly changing consumer behaviors, emerging technologies, and evolving marketing channels that require strategic flexibility and innovation.

### **Can you provide a copy of your brand guidelines and any research conducted on behalf of the organization?**

Brand guidelines and supporting research for Finger Lakes Wine Country are available at the links below. The research and brand refresh were completed in 2019 and remain the foundation of the current brand platform. FLWC welcomes agency recommendations for evolving and strengthening the brand moving forward.

[FLWC Brand Guidelines \(2019\)](#)

[FLWC Research Conducted by Insight Strategy Group \(2019\)](#)

[FLWC Resonance Consultancy Marketing Plan \(2019\)](#)

### **Do you have current analytics or reports other than the 2018-2023 Report that can be shared?**

Yes. In addition to the 2018–2023 Report, below are links for the 2024 Annual Report, and the 2025 Program of Work Performance Report. These reports provide additional insight into current marketing performance, strategic initiatives, and organizational impact.

[2025 Program of Work Performance Report](#)

[2024 Annual Report](#)

[2018-2023 Report](#)

**The RFP outlines a transition from a staff-led model, but does FLWC currently utilize any external agencies for specialized services (e.g., website maintenance, specialized media buying, or PR) that the new partner will be expected to absorb or manage?**

FLWC has historically engaged external agencies to support specialized services including website development and maintenance, social media support, public relations, and media buying. The selected full-service marketing agency will not be expected to absorb or directly manage existing agency contracts.

**Beyond marketing operations, what administrative tasks is the agency expected to take on from staff?**

Beyond marketing strategy, planning, and execution, the agency is not expected to assume core administrative or organizational management functions.

The FLWC Board of Directors will appoint a Marketing Committee that will provide oversight, establish priorities, and serve as the primary liaison with the selected agency. Financial administration, including bookkeeping, budgeting oversight, invoicing, and vendor payments, is managed by a contracted bookkeeper.

The FLWC Board of Directors will continue to manage stakeholder and investor relations, organizational governance, and compliance-related responsibilities. The agency may be asked to support communications or materials related to these efforts but would not be responsible for administrative management of these functions.

The agency will be expected to manage marketing-related administrative tasks such as campaign development, reporting, vendor coordination within marketing initiatives, and strategic planning of marketing programs.

**Who will organize and host board meetings and take minutes?**

2026 Board meetings have been scheduled through the end of the year. Board meetings are organized and hosted by the Board Chair in coordination with Board officers. The Secretary of the Board is responsible for recording and maintaining official meeting minutes. The selected agency may be asked to provide marketing updates or reports for Board review but will not be responsible for meeting administration or documentation.

**How often are the Board meetings and are they virtual or in-person?**

The Board meets monthly. Meetings alternate between fully virtual sessions held via Zoom and hybrid meetings that offer both in-person attendance and a virtual participation option. The selected agency will be invited to present marketing updates or strategic recommendations as needed.

**Can monthly reports/meetings be attended virtually?**

Monthly reporting meetings may generally be conducted virtually. However, periodic in-person meetings and in-region visits will be expected to support strategic planning, stakeholder engagement, content development, and partnership collaboration as needed.

**Will there be a sub-committee or point-person charged with oversight for the marketing programs?**

The FLWC Board of Directors will appoint a Marketing Committee that will provide oversight, establish priorities, and serve as the primary liaison with the selected agency.

**How will creative, messaging, content, and media plans be approved?**

Creative, messaging, content, and media plans will be reviewed and approved by the FLWC Marketing Committee, which will serve as the primary liaison between the agency and the organization. The committee will focus on approval of high-level strategy, campaign direction, brand alignment, and budget allocation.

The selected agency will be expected to manage and execute day-to-day marketing activities within approved strategic and brand guidelines without requiring routine approvals from the Board of Directors.

FLWC anticipates that the onboarding process with the selected agency will include development of clear approval workflows, communication protocols, and timelines to ensure efficient collaboration and execution.

**Will there be a requirement to monitor an incoming email for the organization? What about phone calls, how will they be handled?**

FLWC maintains two general organizational email addresses. The info@ email receives website contact form submissions and general consumer inquiries, while the admin@ email serves as the primary communication channel for organizational and Board-related correspondence.

The info@ inbox, which receives consumer and visitor inquiries, may transition to being monitored and managed by the selected agency as part of consumer-facing marketing, visitor engagement, and promotional support. The admin@ inbox, which supports organizational and Board-related correspondence, will continue to be monitored and managed by the FLWC Board of Directors.

FLWC does not maintain a public-facing phone number for the organization.

**Are the organizations' historical files in digital form or paper form? Will the vendor need to provide space for storing documents?**

Most organizational records are maintained in digital format. FLWC also maintains a storage unit containing historical physical documents, which is managed by the Board of Directors. The selected vendor will not be responsible for physical document storage or archival management. The agency will be responsible only for managing and maintaining marketing-related digital materials developed or utilized as part of their scope of work and may be granted access to relevant digital assets as needed to support marketing and strategic initiatives.

**What responsibilities will the current web developer continue providing?**

The selected agency will be expected to collaborate with FLWC's website provider, particularly regarding website hosting and overall site functionality. FLWC is open to various collaborative models related to website management. For example, the current website provider may continue to serve as the hosting

and technical support partner, while the selected agency may assume responsibility for website content strategy, content updates, and integration with broader marketing initiatives.

**What CMS system is your website maintained in?**

The WordPress platform is used to maintain and manage the FLWC website.

**Do you have a CRM or email database? If so, what tool is it in?**

FLWC does not currently utilize a formal CRM system. FLWC maintains a database of approximately 50,000 opt-in subscribers managed through Constant Contact, which serves as the organization’s email marketing platform. FLWC is open to agency recommendations regarding CRM strategy, audience segmentation, and opportunities to enhance data utilization.

**One of the requirements is tracking brand visibility in “AI-driven environments”. Does FLWC use any specific tools to measure visibility across LLM models? Do you have current “share of voice” data in these models?**

FLWC recognizes the growing importance of AI-driven search and discovery tools in influencing traveler decision-making. At this time, we are not using dedicated platforms to formally track brand visibility or share of voice across large language model environments.

We are monitoring industry trends and understand this is an important emerging area of opportunity. We welcome recommendations from agency partners regarding tools, methodologies, and benchmarks for measuring and strengthening FLWC’s presence within AI-driven discovery platforms.

**Does FLWC currently have a baseline for 'AI-driven discovery' and LLM brand mentions, or is the selected agency expected to establish these metrics during the first 90 days?**

FLWC does not currently maintain formal baseline metrics for AI-driven discovery or brand visibility within large language model environments. Establishing appropriate benchmarks, measurement methodologies, and reporting frameworks in this area is expected to be a collaborative priority.

FLWC would anticipate that the selected agency provides recommendations within the early stages of engagement, including potential tools, performance indicators, and strategies for strengthening visibility across emerging AI-driven discovery platforms. FLWC is also interested in identifying meaningful and effective ways to report on AI-related brand exposure and its impact on destination awareness and visitor engagement.

**In the past was public relations handled internally or contracted with an agency?**

Public relations for FLWC has historically been managed through contracted agency partnerships.

**Have any in-person events been organized and hosted? (Whether internal events for investors/partners or public-facing consumers events [i.e. festivals])**

Historically, FLWC has organized and hosted a variety of in-person events and industry engagement initiatives. These have included two in-region, media-focused conferences, including TBEX 2018 and the

Wine Bloggers Conference 2015, as well as smaller-scale hosted media experiences and familiarization tours.

FLWC has also participated in travel and wine trade expos and has facilitated investor and industry workshops focused on regional collaboration, education, and stakeholder engagement.

**Roughly when were your creative video and photo assets last refreshed, and does the Board have a set timeline for when they expect a new 'hero' content capture to occur?**

FLWC captures photo and video content on an ongoing basis, resulting in a regularly refreshed library of destination and partner assets. Existing photo and video content will be available for agency use through 2026, and agencies are welcome to incorporate these materials into campaign development as a cost-effective option.

The Board of Directors does not currently have a fixed timeline for a large-scale or “hero” content capture initiative. FLWC would welcome strategic recommendations from the selected agency regarding timing, scope, and approach for future hero content development based on brand positioning, campaign strategy, and budget considerations.

**Does the Board have a preference for an agency that executes media buying and 'pulls the levers' with an in-house team versus one that manages specialized media subcontractors?**

The FLWC Board of Directors does not have a preference regarding whether media buying is executed through an agency’s in-house team or through specialized subcontracted partners. FLWC’s primary priority is achieving strong, measurable performance outcomes supported by strategic planning, transparency, and accountability.

FLWC expects the selected agency to clearly outline its media buying structure, including any subcontractor relationships, and to maintain full responsibility for performance, reporting, budget stewardship, and communication regardless of execution model.

**Does the provided budget need to include recurring fees such as website domain/hosting/SSL, email newsletter costs, etc.? Or will certain costs be handled through the current web developer?**

Website hosting and email marketing software costs are not included in the provided marketing budget and are maintained as separate organizational expense lines. These services are currently managed and funded directly by FLWC.

The selected agency will be expected to collaborate with FLWC and existing service providers as needed to support marketing initiatives but will not be responsible for funding or contracting these services unless otherwise mutually agreed upon.

**If our analysis shows the current budget can’t realistically meet all the KPIs, would the Board be open for a phased rollout or a best-case budget recommendation that aligns with these goals?**

FLWC values strategic partnership and recognizes that marketing success is dependent on appropriate alignment between goals, scope, and resources. If analysis suggests that achieving all KPIs within the current budget may not be feasible, FLWC would be open to considering phased approaches or alternative investment scenarios.

We would expect agencies to provide clear prioritization, rationale, and performance expectations to support informed discussion and potential review by the Board of Directors.

**When comparing the RFP budget to the annual expenses of past years, do you anticipate that in year two, with a full 12 months of implementation, that the budget would be closer to the 2023 budget minus any admin/office/salary costs?**

Yes, it is anticipated that the 2027 marketing budget for Finger Lakes Wine Country will increase to a level more consistent with 2023 marketing investment, adjusted to exclude administrative, office, and salary-related expenses that were previously included in overall organizational budgets.

FLWC is funded through a combination of public and private investment, and annual marketing budgets are dependent on continued stakeholder participation and funding support. FLWC remains committed to aligning marketing investment with strategic goals and demonstrated return on investment.