

Request for Proposals

The Crooked Road Travel Guide: Travel Guide Design, Publication and Print

The Crooked Road: Virginia's Heritage Music Trail
RFP Release Date: September 1, 2026
Deadline for Proposal: September 30, 2026

Purpose

The Crooked Road, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, is soliciting proposals from qualified individual(s) or organization(s) to design, publish, and print a travel guidebook with a multi-year shelf life in a magazine style for consumers and visitors to Southwest Virginia. This guide should include a detailed listing of Crooked Road events, venue schedules, historical and informational articles, and ad listings. Sales, layout, and integration of ads will be the responsibility of the selected firm.

About The Crooked Road

The Crooked Road: Virginia's Heritage Music Trail is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit corporation whose mission is to support economic development in the 19 counties and 4 cities of Southwest Virginia by celebrating and promoting the region's unique musical heritage and culture. The region is home to a rich history of traditional Appalachian music including the genres of bluegrass, old-time, gospel, blues, and early country music. Today, The Crooked Road is home to hundreds of cultural caretakers who continue the legacy of playing traditional dance tunes, ballads, and songs that are integral to the cultural identity of Southwest Virginia.

As a 330-mile-long driving trail, The Crooked Road connects ten major venues - institutions that have a special historical and/or cultural significance to the region's musical heritage. The Crooked Road offices are located at One Heartwood Circle, Abingdon, VA 24210. Since its incorporation in 2004, The Crooked Road has played a major role in regional development through cultural heritage tourism. The Crooked Road has attracted visitors from across the nation and the world to Southwest Virginia to explore the breadth and depth of the region's traditional music. In conjunction with partner organizations, PDCs, and local governments, The Crooked Road has generated increased revenues for musicians, music venues, local businesses, and local governments.

Overview

The Crooked Road requests proposals from experienced publishers to design, publish, and print a comprehensive travel guide for visitors to The Crooked Road region. This magazine style should match seamlessly with The Crooked Road's website and mobile app.

Scope of Work

- The firm is expected to design, publish, and print a consumer-facing guidebook to be used by visitors to explore The Crooked Road and learn about opportunities to experience traditional music in Southwest Virginia.
- The selected firm will be responsible for content creation and copy. A content outline will be made by The Crooked Road.
- The firm will handle all advertising sales, outreach, and communication.
- The publication will have a suggested print frequency of every 12 months.

The guidebook will be magazine style size 8.5 x 11 inches, including cover, back cover and internal pages. The final number of pages is to be determined upon award. Printing should be allocated for 15,000 copies. Guidebook production should begin in December 2026 with delivery of finished magazine in May 2027.

Guidebook should include the following in full color:

- Venue listings & directory
- Detachable map of The Crooked Road
- Advertisements
- Articles highlighting significant venues, events, and artists in The Crooked Road region.

Budget

The maximum budget available for this project is $26,000. This amount shall include all labor, project management, stakeholder engagement, travel, meetings, research, graphic design, preparation of deliverables, and all other costs necessary to complete the scope of work.

Proposals shall include a detailed cost proposal that itemizes costs by major task, identifies any subcontractor expenses, and provides a total not-to-exceed project cost. The Crooked Road reserves the right to negotiate the final scope of work and budget with the selected firm to ensure project objectives are achieved within the available funding.

The Crooked Road reserves the right to negotiate ad sales revenue sharing as part of the contract negotiation process.

Selection Criteria

All proposals should provide a work plan/strategy to accomplish the objectives described in the request above. Proposals will be reviewed by The Crooked Road.

Proposals should include the following information:

- Project plan
- Team members and qualifications
- A list of previous relevant experience
- Proposed timeline, schedule milestones
- Payment terms
- Expenses
- Expected content to ads ratio
- Quality of paper and binding method

Proposals should include at least three prior works for reference.

Project Schedule

Date	Activity
September 1, 2026	Issuance of this RFP
September 30, 2026	Proposals Due by 5:00 pm EST
October 8, 2026	Firms Notified for Interviews
October 13-16, 2026	Consultant Interviews
October 19, 2026	Consultant Selection & Contract Negotiations
February 1, 2027	Milestone Check-In
May 1, 2027	Project Delivered

Interviews and presentations will be conducted with the top-ranked firms, with the final selection based upon the sole discretion of the Executive Director and selection committee of The Crooked Road. The selected firm will enter

into contract negotiations with The Crooked Road and a final scope of services, amount and method of compensation will be determined. If a mutually acceptable contract for services cannot be successfully negotiated, the organization will commence negotiations with the next highest ranked firm and continue until a contract is successfully negotiated. The Crooked Road reserves the right to retain the awarded individual(s) or firm(s) for future projects similar to the one described herein. Additionally, The Crooked Road reserves the right to reject all proposals.

Questions

All questions must be submitted in writing by 5:00 pm, September 15, 2026. Responses to all questions will be issued via written addendum and shared with all prospective respondents.

Direct all questions and inquiries to:
Tyler Hughes
The Crooked Road Executive Director
thughes@thecrookedroadva.com
(276) 492-2409

Submissions & RFP Response Layout

To ensure a fair and consistent evaluation process, respondents must organize their proposals according to the format outlined in this section. Proposals that do not follow the required structure may receive point deductions during scoring.

Proposals shall not exceed 20 pages per project component. Resumes, certifications, and other required attachments are not included in the page limit.

Proposals should be organized to include the following:

- Title Page
- Executive Summary
- Company Biography
- Qualifications & Relevant Experience
- Project Timeline
- Cost Proposal
- Additional Attachments As Needed

All proposals must be submitted by September 30, 2026 at 5 p.m. Eastern Time via digital copy to admin@thecrookedroadva.com.

Staff Contact

Direct all questions and inquiries to:
Tyler Hughes
The Crooked Road Executive Director
thughes@thecrookedroadva.com
(276) 492-2409



Request for Proposals
Addendum: September 18, 2026

The Crooked Road Travel Guide: Travel Guide Design, Publication and Print

The Crooked Road: Virginia's Heritage Music Trail
RFP Release Date: September 1, 2026
Deadline for Proposal: September 30, 2026

Planning Information
The Crooked Road has established relationships with its ten major venues, 40+ affiliate venues, and other tourism partners throughout Southwest Virginia. The selected firm will have access to contract information and resources available for planning and creation of the travel guide.

Content Creation/Page Count
The final page count of the travel guide should range between 30 - 65 pages. The content outline provided by The Crooked Road will include suggestions for editorial content that highlights Crooked Road venues, festivals, regional artists, and educational opportunities within The Crooked Road footprint, but will not include finalized articles. Proposals should include a recommended content to advertisement ratio.

Photography
The Crooked Road has access to photos that may be used in the travel guide. Proposals should include any anticipated needs for additional photography to complete the project.

Ad Revenue/Revenue Share Expectations
The selected firm will be responsible for all aspects of ad sales including pricing, billing and collection of ad revenue. The Crooked Road reserves the right to negotiate ad sale pricing and revenue sharing as part of the contract negotiation process. The Crooked Road has not established a target split range. Firms are encouraged to include potential ad revenue splits as part of their proposal.

Distribution and Printing
The Crooked Road plans to distribute copies to its major venues, affiliate venues, visitor center, and other locations throughout Southwest Virginia. The Crooked Road will assume all responsibility for distribution logistics of the printed copies. The selected firm will be responsible for all aspects of production, printing, and delivery to The Crooked Road. This includes proposing specific production and printing solutions.

Detachable Map
The Crooked Road does not require a specific paper stock. Proposals are encouraged to propose a map that is usable, durable, and compatible within the overall project budget.

Digital Version
The Crooked Road does not require a digital copy of the travel guide, but firms are encouraged to propose options for a digital version that fits within the provided budget.

Publication Frequency
The Crooked Road's intended shelf life of this travel guide is three plus years. An annual publication is not required. The Crooked Road reserves the right to purchase additional copies as needed.