

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)
TO PRODUCE A NEW SIGNATURE MUSIC EVENT
FOR THE CITY OF BELLINGHAM**

All proposals must be received no later than **NOON March 25, 2022**. Late submissions will not be accepted. Proposals are to be submitted in a PDF format via email only to:

City of Bellingham Tourism Commission
Signature Event Proposal / Shannon Taysi
Email Shannon Taysi at - staysi@cob.org

INTRODUCTION:

The City of Bellingham, WA, seeks proposals from parties interested in and capable of producing a music related festival, special event or a unique public experience, "Signature Event". This request seeks to identify a qualified producer with the experience, industry contacts and innovative vision for launching an annual music event that will encourage commerce, maximize national and regional exposure, enhance the existing quality of life for residents and become self-sustaining.

Our performing arts, music venues and food and beverage industries have been hit harder by COVID than most. While COVID is not completely behind us, we issue this RFP with optimism that it will soon be safer to return to the music scene. The City will ensure the selected party will follow CDC, State and local COVID safety guidelines.

This RFP does not constitute a commitment implied or otherwise, that the City of Bellingham (City) will initiate a contractual action on this matter. Further, the City will not be responsible for any cost incurred by responders in furnishing any information. After receipt of responses to this RFP, meetings may be scheduled by the City to review/discuss the information received. Responders to this RFP are encouraged to offer big, bold, creative ideas.

FUNDING and ELIGIBLE EXPENSES:

Up to \$85,000 is available for the first year and approximately \$60,000 is available for the two following years for one or more Signature Events. The award(s) will be announced in April or May of 2022. Recognizing the time it takes to prepare a music event, the Tourism Commission's expectation is the inaugural event will take place in 2023, but the goal is to launch the event as soon as possible. Source of funding is lodging tax paid for by hotel/motel visitors and collected within the City of Bellingham. The anticipated commitment is up to three years for purposes of providing seed money necessary to launch a new event. Following year three, the expectation is the operators will be eligible to compete for our annual tourism destination marketing grants (\$10-\$25k average).

Marketing and operational expenses are eligible. Marketing expenses includes activities designed to increase tourism, including but not limited to advertising, publicizing, or otherwise distributing information for the purpose of attracting and welcoming tourists; developing strategies to expand tourism and funding marketing of special events and festivals designed to attract tourists.

Operation includes, but is not limited to, typical expenses associated with managing and operating an event such as supplies, equipment rentals, venue costs etc.

Events do not necessarily need to be held in Bellingham, but need to demonstrate a direct impact to Bellingham's economy (i.e. hotel stays).

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Bellingham is known for its natural beauty, a commitment to environmental awareness and a general healthy, creative and free-spirited nature (see www.bellingham.org/top-facts for more information on our region). Proposals should highlight and enhance Bellingham's unique history, cultural attributes and vibrant downtown. Proposals should consider opportunities for event goers, through partners/others, to connect to Bellingham's culinary proficiency, and/or great outdoor experiences which includes access to the mountains, foothills, and Salish Sea. The City intends to use Signature Events to highlight what Bellingham has to offer.

The City is interested in pursuing an event unique to our area that reinforces Bellingham has a lot to offer outside of the summer months. Bellingham is well known for outdoor and recreational opportunities. The purpose of this offering is to highlight indoor events and activities such as an authentic restaurant and live music experience. The purpose is to build events/activities that locals are connected to and can participate in which also draws a significant number of visitor participants of all ages to Bellingham and Whatcom County to experience what we have to offer in the fall, winter or spring seasons. The goal is the event will become synonymous with the community. The community currently has an annual outdoor relay event "Ski to Sea" held each May over Memorial Day weekend and selected Bellingham SeaFeast as its first Signature Event several years ago. In 2022 our newest Signature Event, Northwest Tune-Up, a biking and outdoor music event will debut. The City is interested in events that differ from these events. Proposals for projects or events held during the off-peak months of October – May is required.

PROGRAM GOALS The Tourism Commission has the following goals for the program yet recognizes every proposal may not satisfy every goal.

- Creates a meaningful artistic and cultural impact on our local community and the visitors that attend.

- Celebrates the indoor food, restaurant, arts and culture scene that Bellingham has to offer.
- Prioritizes diversity, equity and inclusivity and supports BIPOC, LGBTQIA+ and other historically marginalized communities.
- Integrating new and up & coming talent into the line-up is also welcomed.
- Provides a unique distinctive Pacific Northwest experience. For example, the event should not re-create what's happening in Seattle.
- Attracts a significant number of tourists, with an emphasis on the Canadian visitor and yields a strong likelihood of overnight stays. For example, a person is more likely to stay overnight if the event is over a period of days or weeks. A weekend event that begins on Thursday adds more benefit to the already popular weekend stays.
- Generates numerous secondary economic benefits. Promotes the walkability, food and restaurant scene, while highlighting or incorporating, where appropriate, businesses, history, area attractions, other events and environmental stewardship.
- Creates a long-lasting positive impression of the event and of Bellingham/Whatcom County.
- Becomes self-sustaining after a few years – specifically, City funding for operations is not required longer than three years.

REQUIRED SUBMITTALS:

Submissions must be received no later than **NOON on Friday, March 25, 2022!** Late submissions will not be accepted.

1. **Cover Letter (REQUIRED).** 1 page Maximum. Name of primary contact person – his/her/they, address, the fiscal agent (whether government, non-profit or for-profit), phone number and email address.
2. **Narrative (70 Points).** 10 Pages Maximum.
 - a. Description of Signature Event (15 Points). Describe the concept, dates, how the event builds upon Bellingham's food, arts & culture scene, how the event is unique to the Pacific Northwest and other information to fully describe the proposed unique event. Is this event new or does it build upon an existing but very small and relatively new event – be specific in order for the reviewers to have enough information to qualify your application as an eligible event.
 - b. Project Plan/Scope of Work (10). Annual Schedule showing key deliverables and milestones. When will funding be required, sponsors secured, venue secured, talent secured, advertising launched, event be held, etc. Note: Contract negotiation will likely begin May or June and therefore, the date of the event does not actually need to occur in 2022. Details of funding availability and timing of release of funds will be negotiated between the selected party(ies).

- c. Management/Project Team (15 Points). Identify name of key personnel and describe their role and experience. Differentiate between paid and volunteer staff. Resumes of key personnel must be attached, but will not be included in the 10 Page limit.
- d. Partnerships and Vendors (10 Points). Describe partnerships such as leveraging other events, resources of Bellingham/Whatcom County Tourism and Downtown Bellingham Partnership, or coordinate with other scheduled community events, facilities, organizations, community promotion and marketing efforts in order to leverage local resources and minimize duplication. Partnerships with hotels are strongly encouraged. Letters of support or letters of commitment by partners are strongly encouraged.
- e. Community & Economic Impact (15 Points). Please describe the expected economic benefit to the tourism sector and to the general community by explaining your target market and how and where you will reach your market, total estimated number of attendees/beneficiaries, estimated number of tourist attendees, and estimated number of room night stays generated at commercial hotel/motel lodging establishments. Describe secondary economic benefits such as the utilization of local restaurants, venues, businesses and potential employment opportunities for residents.
- f. "Wow" us (5 Points). Applicants are encouraged to convince the reviewers that your proposal helps the Tourism Commission build Bellingham as a tourist destination. Describe how your project impacts the community's standing in terms of advancing Bellingham's goal to have a thriving food, arts and culture scene.

3. **Budget (30 Points)**. No Page Limit.

- a. Budget Spreadsheet. Please be specific about *sources of revenue* (i.e. "City", "Sponsorships", "Ticket Sales", "T-shirt sales", "Foundation Grant", etc.) Be specific about *expenses* (i.e. "Payroll", "Insurance", "Website Design", "Graphic Design", "T-shirts/Collateral", "Radio Advertising", etc.) Note: If applicant seeks reimbursement for payroll, documentation will need to meet auditing standards. It must be clear what line items the applicant is seeking City funding for. Applicants can seek City funding for up to three years. We anticipate additional start-ups costs may be required in 2022.
- b. Budget narrative. A narrative may accompany the spreadsheet to outline details such as the types of advertising and promotional materials, the vendors utilized, the locations/venues where the advertising will be displayed. Describe (or show via spreadsheet) how the event will continue without City funding – i.e. what does the budget look like in 2026?

ALL MATERIALS ARE DUE NO LATER THAN NOON on March 25, 2022.

Email all required materials in a PDF format to:

City of Bellingham Tourism Commission
Signature Event Proposal / Shannon Taysi
Email Shannon Taysi at - staysi@cob.org

Call Shannon Taysi with questions at 360-778-8360

For any addendums or updates check

[Signature Event - City of Bellingham \(cob.org\)](https://cob.org)

between now and submittal date.