



Request for Proposal (RFP)

Agency Brief for Marketing and Promotion of EducationUSA India

Contact: United States-India Educational Foundation and U.S. Embassy, New Delhi

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EducationUSA India solicits proposals from reputed marketing agencies to increase brand awareness of EducationUSA India and promote the United States as a higher education destination among Indians interested in pursuing higher education abroad

Background

EducationUSA is a U.S. Department of State network of over 430 international student advising centers in more than 175 countries and territories. The network promotes U.S. higher education to students around the world by offering accurate, comprehensive, and current information about opportunities to study at accredited postsecondary institutions in the United States. EducationUSA also provides services to the U.S. higher education community to help institutional leaders meet their recruitment and campus internationalization goals. EducationUSA is the official source on U.S. higher education.

In India, there are six EducationUSA advising centers to service Indian students seeking guidance on U.S. higher education. These centers are located in Chennai, Kolkata, Mumbai, New Delhi, and two in Hyderabad. The United States-India Educational Foundation (USIEF) hosts five centers and one of the two in Hyderabad, is managed by Y-Axis Foundation.

Problem Statement

Brand Awareness: EducationUSA India is the U.S. Government's official source to offer accurate, comprehensive, and current information about opportunities to study at accredited postsecondary institutions in the United States, students in India are generally unaware of the brand and the services provided. As a result, many students consult private agents who may not offer unbiased information that takes the students' long-term interest into consideration when advising on U.S. HEIs.

Student Mobility: India has a sizeable active student population in India in various stages of decision-making about pursuing higher studies abroad. According to data released by Ministry of External Affairs of the Government of India, about 1.3 million Indian students were studying abroad in 2022. The United States wants to attract more high-caliber Indian students to consider U.S. for their higher education.

The U.S. higher education system is popular among the Indian students but it loses out on a percentage of students due to lack of visibility. There is an imminent need to create a larger

EducationUSA is a network of hundreds of advising centers in more than 170 countries, supported by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. EducationUSA Advising Centers actively promote U.S. higher education around the world by offering accurate, comprehensive, and current information about accredited educational institutions in the United States.



footprint of awareness and reach for U.S. higher education in India and in the process, make the EducationUSA India brand and its services visible and more accessible to the target audience.

Goals

- To establish the EducationUSAIndia's brand presence as the primary and official source of information for students interested in U.S. higher education evidenced by an increase in relevant and high-quality leads generated and the number of students and parents who contact EducationUSA advising centers between March 1, 2024 and May 31, 2025 through digital and traditional marketing campaigns;
- To establish and promote the U.S. as the -preferred destination for international education among Indian students;
- To increase brand awareness of EducationUSA among female students and students from diverse and underserved communities, as well as their parents, in ways that advance DEIA policy priorities in U.S. educational recruitment of Indian students.

Target Audience

The target audience can be defined per the following parameters:

1. Indian students who are interested in pursuing higher education abroad. This includes secondary school students, undergraduate, graduate, doctoral and post-doctoral study aspirants from metro, tier 1, 2 and 3 cities.
 - *Secondary school students for undergraduate programs between the age group of 16 to 19 years*
 - *Graduate students and working professionals considering post-graduation education between the age of 20 to 35 years*
2. Female students and their parents. Female students make up only 37% of Indian students in the United States, and a successful marketing campaign will require cultural and regional knowledge to increase this number.
3. Parents and relatives of prospective students.
4. School/College counsellors and private education consultants.

Broad Objectives and Sub-objectives

1. EducationUSA India is the official U.S. government source for information on U.S. higher education. Establish EducationUSA India as the primary and an authentic resource for students.
2. Create and boost marketing and branding initiatives on media and platforms where students spend most of their time via mobile devices (cell phones, tablets, apps etc.) including social media marketing, search engine marketing, media placements, authored articles, op-eds, etc.

3. Increase awareness and understanding of U.S. higher education system, the admissions process, the visa process, and ways to finance a U.S. higher education.

- a. Craft content strategy and create content/messaging around demystifying and decreasing misconceptions about studying in the U.S. and visa-related ambiguities among key audience as well as utilize and/or adapt any content and resources made available by EducationUSA and the U.S. Embassy for promotions on various media on the aforementioned themes.
- b. Develop a public relations campaign by identifying and leveraging key opinion leaders and influencers to advocate for U.S. higher education.

To actively demonstrate United States' commitment to the principles of diversity and inclusion by including images and using language to reflect organization's interest in seeing more Indian women studying in the U.S.

3. Day-to-day design and creation of social media content (including but not limited to posts, reels, stories, short graphic videos) using EducationUSA branding guidelines to promote events and activities planned by EducationUSA centers in India and schedule approved posts on EducationUSA India's social media platforms on a regular basis.

Expectations from the Incumbent Agency

The agency is expected to undertake the following responsibilities:

- Devise a comprehensive marketing strategy across media that includes owned media, earned media and paid media (relevant media buying) to meet objectives laid down in the brief
- Propose a strategy that includes, but is not limited to, digital marketing, broadcast marketing, print marketing, radio marketing, search engine marketing (SEM), social media marketing (SMM), influencer marketing, publisher marketing, and PR campaigns to facilitate favorable project outcomes.
- Implement the selected media mix to bring the strategy to fruition through optimal allocation of approved budgets and use of traditional and innovative marketing methods.
- Measure and report KPIs as mutually decided by the soliciting organization and on a real-time basis.
- Monitor achievement of objectives, identify deviations from expected results, modify and fine tune strategy on-the-go and successfully implement required changes in media mix.

Day-to-Day Deliverables:

- Marketing Strategy: To develop a comprehensive marketing strategy with digital and traditional mix, tailored to our target audience and goals including:
- Google Ads Campaign: Create and manage Google Ads campaigns and relevant landing pages to drive qualified leads.

- Content Creation: Produce engaging and informative mixed media content for our website and social media platforms for both strategic campaigns as well as day-to-day social media postings about events and activities
- Social Media Management: Manage and grow our social media presence, including content posting, engagement, and public relations activities. The agency would be required to create social media graphics and posts for a fast-paced work.
- Online Reputation Management (ORM): Monitor and manage our online reputation by addressing any negative comments or reviews and promoting positive content.
- Analytics and Reporting: Provide regular reports on campaign performance, including key metrics and recommendations for improvement.
- Provide PR services including but not limited to print and broadcast advertising, opinions by influencers and established opinion leaders.

Bidder Qualifications

- Bidder must be regularly and continuously engaged in the business of providing comprehensive marketing as well as PR services during the past three years with preference for bidders with experience in the education sector. This should be verifiable through references and past projects completed.
- Bidder must have a comprehensive understanding of all aspects of strategizing and executing complex digital, broadcast, and print marketing campaigns and must be conversant with the current and future trends in the industry.
- Bidder should have strong understanding and make data-based recommendations on media platforms that will reach target audiences.
- Bidder must understand project's marketing needs and provide the appropriate resources to strategize, implement, and execute comprehensive marketing campaigns as well as provide other associated services.
- Bidder must have a customer relationship model that proactively partners with the client to place the right resources at the right time and quickly resolve issues. This must be verifiable through references.
- Bidder must have qualified individuals that may have to pass a hiring background check to work on some applications (i.e., work history and references).

Selection Process

Stage 1 Email proposals to rfp@usief.org.in no later than January 30, 2024. Proposal should include: introduction, company overview and portfolio, project research and understanding, audience analysis, proposed marketing strategy, media mix, proof of concept/sample creatives (collateral) and timeline, deliverables and basic cost breakout, and indicate what services are provided by the bidder and/or a subcontractor.

1. Agency Profile: Provide an overview of your agency, including relevant experience and previous client success stories.
2. Methodology: Describe your approach to comprehensive marketing, including but not limited to PR, Google Ads, and ORM, and including any unique strategies or tools you use.
3. Timeline: Outline a proposed timeline for the project, including key milestones and deadlines.
4. Budget: Provide a detailed breakdown of your proposed budget, including any additional costs or fees.
5. References: Include references from previous clients or partners.

Stage 2: Shortlisted bidders will be called to present their proposals in person or virtually. Only agencies whose proposals are shortlisted will be contacted.

A final selection will be made based on cost, experience, capacity, and marketing strategy. The approximate budget for this contract would be around USD 125,000.

Client referrals may be used for the final deliberation.

Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

1. Methodology and Strategy
1. Budget
2. Experience and Expertise
3. Timeliness
4. References

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