

Request for Proposals: Economic Impact Analysis of Acadia National Park
RFP Release Date: July 19, 2017

Introduction: Friends of Acadia is seeking a professional qualified team or individual to produce a high quality analysis of the economic impact of Acadia National Park.

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Information about Acadia National Park (www.nps.gov/acad):

Acadia National Park is located about midway up the Maine coastline. The park consists of three main sections on Mount Desert Island, Isle au Haut, and the Schoodic Peninsula, with smaller holdings or conservation easements on offshore islands and bordering lands. Park facilities include a scenic motor road system, historic trails and carriage roads, four campgrounds, a research and learning center campus, several picnic areas, and historic buildings. The park is bordered by small New England towns that offer lodging, restaurants, gift shops, and guided activities.

Visitor Characteristics:

Acadia National Park celebrated its centennial in 2016 and received a record 3.3 million visits. The last comprehensive visitor study was conducted in August 2009 (http://psu.sesrc.wsu.edu/vsp/reports/221_ACAD_rept.pdf). Results showed that U.S. visitors to Acadia came from 41 states, Washington, D.C. and Puerto Rico with the greatest percentages from Massachusetts (15%), Maine (14%), and New York (11%). International visitors comprised 6% of the total visitor population and were from 15 countries with the greatest percentage coming from Canada (55% of international visitors), the Netherlands (13% of international visitors), and the United Kingdom (10% of international visitors). Half of the survey respondents were repeat visitors to Acadia. The majority of visitors were in the 36-65 age range, and 72% stayed overnight on Mount Desert Island (MDI). The average length of stay on MDI was 4.2 days.

What is known about Economic Contributions of Visitors:

The National Park Service annually publishes estimates of visitor spending and the associated direct, indirect, and induced economic effects. Previous studies of the economic contributions of the national parks have used assumptions that may not be locally appropriate at Acadia. For instance, the annual economic assessment of the National Park System (<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/socialscience/vse.htm>) uses visitor spending in counties within a sixty mile radius to estimate the economic contribution of the park. One could argue that this does not fully reflect the visitation and travel pattern as people come and go from Acadia.

There may also be secondary economic effects of Acadia that are not attributable to visitor spending. For example, how many scientists came to the Jackson Lab because it is next to Acadia National Park? How many retirees decided to move here? How important is the park as a factor for residents to choose to live here? Acadia National Park is relatively unique among national parks in that the local communities are interwoven with the park, and the relationship and working partnerships with the surrounding communities and businesses are vital to the park's health and success.

This study is intended to supplement and/or refine the information that is known about the economic contributions from visitors to Acadia National Park. The economic analysis report will be used by Friends of Acadia to highlight that Acadia is not only a contributor to the quality of life in the region, but also an important economic asset worthy of public and private investment.

Methodology: To be determined by the proposer, but could include direct interviews of park visitors (with approval from the Office of Management and Budget), local spending surveys, and/or analysis of economic indicators such as meals and lodging tax revenues.

Bidders must read the requirements for studies in and around national parks available at <http://www.nature.nps.gov/socialscience/expedited.cfm#> . While this economic analysis is being commissioned by Friends of Acadia, we anticipate that the National Park Service will find the results useful and will want to be involved in developing questions. Therefore, if direct surveys are planned as part of the study, approval by the Office of Management and Budget will likely be needed. Research conducted inside the park will also require a research permit from Acadia National Park.

Background information bidders may find useful:

- 1) The 2016 assessment of visitor spending and associated economic contributions is available at <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/socialscience/vse.htm>.
- 2) Visitor statistics for Acadia are available at <https://irma.nps.gov/Stats/Reports/Park/ACAD>.
- 3) The last major visitation survey was completed for Acadia in 2009 and is available at http://psu.sesrc.wsu.edu/vsp/reports/221_ACAD_rept.pdf.

Proposals should include:

- 1) a narrative description of the work proposed;
- 2) detailed budget;
- 3) timeline of key steps throughout the study;
- 4) curricula vitae of all researchers involved in the study and a description of their roles;
- 5) description of your team's (or individual) experience with economic impact studies;
- 6) description of what you think distinguishes your team and proposed study from your competitors;
- 7) list of pertinent publications (if not included in the CV);
- 8) if available, a reference list of other organizations/agencies for whom you have done work and a point of contact there;
- 9) a statement of litigation and/or conflict of interest, if any (see "Standards of Conduct" below); and,
- 10) supplemental materials, if helpful to your proposal.

Bids should not exceed \$25,000.

Proposal Due Date: August 23, 2017

Proposals may be submitted by e-mail (in pdf format) to Stephanie Clement, Conservation Director, Friends of Acadia at stephanie@friendsofacadia.org. Proposals may also be mailed to Friends of Acadia, P.O. Box 45, Bar Harbor, ME 04609. Questions may be submitted by e-mail or phone to Stephanie Clement at 207-288-3340 or stephanie@friendsofacadia.org.

Standards of Conduct

Within the last five years, please indicate whether the researcher/research team has been involved in litigation or other legal proceedings relating to his/her/their professional assignments? If so, please provide an explanation and indicate the current status or disposition. Are there any ongoing actions that may currently be in process?

Explain in detail any potential for conflict of interest that may be created by the researcher/research team providing services to Friends of Acadia. Are any partners in the firm significant donors to Friends of Acadia?

Insurance

If selected, bidder must be able to provide a certificate of insurance listing Friends of Acadia as an additional insured. Questions regarding insurance should be directed to Diana McDowell, Director of Finance and Administration, Friends of Acadia, 207-288-3340 or diana@friendsofacadia.org.

Information about Friends of Acadia: www.friendsofacadia.org

Friends of Acadia preserves, protects, and promotes stewardship of the outstanding natural beauty, ecological vitality, and distinctive cultural resources of Acadia National Park and surrounding communities for the inspiration and enjoyment of current and future generations. Friends of Acadia is an independent, non-profit conservation organization that inspires those who love Acadia National Park to make a real and lasting difference for this magnificent place through advocacy, volunteerism, and philanthropy. Founded in 1986, Friends of Acadia is today a leading example of citizen stewardship at national parks, and a place where personal connections to the park are translated into a remarkable collective impact. We bring people together and find solutions that work—to benefit Acadia now and for all time.