

General RFP Questions & Answers

Duplicate questions from repeated submissions have been merged. Where an answer was already provided in the RFP addendum, it's included below the question.

Cross-RFP Questions

1. Number of agencies / open vs. shortlisted RFP.

This is an open RFP, posted publicly on our website and LinkedIn, so we can't put a firm number on how many agencies will ultimately respond. We haven't worked with an outside agency before, so there's no existing roster to draw from. Beyond the public posting, key staff members personally reached out to a small number of trusted contacts to make sure they had visibility.

2. Brand confusion & visitation impact.

The most common misunderstanding is that travelers experience the Finger Lakes as one undifferentiated regional brand rather than recognizing Ontario County specifically—many visit our lakes, wineries, and towns without registering it as a Visit Finger Lakes/Ontario County experience versus the broader region or a neighboring county. That confusion has its greatest impact on repeat, intentional visitation: without a clear sense of what's distinct here, travelers are less likely to return specifically for Ontario County or recommend it as its own destination, which costs us the loyalty and word-of-mouth that a clearer identity would build.

3. Organizational/stakeholder outcomes beyond visitation and campaign performance.

Beyond visitation and campaign metrics, two things matter most: visible proof points for our elected officials and community stakeholders, to build confidence in this renewed investment ahead of future funding decisions, and a genuinely collaborative partnership that helps us mature as an organization during this transition. Success in year one also means coming out with real baseline data and repeatable systems, not just a strong campaign—that's what lets us sustain and grow this investment over time.

4. Primary target markets / evolving audiences.

We don't have sharply defined target markets today—priority segments haven't been tracked in recent years. We do know our audience likely skews toward regional drive markets, and we intend to define and refine that formally using our new Tourism Economics and CoStar data alongside our selected partners. We expect that picture to evolve as the data comes online, which is exactly why we want partners' data-informed recommendations rather than legacy assumptions.

5. Partner relationships to improve collaboration.

A few relationships stand out: our hotelier community, as we work together toward ADR and occupancy growth; our co-op advertising partners, a still-forming program; and the broader set of other 'Finger Lakes'-branded organizations—the Finger Lakes Regional Tourism Council and Finger Lakes Tourism Alliance—where brand overlap sometimes complicates otherwise-aligned goals. We'd also value support navigating our relationship with neighboring counties, where there's shared visitor geography but no formal joint marketing history to-date, solely between Ontario + one of them (exception Cayuga).

6. Three distinct agencies vs. submitting to multiple RFPs.

We're not requiring three distinct agency partners—the same agency or team is welcome to submit proposals for more than one of the PR, Strategic Planning, and Marketing/Advertising RFPs. We just ask that each proposal address its respective scope clearly and independently, so we can evaluate it on its own merits.