



## REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

### Public Relations Services

The Newport and Bristol County Convention and Visitors Bureau (Discover Newport) seeks proposals from qualified Vendors to serve as the organization's public relations partner, tasked with the development and execution of a strategic public relations program. Discover Newport seeks a partner with demonstrated success in generating earned media and securing results-driven media visits. This includes identifying priority journalists, collaborating on targeted itineraries, and delivering coverage that aligns with our strategic objectives.

This document constitutes a Request for Proposal ("RFP"), in a competitive format, from qualified firms. This request is an offer by Discover Newport to underwrite, in accordance with the terms and conditions of this RFP, the services proposed by the successful firm(s), by contract.

The respondents ("Proposers") to this RFP shall provide a proposal, in accordance with the terms and conditions set forth herein, to provide all or part of services to Discover Newport as described in the Scope of Work.

### **Project Overview**

Discover Newport is seeking a public relations partner to support the execution of a focused, earned media strategy that elevates the visibility of Newport and Bristol Counties as a year-round, overnight destination.

The scope of work is centered on generating high-quality media coverage that aligns with the organization's goals of increasing mid-week and shoulder-season visitation. The selected firm will be responsible for proactively identifying media opportunities, cultivating relationships with key travel writers and outlets, and securing placements in priority markets.

In addition, the selected vendor will support local media relations, including proactive outreach and response management, as well as the planning and execution of press events. The firm will also assist in developing and communicating messaging that reflects Discover Newport's balanced, sustainable approach to tourism.

This engagement is intended to be a multi-year partnership, subject to annual review, performance evaluation, and available funding. Discover Newport anticipates that the public relations partner will function as an extension of the organization's internal team, providing consistent strategic counsel, creative excellence, and accountable execution.

## **Background**

Discover Newport is the official destination marketing organization (DMO) for Newport and Bristol Counties, Rhode Island. As a regional tourism leader, Discover Newport is dedicated to promoting the area as a premier travel and meetings destination. The organization works to drive economic growth by attracting leisure visitors, group tours, corporate meetings, and special events that support local businesses and enhance community vitality.

## **Scope of Work**

The selected vendor will serve as Discover Newport's public relations partner, responsible for the development and execution of a strategic PR program with a primary focus on earned media, media hosting, and local communications.

### **Earned Media Strategy & Execution**

- Develop and implement a proactive earned media strategy aligned with Discover Newport's goals and priority markets
- Identify, pitch, and secure media coverage in targeted regional, national, and, where appropriate, international outlets
- Maintain and grow relationships with key travel writers, editors, and influencers
- Draft and distribute press materials, including press releases, media alerts, and story angles
- Monitor media coverage and provide regular reporting on placements, reach, and impact

### **Media Hosting & Press Trips**

- Identify and vet priority journalists for individual and group media visits
- Plan customized itineraries in collaboration with Discover Newport staff and local partners
- Host media on-site, ensuring a seamless, high-quality experience
- Track and report on resulting media coverage and outcomes

### **Local Media Relations**

- Serve as a resource for local media, including proactive outreach and reactive response support
- Build and maintain relationships with local and regional media outlets
- Coordinate messaging with Discover Newport leadership on issues impacting the destination

### **Press Events & Media Engagement**

- Plan and execute press events, media briefings, and familiarization opportunities
- Support event concepting, media invitations, on-site coordination, and follow-up
- Ensure alignment with broader marketing and communications initiatives

### **Community Sentiment & Messaging Support**

- Provide guidance on communications related to resident engagement, stewardship, and industry alignment
- Support Discover Newport in communicating the value of tourism to local stakeholders

### **Reporting & Performance Measurement**

- Provide regular reporting on media outreach, placements, and hosting activity
- Track performance against agreed-upon KPIs, including quality and relevance of coverage
- Offer insights and recommendations to optimize strategy and improve results

The selected vendor will work closely with Discover Newport's internal team and external partners to ensure alignment, consistency, and measurable impact across all public relations efforts.

## **Budget and Contract Period**

The maximum dollar amount shall not exceed \$625K over the Contract term. The successful Proposer(s) will enter into a contract for services with the Discover Newport. The duration of the initial contract between Discover Newport and the successful Proposer is expected to begin on July 1, 2026. The term of the contract is for a period of 36 months (July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2029) with an option to renew for two additional years (July 1, 2029 – June 30, 2031).

July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2027	\$125K
July 1, 2027 – June 30, 2028	\$125K
July 1, 2028 – June 30, 2029	\$125K
July 1, 2029 – June 30, 2030	\$125K
July 1, 2030 – June 30, 2031	\$125K

This budget is inclusive of a fixed monthly retainer fee, all deliverables listed in the Scope of Work, and out-of-pocket expenses.

Payment terms are Net 30 days from the date Discover Newport receives an error-free invoice with all necessary and complete supporting documentation.

Discover Newport reserves the right to modify the scope of services and adjust the associated budget accordingly.

## **Proposal Elements**

Proposals shall not exceed 25 pages, excluding appendices. The following materials may be submitted as appendices and will not count toward the page limit: resumes, detailed budgets or rate cards, creative samples, references, and required forms.

Proposals shall be submitted in PDF format, using a minimum 11-point font, 1-inch margins, and standard 8.5” x 11” page size. Discover Newport reserves the right to reject proposals that do not comply with these requirements.

Proposals must include the following:

- 1. Approach & Timeline**  
Description of the proposer’s approach to delivering the Scope of Work, including key activities and a timeline of major tasks and milestones.
- 2. Account Team & Procurement Point of Contact**  
Identification of the primary procurement point of contact and proposed account team, including roles, qualifications, and relevant experience. Resumes for key personnel should be included.
- 3. Firm Qualifications**  
Summary of organizational qualifications, capacity, experience with similar engagements, financial/operational stability, and five (5) client references.
- 4. Measurement & Evaluation**  
Description of the approach to performance measurement, monitoring, and evaluation, including tools and metrics used to assess progress and outcomes.

**5. Fee Structure & Costs**

A proposed percentage-based, monthly retainer fee to fulfill the Scope of Work, including a total, not-to-exceed cost and line-item detail by task or scope component. Proposals must include a personnel schedule with job titles and billing rates for all subcontractors, as well as any anticipated purchases, travel, third party contracts/services. All costs, including media, must be invoiced at net and approved by Discover Newport.

**Schedule**

The following table provides a Schedule of Events for this RFP through contract finalization and approval. Discover Newport reserves the right to amend this Schedule at its sole discretion and at any time through a published Addendum.

<b>EVENT</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>LOCAL TIME</b>
RFP Released to Proposers	April 21, 2026	
Proposer Inquiry Period Ends	May 4, 2026	5:00 PM
Final Discover Newport Responses to Proposer Inquiries	May 11, 2026	5:00 PM
Proposers Submit Proposals	May 29, 2026	5:00 PM
Optional: Proposer Oral Presentations and Interviews	June 22, 2026	TBD
Estimated Notification of Selection and Begin Contract Negotiations	June 25, 2026	TBD

**Proposal Submission**

Responses to this RFP are due on **May 29, 2026, by 5 p.m.** Late responses will not be accepted and will result in disqualification.

Proposals must be submitted electronically as a PDF and must include one full proposal and one with all confidential information fully redacted. All proposals should include a completed RFP Response Certification Cover Form, included at the back of this document.

Proposals must be addressed to:

**TO:** rfp@discovernewport.org  
**CC:** vcimino@discovernewport.org

Subject line must include:

RESPONSE TO RFP: PR SERVICES

Questions, interpretations, or clarifications concerning this RFP should be directed by e-mail to rfp@discovernewport.org no later than 5 p.m. on May 4, 2026. Responses to questions, interpretations, or clarifications concerning this RFP will be posted online via addendum at discovernewport.org/rfp on May 11, 2026, to ensure equal awareness of important facts and details. *Any attempt by a Proposer to contact a member of Discover Newport’s procurement team outside the RFP process, to gain knowledge or an advantage, may result in disqualification of Proposer.*

## **Evaluation Criteria**

Proposals for this RFP will be evaluated according to the evaluation criteria outlined below. Discover Newport will establish an evaluation team to score proposals. Should a Proposer fail to achieve 70 points, it will receive no further consideration from the evaluation team.

	<b>Points</b>
<b>OVERALL EXPERIENCE OF COMPANY &amp; DEMONSTRATED RESULTS</b> An assessment of the history of your company, your experience as it relates to the requirements within this RFP, evidence of past performance, quality and relevance of past work, references, and related items.	35
<b>SCOPE OF WORK</b> Proposal demonstrates understanding of the project and articulates a well-thought out and creative process with a workplan, timeline, and additional considerations to achieve the desired results.	25
<b>QUALIFICATIONS OF PERSONNEL</b> An assessment of the qualifications and experience of your team and subcontractors.	25
<b>BUDGET APPROACH/COST EFFECTIVENESS</b> Effective and efficient delivery of quality services is demonstrated in relation to the budget allocation. The allocation is reasonable and appropriate.	15
Total	100

## **Oral Presentations and Interviews**

Finalists may be invited to oral presentations/interviews. Discover Newport retains the sole discretion to determine whether to conduct oral presentations, with which Proposers, and the number of interviews.

Proposers invited to be interviewed will receive an assignment no later than June 5, 2026. In addition, Discover Newport may ask the Proposer to provide clarification of elements of the written proposal. Information gained from oral presentations/interviews will be used to refine preliminary scores.

## **Notifications to Proposers**

1. Potential proposers are advised to review all sections of this RFP carefully and to follow instructions completely, as failure to make a complete submission as described elsewhere herein may result in rejection of the proposal.
2. Alternative approaches and/or methodologies to accomplish the desired or intended results of this procurement are solicited. However, proposals that depart from or materially alter the terms, requirements, or scope of work defined by this RFP will be rejected as being non-responsive.

3. All costs associated with developing or submitting a proposal in response to this RFP, or to provide oral or written clarification of its content, shall be borne by the Proposer. Discover Newport assumes no responsibility for such costs.
4. Proposals are irrevocable for a period of not less than 120 days following the date set for submission of proposals.
5. All pricing submitted will be firm and fixed unless otherwise indicated herein.
6. Late proposals will not be considered.
7. All proposals should include the proposer's FEIN or Social Security number as evidenced by a W9, downloadable from <https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/fw9.pdf>.
8. The purchase of services under an award made pursuant to this RFP will be contingent on the availability of funds and made at the discretion of Discover Newport.
9. Awarding this RFP is based on the Evaluation Criteria set forth in this RFP. Vendors are advised, however, that all materials and ideas submitted as part of this proposal and during the performance of any award shall be the property of and owned by Discover Newport, which may use any such materials and ideas.
10. Interested parties are instructed to peruse Discover Newport's website ([discovernewport.org/rfp](http://discovernewport.org/rfp)) on a regular basis, as additional information relating to this solicitation may be released in the form of an addendum to this RFP.
11. In accordance with Title 7, Chapter 1.2 of the General Laws of Rhode Island, no corporation organized under the laws of another state or country shall have the right to transact business in Rhode Island until it shall have procured a Certificate of Authority to do so from the Rhode Island Secretary of State (401-222-3040). This is a requirement only of the successful bidder.
12. Discover Newport reserves the right to award to one or more Proposers.
13. Discover Newport reserves the right to terminate this solicitation prior to entering into any agreement with any qualified firm pursuant to this Request for Proposal.

# Discover Newport

## Request for Proposals (RFP)

### RFP Response Certification Cover Form

RFP Title:

Research Services

## Vendor Information

Company Name:	
Mailing Address:	
City, State, ZIP:	
Primary Contact Name:	
Title:	
Phone Number:	
Email Address:	
Company Website:	

## Certification

By signing below, I certify that:

- I am authorized to submit this proposal on behalf of the vendor listed above.
- The information contained in this proposal is accurate and complete to the best of my knowledge.
- The vendor is in compliance with all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations.
- The vendor agrees to the terms and conditions outlined in the RFP and understands that Discover Newport reserves the right to reject any or all proposals or to negotiate with any proposer prior to awarding a contract.

Authorized Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_