



REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

For: Research Services

The Newport and Bristol County Convention and Visitors Bureau (Discover Newport) seeks proposals from qualified Vendors to serve as the organization's research partner, tasked with the development and execution of a comprehensive research program. The program will not only track performance, but also inform strategic marketing decisions.

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

The primary objective is to provide research that evaluates the impact of the region's tourism marketing programs as well as provide key consumer and industry insights to inform the strategic direction of Discover Newport's marketing program.

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 be responsible for the following:

Advertising Effectiveness & Return on Investment Study

- Seasonal Campaigns (Fall, Winter, Spring/Summer), must include but not limited to:
 - Gauge advertising awareness of the campaign;
 - Measure the efficiency of the media investment;
 - Gather consumer reaction to the creative;
 - Assess advertising impact by comparing the perceptions and behaviors of those aware of the ads to the same measures among those not aware of the ads;
 - Quantify ad-influenced trips, visitor spending, and ROI;
 - Compare research results across market groups; and
 - Provide insights to guide marketing decision-making.
- Annual Fiscal Year Return on Investment report.

Economic Impact

- Online Travel Impact Dashboard
 - Seasonally – Fall, Winter, Spring, Summer
 - Broken down to following:
 - Regionally
 - By Municipality (9 communities)
 - Must include but not limited to:
 - Total Spending
 - Visitor Spending by Commodity Purchased
 - Visitor Spending by Type of Accommodation
 - Earnings
 - Employment
 - Tax Receipts
 - Overnight Visitor Volume: Party Nights
 - Overnight Visitor Volume: Party Trips
 - Overnight Visitor Volume: Person Nights
 - Overnight Visitor Volume: Person Trips
 - Average Overnight Spending: Per Party Night
 - Average Overnight Spending: Per Party Trip
 - Average Overnight Spending: Per Person Night
 - Average Overnight Spending: Per Person Trips
- Subcategories
 - Accommodation
 - Arts, Entertainment & Recreation

- Food Service
 - Food Stores
 - Local Transportation & Gas
 - Retail Sales
 - Visitor Air Transportation
- Online Travel Barometer to include but not limited to:
 - Tax Revenues
 - Room Sales
 - Employment
 - Transportation
 - Traffic Counts
 - Price Indicators and Indexes
 - Lodging Trends

Consumer Perception Study

- Assess the overall image of Newport from the perspective of current and potential visitors;
- Identify key attitudes/perceptions about Newport as a destination, including perceptions of its key strengths and weaknesses;
- Define the prevailing market position, or positioning profile, of the area in the context of consumer perceptions vis-à-vis those of key competitors, which are driven by imagery and selection criteria;
- Investigate the competitive landscape and identify ways in which Newport can differentiate and position itself as the preferred destination;
- Identify key motivators – both rational (product) and emotional – to visit the area and its key competitors and how the region can prompt additional consideration and visitation;
- Determine Newport's key features and benefits offered to visitors, both overall and as it might vary by market; and
- Recommend a sustainable brand and image strategy with accompanying measures for success.

Other Reports/Projects

- Creative testing to evaluate advertisements in terms of overall appeal, communication of key brand messages, and the ability to generate interest in visiting Newport.
- Market Research to determine new markets whether drive or fly.
- Website Functionality and Effectiveness Study
- Seasonal Forecasts
 - Provide forecast for the seasonal spending and visitation.

Qualifications

To be considered for this engagement, vendors must demonstrate a strong track record of experience and expertise relevant to the scope of this project. Minimum qualifications include extensive experience in:

- Tourism and destination marketing research
- Expertise in advanced research methodologies
- Economic and visitor impact analysis
- Market segmentation and perception research
- Dashboard development

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.

EVENT	DATE	LOCAL TIME
RFP Released to Proposers	May 12, 2025	
Proposer Inquiry Period Ends	May 19, 2025	5:00 PM
Final Agency Responses to Proposer Inquiries	May 27, 2025	5:00 PM
Proposers Submit Proposals	June 13, 2025	5:00 PM
Proposer Oral Presentations and Interviews (if applicable)		TBD
Estimated Notification of Selection and Begin Contract Negotiations	June 25, 2025	

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, 2025. The term of the contract is for a period of three years (July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2028) with an option to renew for two additional years (July 1, 2028 – June 30, 2030).

Budget

The maximum dollar amount shall not exceed \$425,000 over the Contract term.

Year 1	\$125,000
Year 2	\$75,000
Year 3	\$75,000
Year 4	\$75,000
Year 5	\$75,000

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

Proposers to this RFP shall provide a proposed fee structure for providing services necessary to complete the proposed scope items. Proposers shall include a total, maximum price to accomplish the scope items incorporated in the proposal. Fee structure proposals shall include, but are not limited to costs for specific task items from the Scope of Work along with an estimate regarding the duration and number of hours to complete each task. Additionally, Proposers shall provide a personnel schedule which includes job title and billing rate for any work which may be undertaken under this contract. Proposers shall also provide job titles and rates for any subcontractors that the respondent is including in this response. If the Proposer contemplates any purchases or pass-through charges during the engagement, any mark-up rate above actual cost shall be identified as a separate line item in the budget. Discover Newport reserves the right to adjust both the budget and related services.

In addition to showing how you will meet the requirements outlined above, Proposers should also provide information regarding the following:

- **Research & Analytics:** Provide an overview of how you determine success. What are the analytic tools or services that you use, and what type of information will you be reporting back to Discover Newport as it relates to meeting our objectives?
- **Travel and Administration:** The Proposer should estimate any travel costs expected to incur during contract period. Travel and per diem expenses shall not exceed rates authorized by Discover Newport.

Criteria for Selection

Responsive proposals for this RFP will be evaluated according to the Evaluation Criteria outlined below.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

	Points
OVERALL EXPERIENCE OF COMPANY & DEMONSTRATED RESULTS 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
SCOPE OF WORK 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
QUALIFICATIONS OF PERSONNEL An assessment of the qualifications and experience of your managerial team, staff, subcontractors, and related items.	25
BUDGET APPROACH/COST EFFECTIVENESS Effective and efficient delivery of quality services is demonstrated in relation to the budget allocation. The allocation is reasonable and appropriate.	15
Total	100

NOTE: Designated Discover Newport staff or selected advisors will evaluate the written proposals. Discover Newport may at any time during the evaluation process seek clarification from Proposers regarding any information contained within their proposal. Final scores for each respondent will reflect a consensus of the evaluations. Any attempt by a Proposer to contact a member of Discover Newport's staff or selected advisors outside the RFP process, in an attempt to gain knowledge or an advantage, may result in disqualification of Proposer.

Instructions and 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 considered to be irrevocable for a period of not less than 120 days following the date set for submission of proposals.
5. All pricing submitted will be considered to be firm and fixed unless otherwise indicated herein.
6. Proposals misdirected to other locations, or that are otherwise not present at Discover Newport's office by the submission deadline for any cause will be determined to be late and will not be considered. For the purposes of this requirement, the official time and date shall be that of the time clock in the reception area of the Discover Newport office.
7. All proposals should identify the proposed team of professionals, including those employed by subcontractors, if any, along with respective areas of expertise and relevant credentials. Proposer should also provide a delineation of the portion of the scope of work for which each of these professionals will be responsible.
8. 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>
9. All proposals should include a completed RFP Response Certification Cover Form, included in this document.
10. 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.

11. 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.

12. Interested parties are instructed to peruse Discover Newport's website (discovernewport.org) on a regular basis, as additional information relating to this solicitation may be released in the form of an addendum to this RFP. Addenda will also be posted to discovernewport.org/rfp.

13. 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.

14. Discover Newport reserves the right to award to one or more Proposers.

Proposal Requirements

In order to be considered responsive, proposals must at a minimum contain the following:

Technical Proposal Elements

1. Description of the proposed approach in delivering the Scope of Work. Activities and timelines should be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time oriented. Include a timeline of major tasks and milestones.
2. Person who will be the primary point of contact with Discover Newport.
3. Qualifications of the Proposer to provide the requested services including capability, capacity, similarly complex projects and related experience and client references. Certification of availability of individuals in proposal.
4. A listing of the staff to be assigned to this engagement and their respective qualifications, past experience on engagements of this scope including resumes, and their role in those past engagements.
5. A description of the outcome monitoring and evaluation plan including a list of tools to track process, output and outcome measures for each component of the application.

Proposal Submission

Responses to this RFP are due on **June 13, 2025, by 5 p.m.**

Proposals must be submitted electronically and must include one full proposal and one with all Confidential Information fully redacted.

Electronic Proposals

Electronic Proposals must be addressed to:

TO: rfp@discovernewport.org

CC: Victoria Cimino, vcimino@discovernewport.org

Subject line must include: **RESPONSE TO RFP: Research**

Electronic Submissions must be submitted using the following criteria:

- a. Searchable PDF Format

Note: Phone calls and late responses will not be accepted and will result in disqualification.

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 19, 2025. Responses to questions, interpretations, or clarifications concerning this RFP will be posted online via addendum at discovernewport.org/rfp on May 27, 2025, to ensure equal awareness of important facts and details.

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, and by responding hereto, no firms are vested with any rights in any way whatsoever.

Discover Newport reserves the right to reject any or all proposals for not complying with the terms of this RFP.

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: _____