

April 3, 2026
Rhode Island Commerce Corporation
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Solicitation Number: **RFP-2606**
ADDENDUM NO. 1
Questions & Answers

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
BUSINESS ATTRACTION AND PR AGENCY

The Rhode Island Commerce Corporation (“Corporation”) seeks proposals from qualified firm(s) to provide public relations and/or advertising services to assist with the strategy and execution of comprehensive, statewide business attraction initiatives and event management and production on behalf of the Corporation.

1. Can you tell me if there is a budget for the Business Attraction and PR Agency campaign RFP #: RFP-2606?

Answer: The budget is not-to-exceed \$600,000 for the total contract. Proposers should submit a cost proposal they believe is appropriate to achieve the scope and deliverables outlined in the RFP. Proposals will be evaluated in accordance with the Evaluation Criteria set forth in the RFP.

2. What are the primary success metrics for advertising and social media efforts: Brand awareness, lead generation, site visits, business inquiries, and / or other economic development indicators?

Answer: All of the above.

3. What does Rhode Island Commerce consider as the top competitive markets for its key industry categories?

Answer: Rhode Island’s top competitive markets vary by industry but consistently include Massachusetts, Connecticut, Maine, Virginia, and Gulf Coast states.

4. What is Rhode Island Commerce’s available budget for paid media campaign tactics, including creative development?

Answer: See answer to Question #1.

5. What is Rhode Island Commerce’s available budget for event-related expenses?

Answer: See answer to Question #1.

6. What is Rhode Island Commerce’s available budget for paid social and/or partnership activations?

Answer: See answer to Question #1.

7. Are there key timeframes or periods of heavy-up anticipated for paid campaigns?

Answer: There are no predetermined periods of increased spend or “heavy-up” for the Corporation’s paid campaigns, as timing is driven by evolving business priorities and market opportunities rather than fixed seasonal programs. The Corporation’s approach is highly adaptive; we monitor performance and remain flexible.

8. Are bidders requested to provide a paid media strategy & plan for this response — or just conceptual thinking?

Answer: No paid media strategy or plan is required.

9. How would Rhode Island Commerce prioritize domestic vs. international targets as it relates to paid campaigns? Is it a 50 / 50 split or should U.S. be prioritized more than international targets?

Answer: The Corporation prioritizes opportunities based on alignment with the State’s core industry strengths, growth potential, and likelihood of successful attraction, rather than strictly by geography. As a result, we do not maintain a fixed split between domestic and international targets and instead efforts focus where they are most likely to generate results.

10. What is the budget maximum available for this scope of work and is that inclusive of expenses (e.g. media buy and travel) or professional fees only?

Answer: See answer to Question #1.

11. Are incumbent(s) expected to bid on this work? If yes, who is your current partner?

Answer: Duffy & Shanley

12. There are some priority objectives in Rhode Island’s CEDS that are not addressed in this RFP. Would you be open to proposals that address these items, or is the budget strictly accounted for what’s in the RFP? For example:

- a. In Rhode Island’s CEDS (2030 plan), Priority Objective 1.1 is about talent development and retention. Do you have a separate campaign RFP for talent? If not, can/should we consider this as part of our proposed strategy?

Answer: We do not have a separate campaign for talent development and retention. Proposers may include these components in their overall proposed strategy and total fees, aligned with RFP priorities.

- b. In Rhode Island's CEDS, Objective 5.4 is to develop and implement strategies for underutilized properties to meet economic needs and expand site readiness. Is this a separate budget and do you want us to include strategic advisory partners in our campaign phases?

Answer: This effort does not have a separate budget. Proposers may incorporate site readiness and the strategic positioning of underutilized properties into their broader campaign approach, including any recommended advisory or partnership components, within their proposed strategy and total fees, aligned with RFP priorities.

13. Which states or regions are Rhode Island's key competitors? Any key countries from an FDI perspective?

Answer: Rhode Island's primary domestic competitors include Massachusetts, Connecticut, Maine, Virginia, and Gulf Coast states, particularly in advanced maritime industries. Massachusetts and Connecticut also compete directly in life sciences and technology sectors.

From an FDI perspective, Rhode Island most frequently engages companies that have already made the decision to enter or expand within the U.S. market. At that stage, competition is primarily domestic. However, we recognize that at a global level, the United States competes with other countries and regions for investment, particularly in Europe and North America.

14. In the last two years, have you conducted perception research with business executives and/or site selection consultants?

Answer: No, the Corporation has not conducted formal perception research with business executives or site selection consultants in the past two years.

15. Do you have pre-determined KPIs for how success will be measured?

Answer: Brand awareness, lead generation, site visits, and business inquiries.

16. How many—and which—business attraction events and tradeshows is Commerce RI planning to attend?

Answer: The Corporation is planning to participate in approximately twelve business attraction events and tradeshows over the coming year. These include major industry conferences and trade missions such as SelectUSA, IPF, Seafood Expo North America, BIO International, Wind Europe, H2O, and the Canada Trade Mission. Additional events include Good Food, Summer Fancy Food Show, and RI Tabletop Show. The Corporation will support the APEX and SupplyRI Networking Events held at the Crowne Plaza. Participation may include exhibiting with booths and engaging in networking opportunities, all designed to maximize visibility and business development potential.

17. How robust of evergreen assets (photo/video) do you have currently available of industry and investors for use in advertising creative vs. the need to capture new content?

Answer: Our current library of evergreen photo and video assets is in the process of being expanded and enhanced. While we have a limited collection available, we recognize the need to continue building a more robust and diverse asset library to support future advertising efforts. As such, we are actively working to enrich our existing resources and will assess opportunities to capture new content as campaign needs evolve.

18. Do you have existing brand guidelines?

Answer: Yes

19. How much autonomy will the agency have in shaping strategy versus executing predefined plans?

Answer: The agency will be a partner in shaping the strategic marketing plan.

20. For social media, can you clarify whether the agency team schedules and publishes approved content or whether the in-house team prefers to handle.

Answer: Agency to do both.

21. For social media, does RI Commerce require approval of each community management/engagement action, or does the agency have autonomy to implement within agreed upon parameters and protocol?

Answer: At present, all external communication from official Corporation social channels including responding to comments must be reviewed and approved by the Chief Communication Officer. Direct messages may be responded to organically, but the Chief Communication Officer must be made aware of any communications beyond directing inquiries to their respective business unit.

22. For social media you mention multiple analytics tools. Does Commerce RI currently subscribe to or have affinity toward certain tools, or are you open to the agency's recommendation?

Answer: The Corporation currently utilizes Agorapulse for social media reporting and analytics. While Agorapulse does offer scheduling capabilities, all content scheduling and planning is managed natively through Smartsheet, which is also used to coordinate monthly content calendars and facilitate approvals from key internal stakeholders. The Corporation remains open to agency recommendations regarding social media management platforms.

23. For public relations, can you confirm whether that this scope is for national earned media? Or, is the expectation also regional/local media?

Answer: Both.

24. Will the agency have access to corporate spokespersons from local and investor companies for case-study storytelling with reporters? If yes, can you provide a list of approved SMEs for earned media interviews?

Answer: The Chief Communications Director serves as the primary spokesperson for local media relations and acts as the main liaison between the Corporation and the media. Access to additional subject matter experts (SMEs) or representatives from investor companies for case studies and earned media opportunities may be coordinated through the Corporation's Communications Office on a case-by-case basis, subject to availability and approval.

25. Will the agency be expected to manage press events, or only support them with pitching?

Answer: The agency's primary role will be to provide support as needed, particularly in developing talking points and related materials, at the direction of the Chief Communications Officer. Management of press events will remain the responsibility of the Corporation under the Chief of Communication Officer with the agency available to assist upon request.

26. Will there be a single point of contact for the agency or multiple for each piece of the scope? What is the structure and responsibilities of Commerce RI's marketing/communications team?

Answer: There will be a single point of contact (POC) from the Corporation for the agency. While our marketing and communications team is made up of several members with expertise in different areas, all agency interactions will be managed centrally through the designated POC to streamline the process and maintain consistency.

27. Are firms able to bid on a portion of the work (e.g. PR, Social Media, Advertising, Event Management & Production) or should submissions be for full scope only?

Answer: Submissions should be for the full scope of work.

28. When are oral presentations expected to take place?

Answer: Oral presentations are expected to take place during the first or second week of May.

29. Can you confirm whether Rhode Island's fiscal year begins July 1 and that this contract is anticipated to begin on June 1, 2026?

Answer: Yes, the Corporation's fiscal year begins on July 1. As this contract is anticipated to commence on June 1, 2026, the initial contract term will cover thirteen months.

***End of Addendum ***