

July 29, 2026
Rhode Island Commerce Corporation
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Solicitation Number: **RFP-2614**

ADDENDUM NO. 1

Questions & Answers

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
MANUFACTURING SUCCESSION READINESS FOR
RHODE ISLAND MANUFACTURERS

The Rhode Island Commerce Corporation (“Corporation”) seeks proposals from qualified firms to provide services to RI-based manufacturing owners and employees aimed at improving the succession readiness of manufacturing firms. As many owners in the manufacturing industry approach retirement without a succession plan in place, Rhode Island risks seeing independent and sometimes family-owned firms transferred to out-of-state ownership, which could result in layoffs, job relocations, and the loss of wealth-building opportunities for Rhode Islanders.

Question #1: Does the agency have a developed list of retiring manufacturing business owners that the selected contractors will work with in this program or should proposals include an outreach plan for such participants. (RFP only mentions buyer outreach, i.e., “assemble and train local buyers...”).

Answer #1: No, the Corporation does not have a list of retiring manufacturing business owners for selected contractors to reach out to. Proposals should include an outreach plan for such participants where applicable.

Question #2: Would the cost of film or video production qualify as an eligible service under the production of materials used during, or to supplement, training and technical assistance activities? Would film or video production also qualify under the marketing and recruitment eligible services section?

Answer #2: Yes, the cost of film or video production would qualify as an Eligible Service provided that the video product is created for the primary purpose of contract-related activities including marketing, recruitment, technical assistance, and training.

Question #3: Are proposals that address multiple tasks but focus more heavily on employee ownership than on other exit and succession strategies encouraged or discouraged?

Answer #3: The Corporation does not have a preference for proposals that focus more heavily on employee ownership than other exit and succession strategies. However, as stated in the RFP, proposals that effectively address more than one task across the three tasks will be favored. Proposals will be scored based on the Evaluation Criteria provided on page 6 of the RFP.

Question #4: May proposals use any format, provided they address all requested information, or must they follow a specific order or structure?

Answer #4: Proposals may use any format provided they address all the requested information in the RFP.

Question #5: Is the proposal required to meet a mandatory MBE/WBE participation threshold, such as the listed 15%, 7.5%, or another percentage?

Answer #5: No.

Question #6: When must the qualifying MBE/WBE participant be certified—before proposal submission, before contract award, or during the contract period?

Answer #6: The qualifying MBE/WBE/DisBE must be certified upon the submission of the RFP response.

Question #7: Finally, can out-of-state businesses or subcontractors qualify under Rhode Island's ISBE requirements?

Answer #7: Please refer to the Rhode Island Division of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion for information regarding certification eligibility and requirements: [Welcome | Rhode Island Office of Division of Equity Diversity and Inclusion](#).

Question #8: Task 1 – Is this task intended to require contractors to coach owners as they explore exit pathways and ownership or leadership transitions, including through education and referrals to professional services? Are contractors also expected to directly provide education and professional services, connect owners to outside providers, or both?

Answer #8: Task 1 should support owners as they explore exit pathways and ownership or leadership transitions. Specific activities may include, but are not limited to: direct education, provision of professional services, and/or referrals to other professional service providers. Proposers may propose any combination of these activities that can be demonstrated to yield desired outcomes related to succession readiness.

Question #9: Task 2: Is there a plan for how trainers or educators will access current manufacturing employees, or should proposers include an access plan in their proposals? Should the plan for assembling and training other local buyers tailor the training by business size or interest—for example, small (5–24 employees), medium (25–49 employees), and large (50+ employees)?

Answer #9: Proposers should include their own plan for reaching current manufacturing employees, where applicable. The plan for assembling and training other local buyers need not tailor the training by business size or interest, but Proposers should keep in mind that the majority of manufacturing employees in Rhode Island are employed in firms with 50 employees or less.

Question #10: Task 3 – Will the agency provide a list of “validated” third party providers for the matchmaking and networking events? Also, please provide a description of a “validated” third party provider.

Answer #10: The Corporation does not maintain a list of “validated” third-party providers for matchmaking and networking events. The Corporation must approve in writing all subcontractors used in connection with the contract. Proposers should identify any proposed subcontractors in their proposal to the RFP, if known.

Question #11: How flexible is the contract start date and program commencement timeline, given the proposed award/execution timing in early September 2026?

Answer #11: The contract start date and program commencement timeline are somewhat flexible given constraining factors. The Corporation aims for the program to commence in Fall 2027 and for activities to last for about one year. This initiative is fully funded by a federal grant and all programming, including the work to be completed under this RFP, must be completed prior to the end of the grant’s performance period.

Question #12: Is there openness to flexibility in the performance period, or to structuring deliverables so that outcomes with longer development cycles can extend beyond the initial one-year term?

Answer #12: While the Corporation aims to wrap activities by September 2027, Proposals with performance periods extending until March 2028 will be considered. See question 11 for additional information regarding timeline.

Question #13: For Task 3, is the expectation that matchmaking transactions be completed within the one-year term, or just the initial opportunities?

Answer #13: The Corporation does not expect that transactions will be completed within the contract term, only that initial matchmaking activities will occur, where applicable (e.g. events, facilitation of direct connections).

Question #14: For Task 2, does RI Commerce define “qualified local would-be buyers” to include multiple pathways, such as existing employees, management teams, and entrepreneur-through-acquisition/searcher candidates, or is there a narrower intended buyer profile?

Answer #14: The Corporation would consider any of the aforementioned profiles to be “qualified local would-be buyers.” Generally speaking, a “qualified local would-be buyer” is an individual or entity who is based in Rhode Island, intends to maintain the business and its jobs in Rhode Island, and is prepared to steward the business to success.

Question #15: What are RI Commerce’s priority success metrics for this contract, especially given that business owner outreach, succession planning, and employee ownership transactions often develop over multiple years?

Answer #15: The Corporation understands that succession planning and ownership transactions often develop over multiple years, and does not expect that transactions will necessarily be realized during the contract period. Our intention with this program is to increase manufacturing owners' readiness for succession by supporting them in succession planning activities and developing the ecosystem of local buyers. Proposers should propose their own succession metrics, which could include number of engagements, number of produced succession plans and similar documents, and the number of sustainable resources or networks established.

***End of Addendum ***