



REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS RFQ #: RFQ-2613

For: On-Call Advisory and Consulting Services

The Rhode Island Commerce Corporation (“Corporation”) is seeking proposals from qualified firms and individual business entities (collectively, “Proposers”) to provide on-call advisory and consulting services in support of statewide economic development priorities.

This document constitutes a Request for Qualifications (“RFQ”), in a competitive format. This request is an offer by the Corporation to underwrite, in accordance with the terms and conditions of this RFQ, the services proposed by the successful Proposer(s), by contract.

Proposers to this RFQ shall provide their qualifications, in accordance with the terms and conditions set forth herein, to provide the services to the Corporation that are described in the Scope of Work.

Project Overview

The Corporation anticipates the need for flexible, specialized expertise to supplement internal teams on a project-specific, as-needed basis. The purpose of this RFQ is to establish a list of pre-qualified vendors who may be engaged through task orders to address discrete needs, emerging initiatives, or temporary capacity gaps. The Corporation may award contracts to one or multiple proposers and is under no obligation to issue any minimum volume of work. Additionally, selection to the vendor list does not guarantee the award of work via any task order nor any compensation.

Background

As a quasi-public agency, the Corporation serves as the State’s economic development organization. The Corporation works closely with the Governor’s Office, the Executive Office of Commerce, municipalities, businesses, nonprofit organizations, and other public and private entities to advance job creation, business expansion, innovation, and long-term economic competitiveness.

The Corporation’s work spans business attraction and retention, small business support, program and initiative design, marketing and brand promotion, policy alignment, and stakeholder engagement. The organization frequently operates in complex, fast-moving environments that require both strategic insight and practical execution.

To support this work, the Corporation seeks to engage skilled external advisors who can provide strategic assistance and counsel, implementation support, and specialized expertise aligned with the Corporation's mission and operating model.

Scope of Work

The Corporation seeks qualifications from proposers capable of providing services in one or more of the functional areas outlined below. Proposers may submit qualifications for a single area, multiple areas, all areas, or specific service categories within an area.

Area A: Policy, Governance, and Strategic Advisory Support

Services in this area may include, but are not limited to:

- Policy analysis and advisory support related to economic development initiatives.
- Interpretation of legislation, regulations, and budgetary provisions.
- Governance best practices and organizational alignment support.
- Advisory services to support compliance, oversight, and accountability.
- Strategic guidance on public-sector operations and intergovernmental coordination.
- Research and support related to the attraction and retention of talent to serve Rhode Island's businesses (including remote workers/digital nomads as a talent pool).

Area B: Marketing, Brand, and Communications Advisory Services

Services in this area may include, but are not limited to:

- Strategic communications and public affairs advisory support.
- Brand strategy development and stewardship.
- Marketing-related planning, execution support, and optimization.
- Executive messaging, speechwriting, and public positioning.
- Media relations strategy, including crisis communications counsel.
- Marketing performance measurement, analytics, and KPI development.
- Alignment of messaging across earned, owned, and paid channels.
- Cross-agency communications coordination and stakeholder engagement support.
- Management of interactive websites, including sites in support of small and local businesses.

Area C: Program Design, Implementation, and Initiative Support

Services in this area may include, but are not limited to:

- Program design, launch, and implementation support.
- Project and initiative management from concept through close-out.
- Business development and pipeline advisory services, involving data analysis and data-driven guidance.
- Market research, performance analysis, and economic impact tracking.
- Stakeholder engagement with businesses, investors, and partners.
- Development of reporting tools, dashboards, and performance metrics.
- Advisory support to internal teams managing complex initiatives.

Engagement Model

- All services will be provided on an **on-call, task-order basis**
- No minimum level of work is guaranteed.
- The Corporation may engage one or multiple Proposers for similar or different tasks.

- Task orders will define scope, timeline, deliverables, and cost for each engagement.

Qualifications

Proposers must demonstrate:

- Experience relevant to the tasks or services described in the area or areas applied for.
- When applicable, proposers are not required to provide legal services but should demonstrate experience navigating public-sector policy environments.
- Demonstrated ability to operate at a strategic level while supporting execution.
- Strong written and verbal communication skills.
- Capacity to perform work in a timely and cost-effective manner.

Budget

No specific budget has been established for this RFQ.

Proposers to this RFQ shall provide a 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(s) and billing rate(s) for any work which may be undertaken under this contract. Proposers shall also provide job titles and rates for any subcontractors that the Proposer 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. The Corporation reserves the right to adjust both the budget and related services.

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

- Travel and Administration: The Proposer should estimate any travel costs expected to incur during contract period. Travel must be in line with budget submitted and approved by the Corporation and follow guidance from all relevant Federal and State statutes.

Criteria for Selection

Responsive proposals for this RFQ will be evaluated according to the Evaluation Criteria outlined below. The Corporation intends to select the Proposer(s) whose proposal(s) receive the highest evaluation scores and are determined to be in the best interest of the Corporation.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

	Points
OVERALL EXPERIENCE OF COMPANY & DEMONSTRATED RESULTS Our evaluation will include an assessment of the history of Proposer's company, experience as it relates to the requirements within this RFQ, evidence of past performance, quality and relevance of past work, references, and related items.	30
QUALIFICATIONS OF PERSONNEL Our evaluation will include an assessment of the qualifications and experience of Proposer's managerial team, staff, subcontractors, and related items.	30
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.	20
FAMILIARITY WITH RHODE ISLAND'S ECONOMIC DRIVERS (if applicable) Our evaluation will include our assessment of Proposer's understanding of the Corporation and Rhode Island's economic drivers and how integrated this knowledge is in proposal.	10
STRATEGIC THINKING/PLANNING APPROACH Overall approach and strategy described/outlined in the proposal and firm capacity to perform the engagement within the specified timeframe (prior experience of the firm in meeting timelines will be factored in here)	10
Total	100
MBE/WBE/DisBE Participation (additional potential points)	6 pts

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

1. ISBE Participation Evaluation (see below for scoring)

a. The Rhode Island Commerce Corporation encourages MBE/WBE/DisBE participation in this Request. In accordance with Title 37, Chapter 14.1, and Title 37, Chapter 2.2 of the Rhode Island General laws, the Corporation reserves the right to apply additional consideration to MBE/WBE/DisBE up to six (6) additional points in the scoring evaluation as provided below:

b. Calculation of ISBE Participation Rate

- i. ISBE Participation Rate for Non-ISBE Vendors. The ISBE participation rate for non ISBE vendors shall be expressed as a percentage and shall be calculated by dividing the amount of non-ISBE vendor's total contract price that will be subcontracted to ISBEs by the non-ISBE vendor's total contract price. For example, if the non-ISBE's total contract price is \$100,000.00 and it subcontracts a total of \$12,000.00 to ISBEs, the non-ISBE's ISBE participation rate would be 12%.
- ii. ISBE Participation Rate for ISBE Vendors. The ISBE participation rate for ISBE vendors shall be expressed as a percentage and shall be calculated by dividing the amount of the ISBE vendor's total contract price that will be subcontracted to ISBEs and the amount that will be self-performed by the ISBE vendor by the ISBE vendor's total contract price. For example, if the ISBE vendor's total contract price is \$100,000.00 and it subcontracts a total of \$12,000.00 to ISBEs and will perform a total of \$8,000.00 of the work itself, the ISBE vendor's ISBE participation rate would be 20%.

c. Points for ISBE Participation Rate:

- i. The vendor with the highest ISBE participation rate shall receive the maximum ISBE participation points. All other vendors shall receive ISBE participation points by applying the following formula:

$$(\text{Vendor's ISBE participation rate} \div \text{Highest ISBE participation rate}) \times \text{Maximum ISBE participation points}$$

For example, assuming the weight given by the RFQ to ISBE participation is 6 points, if Vendor A has the highest ISBE participation rate at 20% and Vendor B's ISBE participation rate is 12%, Vendor A will receive the maximum 6 points and Vendor B will receive $(12\% \div 20\%) \times 6$ which equals 3.6 points.

See Appendix A for information and the MBE, WBE, and/or Disability Business Enterprise Participation Plan form(s). Bidders are required to complete, sign and submit these forms with their overall proposal. Please complete separate forms for each MBE, WBE and/or Disability Business Enterprise subcontractor/supplier to be utilized on the solicitation.

Instructions and Notifications to Proposers

1. Potential proposers are advised to review all sections of this RFQ 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 RFQ will be rejected as being non-responsive.
3. All costs associated with developing or submitting a proposal in response to this RFQ, or to provide oral or written clarification of its content, shall be borne by the proposer. The Corporation 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 that are submitted late, misdirected or sent to the wrong email address will not be accepted.
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 RFQ Response Certification Cover Form, included in this document and available here:
https://assets.simpleviewinc.com/simpleview/image/upload/v1/clients/rhodeisland/RFP_RESPONSE_CERTIFICATION_COVER_FORM_88d2b6a2-2798-4d0f-81b8-cedbe5692088.pdf
10. The purchase of services under an award made pursuant to this RFQ will be contingent on the availability of funds and made at the discretion of the Corporation.
11. Awarding this RFQ is based on the Evaluation Criteria set forth in this RFQ. 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 the Corporation, which may use any such materials and ideas.

12. Interested parties are instructed to peruse the Corporation's website (www.commercieri.com) on a regular basis, as additional information relating to this solicitation may be released in the form of an addendum to this RFQ. Addenda will also be posted to the Rhode Island State Division of Purchases' website at www.ridop.ri.gov.
13. Equal Employment Opportunity (R.I. Gen. Laws § 28-5.1-1, et seq.) – § 28-5.1-1 Declaration of policy – (a) Equal opportunity and affirmative action toward its achievement is the policy of all units of Rhode Island state government, including all public and quasi-public agencies, commissions, boards and authorities, and in the classified, unclassified, and non-classified services of state employment. This policy applies to all areas where State dollars are spent, in employment, public services, grants and financial assistance, and in state licensing and regulation.
14. 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.
15. The proposer should be aware of the State's Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) requirements, which address the State's goal of fifteen percent (15%) participation by MBE's in all procurements, including a minimum of 7.5% participation by minority business enterprises owned and controlled by a minority owner, as defined in § 37-14.1-3, and a minimum of 7.5% participation by minority business enterprises owned and controlled by a woman. For further information, visit the website www.mbe.ri.gov.
16. The Corporation 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. Person who will be the primary point of contact with the Corporation.
2. 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.
3. 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.

Proposal Submission

Responses to this RFQ must be received as follows: one (1) electronic (PDF) version must be provided by email to RFP@commerceri.com by **11:59 pm on July 23, 2026**. Submissions that are late, misdirected or sent to the wrong email address will not be accepted.

Note: To ensure transparency, no phone calls pertaining to this RFQ will be accepted.

Questions, interpretations, or clarifications concerning this RFQ should be directed by e-mail to RFP@commerceri.com no later than **11:59 pm on July 14, 2026**. Responses to questions, interpretations, or clarifications concerning this RFQ will be posted online via addendum at www.commerceri.com and www.ridop.ri.gov on, **July 16, 2026**, to ensure equal awareness of important facts and details.

The Rhode Island Commerce Corporation 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.

Rhode Island Commerce Corporation reserves the right to reject any or all proposals for not complying with the terms of this RFQ.

RFP/RFQ RESPONSE CERTIFICATION COVER FORM

Instruction: To fulfill your RFP/RFQ response, this form must be completed, printed, signed and included with your submission.

SECTION 1 - RESPONDENT INFORMATION

RFP/RFQ Number:

RFP/RFQ Title:

RFP/RFQ Respondent Name:

Address:

Telephone:

Fax:

Contact Name:

Contact Title:

Contact Email:

SECTION 2 —DISCLOSURES

RFP/RFQ Respondents must respond to every statement. RFP/RFQ Responses submitted without a complete response may be deemed nonresponsive.

Indicate "Y" (Yes) or "N" (No) for Disclosures 1-4, and if "Yes," provide details below

____ 1. State whether the Respondent, or any officer, director, manager, stockholder, member, partner, or other owner or principal of the Respondent or any parent, subsidiary, or affiliate has been subject to suspension or debarment by any federal, state, or municipal governmental authority, or the subject of criminal prosecution, or convicted of a criminal offense within the previous 5 years. If "Yes," provide details below.

____ 2. State whether the Respondent, or any officer, director, manager, stockholder, member, partner, or other owner or principal of the Respondent or any parent, subsidiary, or affiliate has had any contracts with a federal, state, or municipal governmental authority terminated for any reason within the previous 5 years. If "Yes," provide details below.

____ 3. State whether the Respondent, or any officer, director, manager, stockholder, member, partner, or other owner or principal of the Respondent or any parent, subsidiary, or affiliate has been fined more than \$5000 for violation(s) of any Rhode Island environmental law(s) by the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management within the previous 5 years. If "Yes," provide details below.

____ 4. State whether any officer, director, manager, stockholder, member, partner, or other owner or principal of the Respondent is serving or has served within the past two calendar years as either an appointed or elected official of any state governmental authority or quasi-public corporation, including without limitation, any entity created as a legislative body or public or state agency by the general assembly or constitution of this state.

Disclosure details (continue on additional sheets if necessary):

SECTION 3 —OWNERSHIP DISCLOSURE

Respondents must provide all relevant information. Respondent proposals submitted without a complete response may be deemed nonresponsive.

If the Respondent is publicly held, the Respondent may provide owner information about only those stockholders, members, partners, or other owners that hold at least 10% of the record or beneficial equity interests of the Respondent; otherwise, complete ownership disclosure is required.

List each officer, director, manager, stockholder, member, partner, or other owner or principle of the Respondent, and each intermediate parent company and the ultimate parent company of the Respondent. For each individual, provide his or her name, business address, principal occupation, position with the Respondent, and the percentage of ownership, if any, he or she holds in the Respondent, and each intermediate parent company and the ultimate parent company of the Respondent.

SECTION 4 —CERTIFICATIONS

Respondents must respond to every statement. Responses submitted without a complete response may be deemed nonresponsive.

Indicate "Y" (Yes) or "N" (No), and if "No," provide details below.

THE RESPONDENT CERTIFIES THAT:

___ 1. The Respondent will immediately disclose, in writing, to the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation any potential conflict of interest which may occur during the term of any contract awarded pursuant to this solicitation.

___ 2. The Respondent possesses all licenses and anyone who will perform any work will possess all licenses required by applicable federal, state, and local law necessary to perform the requirements of any contract awarded pursuant to this solicitation and will maintain all required licenses during the term of any contract awarded pursuant to this solicitation. In the event that any required license shall lapse or be restricted or suspended, the Respondent shall immediately notify the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation in writing.

___ 3. The Respondent will maintain all required insurance during the term of any contract pursuant to this solicitation. In the event that any required insurance shall lapse or be canceled, the Respondent will immediately notify the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation in writing.

___ 4. The Respondent understands that falsification of any information in its RFP/RFQ response or failure to notify the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation of any changes in any disclosures or certifications in this Respondent Certification may be grounds for suspension, debarment, and/or prosecution for fraud.

___ 5. The Respondent has not paid and will not pay any bonus, commission, fee, gratuity, or other remuneration to any employee or official of the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation or the State of Rhode Island or any subdivision of the State of Rhode Island or other governmental authority for the purpose of obtaining an award of a contract pursuant to this solicitation. The Respondent further certifies that no bonus, commission, fee, gratuity, or other remuneration has been or will be received from any third party or paid to any third party contingent on the award of a contract pursuant to this solicitation.

___ 6. This RFP/RFQ response is not a collusive RFP/RFQ response. Neither the Respondent, nor any of its owners, stockholders, members, partners, principals, directors, managers, officers, employees, or agents has in any way colluded, conspired, or agreed, directly or indirectly, with any other Respondent or person to submit a collusive response to the solicitation or to refrain from submitting response to the solicitation, or has in any manner, directly or indirectly, sought by agreement or collusion or other communication with any other Respondent or person to fix the price or prices in the response or the response of any other Respondent, or to fix any overhead, profit, or cost component of the price in the response or the response of any other Respondent, or to secure through any collusion, conspiracy, or unlawful agreement any advantage against the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation or the State of Rhode Island or any person with an interest in the contract awarded pursuant to this solicitation. The price in the response is fair and proper and is not tainted by any collusion, conspiracy, or unlawful agreement on the part of the Respondent, its owners, stockholders, members, partners, principals, directors, managers, officers, employees, or agents.

___ 7. The Respondent: (i) is not identified on the General Treasurer's list created pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws § 37-2.5-3 as a person or entity engaging in investment activities in Iran described in § 37-2.5-2(b); and (ii) is not engaging in any such investment activities in Iran.

____ 8. The Respondent will comply with all of the laws that are incorporated into and/or applicable to any contract with the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation.

Certification details (continue on additional sheet if necessary):

Submission by the Respondent of a response pursuant to this solicitation constitutes an offer to contract with the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation on the terms and conditions contained in this solicitation and the response. The Respondent certifies that: (1) the Respondent has reviewed this solicitation and agrees to comply with its terms and conditions; (2) the response is based on this solicitation; and (3) the information submitted in the response (including this Respondent Certification Cover Form) is accurate and complete. The Respondent acknowledges that the terms and conditions of this solicitation and the response will be incorporated into any contract awarded to the Respondent pursuant to this solicitation and the response. The person signing below represents, under penalty of perjury, that he or she is fully informed regarding the preparation and contents of this response and has been duly authorized to execute and submit this response on behalf of the Respondent.

RESPONDENT

Date: _____

Name of Respondent

Signature in ink

Printed name and title of person signing on behalf of Respondent