

**September 15, 2016**

**Rhode Island Commerce Corporation**

**ADDENDUM NO. 001**

**Pre-Bid Conference**

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**  
Visit Rhode Island Website Design and Development

The Rhode Island Commerce Corporation (Corporation) is requesting proposals from a firm to develop and design a new destination website for Rhode Island under the same domain, [www.VisitRhodeIsland.com](http://www.VisitRhodeIsland.com). Services will include website redesign, website production, ongoing website support, and search engine optimization, as well as developing a strategic approach to organizing content that inspires, informs, and drives action.

**Question #1:** Are you looking for Q4 or early Q1 launch? Do you have a deadline?

**Answer #1:** Targeting end of January but not rushing. Target of sometime during Q1.

**Question #2:** Are you editing the data that is currently on the website? Do you need copy-editing?

**Answer #2:** We are looking for your solutions to migrate and manage all of our data. We will handle copy-editing.

**Question #3:** Who is responsible for hosting environment? Are you looking for vendor recommendations on hosting? Are you looking for a partner that will provide a comprehensive hosting solution? That will determine what sort of database is built.

**Answer #3:** This is referred to in the RFP as a year-to-year relationship. We are looking for a recommendation and/or options for hosting, as well as SEO.

**Question #4:** Are you looking for a vendor who can provide solutions for video hosting to optimize site performance?

**Answer #4:** Absolutely. We are looking for a vendor to present solutions for every foreseeable challenge. We are also looking for vendors to let us know if they cannot handle any of these solutions. Take a look at the current website to offer best practices on how it can be improved.

**Question #5:** At what point will the style guide be shared?

**Answer #5:** Probably within the next month or so. Once the process gets going, a guide will be provided.

**Question #6:** Are you looking for the vendor to put together a complete social media strategy for an internal team to execute?

**Answer #6:** No, we have an internal social media team and strategy. We are just looking for the integration capability. We will always develop content.

**Question #7:** Is the state campaign separate from this RFP?

**Answer #7:** Yes, that is a separate project.

**Question #8:** As an example, The Newport Folk Festival Foundation would be granted access to update their event?

**Answer #8:** Currently, any event organization can submit their event for our review/approval and posting. We'd like the site to be as automated as possible in regards to updates, including having listing owners reminded to update their listings. We want to use this technology to assist us in working with our industry partners.

**Question #9:** Do we want to give the user the ability to book through the website with a partner such as TripAdvisor or Air BnB or directly through the site itself?

**Answer #9:** State websites are tools consumers use to plan; when it comes to booking, they leave the site and go somewhere else to book. Planning tools to set up an itinerary, Google Maps, all the tools a consumer needs to research and plan their trip is the technology we would like to provide. We hope for you to provide a recommendation on how to present this in the best way for our target consumer audience.

**Question #10:** Do you currently use a CRM system?

**Answer #10:** No. You can assume that everything we have should be thrown out. We want to learn as much as we can about our consumer and be able to market to them directly.

**Question #11:** How else can the Commerce Corp. use the information being collected?

**Answer #11:** The data collected will be consumer information used only for tourism marketing. The rest of the corporation is more focused on a B2B interaction.

**Question #12:** Do you have a list of your dream competitors that you'd like to be? Are you looking for international best practices as well?

**Answer #12:** Yes, we are. We are targeting a global audience, and you know the best way to reach those audiences through their countries' algorithms and SEO. Our number one marketplace at the moment is the "nearcationer" within 300 miles. Internationally, first, it's the UK, then China, then Germany and France. We are not performing internationally at all right now.

**Question #13:** Do you have a budget in mind? Could you share that?

**Answer #13:** We do. We'll discuss to determine the release of a number. We would like vendors to include options in the proposal that may set them apart, including experience in and

knowledge of international markets. We hate to put parameters on it because we want the best site possible. We have a number, but it may not be realistic for what we really need to do.

**Question #14:** In working with competitor states, it would just be the tourism aspect that applies to the non-compete?

**Answer #14:** Yes, we would not consider vendors that work on Massachusetts or Connecticut tourism, but other states would not be considered direct competition.

**Question #15:** Do you have data we can use to benchmark?

**Answer #15:** We do, but we may not necessarily use it as a benchmark. We are looking to start from scratch, and we are looking to really improve site performance through this project.

**Question #16:** Do you want to have complete ownership of the code?

**Answer #16:** Yes, we'd like that to be an option included in the proposal. We'd also like to have measurement that could easily be handed over to our team.

**Question #17:** What is the capability of your internal team?

**Answer #17:** There will be a big training and support component; we do not want a vendor just to build a site and walk away. The team will have the ability to make basic updates to text and images. The team does have familiarity with WordPress but not with proficient coding.

**Question #18:** Who is on the selection committee?

**Answer #18:** We do not have the answer to that at this time. We will answer at a later point.

**Question #19:** Is this a calendar year investment – 2017 dollars?

**Answer #19:** Yes, this is a FY17 budget item, with the fiscal year ending June 30, 2017.

\*\*\*End of Addendum \*\*\*