



**Solicitation Information**

**February 15, 2013**

**RFP # 7461231**

**TITLE: Communications and Marketing Services – MPA #479**

**Submission Deadline: Tuesday, March 19<sup>th</sup>, 2013 at 2:30 PM (ET)**

PRE-BID/ PROPOSAL CONFERENCE: Yes      Date: **Thursday, February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2013 at 9:30 AM**  
Mandatory: **NO**  
Location: **Bid Conference Room, Division of Purchases, One Capitol Hill 2<sup>nd</sup> FL., Providence RI 02908**

Questions concerning this solicitation must be received by the Division of Purchases at [rfp.questions@purchasing.ri.gov](mailto:rfp.questions@purchasing.ri.gov) no later than **February 28, 2013**. Questions should be submitted in a *Microsoft Word* attachment. Please reference the RFP# in the subject of all correspondence. Questions received, if any, will be posted on the Internet as an addendum to this solicitation. It is the responsibility of all interested parties to monitor the website and download this information.

SURETY REQUIRED: **NO**

BOND REQUIRED: **NO**

**Daniel W. Majcher, Esq.**  
**Assistant Director, Special Projects**

**Vendors must register on-line at the State Purchasing Website at [www.purchasing.ri.gov](http://www.purchasing.ri.gov).**

**NOTE TO VENDORS:**

Offers received without the completed three-page RIVP Generated Bidder Certification Form attached may result in disqualification. This form is available at [www.purchasing.ri.gov](http://www.purchasing.ri.gov).

**THIS PAGE IS NOT A BIDDER CERTIFICATION FORM**

## **I. Introduction**

The Rhode Island Department of Administration (“Department”), Division of Purchases (“Division”), on behalf of the Executive Branch agencies of the State of Rhode Island, along with potential participation at their own discretion from the Legislative and Judicial branches, quasi public agencies, municipalities (cities, towns and school districts), seeks to retain one or more public relations/advertising vendors (“Vendor” or “Offeror”) to participate on a Master Price Agreement (MPA) to provide one or more of the below services as requested:

- Conduct communications research;
- Conceptualize, design, implement and evaluate communication/media campaigns;
- Provide technical services;
- Provide strategic marketing consultation and
- Provide assistance in strategic communication planning.
- Provide communication and media support on a particular project or projects.

The term of this MPA will be for three (3) years, with two (2) one year extensions at the sole option of the Division. This work will be done on behalf of programs and projects associated with the any of the State’s agencies, as described elsewhere herein, and in accordance with the terms of this request and the State’s General Conditions of Purchase, which may be obtained at the Rhode Island Division of Purchases’ homepage by Internet at <http://www.purchasing.ri.gov>.

It is envisioned that a price agreement will be awarded to one or more vendors with rates provided. As with any MPA, a using agency would create their own release / direct purchase order and would thus be responsible to fund the required services. **There is no guarantee of any level spending activity to a vendor or vendors selected for this MPA.**

MPAs can be utilized by any State Agency, and as a requirement of this solicitation, will also be made available to quasi-public organizations, Rhode Island municipalities and the Legislative and Judicial Branches of Rhode Island government at their own discretion. Placement of a qualified firm(s) on a Master Price Agreement is no guarantee of usage. Services are sought on an “as-needed” basis. Once need has been determined, utilization will be based on a number of factors, including, but not limited to price, expertise, language, and availability.

## **II. General Instructions and Notifications to Offerors**

Potential Offerors are advised to review all sections of this Request for Proposal (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.

This is a Request for Proposal, not an Invitation for Bid. Responses will be evaluated on the basis of the relative merits of the proposal, in addition to price; there will be no public

opening and reading of responses received by the Division of Purchases pursuant to this request, other than to name those Offerors who have submitted proposals.

1. Potential vendors 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 which 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 cost 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 Offeror. The State assumes no responsibilities for this cost.
4. Proposals are considered to be irrevocable for a period of not less than one hundred twenty (120) days following the opening date, and may not be withdrawn, except with the express written permission of the State Purchasing Agent.
5. All prices submitted will be considered to be firm and fixed unless otherwise indicated herein.
6. Proposals misdirected to other state locations, or which are otherwise not present in the Division of Purchases at the time of opening 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 Division of Purchases.
7. It is intended that an award pursuant to this RFP will be made to a prime vendor(s) who will assume responsibilities for all aspects of the work. The State reserves the right to award to multiple vendors. Joint venture and cooperative proposals will not be considered. Subcontractors are permitted, provided that their use is clearly indicated in the vendor's proposal and the subcontractor(s) to be used is identified in the proposal. Subcontractors not identified in the response to this RFP may be utilized on a particular project with prior approval of the state agency or other entity utilizing this MPA.
8. All proposals should include the vendor's FEIN or Social Security Number as evidenced by a Form W-9, downloadable from the Division of Purchases' website at [www.purchasing.ri.gov](http://www.purchasing.ri.gov).
9. The purchase of services under an award made pursuant to this RFP will be contingent on the availability of funds.
10. Vendors are advised that all materials submitted to the State for consideration in response to this RFP will be considered to be Public Records as defined in Title 38, Chapter 2 of the General Laws of Rhode Island, without exception, and will be released

for inspection immediately upon request once an award has been made.

11. Interested parties are instructed to peruse the Division of Purchases' website on a regular basis, as additional information or changes relating to this solicitation may be released in the form of an addendum to this RFP. It is the responsibility of all potential Offerors to monitor the website and be familiar with any changes issued as part of an addendum.

12. Equal Employment Opportunity (G.L. 1956 § 28-5.1-1, et seq.) - §28-5.1-1 Declaration of policy – (a) Equal opportunity and affirmation 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 in all areas where State dollars are spent, in employment, public services, grants and financial assistance, and in state licensing and regulation. For further information, contact the Rhode Island Equal Opportunity Office at (401) 222-3090 or [Raymond.lambert@hr.ri.gov](mailto:Raymond.lambert@hr.ri.gov) .

13. In accordance with Title 7, Chapter 1.2 of the General Laws of Rhode Island, no foreign corporation, a corporation without a Rhode Island business address, shall have the right to transact business in the State until it shall have procured a Certificate of Authority to do so from the Rhode Island Secretary of State (401-222-2040). This is a requirement only of the successful vendor(s).

14. The vendor should be aware of the State's Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) requirement, which should address the State's goal of ten percent (10%) participation by MBE's in all State procurements. For further information, please contact the MBE Administrator at (401) 574-8253 or visit the website [www.mbe.ri.gov](http://www.mbe.ri.gov) or by email at [charles.newton@doa.ri.gov](mailto:charles.newton@doa.ri.gov).

### **III. Purpose and Background**

The objective of this Request for Proposals is to competitively procure the services of qualified vendors who have extensive experience in conducting communications research; conceptualizing, designing, implementing, and evaluating communication campaigns; providing strategic marketing consultation; providing technical services (production of communication materials and media) and providing communication and media support on a project specific basis. The Vendor must demonstrate significant expertise in understanding social marketing principles and concepts as well as working with diverse populations.

#### *Overview of Social Marketing*

The communication services sought require processes for developing effective messages for specific target audiences. These processes transform research-based recommendations into message strategies that are relevant to the target audience(s). The

fundamental aspect of this process is research gathered to understand the target audience's reality, which leads to communications that are relevant, accurate, meaningful, timely, culturally sensitive, and compelling to the audience

Additional Communication activities may include:

1. Education, which seeks to promote certain behaviors by informing and educating individuals through the use of materials and structured activities;
2. Social marketing, which promotes or sustains positive behavior change by applying marketing principles to community interventions, usually using mass media;
3. Targeted information based on agency need.

#### **IV. Scope of Work**

**TERM:** The term of this MPA will be for three (3) years, with two (2) one year extensions at the sole option of the Division. **There is no guarantee of any level spending activity to a vendor selected for this MPA.**

#### **General Description**

The Vendor will be responsible for providing work within the following categories of services:

1. Strategic marketing consultation; and
2. Technical services, including production of materials.
3. Research based services

Services required will be based on the needs of individual programs and projects, and may include one or more of the categories above. Following is a description of the activities that the State's agencies expect the Vendor to perform for each of the categories of services.

#### **Category 1: Strategic Marketing Consultation**

Projects require an array of consultation services for planning effective communication and marketing strategies, ranging from conducting formative research; to designing brochures; to designing, implementing, and evaluating comprehensive communication campaigns. The Vendor agrees to provide an array of strategic marketing consultation services, including but not limited to the following types of services:

- Strategic communication planning
- Crisis communication
- Media relations and/or public relations
- Media training
- Special events planning
- Creative services (such as graphic design/layout of print materials, logo development, illustration, copywriting)

- Comprehensive literature reviews
- Social Media
- Evaluation
- Media Monitoring
- General communication and support on a project basis, as needed.

These services may be requested as individual, stand alone services, or they may be requested as part of a comprehensive campaign. The service should result in a formal plan that is provided to the agency on a project by project basis. The services required will depend on the scope of work for each program or project. The services will be paid on an hourly basis (unless negotiated otherwise by an agency and approved by the Division in which case a fixed project price may be negotiated), based on a specific scope of work to be defined by an agency. Prior to starting, the Vendor will meet with the relevant Agency manager and a representative from the communication unit to understand the program goals and define potential communication goals. Prior to beginning the delivery of the consultation, the Vendor will be required to provide the level of effort (number of hours), propose a timeline to complete the work and give the total cost. Nothing prevents the agency from contacting multiple vendors on the MPA in order to acquire the best value for the State. Work will begin when an Agency and the Vendor have agreed upon the proposal (see section VI: Requirements) and a Purchase Order is issued by the Division of Purchases.

**Category 2: Technical Services**

A “technical service” refers to the production of communication materials and media, including:

- Media production, which may include a variety of printed materials, television and radio slots.
- Web-based applications including web-hosting, social networking sites, e-news releases, Twitter and other delivery channels.

**Category 3: Research Based Services**

- Focus groups (a variety of services may be provided by the Vendor related to the provision of focus groups, including recruitment; development of screening tools, moderator’s guides, and exit tools; facilitation; logistics; report writing; and results analysis)
- Surveys (the Agencies may collect information to measure the effectiveness of communication campaigns, strategies, or products. Potential survey techniques may include intercept and telephone surveys, and newspaper polls. In addition, the Vendor may be expected to conduct “effectiveness measurement” to establish a baseline and benchmarks to gauge message effectiveness through a variety of metrics and tracking.)
- In-depth interviews

These services may be requested as individual, stand alone services, or they may be requested as part of a comprehensive campaign. The service should result in a formal plan that is provided to the agency on a project by project basis. The services required will depend on the scope of work for each program or project. The services will be paid on a per project basis (unless negotiated otherwise by an agency and approved by the Division in which case a fixed project price will be negotiated), based on a specific scope of work to be defined by an agency. Prior to starting, the Vendor will meet with the relevant Agency manager and a representative from the communication unit to understand the program goals and define potential communication goals. Prior to beginning the delivery of the consultation, the Vendor will be required to provide propose a timeline to complete the work and give the total cost based on the scope of the project. Nothing prevents the agency from contacting multiple vendors on the MPA in order to acquire the best value for the State. Work will begin when an Agency and the Vendor have agreed upon the proposal (see section VI: Requirements) and a Purchase Order is issued by the Division of Purchases.

***Please note that as part of the cost proposal for Category 3, the potential offeror must provide a cost for the hypothetical projects stated in Section VI.***

**Requirements for All Three Categories:**

The provision of strategic marketing consultation and technical and research based services requires a comprehensive approach that is broken into four phases for the purposes of this contract. Not all projects will require each phase, however, each project must begin with Phase 1.

**1. Needs Assessment**

The Vendor will attend an initial meeting with Agency staff, at no charge, to discuss the purpose, scope, goals and objectives of that Agency's work to help the Vendor prepare a proposal for the scope of services and budget. Prior to starting the work, the Vendor will provide a written proposal estimating the number of hours and proposing a timeline to complete the work and a project price. Work will begin when the Agency and the Vendor have agreed upon the proposal.

If the project entails the development of educational or promotional materials or a campaign, the Vendor will develop and submit a written plan for a needs assessment/formative research, process evaluation, and impact evaluation.

If formative research is conducted by the Vendor, they will prepare and present a written report including research findings and recommendations regarding how best to meet the Agency's objectives.

## **2. Concept Development Phase**

At this point, if relevant, the Vendor will begin to develop concepts for the communication product or campaign based on the findings of the research in the needs assessment phase.

In the case of a campaign, the Vendor will present a minimum of two campaign concepts. Presentation of these concepts will include possible overarching themes or slogans, as well as an initial proposal of some of the possible campaign elements based on the needs assessment and budgetary considerations. This presentation should include mock-ups, such as sketches of proposed print materials, as well as representations of possible visuals and an indication of how text will appear; and rough drafts of possible themes and scripts for audio/visual elements. The Agency will make the decision on which of the proposed concept(s) and elements will be further developed.

For other products that are not part of a campaign (e.g. stand alone program brochures, focus group guides, surveys, etc.) one concept or draft is sufficient. Work will continue when the Agency and the Vendor have agreed upon the concept to be further developed.

## **3. Design/Implementation Phase**

Full development and implementation of all communication products will be completed during this phase. This may include:

- Writing and revising text (this could include brochures, scripts for television and radio spots, focus group guides, etc.)
- Designing and laying out print pieces (this includes reviewing commissioned illustrations and photography with the Agency) and revising as necessary;
- Developing and writing web-content in accordance with the Agency's template (e.g., ri.gov)
- Copyediting;
- Preparing communication materials for pre-testing among the target audience and revising as necessary based on feedback;
- Obtaining bids and estimates for production of materials;
- Developing a plan for placement and distribution of materials over a 12 month period;
- Identifying optimum levels of reach and frequency (identifying how much of the target audience can be reached and how often given budgetary constraints); and
- Identifying potential partnerships to enhance project impact.
- Media monitoring.

The State reserves the right to receive competitive quotes on a project basis from the vendors listed on the MPA and to purchase technical services directly from vendors. Copies of all invoices for technical services will be included in the Vendor's bills to the Agency.

The Agency will make all final decisions about material layout, copy, and distribution channels.

Once the final products are approved and ready for production, the Vendor will be responsible for assuring the quality of elements that are to be produced. The Agency reserves the right to reject any products, and will not pay for products that fail to meet quality standards. As part of this quality assurance, the Vendor is responsible for:

- Reviewing all stages of proofing for print materials with the Agency;
- Conducting press checks for print materials;
- Reviewing completed materials (print, audio, and visual) with the Agency;
- Supervising radio and TV shoots and edits; and
- Trafficking all materials to appropriate media;

The Vendor is responsible for entering into agreements and/or subcontracts with vendors to procure the above technical services on behalf of the Agency.

The Vendor is also responsible for working with and reimbursing the services of designers, printers, and other contractors with whom the Agency has a continuing relationship, in order to reproduce previously created materials.

All developed materials are the property of the Agency. Print materials will be provided in electronic format (original program format plus a PDF version that fits Agency guidelines) along with original artwork and photography. A digital master of all radio and television commercials master plus DVD and CD copies of each piece must also be provided. The Vendor will maintain an inventory of all products produced by vendor and submit it annually to the Agency.

#### **4. Evaluation/Additional Research**

The Agency may wish to collect information to measure the effectiveness of its work through surveys, focus groups, in-depth interviews, etc. The Vendor will be responsible for proposing a research strategy, timeline and budget estimate\*. Work can begin when the Agency and the Vendor agree upon the proposal. Once research is completed, the Vendor will provide a written report with a summary of the research and recommendations regarding how best to meet program goals.

\*For work in any of the above four phases, the Vendor must notify the Agency before beginning work that will require funds above those indicated in the project estimate.

#### **Additional Requirements**

In addition, the Vendor is responsible for the following:

- Providing office space, office equipment, and office support including telephone, fax, and computer word-processing and graphic design programs;
- Supporting all travel necessary to conduct work defined in the Scope of Work;
- Supervising and reimbursing all subcontractors.

**V. Technical Proposal Submission**

**A. Executive Summary**

The Executive Summary will highlight the contents of the Technical Proposal as well as provide the State of Rhode Island evaluators with an overview and broad understanding of the Offeror's technical approach and ability to meet the scope of work as set forth in this RFP. The firm should specifically identify in the Executive Summary the categories which the firm is offering to provide (may be category one, two and/or three)

**B. Experience, Capacity & Staffing (40 Points)**

**1. Expertise of the Firm and Staffing Experience**

A. The firm should have a dedicated and staffed capability to provide the scope of work above, with the experience and track record to provide first services to the State. Firms wishing to be included in this MPA may apply to provide services within a single category, but the firm is not required to apply to provide services in multiple categories.. This section shall include identification of all staff and/or subcontractors proposed as members of the account management team, and the duties, responsibilities, and concentration of effort which apply to each (resumes (without personal information), curriculum vitae or statements of prior experience and qualification). Experience of the Staff will be evaluated accordingly.

This section shall also include:

- i. A comprehensive listing of similar services undertaken and implemented, as well as similar clients served. This includes providing a brief description of the accounts and a description of the names of staff persons who worked on the accounts/projects.
- ii. The Offeror shall submit a list of contract(s) that have been terminated along with the entity name(s) that obtained the contract and the reasons why the contract was terminated (if applicable). The State reserves the right to seek additional information regarding a company's capabilities from any source it feels is competent to provide such information.
- iii. The Offeror shall have maintained an organization capable of performing the work described herein, in continuous operation for a least the past three (3) years or demonstrates 5 years progressive experience within area.

## 2. Experience of the Firm

The Firm should have prior experience to meet the scope of work herein within the Rhode Island or comparable media market. Please describe the firm's experience within the Rhode Island market. Please provide detail of the firm's years of experience in the Rhode Island market.

## 3. Capacity

The Firm must have sufficient personnel resources capable of managing the scope of work stated herein. Firms are encouraged to apply to be included on this MPA if the firm wishes to provide one or more of the three categories. Please describe the capacity of the firm to handle the State's needs and provide detail on the Firm's proposed account management structure as well as the work experience of each staff member assigned to the account. If the firm is applying for only one category, not all, please be specific about which task the firm is applying to provide.

i. The Offeror shall submit appropriate financial-related information in order to provide the State with the ability to judge the Offeror's financial capacity and capabilities to undertake and successfully complete the contract. Upon request, the Offeror shall provide **financial statements** that include a balance sheet, income statement and statement of cash flow, and all applicable notes for the most recent calendar year or the Offeror's most recent fiscal year. The Offeror may submit specific financial documents in a separate, sealed envelope/package, within the overall package, clearly marked "Confidential-Financial Information" along with the Bid Proposal. Please note that failure to submit financial statements upon request may result in disqualification from consideration.

## 4. References

The firm must provide references for a minimum of three (3) clients. (References for both public and private sector are preferred.) Please provide details including but not limited to the size of the client's annual billings, where the bulk of the billings are spent (i.e. state, region) and the length of the relationship between the firm and the client. This section shall include:

i. The name of a contact person, address, telephone number and email address, where the offeror has provided media buying services. These individuals may be contacted by the State as part of the selection process.

## 5. Strategic Media Planning Capacity

The firm must demonstrate a history of providing strategic media to clients, including a capacity for both quantitative and qualitative media results. Please outline details of the Firm's strategic media planning approach as well as demonstrated examples of success.

**6. Technology**

The firm must demonstrate that it subscribes to the latest technology and platforms to provide services and has access to current market data and information.

**7. Demonstrated Capacity to Partner with Clients**

The firm must demonstrate a history of partnering with clients to achieve strategic media goals and of communicating with clients to meet client needs.

**8. Work Plan/Approach (30 points)**

This section shall outline the process and contain a thorough explanation of all aspects, requirements and services required to provide Services for the State on a project by project basis.

Further, this section shall describe the Offeror’s understanding of the State’s requirements, including the result(s) intended and desired, the approach and/or methodology to be employed, and a work plan for accomplishing the results proposed. The description of approach shall discuss and justify the approach proposed to be taken for each task or requirement, and the technical issues that may be confronted at each stage of the project. The work plan description shall include a detailed list of tasks, activities and/or milestones that will be employed to administer the Services, the assignment of staff members and concentration of effort for attributed deliverables.

**VI. Cost Proposal (30 points)**

The Offeror will provide a matrix with titles, descriptions and hourly rates (fully loaded) for each of the tasks described in the scope of work section above. Please note that these are the maximum rates and an agency may also negotiate a lower rate than stated in the Master Price Agreement or a flat fixed fee arrangement on a project by project basis. Nothing herein prevents the agency from contacting multiple firms listed on the MPA to provide the same scope of work and selecting a firm that will provide the best value for the State. Additionally, the vendor may propose alternative fee arrangements.

Cost– 30 Points – The State will take an average and apply the following formula to determine cost points:

(Price of Lowest Cost Proposal)	X	Maximum Point for Cost(30)	=	Awarded Points
---------------------------------	---	-------------------------------	---	-------------------

*If bidding on Category 3—Research Based Services, please also provide cost proposals for the following hypothetical projects:*

1. Telephone survey of 400 with a +/- 5 margin of error wherein the Offeror generates the sample;
2. Web-based survey of 200 wherein the Offeror generates the sample; and
3. 20 hour long in depth interviews.

## **VII. Proposal Submission**

Questions concerning this solicitation may be emailed to the Division in accordance with the terms and conditions expressed on the cover page of this solicitation. Questions received, if any, with responses, will be posted on the Division of Purchases web site as an addendum to this solicitation. It is the responsibility of all interested parties to download this information.

Interested Offerors may submit proposals to provide the services covered by this RFP on or before the date & time listed on the cover page of this solicitation. Proposals received after this time and date for any reason will not be considered. The official clock is in the reception area of the Division.

### **Proposals must include the following:**

- A. A completed and signed R.I.V.I.P. generated Bidder Certification Cover Form downloaded from the Rhode Island Division of Purchases web site at (click on 'Vendor Information', then 'General Information' – document located under 'Standard Forms' – follow instructions).
- B. The original plus five (5) copies of a separate Technical Proposal, inclusive of and addressing all the aforementioned requirements, describing the background, qualification and experience with and for similar services, as well as the work plan or approach proposed for the services needed and described within this document (further details below). **Electronic copies of all Technical Proposals are required with the submission of the original.**
- C. An original plus five (5) copies of a **separately signed and sealed** Cost Proposal, inclusive of the general requirements. **Electronic copies of all Cost Proposals are required in the submission of the original.**
- D. A completed and signed W-9 Form downloaded from the RI Division of Purchases web site at: <http://www.purchasing.ri.gov> (click on RIVIP, then General Information and then Standard Forms). **Please include with original Technical Proposal only.**

- E. In addition to the required multiple hard copies of proposals, the respondents **must** provide the proposals in electronic format. The preferred electronic format is Microsoft Word, Excel or PDF. Please provide a disk (CD-ROM) containing an electronic version of the technical proposals and a **separate** disk containing an electronic version of the cost proposal. The cost proposal disk should be included in the sealed cost proposal package.
- F. The Offeror's status as a Minority Business Enterprise (MBE), certified by the Rhode Island Department of Administration, and/or a subcontracting plan which addresses the State's goal of ten percent (10%) participation requirement by MBE's in all State procurements. Questions concerning this requirement should be addressed to Charles Newton, MBE Officer, at (401) 574-8253 or [charles.newton@doa.ri.gov](mailto:charles.newton@doa.ri.gov).

### **VIII. Evaluation and Selection**

The State will commission a Technical Review Team to evaluate and score proposals using the following criteria:

<b><u>Criteria</u></b>	<b><u>Points</u></b>
<b>Experience, Capacity &amp; Staffing (40 Points)</b>	40
<b>Work Plan/Approach</b>	30
<b>Cost Proposal</b>	30
<b>TOTAL</b>	100

- In order for the Cost Proposal to be reviewed, all technical proposals must meet a minimum technical evaluation score of **50 points**. Any proposals scoring less than **50 points** will not have the cost component either opened or evaluated and the proposal will be dropped from further consideration.
- Notwithstanding the above, the State, and its agents reserve the right to either accept or reject any, or all, bids, proposals, award on cost alone, cancel the solicitation and to waive any technicality in order to act in the best interest's of the State and to conduct additional negotiations as necessary.
- The State reserves the right to award this contract to one vendor, multiple vendors in one or more of the categories or cancel this solicitation entirely at its own discretion. If multiple awards are made, the State shall reserve the right to require price quotations from each vendor prior to the award of each project and release. In other words, the rates provided in the cost proposal are the maximum rates.
- Proposals found to be technically or substantially non-responsive, at any point in the evaluation process, will be rejected and not considered further. The State, at its sole option, may elect to require presentation(s) by Offerors in consideration for the award. An award will not be made to a contractor who is neither qualified nor equipped to undertake and complete required work within a specified time.

- The Division will commission a review team to evaluate and score all proposals that are complete and minimally responsive using the criteria described above. The evaluation of any item may incorporate input from sources other than the bidder's response and supplementary materials submitted by the bidder. Those other sources could include assessments made by evaluators based on findings recorded from reference checks (including but not limited to those supplied by the bidder), prior experience with or knowledge of bidder's work, responses to follow-up questions posed by the State and/or oral presentations by the bidders if requested by the review team. The State may elect to use any or all of these evaluation tools.
- The review team may contact any, all or some of the bidders with questions and clarifications at any point during the process at its own discretion.
- The Technical Review Team will present written findings, including the results of all evaluations, to the State Purchasing Agent who will make the final selection for this solicitation. When a final decision has been made, a notice will be posted on the Rhode Island Division of Purchases web site.
- Because the evaluation takes into consideration both the technical and cost components in a value based approach, the lowest costing bidder may not necessarily be awarded a contract. The State reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to determine the number of vendors to be selected to participate on the Master Price Agreement.
- ***There is no guarantee of any level of purchasing activity on behalf of the State to any vendor or vendors listed on the MPA.***

**IX. Submission Deadline (Please also refer to page one of this solicitation.)**

An original plus five (5) copies of the Technical Proposal and an original plus five (5) copies of the separately signed & sealed Cost Proposal (separately sealed Technical and Cost Proposals may be shipped in the same container) must be either mailed or hand-delivered and marked “**RFP #7461231: Communications and Marketing Services**” to:

**Rhode Island Department of Administration  
Division of Purchases, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
One Capitol Hill  
Providence, RI 02908**

Proposals received after the above-referenced due date and time for any reason will not be considered. Proposals misdirected to other State locations by the scheduled due date and time and not received by the Division of Purchases before the deadline will be determined to be late and will not be considered. Proposals faxed or emailed to the Division of Purchases will not be accepted.