



**Solicitation Information
October 20, 2015**

Addendum #2

RFP# 7549921

TITLE: Media Planning, Buying & Measurement Services – MPA#417

Submission Deadline: October 26, 2015 at 11:30 a.m. (Eastern Time)

This addendum provides answers to questions received regarding the solicitation.

Lisa Hill
State of Rhode Island
Division of Purchases

Questions and Answers for RFP#7549921
Title: Media Planning, Buying & Measurement Services –MPA #417

Question #1

Of the \$17 million spent in media over the past 3 years, how much was spent in the Providence Journal, RI Monthly and outdoor for Lottery?

Answer to Question # 1

The majority of spend for *Providence Journal*, *RI Monthly* and outdoor for Lottery is not included in the \$17m. There are media campaigns that include this as part of the plan; however, this represents a relatively small amount of spend. Nevertheless, outdoor Lottery was approximately \$1m over that time period. The specific spend for *Providence Journal* and *RI Monthly* related to this time period / specific category of spend is not readily available.

Question #2

Social Media Launch – are you looking for a launch for a particular section of the State’s business, what are the goals of the campaign?

Answer to Question #2

We are not looking for a launch for a particular section of State’s business. Rather, a firm should draw on previous experiences to provide an example, if applicable.

Question #3

You ask for the media budget for any specific program that is referenced. What is this referring to?

Answer to Question #3

If a specific program is referenced in your response as support for the ability to deliver on the scope, please include the media budget as well. This additional information will help the Review & Evaluation Committee to understand the relative size of any program referenced for context. If a specific program is not referenced in your response, then this will not apply. This section is not asking for a list of client budgets.

Question #4

Page 7 – Scope of Work Section 5 b, “...keep tabs on any inventory limits attributed to election consumption and bring these for proactive consideration.” Please explain “election consumption” – are you referring to fire sale pricing opportunities?

Answer to Question #4

Media directors have reported uncommonly higher inventory demand that they attribute to the early start of the presidential election advertising cycle. Firms on this contract are being asked to indicate how they have and will be advising State government clients on the potential impacts of this as a trend as would relate to preemption contingencies, bump rates and budgeting.

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Question # 5: Page 9 Technical Proposal Section 1 Disclose any past or active client relationships to media outlets. By “Client relationship” are you referring media buying business relationships or are you referring to past or present employees that have work with the R.I. Media outlets.

Answer to Question #5 - We are requesting client relationships of the firm not the past or present employees that worked with the RI Media outlets.

Question # 6 Page Appendix A - Media Spend

We did not notice any funds for Homeland Security or Seafood Marketing. If these or other agencies are funded will they become part of this contract?

Answer to Question #6

This MPA is available to the State, including all branches of State government, quasi-public agencies and municipalities (cities and towns and school districts) that have funding and in need of media services. If a specific campaign is not listed as a past spend, but would potentially be a communications focus for a State government entity as previously described, those organizations would have the option to utilize the qualified media buying firms installed on the eventual Media Buying MPA.

Question 7 (A, B, and C)

- A. The RFP requires bidders to provide their financial statements including their balance sheet and P&L. We ask if this requirement can we waived or eliminated. Financials were not required in other State communications RFPs, including the most previous media RFP and the most recent RFP for marketing and communications services. Nor were financials required by the Department of Commerce in the recent multi-million dollar “Tourism/Economic Development” RFP that was recently awarded. This type of requirement is more applicable to a construction contract RFP. Whereas this is a professional services contract it should not be necessary. Financials contain confidential and propriety information about privately held companies that if exposed to competitors would be extremely detrimental to the bidding party. If an Access to Public Records request were filed the state would have to provide a bidders submission and could not protect or hold back in providing the financials. Release of this information to a competitor would be extremely detrimental to the bidding party. Communications services (including media buying) in general are a highly competitive sector. In Rhode Island it is extremely competitive.
- B. If the request to waive or eliminate the requirement for financials is not granted can it be limited to providing just the balance sheet. This document would show the financial strength of a company and the P&L is therefore not needed.
- C. If neither request for waving or eliminating the requirement for financials (in full or in part) is granted what assurances, process and protocols will be provided or in

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place to keep the financials confidential? This bidder is a privately held company that holds its financials in the strictest of confidence. Exposure of our financials would cause great harm particularly if our competitors were to get them. If there is an Access to Public Records request made The State would have to provide the entire submission. Release of documents and the complete and timely fulfillment of records request has become an issue of considerable attention in the past few weeks.

Answer to Question #7 (A, B, and C)

The requirement to provide financial statements is waived for this RFP.

Question #8

In question 2, section b, bullet point 7: Are you asking how a direct-marketing/direct-response experience can fail, or how a geo-targeting media program can fail, based on a direct (e.g., real-life) experience that we encountered?

Answer to Question #8

The latter is accurate. The question doesn't exclude a theoretical response per se; the use of the word 'ideally' intends to state a preference for presenting such insight from first-hand experience as also sets up the second and third parts of this question.

Question #9

Knowing that the state of Rhode Island recently awarded its tourism business to four agencies (with the exception of Media Planning, Buying & Measurement Services), do you see this scope of work including the Media Planning, Buying & Measurement Services for Rhode Island tourism?

Answer to Question #9

The tourism award is not specifically incorporated in this RFP, however this MPA is available to the State, including all branches of State government, quasi-public agencies and municipalities (cities and towns and school districts) that have funding and in need of media services.

Question #10

In question 2, section b, bullet point 1: Are you asking for an explanation of how we would set up a fee compensation proposal, or to see the hours against each valued media asset so that we can do a barter? Also, can you identify and/or provide more background regarding the owned media assets that you reference for cross-purposed bartering?

Answer to Question #10

For reference purposes, we believe the question 10 is referring to bullet point 11 not bullet 1 in this section. RI government agencies eligible to use this contract often have media channels (or 'assets') under their domains that each uses to communicate with core constituencies. Examples might include: signage, transit media, sponsorship, venues/real estate, event posters, catalogs and websites, etc. Retail/commercial price valuations

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may/may not be assigned to these channels, still they are ‘assets.’ Thus, a partnered or bartered blending of such media would not be computed under the commissionable media fee model, but then these media are likely not ‘sold.’ The question requests the respondent to indicate: a) a conceptual cross-State agency situational partnership by naming two such State entities and a plausible campaign platform for which they might work together by sharing access to one another’s institutional media assets (indicating a reasonable hypothesis on kindred target audiences), b) review the approach by which the firm should be compensated for its time as would reflect the value of the idea, scoping the program from objectives to tactics to the outcomes. It is not requesting a financial computation of State-owned media or an hourly rate structure (which is addressed in Appendix D) but is intended to consider your firm’s creative approach to utilizing media that is readily available in new ways, for new gains as measured by audience reach, a common demographic and measurability.

Question #11

In Appendix D – Cost Proposal Format, 1) Commissionable Media Placement Percent: You refer to “All Media (except Social + Optimization). By “Optimization” do you mean Search Engine Optimization or measurement/optimization of paid digital display buys? Under the same section: Are you open to identification of different commission percentages for traditional and digital media (given the mix between the two is not currently known), or must we adhere to one estimated/blended commission percentage?

Answer to Question #11

For purposes of this RFP, ‘Optimizing’ includes: search engine optimization (SEO), Search Engine Marketing (SEM) and all management, measurement and recalibrating optimization for paid Search (AdWords), Digital (web) and Social (Pinterest, Facebook, Twitter, etc.) platforms. Digital media commissions can be offered separately for discrete Digital (web) media campaigns when this reporting includes the Optimizing work as previously described. Bundled advertising media ‘packages’ through which a traditional media buy is packaged with the outlet’s companion digital channel should be computed at the commission rate for traditional media.

Question # 12

In Appendix D – Cost Proposal Format, 4) Inter-Agency Resource Partnerships: Can you provide additional context regarding this section? Is this managing barter/partnership opportunities between the various Rhode Island agencies/brands?

Answer to Question #12

Yes, this is identifying opportunities between the various Rhode Island agencies/brands and providing a plan utilizing those opportunities that will effectively reach target markets. Please see the answer to question #10 for additional information.

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Question #13

Is it safe to assume the primary advertising initiatives for the Department of Transportation will be safety-related campaigns such as Impaired Driving, Speeding, Texting, Motorcycle Safety and/or Occupant Protection, or will there be other paid advertising initiatives in 2016?

Answer to Question #13

Yes, that is the list of primary advertising initiatives for the Department of Transportation.

Question #14

For purposes of calculating the % media commission, can you provide the projected annual net media budget along with the anticipated % of net media by channel (digital, OOH, Broadcast, Print, etc.?)

Answer to Question #14

It is not possible to project the division of media channels as they are selected on a per-campaign basis as will be most appropriate to the targeted audience and the intended behavior. The response asks for a flat percentage rate that reflects current industry best practice, that the respondent firm is willing to follow for the duration of the MPA.

Question #15

Would a bank reference satisfy providing a P&L Balance sheet?

Answer to Question #15

The requirement to provide financial statements for this RFP is waived, please see the answer to question #7.

Question #16

Standard policies and procedures dictate that we bill estimated media up-front and quarterly reconcile the media with supporting invoices and calculations. Is this an acceptable form of billing? Our rationale for billing this way is so that we have sufficient funds on hand to pay media vendors in a timely fashion and avoid media vendors from interrupting media flights for non-payment.

Answer to Question #16

An estimated payment with a quarterly reconciliation to actual is not an acceptable form of billing. The process requires that all invoices be received with supporting net media back-ups and reconciliations in order for payment to be released. This would entail documentation of credits and make-good decisions and sign-offs by the authorized State agency

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Question #17

Is the address outlined below in bold where you wish to receive all proposals?

Division of Purchases
Department of Administration
One Capitol Hill, 2nd floor
Providence, RI 02908-5855

Answer to Question #17

Yes, please see addendum #1 for additional proposal submission instructions.