

# Overarching

Neither the State of Rhode Island, nor its primary Economic Development Entity the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation work with an external marketing, public relations and/or advertising firm.

## General Questions

**Q. Is there any flexibility in the July 31 submission date? We only found out about the RFP this morning, and request a 1 week extension if possible.**

**A.** The Commerce Corporation will be extending its deadline one week. Proposals will now be due Friday, August 7, 2015 at 4:00 p.m.

**Q. How much "on-the-ground" support is the agency expected to provide?**

**A.** The selected firm will have the full support of the Commerce Corporation and any other state agency or subdivision needed to effectively develop and deploy the new statewide brand or meet the state's goals of increasing tourism numbers, visitor spending and business attraction. Specifically, the Commerce Corporation expects to hire a dedicated marketing team of executive and experienced professionals, and is seeking a recruiter (<http://www.commerceri.com/documents/RFP/Executive%20Search%20Firm%20RFP.pdf>) to achieve its hiring goals.

**Q. Are there any elements of the current brand (logos, color, etc) that we would need to include in our efforts?**

**A.** No; however, applicants may propose to keep all, some, or none of our current branding.

**Q. Do you have any specific perceptions of the state commerce efforts that you would need to overcome?**

**A.** Rhode Island has the perception of being a tough place to do business. We have many positive attributes about doing business, but this has not been widely shared. Additionally, certain cohorts either have no or an incomplete understanding of Rhode Island's natural, historic and modern tourist attractions.

**Q. Can you please provide all of the current websites under the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation umbrella?**

**A.** [www.commerceri.com](http://www.commerceri.com); [www.ptacri.org](http://www.ptacri.org); [www.greaterri.com](http://www.greaterri.com); [stac.ri.gov](http://stac.ri.gov); [www.visitrhodeisland.com](http://www.visitrhodeisland.com). While not under the Commerce RI umbrella, a number of third parties (i.e. regional tourism bureaus, chambers of commerce, etc.) have websites on their various areas of expertise. These include; <http://providencechamber.com/>; <http://www.newportchamber.com/>; <http://www.nrichamber.com/>; <http://www.southcountyri.com/>; <http://www.goprovidence.com/>; <http://www.discovernewport.org/>; <http://www.blackstonevalleytourismcouncil.org/>; <http://www.visitwarwickri.com/>; and <http://www.blockislandinfo.com/>.

**Q. How much promotion has been done to target international markets for all commerce efforts?**

**A.** As a state, Rhode Island has done no targeted direct international promotion. Rhode Island indirectly participates in international indirect tourism promotion partnering with Discover New

England. Historically, certain regional tourism bureaus (i.e. Newport), have conducted direct international tourism promotion.

**Q. Are there any new emerging tourist destinations set to open in Rhode Island in the next few years that we should be aware of?**

**A.** None that we are currently aware of.

**Q. Have you worked with other agencies in the past on any specific campaigns? In previous efforts for the Commerce Corporation, what has worked well? What has not performed well?**

**A.** In recent memory, Rhode Island has not conducted major statewide marketing and branding effort. We're planning for a fresh start.

**Q. Is it assumed that the existing [www.visitrhodeisland.com](http://www.visitrhodeisland.com) website will be built upon in its current form, or completely remodeled?**

**A.** Applicants may propose either. We are not coming in with any assumptions.

**Q. What makes this the right time to rebrand Rhode Island?**

**A.** Rhode Island has made progress on a lot of fronts in recent years, and just elected a dynamic new Governor, who has been unabashed and relentless in her pursuit of growing the state's economy and image. The rest of the country has not fully registered this progress. Across a number of disciplines, such as improved rail links to Boston, substantially lower tax rates, a recently passed set of highly competitive business incentives, and world-class facilities, such as a remodeled International Tennis Hall of Fame in Newport, the Ocean House hotel in Watch Hill, just ranked one of the 20 best hotels in the world, top-tier universities, a city (Providence) voted the coolest in United States by GQ Magazine, Rhode Island has a lot going on.

**Q. How are the local tourism regions defined? Are we correct in assuming that we should account for: Blackstone Valley, Block Island, East Bay, Newport County, Providence, South County and Warwick/West Bay?**

**A.** There are six regional bureaus: Providence-Warwick Convention Visitors Bureau, Newport, South County, Warwick, Block Island and Blackstone Valley. The regional tourism bureaus are funded through a separate portion of the hotel tax as outlined by statute; total funding across regions total approx. \$8 million. We anticipate coordinating with the regional tourism regions to incorporate and implement the new statewide primary brand.

**Q. This question is about balancing priorities: Throughout the document it appears that there are multiple and layered hopes and expectations for the impact of this initiative ranging from a tourist visitor to a relocated citizen to starting or moving a business. While certainly one can imagine a model that strives to integrate these audiences and objectives, with limited resources and time can you clarify where the highest priorities are or can you speak to your thinking on the balance?**

**A.** Development of a compelling statewide brand is the top priority, and we are looking for one that will prove attractive to tourists, businesses, and citizens alike. As we deploy that brand, we see potential tourists as our primary audience, while targeting businesses through advertisements, convention attendance, etc. Once the new brand is established, we conceive of the roughly \$5 million in annual funds going 80% to tourism marketing and 20% to business

marketing and growing if/as the re-branding is successful.

**Q. According to the RFP, it appears that that the State is looking for one marketing agency (branding, advertising & PR) or a group of agencies to not only promote tourism, but economic development as well. Please confirm if this is true.**

A. Correct

**Q. What is the primary driver behind the initiative? What is driving you to commit these funds to build the brand of Rhode Island? Are there growth goals and measurable outcomes that have been outlined and established by the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation that the agency will be measured against?**

A. Our goal is to put Rhode Island back on the radar for tourists considering their next trip and for businesses looking to grow. Rhode Island has failed for years to invest adequately in a statewide campaign to attract visitors and businesses, and that changes now. On the Commerce RI website is a study by Nichols and Radcliffe from December 2014, recommending a \$4 million tourism marketing effort. That report projected job creation (about 2,500), as well as additional hotel and tax revenues. It is just the very start of an effort to quantify impact with metrics--one we take seriously--but it is useful reference.

**Q. You mention the grant program associated with this effort; can we get more detail on how you envision this working?**

A. We envision grants that encourage local tourism bureaus to collaborate under statewide campaign. For example, Newport, Block Island, and South County may work together to promote Rhode Island beaches, for instance.

**Q. You mention multiple stakeholders that will need to be involved. Who does this include and what organizations do they represent? What access will we have to them for research? Will coordination of those stakeholders be handled by The Rhode Island Commerce Corporation or will the agency be responsible for coordinating all entities?**

A. We will actively involve local tourism bureaus, chambers of commerce, tourism and marketing industry leaders, and state and local decision makers. The Commerce Corporation will make sure you have access to them. This branding effort was a major proposal in the Governor's election campaign and the legislature has been very supportive; it is a top priority of the State.

**Q. To most efficiently manage this process toward success, will there be a small multi-disciplinary team of stakeholders, and can bidders expect access to these individuals and reasonable access to the many "public and private partners" to make this work?**

A. Yes, definitely.

**Q. What have you done in the past that was successful in engaging public and private partners to develop the Rhode Island brand?**

A. The Commerce Corporation worked with Rhode Island Foundation to bring together more than 300 business leaders to discuss focus areas of intersections in Rhode Island industries. The corporation has also partnered with the Economic Development Foundation of Rhode Island and the Greater Providence Chamber of Commerce to develop and launch the Greater RI website

and marketing campaign. These efforts were modest in nature and had commensurate levels of success.

**Q. What were the issues that resulted in the need for Rhode Island to “reimagine and rebrand itself for the purpose of projecting a more favorable image to the world”?**

**A.** Rhode Island has not invested in a statewide brand for many years and as a result, has trailed neighboring states in tourism industry growth, as well as business attraction and overall positive impressions. Yet we have world-class assets such as Newport and Block Island, Brown University and RISD, 400 miles of coastline, and a food scene centered in Providence that has been ranked the best in the country. It's about time people rediscovered RI.

**Q. Can you provide the current agency roster for the last 3 years by function - PR, Social, Events, Advertising, Merchandise, etc.?**

**A.** Director of Tourism; PR Consultant and outsourced social media in past two years. Three years ago we worked with an outside agency in addition to these functions.

**Q. Is international tourism PR to be expected from the PR agency hired by Commerce RI?**

**A.** We are looking for a comprehensive proposal and recommendations on building a compelling and memorable brand that will attract tourists and businesses regionally, nationally and internationally. We seek recommendations on the most effective way to promote the state internationally.

The goals outlined are comprehensive, covering three or four large objectives, i.e.

- a. Boost consideration of, use of, Rhode Island as a tourist destination
- b. Boost consideration of Rhode Island as an attractive place to start/run a business
- c. Boost consideration of Rhode Island as an attractive place to live, raise a family
- d. Boost consideration of Rhode Island as an attractive venue for business travel

**Q. These could be construed as parallel but separate objectives. Which of these is the top priority or priority with the shortest expected timeline?**

**A.** These should be construed as parallel, but the top priority is to develop a compelling and memorable branding campaign to attract tourists. The timeline for principal launch of our new brand is January 1.

**Q. What are the biggest challenges that the brand faces for those visiting, working and living in RI?**

**A.** A cultural misconception of how great Rhode Island, as described above.

## **Process**

**Q. Will preference be given to a RI agency?**

**A.** No special preference or scoring will be given to Rhode Island agencies.

**Q. Could you shed some light on the scoring system that will be used?**

**A.** First, a diverse team of tourism, business, marketing, and government professionals will rate each proposal based on relevant experience, proposed plan, and fee structure. Special consideration will be given to meeting the objectives outlined in the RFP--for example, presenting "out-of-the-box" ideas on obtaining the greatest return on investment with the dollars appropriated to the project. Next, we will bring in several finalists for in-person interview and presentation, rated along those same criteria.

**Q. Does the state have elements they want to see in their strategy beyond those listed on the RFP guide?**

**A.** No.

**Q. What additional company information is helpful to your selection process? Is current economic impact in Rhode Island an important criteria?**

**A.** "Current economic impact" is an ambiguous term. We do not provide special preference to firms already working in Rhode Island.

**Q. Will the campaign also be promoting within the State, i.e. Rhode Island to Rhode Islanders?**

**A.** Yes.

**Q. What is the anticipated contract length for this initiative? Is the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation open to a multi-year contract for this engagement?**

**A.** This is a one year contract with an option to renew.

**Q. Following the contract award in August 2015, what is the overarching timeline for this initiative? Are there any key dates/deadlines to be mindful of throughout the scope of this engagement?**

**A.** We are looking for a January 1, 2016 launch of the Statewide brand.

**Q. What are the key media markets/areas of focus for this initiative (e.g., Providence Metro area, regional, etc.)?**

**A.** We seek recommendations for the greatest return on investment to promote Rhode Island in the local, regional, national and international markets.

**Q. Who are the key stakeholders involved in the RFP review process?**

**A.** The state of Rhode Island is working with business and tourism leaders as well as chambers of commerce.

**Q. Does the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation have a media partner in place for the scope of this engagement?**

**A.** No.

**Q. What opportunities will the selected agency have to conduct a brief discovery/source content from individuals during this engagement?**

- A. We strongly encourage that activity and don't believe it necessarily must be brief. Sourcing content for citizens and businesses can itself be an opportunity to promote RI.
- Q. Will the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation expect RFP finalists to present draft concepts? If so, what is the expectation for this phase of the RFP? What should this presentation entail?**
- A. We would like to see draft concepts in the RFP written response, though that is not a requirement. By the interview stage, we would very much like to see them.
- Q. When will the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation announce the RFP finalists?**
- A. We anticipate announcing the finalists in mid-August.
- Q. What will be the timeline for notification once the group reviews the RFPs and the selection of the finalists for preparation of the scheduled pitches?**
- A. Notice and preparation would be one to one-and-a-half weeks.
- Q. Is there an incumbent agency of record and if so can you disclose the agency's name?**
- A. No.
- Q. Is the \$5M budget listed in the RFP an annual amount or for the length of the contract?**
- A. The \$5M budget is anticipated to be a recurring annual amount with the first year of spending focused on brand development and deployment and subsequent years focused on deployment.
- Q. Will proposals submitted be kept confidential?**
- A. As a public agency we are required to comply with the public records law, which means that trade secrets and commercial or business financial information will not be made public.
- Q. Can non-RI-based agencies participate and if so, are there requirements to be registered or have a certificate of good standing in RI?**
- A. Non-RI-based agencies can participate. There are registration requirements for firms if selected.
- Q. What will the meeting requirements be for the agency awarded the contract?**
- A. This is to be determined within reason for both parties.
- Q. How often is it expected the vendor partner be onsite in Providence working with your team?**
- A. This is to be determined based on the ongoing needs.
- Q. Once contract award is made, will there be a central client contact or will the committee continue for duration of agency contract?**
- A. Yes, there will be a central client.
- Q. Could a proposal be accepted with a plan to market just Rhode Island Tourism or is it necessary to include an advertising plan to market both tourism and economic development?**
- A. Yes. We are accepting proposals that focus on all aspects of the RFP as well as individual disciplines.

**Q. In addition to the RI Commerce Corporation, are there other individuals or agencies/offices that will have direct involvement and/or decision-making authority for this project? If so, who are they and how will it be managed on the client side?**

**A.** The Commerce Corporation will be the central point of contact and day to day decision maker. It reports up to the Secretary of Commerce and the Governor, both of which will be involved in higher level decisions.

**Q. In the section "Evaluation Process", under part C. c., the RFP states that "The Corporation will identify the respondent with the highest score to pursue contract negotiations". This implies only one contract will be awarded, which seems to contradict the option outlined for a respondent to apply for only a portion of the RFP. Can you clarify whether or not The Corporation is willing to award multiple, partial contracts?**

**A.** The Corporation is willing to award multiple or partial contracts.

**Q. Are all marketing tactics integrated under one plan?**

**A.** We seek recommendations on deployment of the statewide brand and garnering the greatest return on investment.

**Q. What states or cities would you consider a conflict of interest?**

**A.** We do not have firm criteria on this mark. A current contract to promote a neighboring state's tourism assets would clearly be a conflict, but we will consider less-direct conflicts on a case by case basis. We ask that you identify these proactively.

**Q. What are the target flight dates for this campaign?**

**A.** January 1, 2016

**Q. Is there a standardized organizational format you require for the submission of the proposal? Should it be in the same order as outlined?**

**A.** There is not a standardized organizational format.

**Q. Who is on the RFP and Oral Presentation judging committee?**

**A.** The judging committee will be made up of tourism, marketing, and government and business leaders.

**Q. Do you prefer to choose one agency that does everything or multiple discipline agencies? Who are your current agency(s) and are they participating?**

**A.** Rhode Island does not currently engage with an external firm. We are seeking the best proposal to achieve our goals to develop a compelling and memorable branding campaign and deploying this to garner the greatest return on investment.

**Q. Which best describes the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation's view on spec creative:**

**1. You want to see spec creative?**

**2. You don't want to see it, are not requesting it and will not review it?**

**3. You are not asking for it but will review it if it is submitted?**

A. We want to see spec creative.

**Q. Can you please clarify what constitutes spec creative from your point of view? Are you looking for actual graphic or visual production or more of strategic/creative archetype concepts?**

A. We would like to see creative ideas, possible brands and the research that brought you to these ideas.

**Q. Would part of the re---brand include a new website?**

A. We are seeking recommendations.

## **Tourism and Business Attraction**

**Q. What local attractions are considered the most successful that the Commerce Corporation feels are important to continue promoting?**

A. Rhode Island has 400 miles of coastline and 20 percent of the country's historic landmarks. Newport is the sailing capital of the world, home to famed Gilded Age mansions. Providence's celebrated restaurants, award-winning theatre, and vibrant arts scene are enhanced by an elaborate river-walk that is home to the famous Water Fire. And the list goes on.

**Q. What is the state currently doing in terms of grants to local tourism regions to promote the state and brand?**

A. Rhode Island does not currently have a state brand to promote. The regional tourism bureaus promote Rhode Island and their destinations.

**Q. Who are the key target audiences for the tourism and business aspects of this RFP?**

A. We seek recommendations regarding the target audience for both tourism and business attraction that will garner the most return on investment.

**Q. Are there specific industries/businesses you are trying to attract to R.I.?**

A. We are aiming for industries with high quality jobs in sectors such as finance, insurance, technology, advanced manufacturing, food, and maritime.

**Q. How important are meeting and convention-goers in the mix of travelers to R.I.?**

A. Meetings and conventions are an important opportunity to reach a targeted, captured audience.

**Q. Does the state currently have a tax---incentive or relocation package?**

A. The Generally Assembly recently passed Governor Raimondo's economic development and jobs-focused budget, which includes many new incentives and tools for Rhode Island to expand and attract businesses. It was heavily covered in the media and is available on the CommerceRI website as the Ocean State WAVE. It is now one of the most competitive packages on the East Coast.

**Q. What has been your biggest challenge in marketing the state?**

- A. Lack of funds.
- Q. Which conventions have you attended in the past, and which ones were the most successful?**
- A. We are seeking proposals for the development and deployment of a statewide brand and the recommendations that will garner the greatest return on investment.
- Q. Identify lead industry business partners that are currently aligned with the RI Commerce Corporation.**
- A. There are many resources available to determine this information.
- Q. Are there any new business development initiatives or incentives that are in progress that we should be aware?**
- A. We choose not to answer this.
- Q. Any priority geographic markets beyond the Northeastern I-95 corridor?**
- A. We are seeking proposals for the development and deployment of a statewide brand and the recommendations that will garner the greatest return on investment.
- Q. When it comes to the story of driving business growth in Rhode Island, what companies have been your best case studies/examples?**
- A. There are many resources available to determine this information.
- Q. Do you feel enough has been done to communicate the corporate tax incentives that companies receive doing business in Rhode Island?**
- A. We are seeking proposals for the development and deployment of a statewide brand and the recommendations that will garner the greatest return on investment.

## Market Research

The Commerce Corporation is making available all data research available, which should answer all questions pertaining to the topic.

- [http://www.commerceri.com/documents/RFP/IHS Global Insight Report 2012.pdf](http://www.commerceri.com/documents/RFP/IHS%20Global%20Insight%20Report%202012.pdf)
  - [http://www.commerceri.com/documents/RFP/Rhode Island Perception Study 2010.pdf](http://www.commerceri.com/documents/RFP/Rhode%20Island%20Perception%20Study%202010.pdf)
- Q. Why (as far as you know) do travelers pick other destinations over Rhode Island (distance, sight-seeing, pricing, etc.)?**
- A. Please review the research documents made available.
- Q. What top destinations do you see as Rhode Island's main competition?**
- A. Please review the research documents made available.
- Q. What do you consider to be RI key tourism assets/points of differentiation?**
- A. Please review the research documents made available.
- Q. What do you consider to be RI key economic development assets/points of differentiation?**

- A. Please review the research documents made available.
- Q. What do you consider to be RI key residential assets/points of differentiation?**
- A. Please review the research documents made available.
- Q. What are the top five gateway/pipeline cities that feed current tourism?**
- A. Please review the research documents made available.
- Q. What are the main tourist attractions in RI that people travel for (e.g., beaches, food, resorts)?**
- A. Please review the research documents made available.
- Q. What tactics are you executing to support public relations now? Annual press trips? Consumer facing event or stunts? Trade show support?**
- A. We have been supporting these through in-house resources.
- Q. What is your target demographic? HHI? Age? Top markets that generate visits?**
- A. Please review the research documents made available.
- Q. What are the top attractions, landmarks, activities that you are looking to focus on as “must go to” in your campaigns?**
- A. Please review the research documents made available.
- Q. What are Rhode Island “hidden gems” that you wish people knew about to help drive visits?**
- A. Please review the research documents made available.
- Q. Is your goal to drive visits or increase length of stay? Or others?**
- A. Both.
- Q. In the last year has Rhode Island experiences an increase, decrease or stable amount of visitors?**
- A. Please review the research documents made available.
- Q. Do the majority of visitors arrive by car, air or other?**
- A. Please review the research documents made available.
- Q. Has the Commerce Corporation ever engaged with a market research firm for any of its efforts within tourism and business promotion?**
- A. Please review the research documents made available.
- Q. Is there a desire to include the story of the many great colleges and universities of Rhode Island as part of this effort?**
- A. We are seeking proposals for the development and deployment of a statewide brand and the recommendations that will garner the greatest return on investment.
- Q. Do you envision the stakeholder outreach as a way to execute brand development or also as a component of conducting research?**
- A. This is outlined in the RFP.

- Q. Are there legacy strategies or identified strategies that have been effective for Rhode Island tourism, residency and business attraction?**
- A. No.
- Q. Are there business profiles that have been identified for attracting commerce? What strategies have been earmarked as major drivers to attracting corporations as well as job growth? I.e. industries of strength. Will developing these profiles or enhancing them be part of the market research?**
- A. We are seeking proposals for the development and deployment of a statewide brand and the recommendations that will garner the greatest return on investment.
- Q. What is the current demographic of your leisure traveler?**
- A. Research is available at the above links.
- Q. Are there geographic and demographic targets already established for this campaign or will these be established through the market research section of the RFP?**
- A. We are seeking proposals for the development and deployment of a statewide brand and the recommendations that will garner the greatest return on investment.
- Q. Do you have a breakdown of your target markets? How much is designated in New England vs. the rest of the country and Canada? Does Rhode Island market beyond the U.S. and Canada? Do they market 12 months a year? Do they market within the State of Rhode Island to visit Rhode Island?**
- A. We are looking for a comprehensive proposal and recommendations on building a compelling and memorable brand and campaign that will attract tourists and businesses regionally, nationally and internationally.
- Q. Are there data/analytics about current marketing efforts (social, ads, etc.), relative spend and effectiveness?**
- A. No.
- Q. Can you provide KPIs for the last 3 - 5 years?**
- A. We do not have recent KPIs.
- Q. Will you share any current and past brand research, B-B research, B-C research?**
- A. We do not have any available research.
- Q. How much have you spent on brand research over the past few years?**
- A. The last perception study was completed in 2010.
- Q. Which ethnic groups predominate currently and which groups are starting to emerge?**
- A. We do not have any available research.
- Q. What state or city communications campaigns do you admire?**
- A. There are many, but Pure Michigan is an excellent example of a brand that works for both tourism and business development.
- Q. Can you provide previous media channels that were featured (e.g., TV, print, digital, etc.)**

- A. Rhode Island has been recognized in many publications.

## **Budget**

**Many of the budget related questions can be answered through this statement:**

*The \$5 million is solely for development and deployment of a Statewide Tourism and Business Attraction campaign. Regional tourism bureaus are funded through a separate source as well as ongoing tourism activities including trade shows.*

*We are looking for a comprehensive proposal and recommendations on building a compelling and memorable brand and campaign that will attract tourists and businesses regionally, nationally and internationally.*

*The initial contract is for \$5 million with the possibility of multiplying that number in subsequent years provided the campaign is successful.*

- Q. What is the target audience for the advertising component (national, regional, international)? Presently, does the target audience vary across the eight regional tourism councils? Is a certain percentage of the budget expected to be devoted to advertising?**
  - A. We are looking for a comprehensive proposal and recommendations on building a compelling and memorable brand and campaign that will attract tourists and businesses regionally, nationally and internationally.
  
- Q. The RFP indicates that rebranding campaigns should rebrand and promote Rhode Island as a great place to visit, live, work, or start a business. Has the total budget been earmarked based on objective? I.e. have allocations been earmarked from the total to tourism, residency, and commerce/employment?**
- Q. Historically, what percentage of your budget has been allocated to advertising versus public relations?**
  - A. We are looking for a comprehensive proposal and recommendations on building a compelling and memorable brand and campaign that will attract tourists and businesses regionally, nationally and internationally.
  
- Q. Assuming the \$5 million budget is inclusive of all costs associated with this initiative, how much of the budget will be allocated toward agency fees, production, media, and incidentals?**
  - A. We have requested fee structures to be presented in the proposals.
  
- Q. Are you open to the inclusion of paid search as part execution as part of the deployment budget and are those services that can be included in the proposal?**
  - A. We have requested fee structures to be presented in the proposals.

**Q. Are you open to the inclusion of website design and/or development as part of the deployment budget, and are those services that can be included in the proposal?**

**A.** We have requested fee structures to be presented in the proposals.

**Q. What % of the 5 million dollars do you intend to allocate to tourism vs. economic development/business attraction.**

**A.** We are looking to develop a compelling and memorable brand that appeals to both tourists and businesses.

**Q. What % of tourism dollars do you envision allocating toward advertising?**

**A.** We are seeking recommendations on how to utilize the proposed budget to garner the largest return on investment.

**Q. What % of the tourism dollars should be earmarked towards the promotion of local/regional tourism partners?**

**A.** The Rhode Island tourism regions are not funded through the \$5 million dedicated to building a statewide brand and campaign.

**Q. The RFP asks for us to provide a comprehensive budget for all potential services within the \$5 million budget. Can we get a copy of the current Rhode Island Tourism Marketing Plan? Will we need to develop a new website along with the branding campaign?**

**A.** We seek recommendations on deployment of the brand. Rhode Island has not invested in a Statewide, coordinated effort in many years. There is not a tourism marketing plan available.

**Q. Beyond the leisure traveler, what percent of the budget is designated for group meetings, conventions, wedding destinations?**

**A.** The \$5 million budget is being used for development and deployment of a compelling and memorable campaign.

**Q. Can you explain how you would historically provide grants to the local tourism region? How many grants to local tourism regions have you granted over the past 3 - 5 years?**

**A.** The regional CVB's are funded through the hotel room tax.

**Q. Can you provide historical spending for the last 3 - 5 years?**

**A.** In the last 3 – 5 years the state has spent an average of \$500,000 per year on statewide promotion.

**Q. On the call I thought I heard that no advertising spending would come from the \$5 million budget. Did I understand correctly?**

**A.** No, the advertising spend should be included in the \$5 million.

**Q. Also you indicated that Regional tourism bureau and ongoing RI Tourism Activity is to be funded by other sources**

**A.** The \$5 million is solely for development and deployment of a Statewide Tourism and Business Attraction campaign. Regional tourism bureaus are funded through a separate source as well as ongoing tourism activities including trade shows.

**Q.** **Wouldn't part of the \$ 5 million cover RI Tourism' costs? How do you differentiate between the campaign and RI Tourism' activities? For example wouldn't costs associated with the Big E fall under the \$5 million budget (under marketing)?**

**A.** We choose not to answer this question.

**Q.** **Related, how will you measure campaign effectiveness (e.g. ROI, ad awareness, interest in visiting, communication ratings, incremental trips, economic impact, etc.)?**

**A.** We seek recommendations on possible measurements as well as successes that your agency/firm has had in the past.

**Q.** **It appears Rhode Island has not had a statewide tourism campaign recently. Has the state had a statewide tourism and/or economic development campaign in the past decade? If so, what were the lessons learned? And, how are they being applied to the direction or management of the new campaign?**

**A.** We are looking for a comprehensive proposal and recommendations on building a compelling and memorable brand and campaign that will attract tourists and businesses regionally, nationally and internationally.

**Q.** **Are there particular economic development offers that aren't available in other states? Are there specific economic development offers for the State of Rhode Island?**

**A.** The Rhode Island General Assembly recently passed Governor Raimondo's economic development and jobs focused budget, which includes many new incentives and tools to expand and attract businesses.

**Q.** **Are there any specific areas of interest that RI should be known for?**

**A.** Rhode Island is receiving increased recognition for its foodie scene.