



Public Relations - Marketing Tourism Office

DCED is searching for a public relation firm for our Marketing Tourism Office.

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|--------------|-----------------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| Open | 2/20/2025 2:00 PM EST | Type | Request for Proposal |
| Close | 3/20/2025 2:00 PM EDT | Number | 6100062917 |
| | | Currency | US Dollar |

Sealed Until 3/20/2025 2:00 PM EDT

Contacts

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Commodity Codes

| Commodity Code | Description |
|-----------------|--|
| 82100000-ITQ-93 | Creative/AV/Prod - Creative Services - Public Relations Services |
| 82100000 | Advertising |

Description

1. Purpose. This request for proposals (RFP) provides information to enable potential Offerors to prepare and submit proposals for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's consideration.

2. Determination to use Competitive Sealed Proposal Method. The Commonwealth, through the issuing office, has determined that the competitive sealed proposals process is the most practical and advantageous method for awarding contracts to obtain the best value for the Commonwealth.

3. Issuing Office. The Department of Community and Economic Development (“Issuing Office”) has issued this RFP on behalf of the Commonwealth. The sole point of contact in the Commonwealth for this RFP shall be the Contact listed within the Statement of Work, who is the Issuing Officer for this RFP. Please refer all inquiries to the Issuing Officer. Any violation of this condition may be cause for the Issuing Office to reject the offending Offeror's proposal. Offerors must agree not to distribute any part of their proposals beyond the Issuing Office. An Offeror who shares information contained in its proposal with other Commonwealth personnel and/or competing Offeror may be disqualified.

4. Project Description. The Commonwealth of PA, Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED), Office of Tourism (Program Office) is seeking a public relations partner through this Request for Proposal (RFP). The selected Offeror shall serve as the partner of record and provide public relations, communications, and industry outreach support to promote Pennsylvania as a top-tier tourism destination. Please refer to the Statement of Work for full project details.

5. Type of Contract. If the Issuing Office enters into a contract as a result of this RFP, it will be a one (1) year Contract with the option to refresh the Contract for a maximum four (4) additional one (1) year terms. The Contract shall commence on the beginning validity date (expected to be July 1, 2025) and shall end on the expiration date identified on the Contract. Any refresh will be under the same terms, covenants, and conditions as the initial term of the Contract.

For each refresh in term the service requirements may be adjusted to account for market changes and modifications at the Program Office’s discretion. These changes will be documented by the Program Office and provided to the selected Offeror in writing at time of refresh. At which time the selected Offeror will have the opportunity to provide a revised or new price quote for the service to be performed during the renewal period.

The awarded contract and will contain the **Contract Terms and Conditions** attached to this RFP in the **Buyer Attachments** section.

6. Small Diverse Business (SDB) and Veteran Business Enterprise (VBE) Participation. The Department’s Bureau of Diversity, Inclusion and Small Business Opportunities (BDISBO) has developed a goal setting policy based upon recommendations from its 2018 Disparity Study. The goal setting policy requires BDISBO and agencies to identify contract-specific participation goals for SDBs (which include Minority Business Enterprises, Women Business Enterprises, LGBT Business Enterprises, Disability-Owned Business Enterprises, and Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business Enterprises) and VBEs (which include Veteran-Owned Small Business Enterprises and Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business Enterprises). Proposers must either agree to meet the participation goals in full or must request a full or partial Good Faith

Efforts waiver from one or both of the participation goals. Failure to meet the participation goals or establish they have made good faith efforts to meet the participation goals will result in rejection of a proposal as nonresponsive. The goals that have been established for this Project are set forth below:

SDB – 16%

VBE – 3%

Further information can be found in RFP Questions Groups 1.2 and 1.3.

7. New SDB and VBE Goal Information Session. The Commonwealth has made significant changes to the SDB and VBE requirements, and failure to meet these requirements may result in your proposal being deemed nonresponsive. Therefore, the Issuing Office will hold an SDB and VBE Goal Information Session for this RFP which we highly recommend you attend. The purpose of this Session is to provide an overview of the RFP and SDB and VBE Participation submission instructions. Offerors may ask questions in accordance with **Section 10, Questions and Answers** contained in this **Description Section**. Offerors may also ask questions during the Session, however responses provided during the Session are **not official** until the question is submitted in writing using the **Q&A Board** in JAGGAER. Q&A Board questions and written responses shall become part of this RFP.

The location, date, and time of the SDB and VBE Goal Information Session are as follows:

SDB and VBE Goal Information Session – Microsoft Teams, March 3, 2025 at 11am EST.

An RSVP to the SDB and VBE Goal Information Session is due via email to scurtin@pa.gov by February 28, 2025 2PM EST.

8. Rejection of Proposals. The Issuing Office reserves the right, in its sole and complete discretion, to reject any proposal received as a result of this RFP.

9. Incurring Costs. The Issuing Office is not liable for any costs the Offeror incurs in preparation and submission of its proposal, in participating in the RFP process or in anticipation of award of the contract.

10. Questions & Answers. Questions must be submitted using the Q&A Board within this event. Questions must be submitted as individual questions. Only one question is to be submitted at a time and no attachments are to be uploaded. Questions must be submitted by the posted deadline. All questions and responses are considered an addendum to and part of this RFP. The Issuing Office shall not be bound by any verbal information, nor shall it be bound by any written information that is not either contained within the RFP or formally issued by the Issuing Office. The Issuing Office does not consider questions to be a protest of the specifications or the solicitation.

11. Addenda to the RFP. Any revisions to this RFP will be made electronically within this site.

12. Response Date. To be considered for selection, electronic proposals must be submitted on or before the time and date specified. The Issuing Office will reject any late proposals.

13. Proposal Submission: To be considered, Offerors must submit a complete response to this RFP by the due date and time from an official authorized to bind the Offeror to its provisions along with any additional Mandatory Responsiveness requirements as set forth in the Mandatory Responsive Requirements section, which are the only RFP requirements that the Commonwealth will consider to be not waivable. Clicking the submit button within this site constitutes an electronic signature. The Issuing Office reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to (1) waive any other technical or immaterial nonconformities in an Offeror's proposal, (2) allow the Offeror to cure the nonconformity, or (3) consider the nonconformity in the scoring of the Offeror's proposal. The proposal must remain valid for **120 days** or until a contract is fully executed, whichever is later. If the Issuing Office selects the Offeror's proposal for award, the contents of the selected Offeror's proposal will become, except to the extent the contents are changed through Best and Final Offers or negotiations, contractual obligations.

14. Proposal Format: To be considered, the Offeror must respond to all proposal requirements. Each proposal consists of four submittal components: Technical, Cost, SDB Participation Submittal (along with the SDB Utilization Schedule, Good Faith Efforts Waiver request, or both) and VBE Participation Submittal (along with the VBE Utilization Schedule, Good Faith Efforts Waiver request, or both). Offerors should provide any other information thought to be relevant, but not applicable to the enumerated categories, as attachments. The Issuing Office reserves the right to request additional information which, in the Issuing Office's opinion, is necessary to assure that the Offeror's competence, number of qualified employees, business organization, and financial resources are adequate to perform according to the RFP. The Issuing Office may make investigations as deemed necessary to determine the ability of the Offeror to perform the Project, and the Offeror shall furnish to the Issuing Office all requested information and data.

15. Mandatory Responsiveness Requirements. To be eligible for selection, the proposal must be:

1. Timely received from and timely submitted by an Offeror (see Proposal Submission section);
2. Electronically signed by the Offeror (see Proposal Submission section);
3. Contain a completed SDB participation submittal and additional required documentation; and either (a) agree to meet the SDB participation goal in full or (b) receive an approved GFE waiver from any unmet portion of the SDB participation goal; **and**
4. Contain a completed VBE participation submittal and additional required documentation; and either (a) agree to meet the VBE participation goal in full or (b) receive an approved VBE waiver from any unmet portion of the VBE participation goal.

16. Alternate Proposals. The Issuing Office has identified the basic approach to meeting its requirements, allowing Offerors to be creative and propose their best solution to meeting these requirements. The Issuing Office will not accept alternate proposals.

17. Discussions for Clarification. Offerors may be required to make an oral or written clarification of their proposals to the Issuing Office to ensure thorough mutual understanding and responsiveness to the solicitation requirements. The Issuing Office will initiate requests for clarification. Clarifications may occur at any stage of the evaluation and selection process prior to contract execution.

18. Prime Contractor Responsibilities. The selected Offeror must perform at least 50% of the total contract value. Nevertheless, the contract will require the selected Offeror to assume responsibility for all services offered in its proposal whether it produces them itself or by subcontract. Further, the Issuing Office will consider the selected Offeror to be the sole point of contact with regard to all contractual matters.

19. Proposal Contents.

A. Confidential Information. The Commonwealth is not requesting confidential proprietary information or trade secrets to be included as part of Offerors' submissions. Accordingly, except as provided herein, Offerors should not label proposal submissions as confidential or proprietary or trade secret protected. Any Offeror who determines that it must divulge such information as part of its proposal must submit the signed written statement described in subsection c. below. After contract award, the selected Offeror must additionally provide a redacted version of its proposal, which removes only the confidential proprietary information and trade secrets, for required public disclosure purposes.

B. Commonwealth Use. All material submitted with the proposal shall be considered the property of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The Commonwealth has the right to use any or all ideas not protected by intellectual property rights that are presented in any proposal regardless of whether the proposal becomes part of a contract. Notwithstanding any Offeror copyright designations contained in proposals, the Commonwealth shall have the right to make copies and distribute proposals internally and to comply with public record or other disclosure **requirements** under the provisions of any Commonwealth or United States statute or regulation, or rule or order of any court of competent jurisdiction.

C. Public Disclosure. After the award of a contract pursuant to this RFP, all proposal submissions are subject to disclosure in response to a request for public records made under the Pennsylvania Right-to-Know-Law, 65 P.S. § 67.101, et seq. If a proposal submission contains confidential proprietary information or trade secrets, a signed written statement to this effect must be provided with the submission in accordance with 65 P.S. § 67.707(b) for the information to be considered exempt under 65 P.S. § 67.708(b)(11) from public records requests. Refer to the **Additional Required Documentation** section for a **Trade Secret Confidential Proprietary Information Notice Form** that may be utilized as the signed written statement, if applicable. If financial capability information is submitted, such financial capability information is exempt from public records disclosure under 65 P.S. § 67.708(b)(26).

20. Best and Final Offers (BAFO). The Issuing Office reserves the right to conduct discussions with Offerors for the purpose of obtaining "best and final offers" in one or more of the following ways, in any combination and order: schedule oral presentations, request revised proposals, conduct an online auction, and enter into pre-selection negotiations.

The following Offerors will **not** be invited by the Issuing Office to submit a Best and Final Offer: those Offerors which the Issuing Office has determined to be not responsible or whose proposals the Issuing Office has determined to be not responsive; those Offerors which the Issuing Office has determined in accordance with the **Offeror Responsibility** subsection from the submitted and gathered financial and other information, do not possess the financial capability, experience or

qualifications to assure good faith performance of the contract; and those Offerors whose score for their technical submittal of the proposal is less than 75 % of the total amount of technical points allotted to the technical criterion.

The Issuing Office may further limit participation in the best and final offers process to those remaining responsible Offerors which the Issuing Office has determined to be within the top competitive range of responsive proposals. The Evaluation Criteria shall also be used to evaluate the Best and Final offers. Price reductions offered through any online auction shall have no effect upon the Offeror's Technical Submittal.

21. News Releases. Offerors shall not issue news releases, Internet postings, advertisements or any other public communications pertaining to this Project without prior written approval of the Issuing Office, and then only in coordination with the Issuing Office.

22. Term of Contract. The term of the contract will commence on the Effective Date and will end One (1) year after issuances. The Issuing Office will fix the Effective Date after the contract has been fully executed by the selected Offeror and by the Commonwealth and all approvals required by Commonwealth contracting procedures have been obtained. The selected Offeror shall not start the performance of any work prior to the Effective Date of the contract, and the Commonwealth shall not be liable to pay the selected Offeror for any service or work performed or expenses incurred before the Effective Date of the contract.

23. Notification of Selection for Contract Negotiations. The Issuing Office will notify all Offerors in writing of the Offeror selected for contract negotiations after the Issuing Office has determined, taking into consideration all of the evaluation factors, the proposal that is the most advantageous to the Issuing Office. Prior to execution of the contract resulting from the RFP, the selected Offeror must be registered in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's Vendor Master file. In order to register, Offerors must visit the Pa Supplier Portal at <https://www.pasupplierportal.state.pa.us/> or call the Customer Support Center at 877-435-7363.

24. Notification of Award. Offerors whose proposals are not selected will be notified when contract negotiations have been successfully completed, and the Issuing Office has received the final negotiated contract signed by the selected Offeror.

25. Debriefing Conferences. Upon notification of award, Offerors whose proposals were not selected will be given the opportunity to be debriefed. The Issuing Office will schedule the debriefing at a mutually agreeable time. The debriefing will not compare the Offeror with other Offerors, other than the position of the Offeror's proposal in relation to all other Offeror proposals. An Offeror's exercise of the opportunity to be debriefed does not constitute nor toll the time for filing a protest.

26. RFP Protest Procedure. The RFP Protest Procedure is on the DGS website at [click here](#). A protest by a party that has not or has not yet submitted a proposal must be filed no later than the proposal submission deadline. Offerors may file a protest within seven days after the protesting Offeror knew or should have known of the facts giving rise to the protest, but in no event may an Offeror file a protest later than seven days after the date the notice of award of the contract is posted on the DGS website. The date of filing is the date of receipt of the protest. A protest must be filed

in writing with the Issuing Office. To be timely, the protest must be received by 4:00 p.m. on the seventh day.

27. Attachments to the RFP. All attachments to the RFP, including those contained in the **Buyer Attachments, RFP Questions** and **Additional Required Documentation** sections, are incorporated into and made part of the RFP.

28. Evaluation Criteria. The Issuing Office has selected a committee of qualified personnel to review and evaluate timely submitted proposals. The following criteria will be used in evaluating each proposal:

A. Technical: The Issuing Office has established the weight for the Technical criterion for this RFP as 75% of the total points. Evaluation will be based upon the following: Soundness of Approach, Offeror Qualifications, and Requirements. The final Technical scores are determined by giving the maximum number of technical points available to the proposal(s) with the highest raw technical score. The remaining proposals are rated by applying the Technical Scoring Formula set forth at the following webpage: https://www.dgs.pa.gov/Materials-Services-Procurement/Procurement-Resources/Pages/RFP_SCORING_FORMULA.aspx

B. Cost: The Issuing Office has established the weight for the Cost criterion for this RFP as 25% of the total points. The cost criterion is rated by giving the proposal with the lowest total cost the maximum number of Cost points available. The remaining proposals are rated by applying the Cost Formula set forth at the following webpage: https://www.dgs.pa.gov/Materials-Services-Procurement/Procurement-Resources/Pages/RFP_SCORING_FORMULA.aspx

C. Domestic Workforce Utilization: Any points received for the Domestic Workforce Utilization criterion are bonus points in addition to the total points for this RFP. The maximum amount of bonus points available is 3% of the total points for this RFP. To the extent permitted by the laws and treaties of the United States, each proposal will be scored for its commitment to use domestic workforce in the fulfillment of the contract. Maximum consideration will be given to those Offerors who will perform the contracted direct labor exclusively within the geographical boundaries of the United States or within the geographical boundaries of a country that is a party to the World Trade Organization Government Procurement Agreement. Those who propose to perform a portion of the direct labor outside of the United States and not within the geographical boundaries of a party to the World Trade Organization Government Procurement Agreement will receive a correspondingly smaller score for this criterion. The Domestic Workforce Utilization Formula is at the following webpage: https://www.dgs.pa.gov/Materials-Services-Procurement/Procurement-Resources/Pages/RFP_SCORING_FORMULA.aspx

29. Offeror Responsibility. To be responsible, an Offeror must submit a responsive proposal and possess the capability to fully perform the contract requirements in all respects and the integrity and reliability to assure good faith performance of the contract. In order for an Offeror to be considered responsible for this RFP and therefore eligible for selection for best and final offers or selection for contract negotiations:

The total score for the technical submittal of the Offeror's proposal must be greater than or equal to **75%** of the available technical points and the Offeror must demonstrate the financial capability to assure good faith performance of the contract.

An Offeror who fails to demonstrate sufficient financial capability to assure good faith performance of the contract as specified herein may be considered by the Issuing Office, in its sole discretion, for Best and Final Offers or contract negotiation contingent upon such Offeror providing contract performance security for the first contract year cost proposed by the Offeror in a form acceptable to the Issuing Office. Based on the financial condition of the Offeror, the Issuing Office may require a certified or bank (cashier's) check, letter of credit, or performance bond conditioned upon the faithful performance of the contract by the Offeror. The required performance security must be issued or executed by a bank or surety company authorized to do business in the Commonwealth. The cost of the required performance security will be the sole responsibility of the Offeror and cannot increase the Offeror's cost proposal or the contract cost to the Commonwealth.

Further, the Issuing Office will award a contract only to an Offeror determined to be responsible in accordance with the most current version of [Commonwealth Management Directive 215.9, Contractor Responsibility Program](#).

30. Final Ranking and Award. After any best and final offer process is conducted, the Issuing Office will combine the evaluation committee's final technical scores, the final cost scores, and the domestic workforce utilization scores. The Issuing Office will rank responsible Offerors according to the total overall score assigned to each in descending order. The Issuing Office must select for contract negotiations the Offeror with the highest overall score. The Issuing Office has the discretion to reject all proposals or cancel the request for proposals at any time prior to the time a contract is fully executed when it is in the best interests of the Commonwealth. The reasons for the rejection or cancellation shall be made part of the contract file.