

Communications Agency for Provincetown Tourism Office

RFP questions submitted by interested firms submitting a proposal

Q: Will you share (anonymously) other prospective agency questions and answers for all applying to this RFP?

A: Yes, here it is, all the RFP inquires with answers posted to the Town of Provincetown website. Following are all the questions submitted by interested firms.

Q: When does the contract start as there are conflicting dates in the RFP?

A: Contract is to begin spring 2017 and run through 30 June 2020. Please refer to the top of page two of the RFP titled TERM.

Q: Is the budget set or is this figure an estimate?

A: The overall marketing budget is approximately \$350.00 the agency fee is included in the budget.

Q: Does the VSB have a short range and long range strategic business plan?

A: The VSB has a strategic plan and budget in place through 30 June 2018.

The Five Year Plan and strategy are available on the Town of Provincetown website. <https://goo.gl/ADz9KQ>
<https://goo.gl/T2erJF>

Q: Does the VSB have any current market research about Ptown visitors that we can have?

A: The last official survey we have was done in 2007. <https://goo.gl/JmTqc6>

There is a 2016/2017 overview on the Town of Provincetown website. <https://goo.gl/ADaaeg>

Q: What are the overarching immediate needs for the town's tourism promotion?

A: Branding Provincetown and successful brand recognition.

Reaching all segments of business to bring visitors to town in the immediate future and the long term.

Q: How much emphasis does the VSB want to put on promotion to LGBT tourism?

A: Presently the budget for directly marketing to the LGBT audience is 40% of the total budget.

The LGBT audience is also reached through general targeted marketing.

Q: How much paid advertising has been done in the past and where have you placed ads?

A: It averages \$200K annually in an average of 20 publications.

Q: What type of advertising have you done? Traditional print (magazines, newspapers, tourism brochures) Radio? TV? Digital?

A: Traditional print in newspapers and magazines, usually with a digital complement:

Digital magazines

Rack Cards and Calendar Brochures

Regional Radio

Geo-Targeting

Geo-Farming

Social Media (facebook)

Digital campaigns ROS

Billboards

Print Advertorials

Digital Advertorials (Marketing Influencers)

Monthly News Releases

Q: Was it successful?

A: It is extremely difficult to calculate the ROI since we are not a direct commerce organization.

Q: Who is responsible for the VSB's social media platforms?

A: Dedicated Tourism Office paid staff.

Q: How often will the vendor be expected to meet with VSB to present the plan, reports, etc?

A: 2 – 4 times a year based on need.

Skype and Conferencing are also possible.

Q: Who is your current target audience?

A: Arts, Culture & Heritage, General Audience, Group Travel, LGBTQA, Ecotourism and Food Tourism

Q: What are the expectations with future/new target audience coming from the new marketing/PR plan?

A: Bring repeat visitors and new visitors to the town and increase overnight stays in licensed accommodations.

Q: What is the current positioning of P-Town?

A: Provincetown, Massachusetts has been America's First Destination for nearly 400 years. The Pilgrims first landed in the New World here in 1620, sealing the Mayflower Compact in Provincetown Harbor, and the town continues to beckon all those who appreciate its welcoming spirit, unique character and stunning natural beauty. Provincetown has world-class beaches, terrific restaurants, exceptional accommodations, fun outdoor activities, exciting ecotourism, eclectic shops and galleries, vibrant nightlife and a thriving LGBTQA community. For centuries, locals and visitors alike have enriched Provincetown's independent soul and strong sense of place, renewing the commitment to liberty etched here by the Mayflower Pilgrims.

This is a link to the Marketing, Advertising and Media Strategic Plan <https://goo.gl/Xzsttn>

Q: What does P-Town want to achieve with the new PR/Marketing plan (Is it repositioning P-town to attract more people/younger people, etc.)

A: Provincetown's objective is to support current tourism and achieve long term growth in tourism visitation.

Q: How will the new PR/Marketing firm work with the employees of the Tourism Office and the Visitor Services Board, and what is the approval process of the annual strategy?

A: The firm will work as a team with the Tourism Office staff. There is a staff of two which consists of a Director of Tourism and an Assistant Director of Tourism.

An annual strategic plan will be provided by the firm, reviewed by staff and presented to the Visitor Services Board each fall season.

The Tourism Office and VSB will work together to build a budget to support the strategy. The final budget will need to go through the regular budget approval process of the Board of Selectmen and the Annual Town Meeting.

The firm and the Tourism Office will work together to strategize how to best achieve the objectives.

Based on the approved budget the VSB will meet twice monthly to vote on spending from the Tourism Fund.

The Tourism Office will work directly with publications to buy ad space, agreed with by the firm, and place the ads. The firm's creative team will provide the artwork; once ads are approved by the Tourism Office the firm will send the artwork directly to the publications.

Media and Public Relations will mostly fall in the firms arena, although, the Tourism Office will work with the firm on the news release topics and schedule. News releases will need to go through the approval process of the Tourism Office prior to being sent out.

The firm will work closely with the Provincetown Team to accomplish goals and objectives.

Q: Could we see the '5-year plan' strategy?

A: The Five Year Plan and Marketing Overview are available on the Town of Provincetown website. Here are the links.

<http://www.provincetown-ma.gov/DocumentView.aspx?DID=570>

<http://www.provincetown-ma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/5588>

Q: Clarify on RFP— Is it a PR plan or both, PR and Marketing Plan?

A: The firm will be responsible for Public Relations, Media Relations, Marketing and Advertising Plans and Creative Materials. The firm will work as part of the Provincetown Office of Tourism Team.

Q: How are the funds disbursed from the town to pay for bills and services?

A: The Town will pay the firm based on the agreed contract monthly. All invoices and disbursements from the Tourism Fund will be processed through the Tourism Office, approved by the Town's Chief Procurement Officer and paid by the Provincetown Accounts Payable Department. At no time are funds transferred to the firm for any reason.

Q: Is P-Town ready for the new marketing/PR plan from an operations perspective?

A: There is an existing marketing strategy in place. The new firm will work with the existing scheduled advertising and adapt new opportunities.

April 1, 2017 is the targeted start date for the new firm.

Q: Would the FAM tour travel be covered by the city's tourism board?

A: Transportation will be the responsibility of the firm. The Provincetown Office of Tourism will arrange a full immersion FAM trip for up to 3 people from the firm. Please reference page 3 of the RFP, II SCOPE of SERVICES the first bullet point.

Q: How often are the board meetings?

A: The Visitor Services Board meets twice monthly.

Q: Are you currently working with a PR Firm?

A: The Town of Provincetown was working with a PR firm until December 31, 2016.

Q: Whether companies from Outside USA can apply for this?
(like, from India or Canada)

A: Yes, there are no restrictions on firm location.

Q: Whether we need to come over there for meetings?

A: At minimal you would need to be present for quarterly or semiannual meetings in Provincetown.

Q: Can we perform the tasks (related to RFP) outside USA?
(like, from India or Canada)

A: Yes

Q: Can we submit the proposals via email?

A: Ten copies of the proposal must be physically submitted. Please refer to the RFP, page 1, paragraph 3.

<https://goo.gl/aQjijy>

You would also need to be present on March 14, 2017 to interview with the Proposal Evaluation Committee.

Please refer to the RFP Addendum. <https://goo.gl/B9a13e>

Q: Could you share any information/research the VSB has on Provincetown's demographics with regard to tourism?

A: The available demographics information and other research is included in this link from the Town of Provincetown website, <http://www.provincetown-ma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/5588>

Q: Can you elaborate on the Public Sector Knowledge criterion in the RFP? What does that entail? And as a related note, is there any conflict of interest in that our principal owns a business in Massachusetts?

A: The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has State specific laws of relationships between individuals, businesses and government. The firm submitting the proposal should have this knowledge. If there is an appearance of conflict of interest, page 2 of the RFP states "The Town of Provincetown reserves the right to reject any or all proposals that are not in the best interest of the Town."

Q: Can we assume the proposed strategy and marketing plan should not exceed \$350,000 annual budget but does not include the fee for services? Also, are there any prior commitments that we should be aware of?

A: Page 1 paragraph II of the RFP states the approximate marketing budget of \$350,000 including consultants' fees.

The prior commitments in place would be advertising placements previously contracted, and grants to local organizations. These are outlined in the Five Year Plan available on the Town of Provincetown website.

Q: The RFP states the Office of Tourism has an overall annual marketing budget of \$350K, so just checking to ask if that is the budget overall or the budget for the marketing agency/partner that is chosen?

A: The approximate annual marketing budget of \$350K includes all marketing, advertising and agency fees.

Q: Assuming \$350K is the budget for the scope outlined in the RFP, are there any other commitments not listed in the RFP that will need to come out of that budget? For example sponsorships or ad buys?

A: The \$350K budget needs to cover all commitments including sponsorships, ad buys.

Q: Do you have specific marketing goals already outlined such as heads in beds?

A: We do not receive any information on heads in beds; therefore the goals are not specific. We do receive quarterly local options tax from the Department of Revenue. Our goal is to increase the local accommodations tax collected each year. We do want to increase visitation to support all businesses in Provincetown. We intend to work with the communications firm to develop specific marketing goals.

Q: Is the scope flexible at all?

A: The scope of work as outlined in the RFP is the expectation of the Town.

Q: Can you share who is the incumbent agency or agencies? What initiated looking for a new agency partner? Is there anything specific you were not happy with that you can share?

A: Provincetown was working with Marmillion + Co from 2012 through 2016; Massachusetts General Law requires periodic bidding of public work. In this RFP, the Town is increasing the scope of work of the firm to include the creative graphic art work. The incumbent is invited to, and is welcome to, submit a proposal as well.

Q: Can you share your current marketing plan?

A: Please refer to these links from the Town of Provincetown website: <http://www.provincetown-ma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/5588> <http://www.provincetown-ma.gov/DocumentView.aspx?DID=570>

Q: The Schedule described in section III, letter D states April through June of 2017 with an option for contract renewal for fiscal year 2018. The contract term listed at the top of page 2 states the contract term is 3 years. Can you clarify which is correct?

A: The contract term on page 2 of the RFP is accurate. The contract will begin upon execution in April 2017, but not later than July 1, 2017 and shall be for 3 years expiring June 30, 2020, unless, upon mutual agreement, it is extended up to two (2) additional one-year terms.

Q: What is the most recent comprehensive marketing plan?

A: Please refer to this link from the Town of Provincetown website: <https://goo.gl/T2erJF>

Q: What is the most recent Five Year Plan that the RFP states will be updated as part of this initiative?

A: Please refer to this link to the Five Year Plan from the Town of Provincetown website: <http://www.provincetown-ma.gov/DocumentView.aspx?DID=570>

Q: What is the most recent media placement plan (i.e. or detail where your advertising and public relations efforts are focused currently)?

Q: These are listed in the Five Year Plan and more information is this Media Overview: <http://www.provincetown-ma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/5588>

Q: What are the materials you currently distribute at trade shows and visitor centers?

A: We distribute the following materials at trade shows:

Provincetown Chamber of Commerce Visitors Guide

Provincetown Business Guild Visitors Guide

Fast Ferry information

Office of Tourism Calendar of events (also distributed at visitor centers)

Office of Tourism Rack Card (also distributed at visitor centers)

Bicycle information brochure

Attractions and activities brochures

Provincetown tote bag

Q: What is the current media kit?

A: Following are the media kits available on the Town of Provincetown website:

Arts <https://goo.gl/SazsOF>

Facts <https://goo.gl/8fHgsl>

Family <https://goo.gl/ieTdAx>

LGBTQ <https://goo.gl/Lv4Rxj>

History <https://goo.gl/fcteyg>

Outdoor Activities <https://goo.gl/GMBxXn>

Q: What is the number or frequency of meetings with Office of Tourism and VSB you would like the selected firm to attend per year?

A: 2 – 4 times a year based on need

Skype and Conferencing is also possible

Q: Is there any flexibility on the March 14th interview date. The principals of our firm will be traveling that week?

A: This date is firm and will be the only day the Evaluation Committee will meet for interviews.

Q: For the scope of services listed in the RFP, can those be completed over the course of 3 years for a total of \$350K per year?

A: The details of the budget are broken down in the Five Year Plan document <https://goo.gl/ADz9KQ>

You will be able to see exactly how the money is budgeted for ad placement, media and what percentage is spent on different business segments, including the amount budgeted for the communications agency. The available funds in the Marketing portion of the budget can be redirected for different marketing efforts based on needs. Funds are deposited in the Tourism Fund each year. The approximate annual marketing budget of \$350K includes everything related to marketing, advertising, including the fees paid to the communications agency.

Q: Regarding the section in the screen shot below, I'm not sure to what "Include at least three and no more than five" refers.

I'm thinking it would be helpful to know of all relevant clients an agency has served and all conflicts of interest; and that an agency may not have any conflicts so there wouldn't be a minimum of three.

- **List of clients the agency has served in any of the following industries: travel, municipal, entertainment, and hospitality sectors including list of current projects which may be perceived as a conflict of interest to the Provincetown Visitor Services Board – Include at least three and no more than five**

A: As an agency with experience in the travel, entertainment and hospitality sector, and with experience working with municipal organizations, there are clients you have served, or do serve, with similar objectives and interests as the Provincetown Visitor Services Board. Please include at least three of these clients and no more than five of these clients.

Q: What would you say are the top three concerns you're hoping the communications firm will help the Tourism Board address in the next three years?

A: Bring forth a marketing strategy which will be well received by the community and the Town's tourism partners.

Design and implement a branded marketing and advertising campaign.

Target media, editors and journalists to increase editorial coverage of the Town.

Q: What are the immediate top priorities in your mind upon hiring a firm?

A: The firm must become familiar with the Town, visitors and business community.

Meet with the Visitor Services Board and the Tourism Office to discuss a strategy for advertising and marketing campaign, budgets, and media opportunities.

Q: The RFP has two very distinct aspects – earned media (traditional PR and media relations, and related work); and marketing/advertising (including paid media placements and related work). If an agency does not have talent on both sides of the required equation available, would you consider proposals that satisfied one aspect or the other, but not both?

A: Both media relations and media placement experience and abilities are required.

Q: Does the town or Tourism Board have an on-staff graphic designer or photographer? Do you have a contract with a printing firm that the agency would be required to work with?

A: We do not have a graphic designer or photographer on staff. The graphic design will be done through the firm. The photography and photo shoots are outsourced.

The Tourism Office contracts printers directly and uses the company with the lowest bid.

Q: The proposal requires upfront meetings with key stakeholders in town. How much on-site meeting work (in Provincetown) would be optimal on an ongoing/monthly basis?

A: The Visitor Services Board meets twice monthly. The minimal expectation would be for the firm to be present for meeting quarterly or semi-annually based on need, conferencing and skype are also options.

Q: Some previous press releases from the Tourism Board that I've found have included announcements specific to individual or groups of entities in town. Would the chosen firm be working most closely with Tourism Board promoting its broader news and initiatives, or would they be servicing individual businesses or associations with their projects?

A: The firm will be working closely with the Tourism Office to promote Provincetown as a brand. There will also be a need to promote events in the Town which will encourage tourism and overnight stays.

Q: Social Media is not addressed much in the proposal. What role does it play now in overall communications and what are the expectations going forward?

A: Social media is very important in the strategy. The Tourism Office has a dedicated Social Media associate on staff who will work with the firm to maximize the efforts.

Q: Can you clarify the budget? You mention \$350,000 per annum for marketing. Is that *your* budget from which the communications firm would be paid, or is that the expected budget for the *communications firm's scope of work*? If the latter, does that include all monies to be allotted for paid advertisements, brochure printing and distribution, etc.?

A: The \$350,000 per annum includes all monies allotted for paid advertising, photography, printing, and all marketing related expenses including the Communications Agency fees.

Q: Can you say more about the requirement that a communications agency “employ analysts, economists, business development and tourism marketing specialists.” Is your expectation that the chosen communications firm would have those professionals on staff?

A: The agency must be made of community marketing professionals who create branded destination marketing and advertising campaigns which provide measurable results. It will be the responsibility of the firm to employ or contract professionals to accomplish the objectives.