



REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

For: Employee Benefits Brokerage and Consulting Services

The Rhode Island Commerce Corporation (“the Corporation”) is soliciting a Request for Proposal from a benefits brokerage/consulting firm to perform the full range of services related to the design, implementation, maintenance and improvement of the Corporation’s employee benefits programs

Project Overview

The Corporation currently offers the following employee benefits: Health insurance, dental insurance, group term life & AD&D insurance, long and short term disability insurances, FSA health care and dependent care accounts, vision and EAP.

Scope of Services:

The Corporation is seeking a benefits partner that can provide professional, highly qualified benefits guidance and services. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Develop short and long range employee benefit goals and strategies.
- Partner with the Human Resources and Benefits team at the Corporation in the administration of all employee benefit plans including responding to questions from and providing information to staff, and providing other benefits-related advisory services throughout the plan year.
- Review and analyze claims experience, claim service, and claim administration to ensure maximum benefit on an ongoing basis to Organization Name
- Determine and recommend the most cost efficient funding methods for benefit programs by comparing current market trends and the needs of our employees.
- Prepare bid specifications and solicit proposals, as needed, from insurance markets that specialize in group insurance plans.
- Evaluate bids and bidders, including administration, coverage, claim payment procedures, customer service, networks, reserve establishment policies and financial solvency.
- Provide the Corporation with in-depth analysis of proposed alternatives and assist with the process of selecting the most favorable annual renewal options based on current market trends and the needs of our employees.
- Apprise the Corporation of local and national benefit trends and provide benchmark survey data to help calibrate program offerings with employee and employer costs compared to similar organizations.
- Meet with and provide reports and presentations to various Corporation representatives, including Senior Executives if requested.

- Assist the Corporation with the implementation and communication of new programs or changes to existing programs, which does include attending and presenting information at Annual Open Enrollment.
- Work closely with the benefits team to develop and execute the benefits communication strategy for open enrollment and ongoing communications for staff and management.
- Partner with the Corporation to effectively manage the vendors that provide insurance or third party related services to the Corporation.
- Act as advisor on issues such as discrimination testing, 5500 filing, Section 125, COBRA, HIPAA, Medicare, ACA, FMLA, etc. Provide overall guidance to the Corporation with Health and Welfare regulatory compliance.
- Research and report any new developments in the employee benefits arena on an ongoing basis.
- Recommend innovative ideas and new products, programs and services to ensure a competitive, valued and cost effective benefits program.
- Introduce proven programs and ideas to aggressively manage healthcare costs.
- Introduce proven programs and ideas to enhance the Corporation's corporate culture and improve employee productivity and morale.
- Educate and advise on Healthcare Reform, specifically ACA, and the key strategic decisions that the Corporation should consider.
- Help to identify and advise on wellness programs, technology, strategies, and resources to promote a healthier workplace.

Employee Benefits Practice

- Describe why your organization is well suited to advise on employee benefits.
- Please describe the staff, their experience, and any special expertise that would that would be working with company name.
- Please describe any special talents, recognition, or advisory roles that this staff may be involved.
- Please describe your service model and your service philosophy in working with your clients.
- Please describe in detail your renewal process.
- Please describe any education or communication tools and services you provide to your clients.
- How does your organization keep up with market and regulatory changes?
- Please describe your organizations access to legal and regulatory guidance.
- Please describe your organizations philosophy of technology in employee benefits. Please include any examples of how your organization uses technology in its practice.
- Please describe your organizations philosophy and approach to wellness.

Qualifications

- Describe the organizational structure of the company, its history (including number of years in existence, number and location of offices, total number of employees, and number and type of employees in the office).
- Please provide details of the company's ownership structure (include any parent, affiliates or subsidiary relationships).

- Provide details of the company's past and current financial status (include any past or present bankruptcy filings).
- Provide details of your professional liability insurance and / or errors and omissions insurance. Include limits, name of carrier, and most recent policy number.
- Provide a listing of any lawsuit, litigation, or regulatory penalties taken against the company, its parent or affiliates within the last ten years.
- Please describe the number of clients your company works with for employee benefit services, size of client organizations by employee count, location of client organizations, and any specialty niches your organization may focus on.
- Describe the ability of your firm to provide local service
- Describe your firms experience in working with similar organizations and why your firm would be a good fit with our organization.

Fee Structure

- Please describe your fee structure for standard services noting fees, commissions, or contingencies. Include a list of the services provided in this category
- Rates for additional services offered by the firm.

Project Timeline

- The successful Proposer(s) will enter into a contract for services with the Corporation for one year which is expected to begin upon the date of contract approval.
- At the sole option of the Corporation the contract may be renewed for two subsequent years.

Budget Template

Cost Categories	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Fees for Services			
Rates for additional services offered by firm			

EVALUATION CRITERIA

	Percentage
OVERALL EXPERIENCE OF COMPANY & DEMONSTRATED RESULTS Our evaluation will include an assessment of the history of your company, your experience as it relates to the requirements within this RFP, evidence of past performance, quality and relevance of past work, references, and related items.	40%
CREATIVITY (if applicable) Our evaluation will include an assessment of the quality of proposed strategies, and creativity.	0
QUALIFICATIONS OF PERSONNEL Our evaluation will include an assessment of the qualifications and experience of your managerial team, staff, subcontractors, and related items.	10%
STRATEGIC THINKING/PLANNING APPROACH Overall approach and strategy described/outlined in the proposal and firm capacity to perform the engagement within the specified timeframe (prior experience of the firm in meeting timelines will be factored in here)	10%
BUDGET APPROACH/COST EFFECTIVENESS Effective and efficient delivery of quality services is demonstrated in relation to the budget allocation. The allocation is reasonable and appropriate.	40%
Total	100%

The Corporation may at any time during the evaluation process seek clarification from Proposers regarding any information contained within their proposal. Final scores for each Proposer will reflect a consensus of the evaluations.

Any attempt by a Proposer to contact a member of Corporation staff or selected advisors outside the RFP process, in an attempt to gain knowledge or an advantage, may result in disqualification of Proposer.

Instructions and Notifications to Offerors

1. Potential agencies are advised to review all sections of this RFP carefully and to follow instructions completely, as failure to make a complete submission as described elsewhere herein may result in rejection of the proposal.
2. Alternative approaches and/or methodologies to accomplish the desired or intended results of this procurement are solicited. However, proposals that depart from or materially alter the terms, requirements, or scope of work defined by this RFP will be rejected as being non-responsive.
3. All costs associated with developing or submitting a proposal in response to this RFP, or to provide oral or written clarification of its content, shall be borne by the agency. The Corporation assumes no responsibility for such costs.
4. Proposals are considered to be irrevocable for a period of not less than 120 days following the date set for submission of agency proposals.

5. All pricing submitted will be considered to be firm and fixed unless otherwise indicated herein.
6. Proposals misdirected to other locations, or that are otherwise not present at the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation by the submission deadline for any cause will be determined to be late and will not be considered. For the purposes of this requirement, the official time and date shall be that of the time clock in the reception area of the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation.
7. All proposals should identify the agency's proposed team of professionals, including those employed by subcontractors, if any, along with respective areas of expertise and relevant credentials. Agencies should also provide a delineation of the portion of the scope of work for which each of these professionals will be responsible.
8. All proposals should include the agency's FEIN or Social Security number as evidenced by a W9, downloadable from www.purchasing.ri.gov
9. All proposals should include a completed RFP Response Certification Cover Form, included in this document.
10. The purchase of services under an award made pursuant to this RFP will be contingent on the availability of funds and made at the discretion of the Corporation.
11. Awarding this RFP is based on the Evaluation Criteria set forth in this RFP. Vendors are advised, however, that all materials and ideas submitted as part of this proposal and during the performance of any award shall be the property of and owned by the Corporation, which may use any such materials and ideas.
12. Interested parties are instructed to peruse the Corporation's website (www.commerceri.com) on a regular basis, as additional information relating to this solicitation may be released in the form of an addendum to this RFP. Addenda will also be posted to the Rhode Island State Division of Purchases' website at www.purchasing.ri.gov.
13. Equal Employment Opportunity (R.I. Gen. Laws § 28-5.1-1, et seq.) – § 28- 5.1-1 Declaration of policy – (a) Equal opportunity and affirmative action toward its achievement is the policy of all units of Rhode Island state government, including all public and quasi-public agencies, commissions, boards and authorities, and in the classified, unclassified, and non-classified services of state employment. This policy applies to all areas where State dollars are spent, in employment, public services, grants and financial assistance, and in state licensing and regulation.
14. In accordance with Title 7, Chapter 1.2 of the General Laws of Rhode Island, no corporation organized under the laws of another state or country shall have the right to transact business in Rhode Island until it shall have procured a Certificate of Authority to do so from the Rhode Island Secretary of State (401-222-3040). This is a requirement only of the successful agency.

15. The agency should be aware of the State's Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) requirements, which address the State's goal of ten percent (10%) participation by MBE's in all procurements. For further information, visit the website www.mbe.ri.gov.

16. The Corporation reserves the right to award to one or more Proposers.

Proposal Submission

Responses to this RFP are due **by Monday, April 10, 2017 by 2:00pm**. One (1) electronic (PDF) version and five (5) printed copies of the complete proposal must be mailed or hand-delivered in a sealed envelope marked:

Rhode Island Commerce Corporation
Attention: Employee Benefits Brokerage and Consulting Services RFP
315 Iron Horse Way, Suite 101
Providence, RI 02908

Note: No phone calls and late responses will be accepted and responses received via electronic submission only will be disqualified.

Questions, interpretations, or clarifications concerning this RFP should be directed by e-mail to jeanine.lucia@commerceri.com no later than 2:00 pm on Friday, March 24, 2017. Responses to questions, interpretations, or clarifications concerning this RFP will be posted online via addendum at www.commerceri.com and www.purchasing.ri.gov on Wednesday, March 29, 2017 to ensure equal awareness of important facts and details.

The Rhode Island Commerce Corporation reserves the right to terminate this solicitation prior to entering into any agreement with any qualified firm pursuant to this Request for Proposal, and by responding hereto, no firms are vested with any rights in any way whatsoever.

Rhode Island Commerce Corporation reserves the right to reject any or all proposals for not complying with the terms of this RFP.

RFP RESPONSE CERTIFICATION COVER FORM

Instruction: To fulfill your RFP response, this form must be completed, printed, signed and included with your submission.

SECTION 1 - RESPONDENT INFORMATION

RFP Number:

RFP Title:

RFP Respondent Name:

Address:

Telephone:

Fax:

Contact Name:

Contact Title:

Contact Email:

SECTION 2 —DISCLOSURES

RFP Respondents must respond to every statement. RFP Responses submitted without a complete response may be deemed nonresponsive.

Indicate "Y" (Yes) or "N" (No) for Disclosures 1-4, and if "Yes," provide details below

____ 1. State whether the Respondent, or any officer, director, manager, stockholder, member, partner, or other owner or principal of the Respondent or any parent, subsidiary, or affiliate has been subject to suspension or debarment by any federal, state, or municipal governmental authority, or the subject of criminal prosecution, or convicted of a criminal offense within the previous 5 years. If "Yes," provide details below.

____ 2. State whether the Respondent, or any officer, director, manager, stockholder, member, partner, or other owner or principal of the Respondent or any parent, subsidiary, or affiliate has had any contracts with a federal, state, or municipal governmental authority terminated for any reason within the previous 5 years. If "Yes," provide details below.

____ 3. State whether the Respondent, or any officer, director, manager, stockholder, member, partner, or other owner or principal of the Respondent or any parent, subsidiary, or affiliate has been fined more than \$5000 for violation(s) of any Rhode Island environmental law(s) by the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management within the previous 5 years. If "Yes," provide details below.

____ 4. State whether any officer, director, manager, stockholder, member, partner, or other owner or principal of the Respondent is serving or has served within the past two calendar years as either an appointed or elected official of any state governmental authority or quasi-public corporation, including without limitation, any entity created as a legislative body or public or state agency by the general assembly or constitution of this state.

Disclosure details (continue on additional sheets if necessary):

SECTION 3 —OWNERSHIP DISCLOSURE

Respondents must provide all relevant information. Respondent proposals submitted without a complete response may be deemed nonresponsive.

If the Respondent is publicly held, the Respondent may provide owner information about only those stockholders, members, partners, or other owners that hold at least 10% of the record or beneficial equity interests of the Respondent; otherwise, complete ownership disclosure is required.

List each officer, director, manager, stockholder, member, partner, or other owner or principle of the Respondent, and each intermediate parent company and the ultimate parent company of the Respondent. For each individual, provide his or her name, business address, principal occupation, position with the Respondent, and the percentage of ownership, if any, he or she holds in the Respondent, and each intermediate parent company and the ultimate parent company of the Respondent.

SECTION 4 —CERTIFICATIONS

Respondents must respond to every statement. Responses submitted without a complete response may be deemed nonresponsive.

Indicate "Y" (Yes) or "N" (No), and if "No," provide details below.

THE RESPONDENT CERTIFIES THAT:

___ 1. The Respondent will immediately disclose, in writing, to the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation any potential conflict of interest which may occur during the term of any contract awarded pursuant to this solicitation.

___ 2. The Respondent possesses all licenses and anyone who will perform any work will possess all licenses required by applicable federal, state, and local law necessary to perform the requirements of any contract awarded pursuant to this solicitation and will maintain all required licenses during the term of any contract awarded pursuant to this solicitation. In the event that any required license shall lapse or be restricted or suspended, the Respondent shall immediately notify the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation in writing.

___ 3. The Respondent will maintain all required insurance during the term of any contract pursuant to this solicitation. In the event that any required insurance shall lapse or be canceled, the Respondent will immediately notify the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation in writing.

___ 4. The Respondent understands that falsification of any information in its RFP response or failure to notify the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation of any changes in any disclosures or certifications in this Respondent Certification may be grounds for suspension, debarment, and/or prosecution for fraud.

___ 5. The Respondent has not paid and will not pay any bonus, commission, fee, gratuity, or other remuneration to any employee or official of the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation or the State of Rhode Island or any subdivision of the State of Rhode Island or other governmental authority for the purpose of obtaining an award of a contract pursuant to this solicitation. The Respondent further certifies that no bonus, commission, fee, gratuity, or other remuneration has been or will be received from any third party or paid to any third party contingent on the award of a contract pursuant to this solicitation.

___ 6. This RFP response is not a collusive RFP response. Neither the Respondent, nor any of its owners, stockholders, members, partners, principals, directors, managers, officers, employees, or agents has in any way colluded, conspired, or agreed, directly or indirectly, with any other Respondent or person to submit a collusive response to the solicitation or to refrain from submitting response to the solicitation, or has in any manner, directly or indirectly, sought by agreement or collusion or other communication with any other Respondent or person to fix the price or prices in the response or the response of any other Respondent, or to fix any overhead, profit, or cost component of the price in the response or the response of any other Respondent, or to secure through any collusion, conspiracy, or unlawful agreement any advantage against the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation or the State of Rhode Island or any person with an interest in the contract awarded pursuant to this solicitation. The price in the response is fair and proper and is not tainted by any collusion, conspiracy, or unlawful agreement on the part of the Respondent, its owners, stockholders, members, partners, principals, directors, managers, officers, employees, or agents.

___ 7. The Respondent: (i) is not identified on the General Treasurer's list created pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws § 37-2.5-3 as a person or entity engaging in investment activities in Iran described in § 37-2.5-2(b); and (ii) is not engaging in any such investment activities in Iran.

___ 8. The Respondent will comply with all of the laws that are incorporated into and/or applicable to any contract with the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation.

Certification details (continue on additional sheet if necessary):

Submission by the Respondent of a response pursuant to this solicitation constitutes an offer to contract with the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation on the terms and conditions contained in this solicitation and the response. The Respondent certifies that: (1) the Respondent has reviewed this solicitation and agrees to comply with its terms and conditions; (2) the response is based on this solicitation; and (3) the information submitted in the response (including this Respondent Certification Cover Form) is accurate and complete. The Respondent acknowledges that the terms and conditions of this solicitation and the response will be incorporated into any contract awarded to the Respondent pursuant to this solicitation and the response. The person signing below represents, under penalty of perjury, that he or she is fully informed regarding the preparation and contents of this response and has been duly authorized to execute and submit this response on behalf of the Respondent.

RESPONDENT

Date: _____

Name of Respondent

Signature in ink

Printed name and title of person signing on behalf of Respondent