

March 25, 2021
Rhode Island Commerce Corporation

**Project Name: Outreach and Marketing Services to Small Businesses
Impacted by the COVID Health Pandemic**

**Solicitation Number: RFP-2267
Addendum 1
Answers to Questions**

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

**OUTREACH AND MARKETING SERVICES TO SMALL BUSINESSES IMPACTED
BY THE COVID HEALTH PANDEMIC**

The Rhode Island Commerce Corporation seeks proposals from qualified entities and organizations including chambers of commerce, business associations, non-profit organizations, community organizations, as well as towns, municipalities, and/or subdivisions thereof (“Proposers”) to develop and provide direct outreach and marketing services that are designed to drive awareness of, and promote participation in, the Small Business Administration’s (“SBA”) Paycheck Protection Program (“PPP”) and other state or federal assistance programs and resources to small businesses impacted by the COVID-19 health pandemic.

Prospective Proposers and all concerned are hereby notified of the following questions and answers regarding the Request for Proposals document for the above-listed RFP. These questions and answers shall be incorporated in and shall become an integral part of the RFP documents.

Will RI Commerce be able to provide access to a database with contact information including phone numbers and email addresses for all businesses in the state of Rhode Island?

Rhode Island Commerce has a large network of businesses in Rhode Island and will work with outreach partners to connect them to businesses in state. However, we also expect Proposers to draw upon their own network of Rhode Island businesses and contacts.

We would like to remove businesses from our direct outreach targeting that have received PPP funding already. Does RI Commerce have access to a list of all recipients for both rounds of funding?

As the PPP is a federal program, Rhode Island Commerce does not have a list of those businesses that have already received PPP funding. Additionally, since it is possible for businesses to receive two PPP draws now, we would advise against limiting the outreach pool to businesses that have already received PPP funding.

By creating a list of all businesses in the state that have not received PPP funding, this seems like a product worth sharing with all other direct outreach and marketing vendors to ensure maximum reach and avoid duplication of effort. How will all vendors engaged in direct outreach and marketing be coordinated?

RI Commerce will have staff dedicated to facilitating and managing the Outreach and Marketing efforts of any and all partners selected to ensure coordinated efforts.

Will there be coordination between direct outreach and marketing vendors, and the technical assistance and training vendors engaged to assist with PPP applications? Will RI Commerce have a data communication system for "warm handoffs" or would that be a responsibility of direct outreach and marketing vendors to create and manage?

RI Commerce will have staff dedicated to facilitating and managing the Outreach and Marketing efforts of any and all partners selected to ensure coordinated efforts; these staff efforts will additionally facilitate coordination between the Outreach/Marketing and Technical Assistance/Training partners.

Some businesses have reported being unable to apply for PPP funds in round 1 due to low credit scores. Will there be any accommodations for this?

This is a question for the Small Business Administration and the US Treasury. However, we do expect our Technical Assistance and Training partners to work with businesses to put forth the best applications for PPP funding possible.

Should outreach efforts succeed with businesses where the business owner's primary language spoken is a language other than English, will there be corresponding technical assistance providers who speak those languages? If we are engaging an interpreting and translation firm for outreach efforts, should time required to interpret for business owners working with technical assistance providers be factored into our outreach proposal?

Working with business owners for whom English is not their primary language is important to RI Commerce. We will seek to engage Technical Assistance partners who can provide direct application support in languages other than English and to help coordinate the partners so there can be a "warm handoff" of those businesses from our outreach to technical assistance engagements. As needed, please include translation or other language services in the scope of any proposal.