

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

I. Description of Proposal

This document constitutes a Request for Proposal (RFP), in a competitive negotiated and sealed format, from qualified individuals and organizations to perform the scope of services defined herein. This request is an offer by the Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation (RIEDC) to purchase, in accordance with the terms and conditions of this RFP, the services proposed by the successful offeror(s), by contract, as needed.

RIEDC is seeking a qualified vendor to oversee the next phase of development for the successful RI-Nexus program, an effort that seeks to create greater connectivity across Rhode Island's Information Technology and Digital Media (ITDM) sector.

The ITDM sector is the fastest growing industry sector in the United States (expected to grow by 68 percent by 2012). In Rhode Island, the ITDM sector accounts for more than 15,000 jobs and more than \$1 billion in wages. In 2006, the sector's average salary was nearly \$70,000, making it the state's highest-paying industry sector.

The RI-Nexus program, launched in 2007, is a key activity in our business development effort to grow jobs in the ITDM sector.

Responses to this RFP are due no later than 4:30 p.m. on March 24, 2008.

- 1.1 The Offeror shall provide a proposal, in accordance with the terms and conditions set forth herein, a plan for providing services to the RIEDC as follows:
 - Oversee next phase of development for the RI-NEXUS program with a goal of strengthening the community of information technology and digital media professionals in Rhode Island and supporting RIEDC's plan for creating more jobs in this sector;
 - Assume full production, maintenance and design responsibility for the RI-Nexus web portal at www.rinexus.org, including a vision for the how the portal should evolve in 2008 and beyond. This activity includes both the strategic and day-to-day operations of the site and oversight of contract workers (programmers, writers, etc) associated with the project;
 - Design and execute a series of events and activities aimed at increasing user traffic to the site and increasing enthusiasm for

Rhode Island's ITDM community both within in the state and regionally;

- Assist RIEDC in fully leveraging the RI-Nexus program in its regional attraction campaign to promote growth in the ITDM sector;
- Produce narrative copy for the RI-Nexus portal; manage and populate the RI-Nexus blog, and increase user interactivity on the blog and across the site;
- Continue with ongoing outreach efforts with ITDM sector leadership and establish new connections within the community;
- Increase public visibility of the RI-Nexus program;
- Create metrics for measuring success and guiding the next phase of RI-Nexus program development;
- Create a budget for the program and execute programming and activities against that budget;
- Assume full responsibility for RI-Nexus fundraising plan and design and deliver a plan in 2008 that will provide at least 50 percent of the program's operating budget.

1.2 All questions concerning this procurement should be directed to Melissa Withers, Director, Communications and Market Development, 401-278-9134 or mwithers@riedc.com

II. **RIEDC Mission**

The RIEDC mission is to strengthen the Rhode Island economy through policies, programs, and projects which will enhance the business environment in order to promote prosperity for all of our citizens. Toward this end, the RIEDC offers real estate and site selection services, workforce development and training programs, financial and capital assistance, urban and enterprise zone initiatives, research and development, Federal contract assistance, and tourism services.

III. **Scope of Services**

3.1 Offeror will provide RIEDC with consulting services as mutually agreed upon and described in a proposal statement of work which will govern any particular assignment that is engaged under this RFP.

3.2 The Statement of Work consistent with Section 1.1 above shall be drafted as an engagement letter between the parties setting forth the following:

- a. a complete and detailed description of the type(s) of services to be rendered by the Offeror;
- b. the applicable billing rates for the services to be rendered (“Service Fees”);
- c. any additional terms and conditions to which the parties may agree.

IV. **Process and Requirements**

- 4.1 Offerors will submit their proposals within the timeframe indicated. Our evaluation will be geared to identify those proposals which offer the best combination of expertise and value for a given service area. RIEDC will not, however, base its evaluation solely on price and reserves the right to make an award to an Offeror who may not necessarily be the lowest bidder.
- 4.2 No extension in the submittal date will be granted on an individual basis. If RIEDC determines that the timeframe it has established for this RFP is inadequate, it may, at its option, extend the submission deadline for all Offerors.
- 4.3 Offerors agree that their proposals are a firm agreement to provide services at a stipulated rate to RIEDC. Those rates will be reflected in the Statement of Work and engagement letter. All pricing schedules quoted in response to this RFP, however, must remain in effect for one (1) year at a minimum and may, at the election of the Offeror, be guaranteed for three (3) years.
- 4.4 Offeror may withdraw their proposal at any time prior to award by notifying the RIEDC in writing of its intention to do so.

V. **Awards**

- 5.1 Offeror shall have the capability, experience, and expertise to provide the RIEDC with services in accordance with the requirements set forth herein and consistent with the representations made in the submission under this RFP.

- 5.2 RIEDC reserves the right to reject any or all portions of an individual proposal, reject all proposals, or reissue the entire RFP, in its sole discretion.
- 5.3 Selection of the approved vendor will be substantially based on the criteria delineated in section VII (Evaluation Criteria).

VI. **Proposal Format**

- 6.1 Five copies of each proposal shall be submitted to the RIEDC.
- 6.2 RIEDC will not provide any reimbursement for any cost associated with the development or presentation of a proposal.
- 6.3 Failure to include any of the following information may have an adverse impact on the evaluation of a proposal:
 - a. Offeror should complete Attachment A (Questionnaire).
 - b. Inclusion of client information or references that reflect upon the Offeror's consulting expertise or experience is desirable.
 - c. Proposal should be prepared in a standard 8 ½ x 11 format and adequately bound.
 - d. Table of contents and an executive summary of the proposal should be included.
 - e. A fee schedule for work proposed under the RFP should be included.

VII. **Evaluation Criteria**

Each proposal submitted will be evaluated against the following criteria:

- a. Offeror's past experience and performance on comparable work and assignments;
- b. Demonstrable connectivity to local and regional ITDM community
- c. Ability to be perceived as a credible leader among senior representatives in the ITDM sector
- d. Ability to be perceived as a credible leader among ITDM entrepreneurs
- e. Experience envisioning and executing events for ITDM and ITDM-related audiences

- f. Connectivity to national ITDM trends, leaders and ability to tap into external resource networks
- g. Commitment to equal opportunity and diversity
- h. Proposed cost or applicable fee schedule for a twelve month period
- i. Expertise in web portal design and construction and proven expertise in project management
- j. Ability to work with RIEDC team and members of the local community to build consensus and enthusiasm for RI-Nexus endeavors
- k. Communication and brand building expertise
- l. Ability to work independently and assume full project management responsibility for the RI-Nexus program
- m. Quality of professional and/or client references.

As noted, Offerors may be asked to participate in an interview process after submission of all proposals to the RIEDC, at its option. Ultimate selection to the approved vendor list will be made solely by the RIEDC.

ATTACHMENT A

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Provide the full name, address, and federal employer identification number for your firm.
2. Give all of the relevant contact information for the individual at your firm who will be responsible for coordinating with the RIEDC on this proposal.
3. Describe briefly your firm's history, organization, management, and philosophy.
4. Indicate how long your firm has been engaged in advertising/marketing/public relations projects of the type specified in this RFP and for whom.
5. Indicate what special expertise you bring to this project.
6. Specify the individual(s) within your firm who would be responsible for assignment to the RIEDC account and give a statement of qualifications for each.
7. Summarize, if applicable, any prior firm experience for similar work performed for a public sector or quasi-public agency like the RIEDC.
8. Disclosure of outstanding obligations with the State and any current engagements with the RIEDC and the State for all entities and individuals that are being included in the proposal