

STATE OF MAINE
Department of Economic and Community Development



RFP# 202402023

Workforce Attraction Marketing Services

RFP Coordinator	<p><i>All communication regarding the RFP <u>must</u> be made through the RFP Coordinator identified below.</i></p> <p>Name:Phoenix McLaughlinTitle:Director of Strategy Implementation Contact Information:Phoenix.McLaughlin@maine.gov</p>
Submitted Questions Due	<p><i>All questions <u>must</u> be received by the RFP Coordinator identified above by:</i></p> <p>Date: June 14, 2024, no later than 11:59p.m., local time</p>
Proposal Submission Deadline	<p><i>Proposals <u>must</u> be received by the Division of Procurement Services by:</i></p> <p>Submission Deadline: June 28, 2024, no later than 11:59 p.m., local time.</p> <p><i>Proposals <u>must</u> be submitted electronically to: Proposals@maine.gov</i></p>

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PUBLIC NOTICE

**State of Maine
Department of Economic and Community Development
RFP# 202402023
Workforce Attraction Marketing Services**

The State of Maine is seeking proposals for branding and promotion of the State of Maine as a place to work and live as well as outreach and support services for Maine businesses who are recruiting for employment in Maine. The goal of the campaign is to increase the number of individuals and families who move to Maine in order to join Maine's workforce.

A copy of the RFP, as well as the Question & Answer Summary and all amendments related to the RFP, can be obtained at:

<https://www.maine.gov/dafs/bbm/procurementservices/vendors/rfps>

Proposals must be submitted to the State of Maine Division of Procurement Services, via e-mail, at: Proposals@maine.gov. Proposal submissions must be received no later than 11:59 p.m., local time, on June 28, 2024. Proposals will be opened the following business day. Proposals not submitted to the Division of Procurement Services' aforementioned e-mail address by the aforementioned deadline will not be considered for contract award.

RFP TERMS/ACRONYMS with DEFINITIONS

The following terms and acronyms, as referenced in the RFP, shall have the meanings indicated below:

<u>Term/Acronym</u>	<u>Definition</u>
Department	Department of Economic and Community Development
RFP	Request for Proposal
State	State of Maine
ARPA	American Rescue Plan Act

State of Maine - Department of Economic and Community Development
RFP# 202402023
Workforce Attraction Marketing Services

PART I INTRODUCTION

A. Purpose and Background

The State of Maine Department of Economic and Community Development (Department) is seeking workforce attraction marketing, outreach and support services as defined in this Request for Proposal (RFP) document. This document provides instructions for submitting proposals, the procedure and criteria by which the awarded Bidder will be selected, and the contractual terms which will govern the relationship between the State of Maine (State) and the awarded Bidder.

1. Overview

The Department is seeking proposals from full-service marketing, communications, advertising, and public relations firms to develop and implement a 2-year, \$2.5 million campaign to brand and promote the State of Maine as a place to work and live.

The campaign will support the goals of the State's 10-year Economic Development Plan (2020-2029), particularly as it relates to attracting new talent to the Maine workforce and to build upon the work done to date by various other State agencies, including the State of Maine's Office of Tourism, and other State agencies. (Bidders can learn more about Maine's 10-Year Economic Development Plan at www.maine.gov/decd/strategic-plan).

The awarded Bidder will develop and execute a marketing campaign to brand and promote Maine as a desirable place to work and live – from north to south, cities to rural parts of the state – with national and regional outreach components. In addition, the campaign will provide support through the development of tool kits for Chambers of Commerce, Maine businesses and trade associations, individual businesses and nonprofits seeking employees, educational districts and institutions, and other relevant stakeholders within Maine working to promote and enhance Maine's image as a great place to live and work as part of their on-going efforts to attract job seekers.

2. Current Context

The median age in Maine is 44.6 years, compared to the national average of 38.1 years. Among a variety of factors, most noticeably, the aging of Maine's population may result in the loss of an estimated 65,000 from our workforce over the next 10 years. Maine has committed resources and initiatives to address this in a myriad of ways within two of the most prominent strategies in Maine's 10 Year Economic Plan: Grow Local Talent and Attract New Talent. In Grow Local Talent, Maine is committed to tackling this issue through internal efforts to better engage with Maine residents of working age but not currently in the labor pool. Attract New Talent Maine is focusing its efforts to capitalize on the positive net-domestic "in-migration" of workers of the recent years.

As outlined in our 10-Year Economic Development Plan, the goal is to attract 75,000 people to Maine's talent pool between 2020 and 2029. At the end of 2022, the "in-migration" number was 11,600 people aged 25-54, and Maine attracted ~13,000 to Maine's total talent pool

through our Grow Local Talent and Talent Attraction efforts.

While there are several outreach efforts to increase labor force participation among existing residents, this RFP focuses on attracting talent, retaining students, and the relocation of individuals and families currently working and residing in other States to Maine. The Federal ARP funds made available for this program are provided to reinforce the state's workforce by attracting workers into Maine to fill critical positions in the State's key industries most impacted by the pandemic including healthcare and social assistance, construction, transportation/warehousing, manufacturing, education, information, clean energy and agriculture, fishing and forestry.

3. Program Details

Maine has proven that it can market its assets effectively regarding tourism. Maine brings 15-16 million people to Maine annually as part of a \$8.4 billion annual tourism industry. Now, Maine must scale up its workforce attraction efforts to reach its goal of adding 75,000 to Maine's talent pool by 2029.

B. General Provisions

1. From the time the RFP is issued until award notification is made, all contact with the State regarding the RFP must be made through the RFP Coordinator. No other person/ State employee is empowered to make binding statements regarding the RFP. Violation of this provision may lead to disqualification from the bidding process, at the State's discretion.
2. Issuance of the RFP does not commit the Department to issue an award or to pay expenses incurred by a Bidder in the preparation of a response to the RFP. This includes attendance at personal interviews or other meetings and software or system demonstrations, where applicable.
3. All proposals must adhere to the instructions and format requirements outlined in the RFP and all written supplements and amendments (such as the Summary of Questions and Answers), issued by the Department. Proposals are to follow the format and respond to all questions and instructions specified below in the "Proposal Submission Requirements" section of the RFP.
4. Bidders will take careful note that in evaluating a proposal submitted in response to the RFP, the Department will consider materials provided in the proposal, information obtained through interviews/presentations (if any), and internal Departmental information of previous contract history with the Bidder (if any). The Department also reserves the right to consider other reliable references and publicly available information in evaluating a Bidder's experience and capabilities.
5. The proposal must be signed by a person authorized to legally bind the Bidder and must contain a statement that the proposal and the pricing contained therein will remain valid and binding for a period of 180 days from the date and time of the bid opening.
6. The RFP and the awarded Bidder's proposal, including all appendices or attachments, will be the basis for the final contract, as determined by the Department.
7. Following announcement of an award decision, all submissions in response to this RFP will be public records, available for public inspection pursuant to the State of Maine Freedom of Access Act (FOAA) ([1 M.R.S. § 401](#) et seq.).
8. The Department, at its sole discretion, reserves the right to recognize and waive minor informalities and irregularities found in proposals received in response to the RFP.
9. All applicable laws, whether or not therein contained, are included by this reference. It is the Bidder's responsibility to determine the applicability and requirements of any such

laws and to abide by them.

C. Contract Term

The Department is seeking a cost-efficient proposal to provide services, as defined in the RFP, for the anticipated contract period defined in the table below. Please note, the dates below are estimated and may be adjusted, as necessary, in order to comply with all procedural requirements associated with the RFP and the contracting process. The actual contract start date will be established by a completed and approved contract.

The term of the anticipated contract, resulting from the RFP, is defined as follows:

Period	Start Date	End Date
Period of Performance	August 1, 2024	July 31, 2026

D. Number of Awards

The Department anticipates making one (1) award as a result of the RFP process.

PART II SCOPE OF SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED

A. Objectives

The awarded Bidder will recommend and include reasonable, attainable, and measurable objectives of the campaign which will result in higher domestic migration numbers into Maine and joining Maine's talent pool. The awarded Bidder will be designated as subrecipient of funding pursuant to Federal ARPA guidelines.

B. Target Audiences

While virtually any worker in the United States could potentially move to Maine, in this effort, the focus is on the following target audiences:

- 1. Workers and Families with Existing Ties to Maine:** Whether they have vacationed or visited Maine before, attended college at one of Maine's higher education institutions, know other friends and/or families living in Maine, those with prior or existing ties to Maine are a likely target to return as workers.
- 2. Young Families:** Families with young children may be attracted to Maine's sound school systems; its Alford 529 grant, which provides \$500 to every baby born in Maine; its low crime levels; and the possibility of remote work within a state that has so much to offer.
- 3. Remote Workers:** In today's mobile society, remote workers can choose to live in one state while working for an organization in another state. With all Maine has to offer, it is an attractive option for remote workers, who may move here while working for an out-of-state firm but may ultimately seek employment with a Maine-based company.
- 4. New Americans, Skilled Workers, and International Trained Professionals living in other U.S. States:** Growing Maine's racial, ethnic, and multilingual workforce is key to achieve our overarching talent attraction goal, particularly among workers with easily transferrable skills. Furthermore, this campaign seeks to pay special attention to the two-plus million college-educated (or beyond) immigrants in the United States who underemployed and are not able to optimize their academic and professional background with their current occupations in states outside of Maine. Maine is putting forth an array of coordinated initiatives to ensure internationally trained workers and professionals are able to reach their optimal career potential in Maine.
- 5. Recent College Graduates:** Maine has several programs, such as the Student Loan Repayment Tax Credit, which reimburse college debt for recent college graduates living and working in Maine. College graduates in and around New England are likely targets for Maine's workforce, especially in the bioscience and technology sectors.
- 6. Transitioning Military personnel and their Families:** Every year, approximately 200,000 men and women leave U.S. Military service and return to life as civilians. Efforts over the past several years have proven that Maine is a great location for transitioning military members and their families.

C. Geography

The awarded Bidder will provide grounded, clear recommendations on reaching the most likely prospects within the Department's six target audience groups – whether within other New England States, key metropolitan areas/states in other parts of the country, or via recommendations other than geographic location.

D. Strategies

The awarded Bidder will assist the Department in achieving its objectives by:

1. **Creating a Brand** that is flexible enough to stand on its own in national/regional education, outreach, and promotion efforts as well as be used by in-State organizations, businesses, institutions, and State agencies in their workforce recruitment efforts.
2. **Creating a Campaign** that supports or can be layered thematically with other current workforce attraction campaigns conducted by organizations within the state. This new campaign must also leverage the Office of Tourism campaign, which will run concurrently.
3. **Using Highly-Targeted Paid Advertising** to reach those easiest to reach low-hanging fruit in our target audiences. Given the budget for this project, the Department believes exploring digital re-targeting ads, other forms of digital advertising (YouTube, apps/games, podcasts), as well as appropriate and targeted sponsorships will prove most effective. However, the Department is open to all suggested approaches.
4. **Maximizing Public Relations** efforts to effectively reach these audiences, including traditional print and broadcast outlets, social media outlets, websites, blogs, podcasts, and other online outlets.
5. **Creating a Tool Kit** of materials that make it easy for Maine businesses, educational institutions, nonprofits, trade and professional associations, State agencies, and other groups interested in hiring employees/expanding workforce capacity to help spread a consistent message about the advantages of living and working in Maine. The contents of this kit shall support the effective recruitment of out-of-state workers to work and live in Maine – all parts of Maine, particularly to rural areas.
6. **Designing a Website** to maximize the connection with other campaign elements. The successful Bidder will ensure that all messages and materials are available via a standalone website specific to this effort. The website shall feature highly interactive features and functionality to facilitate connections with other related campaigns; act as one stop shop for interested parties seeking to move to Maine and a virtual resource hub or portal for Maine employers to retrieve resources as needed.
7. **Creating, Leveraging and Attending Events** to generate interest in relocating to Maine. Transitioning Military and graduating students are examples of audiences where creating events or attending specific events could generate interest in the opportunities Maine has to offer.

E. Brand and Campaign Theme Creation

The awarded Bidder will create a brand, brand persona, and campaign theme for Maine's campaign to attract workers to the State based on career options and lifestyle choices. This brand must be developed within the context of how it is integrated into national and regional (external) promotions as well as used by Maine businesses, organizations, cities, and geographic regions for their workforce attraction campaigns within their own unique needs at the local, regional, or state level. All areas of the state must be represented. The State of Maine and the Department are specifically interested in focusing on Maine's more rural areas, particularly the least populated counties.

Creative concepts and creative messaging for positioning Maine authentically and compellingly are encouraged. The awarded Bidder will be responsible for conducting all necessary research critical to developing their concepts and creative messaging materials.

F. Market Analysis and Recommendations

The awarded Bidder will identify target groups from within the Department's requested target audience categories, and conduct primary research as needed, such as segmentation research, analysis of market trends, analysis of website trends, ad testing, web user experience testing, capturing, and understanding target audience insights and data. This information will be used to develop targeted, effective, measurable outreach.

The Department is currently conducting research to better understand the domestic migration patterns that emerged post pandemic and the year 2020. In 2021, Maine jumped from 42nd to the 14th State in overall net-domestic migration. Additionally, it was 7th in the nation in domestic net migration in 2021 and 10th in 2022. The awarded Bidder will be supplied with a copy of the research results to aid in developing this stage.

G. Workforce Attraction Tactical Campaign Plan

The awarded Bidder will develop and implement a 2-year workforce attraction plan.

H. To accomplish the outcomes described above, the awarded Bidder must provide the following services:

1. Creative Services

For all recommended tactics, provide creative services including but not limited to graphic design, copywriting, advertising development – print (including printing)/broadcast/digital – video production, photography, stock photography, illustrations.

All original advertising material, layouts, copy, photography, illustrations, sketches, and storyboards created by the awarded Bidder will become the property of the State of Maine/Department once contractor charges are fully paid. If necessary, the awarded Bidder will negotiate the transfer of rights from any subcontractor to the Department should a subcontractor be used to provide any creative services.

2. Media Services

For planning, negotiating, purchasing, and placing all media. Including tracking and reporting on campaign performance, evaluating analytics, checking all media for accuracy, appearance, and quality, and verifying all paid media ran as scheduled.

3. Public Relations Services

For implementing all recommended public relations tactics, including article writing, pitching, placement, scheduling of appearances for the Department staff on podcasts, TV, broadcast opportunities, scheduling of Department staff to speak at national, regional, and/or statewide meetings and conferences.

4. Web Services

For creation of a standalone website with linkable elements to the Department's Maine.gov site and other sites/portals in the workforce attraction space as appropriate. This website must include a level of functionality to support what is described under Strategies in Part II D of this RFP.

5. Account Management Services

For a day-to-day point of contact for Department staff and overall account management, including contracts, budgets, billing, quality control, and project management to ensure projects are delivered on time and on budget. Attend and present at Department steering committees, related conferences, and events as needed. Work with any business or trade associations, as directed by the Department, to co-present on the use of tool kits.

6. Event Management and Attendance

Identify, create and/or attend hiring events or specific target audience events. Providing workforce attraction campaign materials.

While the awarded Bidder is not required to have an office in Maine, it is very likely that the Department will require the awarded Bidder to attend in-person meetings and hiring events in Maine and the New England region to conduct presentations or meet with stakeholders. Therefore, the Bidder shall be prepared to [travel to Maine and the surrounded New England region](#) as needed.

7. Reporting

The awarded Bidder will provide a monthly report on key performance indicators (KPIs) for review by the Department.

I. I.T. Policies

1. Digital Accessibility

<https://www.maine.gov/oit/sites/maine.gov/oit/files/inline-files/DigitalAccessibilityPolicy.pdf>

2. Social Media for State Business

<https://www.maine.gov/oit/sites/maine.gov/oit/files/inline-files/SocialMediaStateBusiness.pdf>

3. Domain Name Policy and Procedure

<https://www.maine.gov/oit/sites/maine.gov/oit/files/inline-files/DomainNamePolicyProcedure.pdf>

A waiver for domain naming is possible but will need to have a request submitted to the MainIT Enterprise Architecture Team once the proposed domain name has been selected.

PART III KEY RFP EVENTS

A. Questions

1. **General Instructions:** It is the responsibility of all Bidders and other interested parties to examine the entire RFP and to seek clarification, in writing, if they do not understand any information or instructions.
 - a. Bidders and other interested parties should use **Appendix E** (Submitted Questions Form) for submission of questions. The form is to be submitted as a WORD document.
 - b. The Submitted Questions Form must be submitted, by e-mail, and received by the RFP Coordinator identified on the cover page of the RFP as soon as possible but no later than the date and time specified on the RFP cover page.
 - c. Submitted Questions must include the RFP Number and Title in the subject line of the e-mail. The Department assumes no liability for assuring accurate/complete/on time e-mail transmission and receipt.
2. **Question & Answer Summary:** Responses to all questions will be compiled in writing and posted on the following website no later than seven (7) calendar days prior to the proposal due date: [Division of Procurement Services RFP Page](#). It is the responsibility of all interested parties to go to this website to obtain a copy of the Question & Answer Summary. Only those answers issued in writing on this website will be considered binding.

B. Amendments

All amendments released in regard to the RFP will also be posted on the following website: [Division of Procurement Services RFP Page](#). It is the responsibility of all interested parties to go to this website to obtain amendments. Only those amendments posted on this website are considered binding.

C. Submitting the Proposal

1. **Proposals Due:** Proposals must be received no later than 11:59 p.m. local time, on the date listed on the cover page of the RFP.
 - a. Any e-mails containing original proposal submissions or any additional or revised proposal files, received after the 11:59 p.m. deadline, will be rejected without exception.
2. **Delivery Instructions:** E-mail proposal submissions are to be submitted to the State of Maine Division of Procurement Services at Proposals@maine.gov.
 - a. Only proposal submissions received by e-mail will be considered. The Department assumes no liability for assuring accurate/complete e-mail transmission and receipt.
 - i. Proposal submission e-mails that are successfully received by the proposals@maine.gov inbox will receive an automatic reply stating as such.
 - b. E-mails containing links to file sharing sites or online file repositories will not be accepted as submissions. Only e-mail proposal submissions that have the actual requested files attached will be accepted.
 - c. Encrypted e-mails received which require opening attachments and logging into a proprietary system will not be accepted as submissions. Please check with your

organization's Information Technology team to ensure that your security settings will not encrypt your proposal submission.

- d. File size limits are 25MB per e-mail. Bidders may submit files separately across multiple e-mails, as necessary, due to file size concerns. All e-mails and files must be received by the due date and time listed above.
- e. Bidders are to insert the following into the subject line of their e-mail proposal submission: "**RFP# 202402023 Proposal Submission – [Bidder's Name]**"
- f. Bidder's proposal submissions are to be broken down into multiple files, with each file named as it is titled in bold below, and include:

- **File 1 [Bidder's Name]–Preliminary Information:**

PDF format preferred

Appendix A (Proposal Cover Page)

Appendix B (Debarment, Performance and Non-Collusion Certification)

- **File 2 [Bidder's Name]– Organization Qualifications and Experience:**

PDF format preferred

Appendix C (Organization Qualifications and Experience Form) and all required information and attachments stated in PART IV, Section II.

- **File 3 [Bidder's Name] – Proposed Services:**

PDF format preferred

All required information and attachments stated in PART IV, Section III.

- **File 4 [Bidder's Name] – Cost Proposal:**

PDF format preferred

Appendix D (Cost Proposal Form) and all required information and attachments stated in PART IV, Section IV.

PART IV PROPOSAL SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

This section contains instructions for Bidders to use in preparing their proposals. The Department seeks detailed yet succinct responses that demonstrate the Bidder's qualifications, experience, and ability to perform the requirements specified throughout the RFP.

The Bidder's proposal must follow the outline used below, including the numbering, section, and sub-section headings. Failure to use the outline specified in PART IV, or failure to respond to all questions and instructions throughout the RFP, may result in the proposal being disqualified as non-responsive or receiving a reduced score. The Department, and its evaluation team, has sole discretion to determine whether a variance from the RFP specifications will result either in disqualification or reduction in scoring of a proposal. Rephrasing of the content provided in the RFP will, at best, be considered minimally responsive.

Bidders are not to provide additional attachments beyond those specified in the RFP for the purpose of extending their response. Additional materials not requested will not be considered part of the proposal and will not be evaluated. Include any forms provided in the submission package or reproduce those forms as closely as possible. All information must be presented in the same order and format as described in the RFP.

Proposal Format and Contents

Section I Preliminary Information (File #1)

1. Proposal Cover Page

Bidders must complete **Appendix A** (Proposal Cover Page). It is critical that the cover page show the specific information requested, including Bidder address(es) and other details listed. The Proposal Cover Page must be dated and signed by a person authorized to enter into contracts on behalf of the Bidder.

2. Debarment, Performance and Non-Collusion Certification

Bidders must complete **Appendix B** (Debarment, Performance and Non-Collusion Certification Form). The Debarment, Performance and Non-Collusion Certification Form must be dated and signed by a person authorized to enter into contracts on behalf of the Bidder.

Section II Organization Qualifications and Experience (File #2)

Limit submissions of this section to 30 pages, not including Certificates of Insurance or Dun & Bradstreet Business Information Report Snapshots.

1. Overview of the Organization

Bidders must complete **Appendix C** (Qualifications and Experience Form) describing their qualifications and skills to provide the requested services in the RFP. Bidders must include three examples of projects which demonstrate their experience and expertise in performing these services as well as highlighting the Bidder's stated qualifications and skills.

2. Subcontractors

If subcontractors are to be used, Bidders must provide a list that specifies the name,

address, phone number, contact person, and a brief description of the subcontractors' organizational capacity and qualifications. Additionally, letters of support can be included for any intended partner organizations.

3. Organizational Chart

Bidders must provide an organizational chart. The organizational chart must include the project being proposed. Each position must be identified by position title and corresponding to the personnel job descriptions.

4. Litigation

Bidders must attach a list of all current litigation in which the Bidder is named and a list of all closed cases that have closed within the past five (5) years in which the Bidder paid the claimant either as part of a settlement or by decree. For each, list the entity bringing suit, the complaint, the accusation, amount, and outcome.

5. Financial Viability

Bidders must provide a current copy of their Dun & Bradstreet Business Information Report Snapshot.

6. Licensure/Certification

Bidders may provide documentation of any applicable licensure/certification or specific credentials that are related to providing the proposed services of the RFP.

7. Certificate of Insurance

Bidders must provide a certificate of insurance on a standard ACORD form (or the equivalent) evidencing the Bidder's general liability, professional liability and any other relevant liability insurance policies that might be associated with the proposed services.

Section III Proposed Services (File #3)

1. Services to be Provided

Discuss the Scope of Services referenced above in Part II of the RFP and what the Bidder will offer. Give particular attention to describing the methods and resources you will use and how you will accomplish the tasks involved. Also, describe how you will ensure expectations and/or desired outcomes as a result of these services will be achieved. If subcontractors or partner organizations are involved, clearly identify the work each will perform.

This response must be submitted in a narrative format, ensuring the response follows the respective header titles as listed in Part II of the RFP. Responses for this section must be limited to 25 pages, minimum 11-point font for body copy.

2. Project Plan

Bidders must develop a project plan, including sufficient detail to ensure the scope of work is easily and clearly understood; that the plan must operate at multiple levels; and that it is achievable within the budget and timeframe. Bidders must describe an understanding of identified challenges, scope, and the appropriate application of marketing strategies and tools.

For the Period of Performance (identified in Part I), include:

- a. Understanding of the Current Context: Provide a narrative of the Bidder's understanding of Maine's current workforce, the state of the workforce challenges, and national trends and forecasts, with particular emphasis on the opportunities/challenges for Maine.
- b. Objectives by Target Audience
- c. Strategies by Target Audience
- d. Tactics by Target Audience
- e. Timeline for Implementation

Section IV Cost Proposal(File #4)

1. General Instructions

- a. Bidders must submit a cost proposal that covers the period starting August 1, 2024 and ending on July 31, 2026.
- b. The cost proposal must include the costs necessary for the Bidder to fully comply with the contract terms, conditions, and RFP requirements.
- c. No costs related to the preparation of the proposal for the RFP, or to the negotiation of the contract with the Department, may be included in the proposal. Only costs to be incurred after the contract effective date that are specifically related to the implementation or operation of contracted services may be included.

2. Cost Proposal Form Instructions

Bidders must fill out **Appendix D** (Cost Proposal Form), following the instructions detailed here and in the form. Failure to provide the requested information, and to follow the required cost proposal format provided, may result in the exclusion of the proposal from consideration, at the discretion of the Department.

PART V PROPOSAL EVALUATION AND SELECTION

Evaluation of the submitted proposals will be accomplished as follows:

A. Evaluation Process – General Information

1. An evaluation team, composed of qualified reviewers, will judge the merits of the proposals received in accordance with the criteria defined in the RFP.
2. Officials responsible for making decisions on the award selection will ensure that the selection process accords equal opportunity and appropriate consideration to all who are capable of meeting the specifications. The goals of the evaluation process are to ensure fairness and objectivity in review of the proposals and to ensure that the contract is awarded to the Bidder whose proposal provides the best value to the State of Maine.
3. The Department reserves the right to communicate and/or schedule interviews/presentations with Bidders, if needed, to obtain clarification of information contained in the proposals received. The Department may revise the scores assigned in the initial evaluation to reflect those communications and/or interviews/presentations. Changes to proposals, including updating or adding information, will not be permitted during any interview/presentation process and, therefore, Bidders must submit proposals that present their rates and other requested information as clearly and completely as possible.

B. Scoring Weights and Process

1. **Scoring Weights:** The score will be based on a 100-point scale and will measure the degree to which each proposal meets the following criteria.

Section I. Preliminary Information (No Points)

Includes all elements addressed above in Part IV, Section I.

Section II. Organization Qualifications and Experience (35points)

Includes all elements addressed above in Part IV, Section II.

Section III. Proposed Services (40points)

Includes all elements addressed above in Part IV, Section III.

Section IV. Cost Proposal (25points)

Includes all elements addressed above in Part IV, Section IV.

2. **Scoring Process:** For proposals that demonstrate meeting the requirements in Section I, the evaluation team will use a consensus approach to evaluate and score Sections II & III above. Members of the evaluation team will not score those sections individually but, instead, will arrive at a consensus as to assignment of points for each of those sections. Sections IV, the Cost Proposal, will be scored as described below.
3. **Scoring the Cost Proposal:** The total cost proposed for conducting all the functions specified in the RFP will be assigned a score according to a mathematical formula. The lowest bid will be awarded 25 points. Proposals with higher bids values will be awarded proportionately fewer points calculated in comparison with the lowest bid.

The scoring formula is:

(Lowest submitted Total of [Account Management Services and Reporting + Event Management and Attendance] ÷ Total of [Account Management Services and Reporting + Event Management and Attendance] being scored) x 10 = pro-rated score

(Lowest submitted Total of remaining categories in cost proposal ÷ Total of remaining categories in cost proposal being scored) x 15 = pro-rated score

The pro-rated score resulting from each formula will be added together for a total cost proposal score.

No Best and Final Offers: The State of Maine will not seek or accept a best and final offer (BAFO) from any Bidder in this procurement process. All Bidders are expected to provide their best value pricing with the submission of their proposal.

- 4. Negotiations:** The Department reserves the right to negotiate with the awarded Bidder to finalize a contract. Such negotiations may not significantly vary the content, nature or requirements of the proposal or the Department's Request for Proposal to an extent that may affect the price of goods or services requested. The Department reserves the right to terminate contract negotiations with an awarded Bidder who submits a proposed contract significantly different from the proposal they submitted in response to the advertised RFP. In the event that an acceptable contract cannot be negotiated with the highest ranked Bidder, the Department may withdraw its award and negotiate with the next-highest ranked Bidder, and so on, until an acceptable contract has been finalized. Alternatively, the Department may cancel the RFP, at its sole discretion.

C. Selection and Award

1. The final decision regarding the award of the contract will be made by representatives of the Department subject to approval by the State Procurement Review Committee.
2. Notification of conditional award selection or non-selection will be made in writing by the Department.
3. Issuance of the RFP in no way constitutes a commitment by the State of Maine to award a contract, to pay costs incurred in the preparation of a response to the RFP, or to pay costs incurred in procuring or contracting for services, supplies, physical space, personnel or any other costs incurred by the Bidder.
4. The Department reserves the right to reject any and all proposals or to make multiple awards.

D. Appeal of Contract Awards

Any person aggrieved by the award decision that results from the RFP may appeal the decision to the Director of the Bureau of General Services in the manner prescribed in [5 M.R.S.A. § 1825-E](#) and [18-554 Code of Maine Rules Chapter 120](#). The appeal must be in writing and filed with the Director of the Bureau of General Services, 9 State House Station, Augusta, Maine, 04333-0009 within 15 calendar days of receipt of notification of conditional contract award.

PART VI CONTRACT ADMINISTRATION AND CONDITIONS

A. Contract Document

1. The awarded Bidder will be required to execute a State of Maine [IT Service Contract \(IT-SC\)](#) with appropriate riders as determined by the issuing department. Bidders shall carefully review the IT-SC and make note of any *proposed* exceptions utilizing **Appendix F – IT-SC Exception Form**.

All exceptions will be negotiated between the awarded Bidder(s) and the State. The State will not accept any proposed exceptions as part of this RFP process. The State is not obligated to accept, negotiate, or compromise of any proposed exceptions.

The complete set of standard State of Maine Service Contract documents, along with other forms and contract documents commonly used by the State, may be found on the Division of Procurement Services' website at the following link: [Division of Procurement Services Forms Page](#)

2. Allocation of funds is final upon successful negotiation and execution of the contract, subject to the review and approval of the State Procurement Review Committee. Contracts are not considered fully executed and valid until approved by the State Procurement Review Committee and funds are encumbered. No contract will be approved based on an RFP which has an effective date less than fourteen (14) calendar days after award notification to Bidders. (Referenced in the regulations of the Department of Administrative and Financial Services, [Chapter 110, § 3\(B\)\(i\)](#).)

This provision means that a contract cannot be effective until at least 14 calendar days after award notification.

3. The State recognizes that the actual contract effective date depends upon completion of the RFP process, date of formal award notification, length of contract negotiation, and preparation and approval by the State Procurement Review Committee. Any appeals to the Department's award decision(s) may further postpone the actual contract effective date, depending upon the outcome. The contract effective date listed in the RFP may need to be adjusted, if necessary, to comply with mandated requirements.
4. In providing services and performing under the contract, the awarded Bidder must act as an independent contractor and not as an agent of the State of Maine.

B. Standard State Contract Provisions

1. Contract Administration

Following the award, a Contract Administrator from the Department will be appointed to assist with the development and administration of the contract and to act as administrator during the entire contract period. Department staff will be available after the award to consult with the awarded Bidder in the finalization of the contract.

2. Payments and Other Provisions

The State anticipates paying the Contractor on the basis of net 30 payment terms, upon the receipt of an accurate and acceptable invoice. An invoice will be considered accurate

and acceptable if it contains a reference to the State of Maine contract number, contains correct pricing information relative to the contract, and provides any required supporting documents, as applicable, and any other specific and agreed-upon requirements listed within the contract that results from the RFP.

PART VII LIST OF RFP APPENDICES AND RELATED DOCUMENTS

Appendix A – Proposal Cover Page

Appendix B – Debarment, Performance, and Non-Collusion Certification

Appendix C – Qualifications and Experience Form

Appendix D – Cost Proposal Form

Appendix E – Submitted Question Form

APPENDIX A

**State of Maine
 Department of Economic and Community Development
 PROPOSAL COVER PAGE
 RFP# 202402023
Workforce Attraction Marketing Services**

Bidder's Organization Name:			
Chief Executive - Name/Title:			
Tel:		E-mail:	
Headquarters Street Address:			
Headquarters City/State/Zip:			
<i>(Provide information requested below if different from above)</i>			
Lead Point of Contact for Proposal - Name/Title:			
Tel:		E-mail:	
Headquarters Street Address:			
Headquarters City/State/Zip:			

- This proposal and the pricing structure contained herein will remain firm for a period of 180 days from the date and time of the bid opening.
- No personnel currently employed by the Department or any other State agency participated, either directly or indirectly, in any activities relating to the preparation of the Bidder's proposal.
- No attempt has been made, or will be made, by the Bidder to induce any other person or firm to submit or not to submit a proposal.
- The above-named organization is the legal entity entering into the resulting contract with the Department if they are awarded the contract.
- The undersigned is authorized to enter contractual obligations on behalf of the above-named organization.

To the best of my knowledge, all information provided in the enclosed proposal, both programmatic and financial, is complete and accurate at the time of submission.

Name (Print):	Title:
Authorized Signature:	Date:

APPENDIX B

**State of Maine
Department of Economic and Community Development
DEBARMENT, PERFORMANCE, and NON-COLLUSION CERTIFICATION
RFP# 202402023
Workforce Attraction Marketing Services**

Bidder's Organization Name:	
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By signing this document, I certify to the best of my knowledge and belief that the aforementioned organization, its principals and any subcontractors named in this proposal:

- a. Are not presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, and declared ineligible or voluntarily excluded from bidding or working on contracts issued by any governmental agency.*
- b. Have not within three years of submitting the proposal for this contract been convicted of or had a civil judgment rendered against them for:
 - i. Fraud or a criminal offense in connection with obtaining, attempting to obtain, or performing a federal, state, or local government transaction or contract.*
 - ii. Violating Federal or State antitrust statutes or committing embezzlement, theft, forgery, bribery, falsification or destruction of records, making false statements, or receiving stolen property.**
- c. Are not presently indicted for or otherwise criminally or civilly charged by a governmental entity (Federal, State or Local) with commission of any of the offenses enumerated in paragraph (b) of this certification.*
- d. Have not within a three (3) year period preceding this proposal had one or more federal, state, or local government transactions terminated for cause or default.*
- e. Have not entered into a prior understanding, agreement, or connection with any corporation, firm, or person submitting a response for the same materials, supplies, equipment, or services and this proposal is in all respects fair and without collusion or fraud. The above-mentioned entities understand and agree that collusive bidding is a violation of state and federal law and can result in fines, prison sentences, and civil damage awards.*

Name (Print):	Title:
Authorized Signature:	Date:

APPENDIX C

State of Maine
Department of Economic and Community Development
QUALIFICATIONS and EXPERIENCE FORM
RFP# 202402023
Workforce Attraction Marketing Services

Bidder's Organization Name:	
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Present a brief statement of qualifications. Describe the history of the Bidder's organization, especially regarding skills pertinent to the specific work required by the RFP and any special or unique characteristics of the organization which would make it especially qualified to perform the required work activities. You may expand this form and use additional pages to provide this information.

APPENDIX C (continued)

Provide a description of projects that occurred within the past five years which reflect experience and expertise needed in performing the functions described in Part II – Scope of Services to be Provided of the RFP. Please note that contract history with the State of Maine, whether positive or negative, may be considered in rating proposals even if not provided by the Bidder.

Demonstrate the Bidder’s experience in regional and national advertising, marketing and promotion campaigns, and media placements for an account of this size and scope. Explain the Bidder’s expertise in developing workforce attraction/place or destination branding/marketing campaigns at the state, regional, and/or national level.

Project One	
Client Name:	
Client Contact Person:	
Telephone:	
E-Mail:	
Brief Description of Project	

Project Two	
Client Name:	
Client Contact Person:	
Telephone:	
E-Mail:	
Brief Description of Project	

Project Three	
Client Name:	
Client Contact Person:	
Telephone:	
E-Mail:	
Brief Description of Project	

APPENDIX D

State of Maine
Department of Economic and Community Development
COST PROPOSAL FORM
RFP# 202402023
Workforce Attraction Marketing Services

Bidder's Organization Name:	
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Bidders must use the table below to provide their costs for the proposed services as detailed in Part II Scope of Services.

Services to be Provided	Labor (Hourly Rate)	Direct Costs
1. Creative Services	\$	\$
2. Media Services	\$	\$
a. Media Buy	\$	\$
3. Public Relations Services	\$	\$
4. Web Services	\$	\$
5. Account Management Services and Reporting	\$	\$
6. Event Management and Attendance	\$	\$
Total		\$
Printing Services Provide estimated printing costs for marketing materials identified in proposal.	\$	\$
Total (All Other)		\$
Total Direct Costs		

APPENDIXE

State of Maine
Department of Economic and Community Development
SUBMITTED QUESTIONS FORM
RFP# 202402023
Workforce Attraction Marketing Services

This form should be used by Bidders when submitting written questions to the RFP Coordinator as defined in Part III of the RFP.

If a question is not related to any section of the RFP, enter "N/A" under the RFP Section & Page Number. Add additional rows as necessary.

Organization Name:	
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RFP Section & Page Number	Question