

**EMPIRE STATE DEVELOPMENT
REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS
MARKETING SERVICES INCLUDING ADVERTISING, DIGITAL MARKETING, EVENTS, MEDIA PLANNING AND BUYING SERVICES
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

PLEASE NOTE:

Empire State Development has received a number of questions that it has deemed not related to this specific RFQ. Many of them will become more relevant as we advance on to the next stage with the up to six selected firms. Those questions will be addressed at that time.

- 1) Q -** Is BBDO, the incumbent, being encouraged to bid for this opportunity, and if so, is ESD happy with BBDO's work over the past four years? Is there anything about BBDO's work that ESD is dissatisfied with or feels could use some improvement?

A – All responding companies will be given consideration and weight based on the qualification criteria as indicated in the RFQ.

- 2) Q –** We are an upstate agency, based in Rochester. Will any weight/consideration be given to an Upstate NY agency?

A – All responding companies will be given consideration and weight based on the qualification criteria as indicated in the RFQ.

- 3) Q -** We are a woman-owned agency, however we are not a certified MWBE. Will any weight/consideration be given to a woman-owned agency, even a non-certified one?

A – All responding companies will be given consideration and weight based on the qualification criteria as indicated in the RFQ.

- 4) Q -** My firm conducts several of the services required for response within the RFQ, however we do not cover all areas requested. Is the firm you're looking for capable of handling every item on the list, or are you looking to hire multiple firms with specialty in specific arrears?

A- We are looking to hire a full-service advertising and marketing agency. We expect that the agency will subcontract out some of the services we require.

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5) **Q** – I would like to ask if your digital media buying would be handled by an agency or would we submit to the RFP as a digital video pre roll company?

A - We are looking to hire a full-service advertising and marketing agency. We expect that the agency will subcontract out some of the services we require.

6) **Q** – I just noticed your RFQ and we would like to respond for Marketing Services and Event Strategy. Could you please let us know if we can submit?

A – We are looking to hire a full-service advertising and marketing agency. We expect that the agency will subcontract out some of the services we require.

7) **Q** – What was the total digital media budget spend for 2014?

A – Between \$1.5MM and \$2MM

8) **Q** Has the agency under current contract (BBDO) had any performance hiccups that has put the account into review?

A – The term of the contract has expired. As the law requires, we are engaged in a competitive procurement process.

9) **Q** – On page 3, BBDO is mentioned as the lead contractor and on page 2 it states their contract is up for renewal. Is this RFQ designed to find the lead contractor?

A – Yes

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10) Q- On page 4, it appears that New York State is also selecting subcontractors in this round of the RFI. If we are not selected as one of the six firms, how are the subcontractor relationships formed? Is there another RFQ, or do we contact the selected firm after they are appointed?

A – If your firm has a specific service but is not qualified to act as a full-service marketing and advertising agency, we suggest you contact the selected agency and ask about sub-contracting possibilities.

11) Q- Does ESD require the RFQ to be delivered in hard copy format, or may we submit via a PDF of the word document to this email address. If not, how many hard copies are requested?

A- The submission should include five (5) (hard) copies of the information required by this RFQ and one (1) additional copy on disk or flash/jump drive.

12) Q - Is ESD seeking multiple agencies to partner on the \$50-\$75 million marketing budget for the programs related to economic development, or is ESD looking to consolidate the entire budget with only one firm?

A - We are seeking one firm which may subcontract.

13) Q - Is there a minimum agency size in terms of number of staff and annual billings required to participate in the RFQ and impending RFP?

A – No

14) Q - In regards to providing creative samples, may we provide a link for ESD to view our television commercials, or is there another delivery message ESD prefers?

A – Yes

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15) Q – What is the length of the contract that will be awarded to the winning firm?

A – After the RFQ results in up to 6 bidders for the contract, expect the contract to be for 2 years with 2 one-year extensions possible.

16) Q – From Section V of the RFQ, can you clarify what is meant by “Interviews”, which are to take place between May 4 and May 15, 2015?

A – Companies that meet the requirements of the RFQ may be asked to attend interviews with ESD staff.

17) Q - Can you provide any information on timing from the announcement on May 18 of the selected firms to date of joint agency briefing? Additionally, approximately how much time will the selected firms have from the briefing until the formal presentations are due?

A – We expect the briefing will occur approximately one week after announcement of selected firms. Selected firms will have about 2 weeks to respond to the RFP.

18) Q – On page 3, you indicate that BBDO is responsible for the administration, oversight and management of outside procurements, billings and payments to subcontractors. Thus, we would like to confirm that each of the six firms selected must meet 30% MWBE goals individually. If a submitted consultant is an MBE or WBE, we assume that the individual consultant can self-perform 15% of the work. Please confirm the accuracy of these statements.

A – Up to 6 firms will be selected to receive the RFP. We expect that one of these firms will be chosen. This firm will be responsible for meeting the MWBE goals.

19) Q - At the conclusion of your review of the RFQs and the issuance of an RFP, how can MWBEs submit qualifications to the selected firms for possible participation as subcontractors in this large marketing procurement?

A - There will only be one selected firm. WMBEs can apply to that firm for subcontracting opportunities.

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20) Q - How has the budget traditionally been weighted in terms of priority between economic development and tourism programs?

A - Generally, 50/50.

21) – Aside from new job creation and tourism revenue are there other metrics you are measuring against?

A - We look at a number of different performance metrics including website visitation, engagement, awareness, imagery and consideration.

22) Q – Have you explored marketing partnerships, e.g. retail, airline or hospitality, as part of your programs?

A - Yes

23) Q – Who are the key decision-makers involved in this process?

A – ESD will form a selection committee to review responses to the RFQ.

24) Q - What is the marketing budget allocation based on ESD's key mission objectives?

A - Generally, 50/50.

25) Q- Can you elaborate on ESD's internal creative and production capabilities?

A- ESD has a video crew that provides some footage for our tourism and business campaigns in addition we have graphic designers who create collateral material.

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26) Q - In section IV 'Minority-And Women-Owned Business Provisions', there is the statement, "the agency may assign goals to any resulting contract(s) that are greater or less than the agency's goal." Can you elaborate on this point as well as give an example?

A - We (the agency) have the right to adjust the MWBE goals as needed.

27) Q - Will you be using a point allocation system to evaluate firms against the qualification criteria outlined? If not, what is the evaluation weighting of fully-loaded costs relative to other criteria?

A - Yes, all criteria are weighted equally.

28) Q - Can an Agency responding to this RFQ earmark certain information as competitively protected under the Freedom of Information Law (FOIL)?

A - Respondents may request that certain information be treated as trade secret.

29) Q - What is the timeline for selected firms in the next phase of this process?

A - Selected firms will respond to the RFP on or about June 9, 2015.

30) Q - Will there be a question and answer period during the assignment phase of this process?

A - Yes

31) Q - Can you help us understand the expected format of the final fee? Will it be firm-fixed price, billable hours based on rate card, or is it still TBD?

A - It is TBD, but we expect it to be based on hourly rates.

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32) Q – Re: Section II: This states the RFQ is designed to identify 6 qualified firms that will be asked to submit formal proposals. Will one finalist be awarded the final contract, or will this be a multi-agency award, with each subsequent project presented to all qualified agencies to submit proposals?

A – We are looking to hire a full-service advertising and marketing agency. We expect that the agency will subcontract out some of the services we require.

33) Q – Re: Section IV (page 5) Minority- and Women-Owned Business Provisions: Please clarify if the RFQ response should supply a potential list of MWBE subcontractor options, and/or whether past examples of MBWE collaboration are necessary.

A – Yes, one of the criteria in the RFQ is “Diversity and commitment to equal opportunity and ability to integrate minority and women-owned businesses into the program”.

34) Q – Re: Section V (page 5) Schedule of Dates: Please explain the process for the 5th stage, “Interviews.”

A - We expect the briefing will occur one week after announcement of selected firms. Selected firms will have about 2 weeks to respond to the RFP.

35) Q – Re: Attachment C, (page 11) Forms and Statements Required by New York State Regulations: The paragraph in the middle of the page references “RFP” – should that say “RFQ”?

A – Yes

36) Q - Please clarify whether State Finance Law Sections 139-j and 139-k Forms are required at the RFQ stage (due 4/27/15), the next stage phase for the six selected agencies, or both.

A – Both

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37) Q - We share ESD's commitment to Minority-owned and Women-owned Business Enterprise programs. While the goal ESD cites is 30%, how is the goal delineated between MBE and WBE? Additionally, to expand our MWBE partners, can ESD provide a list of MWBE that have expressed an interest in this RFQ?

A – We expect the goal to be 15% for each. All certified MWBEs can be found on our website at:
<https://ny.newnycontracts.com/FrontEnd/VendorSearchPublic.asp>

38) Q - Is there an opportunity to recommend alternate spending levels that align to objectives?

A – Yes

39) Q - While the qualification criterion includes “high-level branding work,” Attachment A does not specifically request experience in this discipline. Should in-house or subcontractor partners in the branding be included in the response?

A – Yes.

40) Q - As for fiscal management, is ESD's preference to have one point of contact for all related fiscal issues?

A – Yes

41) Q - May we have the names of the companies that have submitted questions?

A - No

42) Q - Do you have parameters on the length of the response for the initial RFQ submission?

- No

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43) Q - Can you provide the approximate staffing numbers of the current agency and the partners/contractors engaged on the current contract?

A – Our current agency, not including subcontractors, has incurred the following average Quarterly hours for the current period.

Category	Average Quarterly Hours
Account Management	2,198
Creative Services	994
Research & Strategy	39
Production Services	623
Total	3,854

44) Q- Can you identify an approximate time allocation against the required basic services as listed in point 3 on page 2 of the RFQ?

A – Time allocation will be dependent upon specific proposals developed once the RFP is completed.

PLEASE NOTE THAT RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS THAT WERE SUBMITTED WILL FOLLOW. PLEASE CHECK OUR WEBSITE DAILY FOR UPDATES.