

- RFQ/ RFP # EDD2024-01
 - Addendum
- Is there a budget for this scope of work? The final budget will be approved by the NHCOG Policy Board based on proposals submitted. If the proposal exceeds funds available this fiscal year, scope of work may be adjusted to reduce scope or increase timeline over multiple fiscal years.
- What are the separate budgets for the brand audit, marketing strategy and ad campaign (breaking out creative and media plan) Your fee proposal should break out the different initiatives. **The final budget for each initiative will be approved by the NHCOG Policy Board based on proposals submitted. If the proposal exceeds funds available this fiscal year, Scope of Work may be adjusted to reduce scope or increase timeline over multiple fiscal years.**
- Are there any specific guidelines or restrictions on how the fee proposal should be structured? **There are no restrictions on how the fee proposal should be structured. The RFQ does request that at a minimum it includes an hourly rate and expense schedule.**
- Was a strategic marketing plan previously developed to promote discoverlitchfieldhills.com? **Discover Litchfield Hills was developed out of a desire to have a website to promote events and businesses throughout the region. In the infancy stages of development, we believe that a consultant was used to help develop the appropriate name "Discover Litchfield Hills" and branding for the website. NHCOG does not currently have a written strategic marketing plan and efforts have been largely on developing and promoting the DLH website.**
- Is there an incumbent agency, and if so, will they be participating in the RFP? **No incumbent agency**
- Why have you put this work out for RFP and not elected to proceed with the prior developer of discoverlitchfieldhills.com for this project? **Two primary reasons: 1. If we plan to use State and/or Federal money to support any of these efforts, proper procurement procedures must be followed; and 2. NHCOG does not have a strong relationship with an agency to perform these services. Discover Litchfield Hills was developed over 9 years ago.**
- What was your annual spend on a similar scope of work last year? **NHCOG did not contract for a similar scope last year, or previous years.**
- Has the NHCOG worked with a marketing firm in the past, and if so, what were some lessons learned or key successes from that experience? **Unknown, all new staff at NHCOG.**

- What have you spent on similar campaigns in the past? **\$0**
- Can you share any past campaign outcomes or reports? **No**
- Are there preferred advertising platforms (digital, TV, radio, print) or specific channels that have worked well in the past? **We have not done any paid advertising in the past.**
- Have you worked with a marketing and public relations agency before? **Yes, in the original development of Discover Litchfield Hills, over 9 years ago.**
- Is this your first time developing a comprehensive marketing/public relations/advertising plan and effort? **Yes**
- Do you require the marketing partner to be located in market? **No, but they should have a strong understanding of the local market.**
- The RFP notes developing a strategy for various efforts, should our response include complete implementation for social media, public relations, etc? Or will internal staff execute the plan we develop? Can you be more specific on what we will implement and what your staff will implement. **The selected consultant(s) will be relied on as needed, which may include the execution of social media and public relations. It is anticipated that the NHCOG Staff and the consultant will work together to develop both the marketing plan with an associated budget and plan for implementation that will likely include a hybrid of both NHCOG Staff and the consultant taking on various tasks. The fee proposal should include an hourly rate that can be applied as needed.**
- How extensive should the brand audit be? **We will rely on the consultant to help us develop a framework to conduct a brand audit that helps us meet the goals and objectives of this work.** Are there specific data sources or benchmarks you would like us to use? **We do not have specific data sources or benchmarks in mind but will provide the data we have on website usage.**
- Are there existing customer perception studies or data that you can share with us now? If not now, do you have this information for the selected partner to access? **There have been no perceptions studies done to date.**
- Do you have a brand standards guide now? **No**
- Do you have defined target audience segments already, or should part of our work include identifying these segments from scratch? **No, this should be part of the proposed work.**

- What specific goals or outcomes are most important to the NHCOC in terms of metrics (e.g., increased visitors, local business growth, website traffic, etc.)? **Ultimately these efforts are designed to support local business growth.**
- What are the most important outcomes you want to achieve through the marketing strategy (e.g., increased tourism, stronger community engagement, economic growth)? **Ultimately, the goal is to support local businesses by increasing patrons through tourism and informing residents.**
- Are there any existing performance metrics or key performance indicators (KPIs) from previous campaigns that you would like to maintain or improve upon? **No**
- Are there key performance indicators (KPIs) or success metrics that are priorities for measuring the impact of our marketing efforts? **Part of the Scope of work will be to identify KPI's and methods to measure success.**
- What challenges or barriers have you faced in previous marketing efforts that we should consider when creating this strategy? **All marketing efforts around Discover Litchfield hills have been organic and limited resources dedicated to promotion.**
- Are you open to new types of media, like influencer partnerships or user-generated content? **Yes**
- Is there a specific timeline or seasonal push for the advertising campaign to align with? **No**
- How will this effort coordinate with your existing Discover Litchfield Hills website and social media presence? **These efforts are directly tied to DLH website and social media presence and will provide guidance to enhance these efforts.**
- How closely (or not) should the look and feel of the advertising creative align with the Discover Litchfield Hills website? **Advertising campaigns should be aligned with Discover Litchfield Hills website and brand; however, we are open to suggestions, modifications and changes as deemed necessary to achieve goals.**
- Can you clarify the level of collaboration expected between the selected consultant and the local municipalities, businesses, and nonprofits? **The consultant will primarily work directly with NHCOC Staff. It is anticipated that the consultant will also work with the NW CT EDC, which is comprised of individuals from local municipalities, businesses**

and non-profits. It is not anticipated that the consultant will work directly with stakeholders to advance their specific marketing efforts.

- Who will the point of contact be and how will they work with the Agency (s) of choice? i.e. single point of contact who manages internal review, or will review/approval be committee based? **The NHCOG Director of Economic and Community Development, Rista Malanca, will be the point of contact.**
- Does Visit NHCOG have a designated spokesperson or group of spokespeople? **NHCOG Director of Community and Economic Development, Rista Malanca, will be the point of contact/spokesperson.**
- Who are the decision-makers for the campaign and what is their background? **The EDC Local Tourism workgroup will review the proposals and make a recommendation to the NHCOG Policy Board for final approval. The EDC workgroup is comprised of individuals representing tourism districts, arts councils, local businesses and hotels. The NHCOG Policy Board is comprised of the Chief Elected Officials from all 21 Municipalities on our Region.**
- What is your internal marketing team cover? How many marketing staff do you have, and what will their roles be in working with the selected agency? **NHCOG does not have an internal marketing team.**
- How frequently do you expect updates or meetings with the NHCOG and the Economic Development Collaborative (EDC)? **Meetings will be scheduled as needed and will vary based on specific initiatives. The full board of the EDC meets quarterly. The Local Tourism workgroup meets monthly. It is not expected that the consultant will be at every meeting, only when feedback is necessary or to report out on the completion/findings of a particular task/initiative.**
- How much notice will we have for required in-person meetings? **NHCOG will work with the consultant on scheduling and availability.**
- What expectations do you have for your agency partner to be onsite during the program/year? **Both in-person and virtual meetings will be scheduled as needed and will vary based on specific initiatives. The full board of the EDC meets quarterly. The Local Tourism workgroup meets monthly. It is not expected that the consultant will be at every meeting, only when feedback is necessary or to report out on the completion/findings of a particular task/initiative.**
- Will meetings be in person or virtual? If a meeting is in-person, is a virtual option for some attendees offered? **Most meetings are virtual or hybrid, but some in-person meetings may be required.**

- Are there any specific reporting formats or tools you would like us to use for progress updates and results tracking? **No**
- Do you have a preferred start date for this project, or specific milestones we should aim for during implementation? **We are anticipating consultant selection by the end of December and would like to start this project early in 2025.**
- If a decision is made by the end of December, should the agency assume that work would begin in January 2025? **Yes.**
- Is there an anticipated end date for the contract, or is it open-ended for ongoing services? **We are expecting to award a multi-year contract for ongoing services, as needed.**
- Could you provide more detail on the specific deliverables you expect for the marketing strategy and advertising campaign (e.g., scope of public relations support, types of material needs, support on annual campaigns, etc.)? **We expect this will be an iterative process, allowing the information from the Brand Audit to guide the short-term marketing plan and the marketing strategy guiding the advertising campaign. Additionally, the long-term marketing strategy and future advertising campaigns may be adjusted based on outcomes and funding. At this time, it is difficult to provide more details on specific deliverables but will be open to any and all possibilities.**
- Do you have an internal public relations or social media team in market now? **No**
- Are there any ongoing maintenance or update requirements after the campaign has launched? **Not to our knowledge**
- Do you have staff now to support website maintenance/content updates? **These services are contracted out.**
- Will you consider agencies from other geographic areas aside from outside the Connecticut/NY area? **Yes. There are no restrictions on the agency's location; however, knowledge, or ability to gain knowledge, of the local market may be part of final considerations.**
- Could you let us know if you have a local preference or are you open to a Canadian agency that has done similar work with clients across the United States, with some currently being the States of California, Colorado and Wyoming? **There are no restrictions on the agency's location; however, knowledge, or ability to gain knowledge, of the local market may be part of final considerations.**

- Does NHCOG have existing audience research or has it conducted relevant audience mapping or is that part of the Develop a Marketing Strategy piece of this engagement? **No**
- Will the two programs support each other? In other words, will you plan to include links to advertisements and or other content on the existing website and drive traffic to the website through the advertising/marketing program? **Yes**
- Do you intend for the firm to actively manage social media accounts, or is the firm just creating the messaging and strategy for these channels? **Depending on the capacity of NHCOG Staff and the consultant who currently manages social media content, it is possible the selected firm will manage some aspects of social media, especially paid advertising campaigns.**
- Does NHCOG have an existing contract with PRNewswire, Cision, Muck Rack, or a similar service that the agency can leverage? **No** Or should the agency plan to budget for that service in its RFP response? **During the development of the marketing strategy cost, effectiveness and efficiency will all be considered when determining what platforms and services will be used. The current proposal does not need to be inclusive of all services that may be used; however, any products, data collections services or subscriptions that you are proposing be used to conduct the brand audit and develop the marketing strategy should be included.**
- Could we request an extension to the submission deadline? **At this time, no. If we do not receive sufficient response by the deadline, we may consider an extension.**
- Could we request an electronic submission in light of the lifting of all delivery guarantees from all the courier companies? **No, due to Freedom of Information rules all proposals will remain sealed until the deadline has passed. Electronic submission does not allow proposals to remain sealed.**
- Under General Condition, it says “Proposals shall include an original and three (7) exact copies (in addition to the hard copy).” **Can you clarify if you would like an additional three or seven copies of the proposal when it is delivered along with the original? Seven (7) copies, one for each member of the EDC workgroup reviewing the proposals.**
- What is currently not resonating or is it working and you want to extend the messaging to adjacent states? **We are not sure if DLH is resonating with our intended audience or not, which is why we would like to conduct a brand audit. Additionally, we would**

like to extend our messaging, but would need to determine the target audience first, which would likely include adjacent states due to our close proximity to MA & NY.

- How do you measure results? **We do not currently measure results**
- Who is the target audience(s)? **This is not clearly defined**
- What is your media budget and how do you currently deploy marketing resources? We historically have not had a media budget. **All marketing resources have been done organically through word of mouth.**
- What is a region whose marketing campaign you admire? **Not sure**
- What are the tent pole events in the region? **This varies from Community to Community; however, the larger public events in the Region include the Goshen Fair and Harwinton Fair. There are other ticketed events at private locations such as Lime Rock and the Warner Theatre (just to name a few) throughout the year as well.**
- Are there any anticipated constraints or limitations on the media buying budget or content production? **The budget is not unlimited. Cost, effectiveness and efficiency will all be considered when determining what platforms and services that will be used. Future funding may come from the NHCOC Operations budget and/or grants through State and Federal Agencies. The consultant will work closely with NHCOC to develop a plan that meets current and future budgets.**
- What are the priority target markets (geographic and demographic) that the NHCOC would like to focus on in the marketing and advertising campaigns? **This is currently undefined.**
- Will you accept an electronic signature such as DocuSign for the Cover Letter and Appendix B? **Yes, but it will need to be printed and included in the packet. Wet signature not required.**
- Would an electronic signature suffice for Appendix C, the non-collusion Affidavit? Or, must this be notarized? **This must be notarized**
- How many copies are required for the fee proposal? Is this also seven copies, plus one original? **yes**
- We will be submitting a proposal together with another agency. Do both agencies need to complete Appendix B and Appendix C forms? **No, only the primary consultant**
- For Appendix A, Insurance Requirements, Non-Discrimination, and Indemnification, since the Certificate of Insurance is not due until up to 10 days after the award, what

information is needed in our response? **Just acknowledgment and acceptance of the terms**

- The RFP/RFQ only asks for printed copies of the response, including the sealed fee proposal. Are we able to provide a thumb drive or email a link to our portfolio section so that videos can be viewed by the review team? **Yes**