



Connecticut Port Authority

Request for Proposals

Communications & Marketing Services

RFP No. CPA0024-CM

Key Dates:

RFP Released:	Friday, August 23, 2024
Deadline for Questions:	4:00 PM EDT, Friday, September 6, 2024
Responses to Questions:	4:00 PM EDT, Friday, September 13, 2024
RFP Submission Deadline:	4:00 PM EDT, Friday, September 27, 2024

Responses to Questions

Question submission

1. Is your intended reach International? National? Eastern Seaboard?

The Connecticut Port Authority is a quasi-public agency created in 2014 that is responsible for marketing and coordinating the development of the state's ports and maritime economy. The creation of the Connecticut Port Authority represents a major commitment to invest in the state's port infrastructure to create jobs and attract private investment to the state.

2. Are you interested in reaching business/commercial audience only, residential only, or both markets?

Business/Commercial, and general public.

3. Are there specific industries you wish to target? Specific business size?

Maritime, shipping, energy, waterfront infrastructure and development.

4. Can you share who you have targeted in previous attempts and the response rates you have been able to achieve?

The Authority is considering implementing a marketing strategy and is unable to provide the requested data at this time.

5. Is there a budget for social media/digital (targetted programmaatic) spend?

An estimated budget for social media/digital may be determined by the Authority during the creation of a marketing strategy with the selected firm.

6. Is there an overall budget, and what percentage is allocated to PR efforts vs marketing/graphics?

An estimated budget for PR efforts, marketing and graphics may be determined by the Authority during the creation of a marketing strategy with the selected firm.

Question submission

I am writing to confirm if the Port Authority is seeking a rebrand (new identity, logo and messaging) as part of this RFP and if so if that is something that can be submitted for as a stand alone service.

Yes. A proposal for rebranding may be submitted as a stand-alone package.

Question submission

General

- The RFP does not list a budget for this engagement. Is there a specific budget range that responding firms should account for?

An estimated budget may be determined by the Authority during the creation of a marketing strategy with the selected firm.

Public Communications

- Achieving favorable media coverage is heavily reliant on the ability to share relevant news of public interest. How often do you anticipate having go-to-market news of interest to the general public?

The Authority intends to update the public on a monthly basis, along with ad-hoc updates for special engagements.

Digital

- What percentage of the total budget will be dedicated to digital spending?

An estimated budget may be determined by the Authority during the creation of a marketing strategy with the selected firm.

- Are there existing goals in place for this engagement. such as “increase website traffic by x” or generate four million impressions during the duration of the engagement.

No. Key performance indicators (KPIs) may be determined with the selected firm.

Social Media

- How does social media fit into your overall marketing strategy?

The Authority seeks to use social media as a Business Development tool, as well as for Community Engagement with the general public.

- Are you able to confirm the Authority’s target audience on Social? Is it safe to assume that we are working to engage with the Business Development audience vs. the general public?

Both.

- Define which platforms specifically need to be maintained (re: etc.) Which platform is the preferred?

LinkedIn and Facebook; and potentially X and Instagram.

- In the order of preference, what are your primary goals for social media? Increasing brand awareness, driving website traffic, building community/followership?

Increasing brand awareness, stakeholder and community engagement and increased web traffic.

- Do you have brand guidelines or style guides already developed? (i.e., Logos, color schemes, fonts)

All rebranding must be in accordance with the Branding guidelines issued by the State of Connecticut.

Website

- What is the anticipated budget range for this website portion of the project?

An estimated budget may be determined by the Authority during the creation of a marketing strategy with the selected firm.

- What are the specific goals for the Authority’s Home/landing page strategy (e.g., increased website traffic, higher engagement rates, improved brand awareness)?

Increasing brand awareness, enhancing community engagement and increasing web traffic

- How frequently does the Authority expect website updates and maintenance to occur?

Weekly.

- Are there any specific features or functionalities the Authority wants to add to its website?

The Authority is seeking to enhance its web functionality in accordance with The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

- What is the current state of the Authority’s website analytics? Is there a need to improve or expand tracking capabilities?

Yes, the Authority would like to enhance its use of web analytics

Question submission

Questions

- What specific communication and marketing goals does the Authority hope to achieve within the one-year contract period?

Rebranding to include web and logo re-design, in an effort to increase brand awareness and community engagement.

- How does the Authority currently define its target markets within the maritime industry? Are there specific segments they want to reach more effectively?

Shipping

Cruise/passenger/excursion

Recreational boating

Commercial and recreational fishing

Vessel tracking

Energy

Cargo/bulk/container

Shipbuilding/repair

Port & Terminal Operations

Freight

- How will the Authority measure the success of a PR strategy, as well as the entire communications and marketing strategy? Are there specific KPIs?

Key performance indicators (KPIs) may be determined with the selected firm.

- Are there specific goals you are trying to achieve with a communications strategy - i.e. increased ferry bookings, overall awareness of Port Authority initiatives, etc..

Increasing brand awareness and enhancing community engagement.

- How will the selected firm collaborate with the Authority's internal communications team throughout the project?

Regular meetings with the selected firm to establish goals and objectives for the year.

- Are there specific publications, contacts, or media outlets that the Authority already works closely with that we should be aware of?

Yes. The Authority will provide this information to the selected firm.

- Is it beneficial to as well engage the Spanish market so we can cast a wider net?

The Authority will discuss potential options with the selected firm once goals and objectives have been determined.

- What are the key branding elements that need to be created or refreshed (e.g., logos, taglines, digital materials)?

Rebranding to include web and logo re-design, in an effort to increase brand awareness and community engagement.

- What are the most critical functionalities needed for the Authority's website? (For consistency, can we list Connecticut Port Authority (CPA) at the beginning and then refer to it as CPA throughout the rest of the document?)

The Authority is seeking to enhance its website functionality in accordance with The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

- How does the Authority currently manage its digital platforms and social media, and what changes or improvements are expected in this area?

The Authority does not currently utilize its social media platforms, and is looking to re-engage with social media.

- How frequently will meetings be required between the agency and the Authority?

Regular meetings with the selected firm to establish goals and objectives for the year.

- Group has a large network of celebrities and Influencer relationships. Is this something Authority would be interested in?

No interest at this time.

- What is the estimated budget for this project, and are there specific allocations for different components (e.g., PR, digital, creative)?

An estimated budget may be determined by the Authority during the creation of a marketing strategy with the selected firm.

Question submission

- We have a notarized OPM Form 1 – Campaign Contribution Certification from April - do we need to provide a more recent copy?

Yes.

- Do we need to fill out any information on the Notice to Executive Branch State Contractors and Prospective State Contractors of Campaign Contribution and Solicitation Limitations or is this just a notice?

The Notice to Executive Branch State Contractors and Prospective State Contractors of Campaign Contribution and Solicitation Limitations is a Notice, and the associated form for completion is the OPM Form 1- Campaign Contribution Certification.

As stated on the Notice “For further information on the notice and certifications, and to find answers to many questions raised by this notice, please see the Frequently Asked Questions – State Contractors section of the Commission’s website at <https://seec.ct.gov/Portal/SCCB/FAQs>.”

- Do we need to fill out any information on the Notice Concerning Contract Compliance Responsibilities or is this just a notice?

As stated in the Notice, “Persons having questions about this notice or their rights under the law are urged to contact the: COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND OPPORTUNITIES AFFIRMATIVE ACTION AND CONTRACT COMPLIANCE UNIT 450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 2 Hartford, CT 06103 (860) 541-3434”.

- Are there any budget parameters for each of the potential marketing and communications deliverables (for example Digital Marketing)?

An estimated budget may be determined by the Authority during the creation of a marketing strategy with the selected firm.

- Is CT Port Authority interested in cultivating and curating video content; for use on CT Port Authority social platforms, website, e-newsletters, and, potentially, digital marketing outreach?

Yes.

- Within CT Port Authority's budget, can you rank the relative priorities of brand development, communications, creative services, traditional advertising, digital marketing, social media, and web content development?
 - Communications
 - Web development
 - Brand development
 - Creative Services
 - Digital Marketing
 - Social media
 - Advertising

Question submission

-Are you able to share any budget information?

An estimated budget may be determined by the Authority during the creation of a marketing strategy with the selected firm.

- If so, is there just one overall budget for all of the services requested, or does each component--particularly the 3 main services (Public Communications, Creative, Digital)--have its own budget?

An estimated budget for each component may be determined by the Authority during the creation of a marketing strategy with the selected firm.

Question submission

1. Can you explain the process for content and campaign approvals

All content and campaigns are approved by the Authority.

2. How many points of contact will the selected marketing agency have within the Authority?

Approximately three

3. How many community events are anticipated over the course of this engagement?

Approximately 2-4 events per quarter are anticipated (approximately 8-16 events for the year).

4. What are the specific goals and success metrics for this project?

Increasing brand awareness & enhancing community engagement. Key performance indicators (KPIs) may be determined with the selected firm.

5. Who are the primary target audiences for the communications and marketing efforts?

Maritime stakeholders and business development; and community engagement / general public.

6. Is there an estimated or allocated budget for this engagement?

An estimated budget may be determined by the Authority during the creation of a marketing strategy with the selected firm.

7. Is there an existing content management system (CMS) in place for the website, or will the agency need to recommend one?

A proposer may recommend a CMS in its submission. The current website uses WordPress.

8. Is there an existing brand identity, or will the agency need to develop new branding for the Authority?

The Authority will be pursuing rebranding.

9. Will the selected agency provide ongoing technical support for the website or just strategic content and design updates?

The selected firm will provide strategic content and design updates, and web development support.

10. Does the Connecticut Port Authority have established relationships with specific press or media outlets that the agency will collaborate with?

Yes. The Authority will provide this information to the selected firm.

Question submission

1. Will there be a corresponding paid media budget to support earned efforts such as digital strategy and social media campaign?

An estimated budget may be determined by the Authority during the creation of a marketing strategy with the selected firm.

2. We can provide a range of support, anywhere from strategic planning, to designing materials to onsite personnel, for tradeshow and events. Can you clarify the level of support you are looking for at such events? Additionally, how often do you exhibit at events that would require our support?

Potential support for strategic planning and design materials annually, to be determined with the selected firm.

3. Do you have any prior marketing campaigns or research that you could share?

Not currently available.

4. In our experience, it's clearer to deliver a budget by project phases instead of by tasks. Would the budget phased approach be acceptable for this proposal?

Refer to the "Fee Proposal" subsection of the RFP, Section V. subsection C.

5. Are you looking for logo creation in this campaign? If so, does logo creation need to follow new state branding guidelines?

All rebranding, including logo re-design, must be in accordance with the Branding guidelines issued by the State of Connecticut.

6. How do you prioritize your target audience? Focus on cities/states/etc.

Maritime stakeholders and business development; and community engagement / general public.

Question submission

1. To whom will the PR consultant(s) report?
 - o Will that person have decision-making authority or will he/she need to go to someone else for a final decision?

The Authority maintains a small operational staff. Decision-making will be done by the Authority.

2. Who does the marketing and social media team report? Do they work in tandem with the PR and communications team, or do they report to that individual(s)?

- o The Authority will coordinate with the selected firm.

3. What will the in-person expectations be for the different consultants under consideration?

- o The Authority will coordinate with the selected firm via email; phone; virtual, hybrid and in-person meetings.

4. Will the applicant's local Connecticut experience be weighed differently than experience in other states?

Section IV "Contractor Qualifications" of the RFP indicates that the Authority is seeking firms that have extensive knowledge working with governmental agencies or entities, with a preference for firms with experience or significant knowledge of Connecticut quasi-public entities.

5. Will applicants based in Connecticut be preferred?

Section IV "Contractor Qualifications" of the RFP indicates that the Authority is seeking firms that have extensive knowledge working with governmental agencies or entities, with a preference for firms with experience or significant knowledge of Connecticut quasi-public entities.

6. How much did the Port Authority spend in marketing services in the calendar year 2023?

Previous marketing spend information may be shared with the selected firm.

7. How much did the Port Authority spend in PR and communications consulting services in the calendar year 2023?

Previous PR and communications spend information may be shared with the selected firm.

Question submission

1. Is there an incumbent vendor or is the RFP for a newly created/expanded scope of work?

The Authority currently has a vendor providing services, however the RFP has been developed for an expanded scope of work in the areas of marketing and communications.

2. What is the approximate budget range for contract term?

An estimated budget may be determined by the Authority during the creation of a marketing strategy with the selected firm.

3. What is the current spend (prior 12 months) for advertising?

Previous spend information may be shared with the selected firm.

4. Is the cost of materials included in the Scope of Work, Section II A, 7, (a) through (o) expected to be included in the RFP response?

It is not required to be included. Items listed in this section can be quoted as requested by the Authority during the term of the contract.

5. Scope of Work, Section II, A, 9 – how often can this be anticipated and for approximately how many people each occurrence?

This is potentially anticipated on an annual basis for a group of less than 30.

6. Scope of Work, Section II, A, 10 – can you provide an estimate of the number of occurrences in which these could happen during the 12 month contract period

This is anticipated on a monthly basis.

7. Meetings – about how many public meetings could be expected to be scheduled during the 12 month contract period?

The selected firm should anticipate an average of 10-12 public meetings per annum. Attendance may be on a hybrid basis, as determined by the Authority.

8. Are there any specific social media management scope of work requirements not present in the RFP? Seems like traditional full social media management (with original content creation to be provided by vendor), but don't want to falsely assume.

No.

9. If selected vendor is called upon to act as the Spokesperson, what type of commitment might that look like? (e.g. how many engagements, nature of appearances/uses, etc.)

We do not anticipate any at this time.

Question submission

Is there an official RFP document you can provide to help craft our response?

Please review RFP No. CPA0024-CM, which can be found on the Authority's website at <https://ctportauthority.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/Connecticut-Port-Authority-RFP-Communications-Marketing-Services.pdf>.

Question submission

1. Is there an incumbent for this work, or an agency you have recently worked with for similar services? If yes, whom?

The Authority currently has a vendor providing services, however the RFP has been developed for an expanded scope of work in the areas of marketing and communications.

2. How will you measure the success of the selected contractor's performance on this contract?

Key performance indicators (KPIs) will be determined with the selected firm.

3. Is the Connecticut Port Authority looking to rebrand?

Yes. All rebranding must be in accordance with the branding guidelines issued by the State of

Connecticut.

4. What is the anticipated annual budget of this contract?

An estimated budget may be determined by the Authority during the creation of a marketing strategy with the selected firm.

5. What is the frequency and/or number of deliverables detailed in the Section II Scope of Services, items A-C? This would be needed to develop an accurate detailed breakdown of person-hours by task, as requested in Section C Fee Proposal.

This may be determined with the selected firm.

Question submission

- Can you please provide a budget or budget range for all services and/or a breakdown by services? Is there a budget level that cannot be exceeded overall or by service? This will help us make the best recommendation to fit your needs.

An estimated budget may be determined by the Authority during the creation of a marketing strategy with the selected firm.

- Please clearly identify your main objectives for communications and marketing activities.

Increasing brand awareness & enhancing community engagement.

- How will you define/measure success?

Key performance indicators (KPIs) may be determined with the selected firm.

- Please clearly identify your primary target audience and any secondary audiences?

Maritime stakeholders and business development; and community engagement / general public.

- Historically, what communications and marketing has been done for the Port Authority? Is there a prior year Marketing & Communications calendar that you can share?

Not available at this time.

- Is this the first time the Port Authority is engaging an outside agency and, if so, what has spurred this need?

The Authority currently has a vendor providing services, however the RFP has been developed for an expanded scope of work in the areas of marketing and communications.

- What industries/business segments are most critical to the economic growth of CT's ports?

- Shipping
- Cruise/passenger/excursion
- Recreational boating
- Commercial and recreational fishing
- Vessel tracking
- Energy
- Cargo/bulk/container
- Shipbuilding/repair
- Port & Terminal Operations

- Freight

- Are there any geographic target markets?

The Connecticut Port Authority is a quasi-public agency created in 2014 that is responsible for marketing and coordinating the development of the state's ports and maritime economy. The creation of the Connecticut Port Authority represents a major commitment to invest in the state's port infrastructure to create jobs and attract private investment to the state.

- Overall, what is the percentage breakdown of PR on a local/regional basis vs. national basis?

Currently mostly local/regional

- Approximately, how frequent is the opportunity to promote new "news" that would warrant a press release/press outreach? We are looking to better understand the level of activity on a monthly and annual basis.

Approximately monthly, potential for more.

- The RFP lists "develop content for variety of printed and digital materials." Do you annually produce all the materials listed in section A7? Can you quantify numbers per year as it relates to the materials listed in section A7. Understanding quantities would be especially helpful for the items list in A7.

No, we do not currently annually produce all of the materials listed in Section II.A.7.

- Specifically, section A7 also includes authority logos, taglines and other key branding. Are you looking for us to re-brand the Port Authority in some way with a new logo or brand tagline? What other key branding elements are you referencing?

Looking for logo re-design. All rebranding must be in accordance with the Branding guidelines issued by the State of Connecticut.

- Approximately how many public events per year would we manage?

The selected firm should anticipate an average of 10-12 public events per year.

- Services do not identify production of any material under section A or section B. Is production of materials outside this scope of work?

It is not required to be included. Items listed in this section can be quoted as requested by the Authority during the term of the contract.

- How is your website, as outlined in Section C, currently managed? Internally or externally? Who currently develops content for your site? I don't know the right wording of the question – please ask Helen – but we should find out what their website is built in/what platform (e.g. WordPress, etc.) as that will impact how we scope/potential partners.

The Authority's website is currently maintained by an external vendor. The Authority is interested in a website re-design. Current website is built in WordPress.

- Per Section D, can you outline approximately how many meetings per year?

The selected firm should anticipate an average of 10-12 meetings per annum. Attendance may be on a hybrid basis, as determined by the Authority.

- There is no mention of video production which could be beneficial on your website or social. We are assuming the development of video production is not included in this RFP.

The Authority has an interest in potential video production. A proposal for this may be submitted as a stand-alone package.

- How many daily contacts would the agency have? Is there one primary contact(s) daily? What are the titles of the roles that would interact with the agency daily?

Approximately three

- Would you be open to a monthly fee arrangement to obtain an agency of record?

Yes. The agreement must detail the scope of services covered for that monthly fee.

Question submission

General Questions

1. Clarification on Objectives:

- Can you provide more detailed objectives for this engagement, particularly what success looks like for the Connecticut Port Authority?

This will be determined with the selected firm.

- Are there any specific metrics or KPIs that the Authority will use to measure the success of the communications and marketing efforts?

Key performance indicators (KPIs) may be determined with the selected firm.

2. Budget and Cost Structure:

- Is there a predefined budget range for the services requested in this RFP?

An estimated budget may be determined by the Authority during the creation of a marketing strategy with the selected firm.

- How flexible is the budget, and are there opportunities for negotiation based on proposed strategies?

An estimated budget may be determined by the Authority during the creation of a marketing strategy with the selected firm.

3. Engagement and Approval Processes:

- What is the preferred process for reviewing and approving materials and strategies developed by the selected agency?

Materials and strategies may be presented by the selected firm for approval by the Authority.

- Who are the key stakeholders or decision-makers that the selected firm will need to engage with throughout this project? How many decision-makers or decision-

influencers

Approximately three

Scope of Services Questions

4. Public Communications Services:

- Can you provide more specifics on the types or volume of events or community engagements expected under the public education/community events requirement?

Approximately 2-4 community events per quarter are anticipated (8-16 per year).

- What is the anticipated volume of press releases, media advisories, and other public communications materials to be produced?

Monthly

5. Creative Services:

- Are there any existing brand guidelines or assets that the selected firm should be aware of or use?

Yes. All rebranding must be in accordance with the branding guidelines issued by the State of Connecticut.

- Will the agency be responsible for creating all new branding elements?

Web and logo re-design are priority.

6. Digital, Website, and Social Media Services:

- Can you provide more detail on the current digital footprint and assets, including any existing analytics data as it relates to the vitality and performance of such properties?

Yes, the Authority would like to enhance its use of web analytics

- What are the specific goals for the website? Is it only one or are there others?

The Authority is looking to re-design the website. The website has multiple sections.

- What are the specific goals for social media management regarding audience engagement and content types?

Stakeholder & business development, and Community engagement (general public)

- Is there an anticipated volume/cadence for weekly or monthly social media?

Potentially weekly or monthly

Contract Terms and Conditions Questions

7. Contract Length and Renewals:

Can you confirm the process and criteria for contract renewals after the initial one-year term?

The Authority may extend the contract for two (2) additional one (1) year periods, after the initial one-year term, once satisfied with the selected firm.

Are there any performance-based criteria that could impact the renewal or extension of the contract?

Key performance indicators (KPIs) will be determined with the selected firm.

8. Non-Disclosure and Confidentiality:

- Are there specific confidentiality requirements beyond those typically expected in public sector contracts?

No.

Proposal Content Questions

10 . Service Proposal Specifics:

- Are there any additional details or specifics you are looking for in the ‘Service Proposal’ section that are not mentioned in the RFP?

No.
- Is there a specific set of criteria you can share for how a firm will be chosen that you are willing to share?

Please refer to Section IX “Evaluation Criteria”
- Is there a preferred format for a detailed description of the firm’s approach to performing the services?

No

11 . Declarations and Required Forms:

- Could you clarify any specific expectations or common issues seen with the submission of required forms?
 - Please refer to Section V.D.
- Is there any flexibility in the submission requirements for electronic versus hard copy proposals?
 - Please see the “Submission of Proposals” outlined in Section VI.B. “Proposers shall submit one (1) original hard copy and (1) electronic copy of their Proposal by 4:00 PM (EDT) on Friday, September 27, 2024.”

Technical and Logistical Questions

12 . Technology and Infrastructure:

- What technology or platforms are currently being used for digital marketing, social

media, and website management?

The Authority does not currently utilize its social media platforms, and is looking to re-engage with social media

- Are there any specific requirements or preferences for technology solutions to be used by the agency?

Any technology requirements can be discussed with the selected firm

13. Meetings and Coordination:

- What is the expected frequency and format of meetings (in-person vs. virtual) between the Authority and the selected firm?

The selected firm should anticipate an average of 10-12 public meetings per annum. Attendance may be on a hybrid basis, as determined by the Authority.

14. Additional Clarifications:

- Are there any known challenges or risks that the Authority anticipates in achieving the objectives outlined in the RFP?

Not at this time.

- Is there any additional background information or context that would help the agency understand the Authority's needs better e.g., strategy decks, filings, etc.?

The Connecticut Port Authority is a quasi-public agency created in 2014 that is responsible for marketing and coordinating the development of the state's ports and maritime economy. The creation of the Connecticut Port Authority represents a major commitment to invest in the state's port infrastructure to create jobs and attract private investment to the state.

Question submission

1. Regarding the evaluation criteria mentioning "the firm's presence in Connecticut": Is this RFP reserved only for Connecticut-based companies? If not, is there a percentage preference given to Connecticut companies in the evaluation process; and If so, how does this preference factor into the evaluation of financial proposals from out-of-state companies?

Section I.V. of the RFP indicates that the Authority is seeking firms that have extensive knowledge working with governmental agencies or entities, with a preference for firms with experience or significant knowledge of Connecticut quasi-public entities.

2. Can you provide more information on the key stakeholders or target audiences?

Maritime stakeholders and business development; and community engagement / general public.

3. Among the various services requested (public relations, strategy development, content creation, graphic design, digital services, event planning), are there specific areas that the Authority considers higher priority?

Communications and public relations. Web and logo re-design.

4. Is there a specific number of public meetings of the Board of Directors each year that the selected firm would be expected to attend?

The selected firm should anticipate an average of 10-12 public meetings per annum. Attendance may be on a hybrid basis, as determined by the Authority.

5. Are there any registration requirements for out-of-state businesses or can this be done if they are awarded this contract?

No. There are no registration requirements for out of state businesses.