



# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## Requests for Proposals: Advertising and Creative Agencies for the Department of Commerce

---

### **Do you have an incumbent and would they be participating in this RFP?**

No, this is a new opportunity.

### **Can you provide more details on the City being able to award multiple proposals? In the event that multiple contracts for this initiative were given, would that change the amount of 150K? And how would that work?**

The City of Philadelphia reserves the right to award multiple contracts to complete the desired scope of services. It depends on the proposals received, such as if we do not receive ones that can complete all aspects of the services we requested. While individual contracts will not exceed \$150k, it is possible that multiple contracts could exceed if deemed appropriate.

### **Are some Department services considered higher priority than others and should we focus on those, or should we prepare for unknowns?**

We seek proposals that focus on the services you offer and your ability to support based on the resources that the Department of Commerce offers for businesses. We welcome applications focused on your ability to deliver the scope of services we are seeking.

See scope of services section of the RFP document. Commerce will discuss with the selected vendor a strategy and timeline that help fulfill our goals.

### **How creative should we be able to get? We can really go creative. But there is a standard tone from the City. How much should we step outside of that?**

There are City standards that will be provided. Creativity within those standards are sought to reach Philadelphia small businesses, especially those historically underserved.

### **What percentage of the budget is expected to be allocated to media buying?**

Each applicant is welcome to provide a proposal that includes proposed allocations and averages for media buying based on your expertise. A proposal that takes strong consideration of how costs will help achieve reach based on our scope of services are welcome.

### **What result are you trying to achieve, meaning the result, numbers, population you are trying to catch attention from?**

The Department of Commerce is dedicated to helping all businesses start, stay and grow in Philadelphia. Commerce is dedicated to increasing access to opportunity and information for entrepreneurs. See the list of programs in the scope of services. Regarding geographic locations, the Department of Commerce has a database of current gaps and strengths to help expand our reach.

**Are there any creative assets that currently exist that we would want the agency to take on, build off of, or mix in?**

The Department of Commerce has organic posts as creative assets across LinkedIn, Instagram, Facebook and X. Commerce also has a Flickr album with photos. Commerce is seeking proposals from agencies to help create new assets focused on an advertising, storytelling and search engine optimization strategy to reach more businesses.

**Are any bilingual communications needed?**

The City of Philadelphia is committed to reaching entrepreneurs in the various languages reflected in our city's population. The City of Philadelphia has contracts with translation providers or you can include as part of your proposal if your agency finds it best fitting.

**Is this the first time you're engaging a consultant/agency for this initiative?**

The Department of Commerce worked with an agency for a program launch, otherwise, yes, this is a fully new opportunity and we do not have an incumbent.

**Where are the City of Philadelphia digital standards located?**

The City's digital standards are available here: <https://standards.phila.gov/>

**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?**

The City does have a local preference clause in its RFP process. Please refer to "10. Local Business Entity or Local Impact Certification" on Page 6 of the RFP document. However, companies outside of Philadelphia are still eligible to apply and location is not a sole determining factor.

**Why is this RFP not listed on the City's eContract Philly system? Are there other procurement systems the City uses for posting RFPs of this nature?**

The RFP is listed on PIDC's website because Commerce has contracted with PIDC to manage the funds that will pay for this service. Therefore, PIDC will be issuing this contract on behalf of the Department of Commerce to the selected vendor. The Philadelphia Industrial Development Corporation (PIDC) and PAID are quasi-City agencies that partner closely with the Department of Commerce to deliver economic development services to Philadelphia's businesses. Decisions about which agency will offer contract opportunities are made at the discretion of both agencies' leadership and depend on the availability and sources of funds in that year's City budget.

**Should vendors propose an integrated strategy across digital, print, and in-person platforms, or is the preferred advertising channel digital based?**

Yes, vendors can propose an integrated strategy across digital, print and in-person platforms based on the expertise and services that they offer. We welcome each applicant's scope of work based on the scope of services the Department of Commerce has listed.

**Will the selected vendor have access to internal or program-level data to assist in campaign design (e.g., demographic profiles, historical performance, ZIP code reach)?**

Yes, aggregated data will be analyzed with Commerce staff and guidance provided.

**Are vendors expected to create interactive dashboards to track performance? If so, is there a preferred platform?**

Regular reports of deliverables that highlight performance per scope will be a requirement of the contract.

**Will vendors be able to collaborate with and/or leverage the City or Department's internal communications teams to amplify/ draft messaging?**

Yes, we will work together. The City of Philadelphia responsibilities are listed in the RFP document.

**Will the City provide access to brand toolkits, messaging frameworks, or previously developed materials the Commerce Department has used in the past for other initiatives?**

Yes.

**Are vendors permitted to propose multiple campaign concepts in their submission?**

Vendors can submit their proposals as they see fit for our review, as long as they primarily include the services that you offer, vendor experiences and your ability to deliver on the scope.

**What strategies are you currently using to bring awareness to the public?**

The Department of Commerce reaches entrepreneurs through various strategies:

- Customer service (phone calls, emails and in-person assistance).
- Newsletters.
- Social media platforms (LinkedIn, Instagram, Facebook and X).
- Press releases and media coordination.
- Events, tabling and showcases.
- Department of Commerce's website content.

**If the City adds new programs mid-contract, will additional funding be provided or is that expected to come from the original budget?**

Each contract will have a set scope of services. If any changes are needed, we can discuss with the selected vendor for consideration and amend the contract accordingly.

**Will we receive introductions to City-supported businesses for testimonials or campaign participation?**

Yes.

**Does the City have baseline data (e.g., current social-media reach or website traffic) to help set performance targets, and will additional metrics like lead generation be tracked?**

Yes, baseline data is available and additional metrics can be tracked.

**Key Components: What should be included in a strong, complete RFP submission package? (e.g., work samples, budget, capacity statement, resumes, certifications, etc.)**

The RFP document details submission guidelines and expectations. Yes, we welcome each applicant's proposal budget allocations, work samples and available services.

**Submission Method: Is the RFP submitted via a specific portal or by email/mail? And is there a confirmation process once it's received?**

All complete RFP submissions can be emailed to [nagiarry.meneus@phila.gov](mailto:nagiarry.meneus@phila.gov). All applicants will receive a confirmation email.

**Has this project been executed in the past? If so, what worked / didn't?**

We want to know what areas/populations we are not reaching and we want to see proposed strategies to reach those. We also have insights from our own work about where we are not reaching. We want to hear from your proposals, creative strategies and your expertise while remaining in alignment with City standards.

**How would the selected vendor be paid?**

The selected vendor will be paid based on deliverables provided and the set total for billable hours allowed for personnel.

**Which marketing strategy that you currently use receives the most response/conversion?**

This comprehensive advertising opportunity is new.

**Is there a hotline that assists people with filling out applications?**

Yes. The Mayor's Business Action Team at the Department of Commerce provides personalized assistance in multiple languages to entrepreneurs for all aspects of doing business in Philadelphia. Businesses can email [business@phila.gov](mailto:business@phila.gov) or call 215-683-2100 for assistance.

**What type of KPIs will be measured other than the ones listed on the RFP sheet?**

The selected vendor will be evaluated by the ability to stay in alignment with City standards, goals and priorities. Additionally, the selected vendor will be evaluated based on the ability to be responsive and complete tasks successfully.

**Will business resource applications be in multiple languages? If yes, which languages?**

Commerce offers many of its resources in multiple languages. However, not all applications and materials are currently available.

We have identified the top ten languages spoken among business owners:

- English
- Spanish
- Mandarin (Simplified Chinese)

- Vietnamese
- Khmer
- Cantonese (traditional Chinese)
- Korean
- Arabic
- French
- Portuguese
- Haitian Creole

**What are your main goals with digital marketing strategies? (ie. more site visits)**

The goals in terms of calls to action include:

- Site visits
- Applications for assistance
- Contact us
- Learn more
- Social media followers

**Is there a preference for MWBE Business participation?**

We welcome all businesses to apply.

The City does have a local preference clause in its RFP process. Please refer to “10. Local Business Entity or Local Impact Certification” on Page 6 of the RFP document.

**Will we be able to use the City’s social media accounts directly, or will content be routed through their comms team?**

The selected vendor will access Commerce's Meta business manager through its own agency. Otherwise, the Commerce Communications Team will post directly. All content is approved by the Department of Commerce before publicizing.

**Will the agency be expected to recommend and negotiate all media placements?**

The Department of Commerce expects the selected agency to create a strategy for media placements, based on the recommendations provided by the Department of Commerce and insights from the selected vendor. Commerce will coordinate accordingly based on media placements' logistics. All templates will be provided to ensure adhering with City guidelines.

**Attachments or Supporting Docs: Are there optional but recommended items that could strengthen the application?**

Optional items include client testimonials.

**Evaluation Criteria: Do you know how proposals are typically evaluated or scored by the City? Any insights on what reviewers prioritize?**

Proposals will be evaluated based on:

- Ability to deliver services based on the proposed scope.
- Prior experience with supporting the economy in Philadelphia.
- Understanding of Philadelphia and its industries.
- Creativity in campaign development.
- Experience in localized outreach.
- A clear plan for measuring and reporting success.

**How does the City define success for this contract?**

The City of Philadelphia defines success for this contract based on the growth of businesses reached per month that either apply to our programs, stay connected with us or contact us for personalized assistance. The goals are to find key mechanisms that lead to that growth.

**Tips for Success: Based on your experience, are there any common mistakes to avoid or best practices you suggest for an RFP?**

The RFP document has a "How to Submit Your Response" section available that can be used as your guide to prepare the response.

**Are there guidelines on the expected number and length of social-media videos and assets?**

The applicant can let us know what is proposing to complete based on the available funds.

**How many commercial corridors are we expected to cover?**

The audience is citywide. We can estimate at this time that there are 20-30 corridors where we would like to see increased participation from businesses.

**Will all submitted proposals — particularly those that include innovative strategies or proprietary ideas — remain confidential and not be shared with or used by other vendors if not selected?**

Materials submitted will be kept confidential, subject to Pennsylvania's Right to Know Law.