



Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority

Addendum No. 1 – March 25, 2022

Request for Proposals 22-AD

ALL VENDORS SUBMITTING A PROPOSAL ARE REQUIRED TO ACKNOWLEDGE RECEIPT OF THIS ADDENDUM NO. 1 AS PART OF THEIR PROPSAL. PLEASE SIGN BELOW ACKNOWLEDGING RECEIPT OF THIS ADDENDUM AND RETURN WITH THE FINAL PROPOSAL.

Supplier Name: _____

Supplier Authorized Signature: _____

Supplier Name & Title: _____

Questions Received from Vendors and Responses from NNEPRA

1. Question: Is it correct to assume that the agency is responsible for maintaining the Drupal software, theme and graphics, whereas NNEPRA is responsible for the ticketing, train status software and language translation?

Response: Yes. The agency will maintain the Drupal software, theme, graphics, and embed the Google Translate Code. Amtrak provides NNEPRA's agency with the booking widgets/train status code to embed into the site.

2. Question: Will the agency's website responsibilities include developing and updating the programming of ticketing and train status software? Is this technology built into the Drupal installation, a third party software or by means of an API?

Response: No, the agency will not be responsible in developing and updating the programming of ticketing and train status software for the website. Amtrak provides NNEPRA's agency with the booking widgets/ train status code to embed into the site.

3. Question: Can you detail which aspects of the website are managed by NNEPRA?

Response: NNEPRA's agency will be responsible for maintaining all aspects of the site except for the booking widgets/ train status code provided by Amtrak.

4. Question: Will NNEPRA staff post "organic" social media content, or is that responsibility solely on the agency?

Response: NNEPRA staff currently posts "organic" social media content. The social media strategy/ roles and responsibilities moving forward is to be determined.

Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority – RFQ 22-AD
Addendum No. 1

5. Question: How often per month, on average, have “on-site” meetings happened in the past?

Response: Once per month.

6. Question: Would NNEPRA prefer to see creativity in the design of agency RFP submission, or are text-only submissions preferred?

Response: NNEPRA has no preference in the agency approach.

7. Question: Based on the reports on your website, ridership is rebounding from 2020 numbers, and not quite back to pre-pandemic volume. What are expected trends moving forward? What would you like to see in terms of that trend?

Response: Ridership trends and timing of ridership recovery remain difficult to predict due to the pandemic and shifts in consumer behavior. It is our hope that ridership will return to pre-pandemic levels and grow from there.

8. Question: What led to the exploration of agency support (or different agency support) at this time?

Response: The pandemic, changes in ridership patterns, and procurement policies prompted this Request for Proposals to ensure we are receiving the best available solution.

9. Question: Can you provide a general breakdown (%) of revenue derived from ridership, advertising, and other means?

Response: Generally, it has been 88% Ticket Revenue, 7% Food Service Revenue, 5% Parking/ Misc. Revenue

10. Question: If you had to prioritize one key metric to judge the success of your partnership with an agency in the coming year, what would it be?

Response: Identifying areas of untapped ridership potential and developing marketing strategies to address those areas.

11. Question: What role will category experience play in your evaluation of proposals? Are you open to working with a firm that does not have that experience?

Response: Please review "Evaluation of Proposals" on page 5 and 6 of RFP.

12. Question: How much research has been done regarding audience segments, motivators, and barriers?

Response: Some market research is available.

13. Question: What stands in the way of achieving the goal of increased ridership as it is?

Response: The pandemic and changes in ridership patterns.

14. Question: What has been most successful in the past? Alternatively, what has failed? Why?

Response: There have been a variety of successes and learning opportunities that have informed strategies in the past and future.

15. Question: Do you have an existing brand standards guide or platform, or would the creation of said documents be a part of this work?

Response: NNEPRA has existing brand standards that will not be a part of this work.

Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority – RFQ 22-AD
Addendum No. 1

16. Question: What kind of partnership are you looking for with an agency?

Response: NNEPRA seeks a trusted full service creative and media buying agency that can work in conjunction with and as an extension of our small staff.

17. Question: What keeps you up at night?

Response: The impacts of the pandemic on ridership and the communities for which the Downeaster services.

18. Question: How often do you anticipate on-site meetings as mentioned in Scope of Work point C?

Response: Once per month.

19. Question: Please clarify how much of Attachment A needs to be submitted with the proposal given the 25-page limit including Attachment A. Are all 13 pages required or just the 3 pages that need to be signed at the very end?

Response: The 25 pages does not include Attachment A.

20. Question: Is the \$225,000 allocated to paid media for ad spend or is it the development of the assets listed in the RFP (digital (display, pre-roll, social media, and search), print and broadcast assets (TV/CTV, radio, video) to include outdoor advertising, signage, sales materials, schedules, etc.?

Response: Yes, the \$225,000 is allocated to paid media.

21. Question: On page 3, it's mentioned that there is a total budget of \$350,000, with \$225,000 allocated for media buys. Is it safe to assume that the remaining \$125,000 would be for management fees and creative?

Response: Yes, the remaining \$125,000 is for creative development and agency fees.

22. Question: For traditional media (e.g. radio, tv, billboards), would you want us to bill for this media with industry standard 15% agency commission? Or would billing from the media partners be direct to NNEPRA with our billables restricted to hourly fee for media planning/placement?

Response: Media purchases and outside vendors, retained by agency on behalf of NNEPRA, will be billed at net cost directly to NNEPRA. Media charges must be detailed on monthly invoices with supporting documentation and reconciliation.

23. Question: In part D of the scope section, there is mention of social media. Would we be responsible for all posting, organic and paid?

Response: NNEPRA staff currently posts "organic" social media content, and the agency post paid. The social media strategy/ roles and responsibilities moving forward is to be determined.

Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority – RFQ 22-AD
Addendum No. 1

24. Question: In part E of the scope section that refers to the website, would we be responsible for hosting your current site (AmtrakDowneaster.com) or would the hosting responsibilities belong to NNEPRA?

Response: NNEPRA and selected agency will need to determine the best solution.

25. Question: What platform is your website built in?

Response: Drupal.

26. Question: Can you prioritize the type of customer you wish to increase ridership with? More business travelers, more leisure travelers, students, etc.? Or an order of importance?

Response: NNEPRA's goal is to increase ridership in all existing and emerging markets.

27. Question: Is there a specific station(s) you wish to increase ridership from?

Response: No.

28. Question: Has ridership returned to pre-covid levels? Can NNEPRA share analytics from the past 2 years?

*Response: A link to up-to-date statistics on ridership and revenue is:
<https://www.nnepra.com/reports-stats/statistics/>*

29. Question: What are the ridership goals over the next two years as a percentage of current levels?

Response: The goal is to return to pre pandemic levels and achieve annual ridership of 600,000 by 2024.

30. Question: Does NNEPRA collaborate with Maine Office of Tourism, Visit Portland, or similar organizations throughout New England?

Response: Yes.

31. Question: Does NNEPRA collaborate with colleges and universities along the Downeaster line?

Response: Yes.

32. Question: Is NNEPRA able to provide specifics on what marketing initiatives have worked best, demographics that are prime targets, opportunities NNEPRA feels are underutilized?

Response: Yes, that information can be made available to the selected agency.

33. Question: What is the status of the relationship with the current agency of record?

Response: NNEPRA has an effective partnership with the current agency.

Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority – RFQ 22-AD
Addendum No. 1

34. Question: What are the server specifications that are required for the website?

Response: That information can be made available to the selected agency.

35. Question: Why is NNEPRA moving hosting, web support, server backup, and web maintenance?

Response: This functionality is maintained by current agency.

36. Question: What security measures are in place currently and what security measures need to be taken care of?

Response: That information can be made available to the selected agency.

37. Question: How many hours monthly are currently being used for maintenance?

Response: Currently around 8-10 hours per month.

38. Question: Can you give an example of website programming and software needs that needs to be done? Is this to be quoted and billed separately or fit within a certain amount of hours provided.

Response: We would expect activities such as updating the Downeaster schedule to be an ongoing programming need that would be included in a monthly fee. Website redesign/ refresh and development of landing pages are examples of projects that would be priced and billed separately.

39. Question: What email platform do you use and who will be responsible for that?

Response: NNEPRA uses the email platform CreateSend. NNEPRA staff currently develops e-newsletter. An integrated email strategy/ roles and responsibilities moving forward is to be determined.

40. Question: Who has control of the DNS & will they still be responsible for this?

Response: NNEPRA has third party IT support who will be responsible for DNS.

*****The time and date specified in the original solicitation has not changed as a result of this addendum.*****

For any additional questions regarding this addendum please contact:

William Gayle, Grant and Policy Administrator
Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority
75 West Commercial Street, Suite #104
Portland, Maine 04101
william@nnepra.com

Signed by: 