Response to Questions/Requests for Clarification RFP No. 01-000-24-0001

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	RFP Section No., RFP Form, RFP Exhibit	Question/Request for Clarification	VPRA Response
1.	RFP (Form PD 07), Exhibit 1 Scope of Work, Section 1.2.3 Task Three: Social Media and Website Management, pages 52-53	Does social content include influencer opportunities?	Yes, that is outlined in the scope under the Task Three deliverables within Exhibit 1 to the RFP.
2.	RFP (Form PD 07), Exhibit 1 Scope of Work, Section 1.2.3 Task Three: Social Media and Website Management, pages 52-53	Can you please provide a social media case study that you believe was done well in the past?	Proposers are free to examine Amtrak Virginia social handles for examples of social media case studies.
3.	RFP (Form PD 07), Exhibit 1 Scope of Work, Section 1.2 Description of Work, page 50	Is there a specific experience or deal we are trying to promote or just overall that Amtrak exists in VA?	VPRA pays Amtrak to operate train routes throughout Virginia. We are promoting the four state-supported routes. Richmond to DC, Roanoke to DC, Norfolk to DC and Newport News to DC. Additionally, we seek to promote feeder markets for travelers connecting through the Northeast corridor into Virginia.
4.	RFP (Form PD 07), Exhibit 1 Scope of Work, Section 1.2 Description of Work, page 50	Can you please confirm this is just for travel within Virginia?	The services are primarily intended to promote the four state-supported routes in Virginia; however, the Consultant will also be tasked with encouraging travel into Virginia and from Virginia into the Northeast corridor.
5.	Exhibit 1	What are some of the KPIs for the VPRA?	In general, return on investment and increasing awareness of the four state-supported routes. Specific performance metrics will be established with the successful Offeror following award of the contract.
6.	9.0	What are the pain points of the marketing performance from the current incumbent?	VPRA will not be responding to this question.
7.	Tab 5	Is the \$450K per contract year?	VPRA will address this question in an addendum.

8.	Exhibit 1	Is there a photographer already staffed or would the agency need to perform and/or hire own agency photographer?	The Consultant will be responsible for procuring these services.
9.	7.0	Who would be the daily VPRA point(s) of contact?	VPRA's Passenger Rail Marketing Manager.
10.	7.0	What level of involvement or collaboration is expected from VPRA during the planning and execution phases?	VPRA will be very hands-on during the planning and execution phases; requiring weekly touchpoints and status updates.
11.	RFP (Form PD 07), Exhibit 1 Scope of Work	For the University and event sponsorships, was OOH mainly utilized or was there a combination of digital and OOH?	Sponsorship packages are unique to the entity and typically combine a mix of tactics.
12.	RFP (Form PD 07), Exhibit 1 Scope of Work	Are there particular key moments in time or key months throughout the year they're looking to increase ridership?	Shoulder seasons, mid-week travel, smaller city pairs within routes.
13.	RFP (Form PD 07), Exhibit 1 Scope of Work	Are the Amtrak Virginia locations prioritized by level of importance and/or by which markets need the most support?	VPRA has a strategy team that identifies underperforming segments of the routes to determine which need more marketing support. The overall goal is to increase ridership YOY on all four state-supported Amtrak routes.
14.	Scope of Work: Section 1.1	VPRA mentions that it wants to "increase ridership and maximize return on marketing investment". What are your specific ridership goals and marketing ROI goals? What does success look like for this particular contract?	Achieve a minimum 3% ridership and revenue increase YOY.
15.	Scope of Work: Section 1.2	The Description of Work lists a budget of \$350,000 per year for paid advertising campaigns and a budget of \$100,000 per year for paid sponsorships and strategic partnerships. What is the allocated budget for social media and website management?	VPRA will address this question in an addendum.
16.	Scope of Work: Section 1.2	Is creative services part of the required scope of services? Does VPRA need a new creative campaign or is it planning to utilize existing creative assets for paid media placements, sponsorships, social media, and website content?	Creative service is a big aspect of this scope. The Consultant will be responsible for creating new creative campaigns using existing photo assets and sourcing additional assets needed to implement the paid media campaigns, sponsorships, social, and website updates.
17.	Scope of Work: Task One	The Scope of Work mentions that the Contractor will need to "secure appropriate rights for all images and digital assets". Does VPRA have existing images and digital assets or does VPRA	VPRA has utilization of the Amtrak National photo database as well as non-expired VPRA-owned photo assets. However, the Consultant will be

		need the Contractor to secure new photographs, videos, animations, and or illustrations? If the latter, what is the production budget to develop and capture those assets?	responsible for sourcing any additional assets needed to implement the scope of this contract.
18.	Scope of Work: Task One	The Scope of Work mentions that the Contractor will need to "utilize market research to identify potential riders and target them effectively. "Does VPRA have any existing research that would help us understand the strength of the brand and its perception amongst potential users of Amtrak Virginia? Or is VPRA looking for the Contractor to undertake new research?	VPRA has existing data that the Consultant will use to develop an approach that best reaches the desired target audiences. Some desktop research and social listening will be required to identify and manage changes to the market.
19.	Scope of Work: Task One	Who are your target audiences for this advertising and paid media?	Target audiences will be provided to the successful Offeror following award of the contract.
20.	Scope of Work: Task One	The Scope of Work mentions that the Contractor will need to "develop and deploy quarterly Amtrak Virginia newsletters". Does this task include HTML template design, development, testing and campaign optimization? What role does VPRA currently conduct in newsletter campaigns? Does VPRA (and/or media affiliates) plan to use a CRM and/or email marketing service beyond Constant Contact in these campaigns?	VPRA has a Constant Contact account with a template for the quarterly newsletter sends. The Consultant will be responsible for developing the content for the quarterly newsletters, sourcing the photo assets, getting content approved, uploading the content into the newsletter template, deploying, and generating a post-send report. We do not plan to use CRM beyond Constant Contact.
21.	Scope of Work: Task One	The Scope of Work mentions that the Contractor will need to design and print route brochures. How many brochure variants are needed in one year? What are the design and printing specifications? Are printing costs included in the listed \$350k and \$100k budgets? Or is there an additional budget allocation for printing?	One variant of the brochure will be required annually. The design will be determined by the Consultant. Printing costs are included within anticipated direct costs associated Paid Advertising Campaigns.
22.	Scope of Work: Task Two	The Scope of Work mentions that the Contractor will need to "identify and execute sponsorship opportunities". It also states that the Contractor will need to manage and execute event activations and special events, including providing staffing. How have these events been staffed in the past? Was the staffing outsourced to another vendor or were the events staffed by advertising agency personnel? How many staff	Consultant will be responsible for coordinating staffing for the events either with its existing personnel or other third parties. Staffing is not included within the projected direct cost allocations associated with Paid Advertising Campaigns or Paid Sponsorships and Strategic Partnerships.

		members are typically required at these events? Is event staffing included in the outlined \$350k and \$100k budget? Or is there an additional budget allocation for event staffing?	
23.	Scope of Work: Task Two	The Scope of Work mentions that the Contractor will need to design and source stand alone displays for all 17 Amtrak Virginia stations. Please provide specifications for these displays, including information about how often the displays are changed.	Consultant is responsible for developing the specifications for the displays as part of its services.
24.	Scope of Work: Task Three	The Scope of Work mentions that the Contractor will need to create engaging content, including reels and short videos. Does VPRA plan to create new reels and videos for this content? Or will the agency be leveraging existing footage or existing creative assets? Are the production costs for these reels and videos included in the outlined \$350k and \$100k budget? Or is there an additional amount for production?	VPRA will not be creating new reels and video. Consultant will have access to VPRA's existing photo and video databases but will need to develop new content as required. Production costs are not included within the Paid Sponsorships and Strategic Partnerships (Task 2) budget.
25.	RFP Section 2.3, Introduction, Page 3	This section of the RFP indicates that this is a "single step procurement". What does that mean exactly? We ask because the procurement schedule includes an estimated timeframe for interviews.	By single step, we mean that we will not be shortlisting Offerors as a condition precedent to Proposal submittal.
26.	RFP Section 9.0, Rules of Contact, Page 5	The Rules of Contact outlined in the RFP indicate that Pulsar Advertising may not be contacted regarding this RFP. Is Pulsar the incumbent on this contract? Are they eligible to rebid this contract? For how many years has VPRA worked with Pulsar?	Pulsar is the incumbent. No additional information will be provided about this firm.
27.	RFP Section 9.0, Rules of Contact, Page 5	The Rules of Contact outlined in the RFP indicate that Amtrak may not be contacted regarding this RFP. Does Amtrak Virginia consider Amtrak (national) a conflict of interest for this contract?	No. VPRA wishes to preclude Offerors from contacting Amtrak as it may give rise to an organizational conflict of interest based on unequal access to information.
28.	RFP Section 17, Capacity, Page 11	This section of the RFP indicates that Offeror's physical location and proximity to Virginia will receive an award of 5 points in the evaluation criteria. How will proximity be scored? Will firms in close proximity to your Richmond	VPRA will address this question in an addendum. Firms located in the mid-Atlantic region (New York, New Jersey, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Virgnia, West Virginia, and the District of Columbia) will receive the full five points. Firms located outside

		headquarters be given the most points? Will firms with offices outside of Virginia (but still within close proximity to Richmond) be considered?	of the mid-Atlantic region are free to participate in this procurement but will not be eligible for any of the five points designated for the geographical preference.
29.	RFP Section 17, Fee Proposal, Page 11	The RFP indicates a \$350,000 budget for paid advertising campaigns and a \$100,000 budget for paid sponsorships and strategic partnerships. What is the budget for social media and website management? What is the budget for creative services? What is the total annual budget for this contract?	VPRA will address this question in an addendum.
30.	RFP Section 18 & Section 14.2	The evaluation criteria for this RFP indicates that 10 points will be awarded to an Offeror that includes Small/Small and Diverse Business Participation in its proposal response. Yet, Section 14.2 indicates that "no SWAM or DBE contract goals are included within this solicitation." Can you please clarify this discrepancy? Does VPRA require Small and Diverse Business participation for this contract?	There is no conflict in the RFP terms. Proposers are encouraged to utilize small, diverse, disadvantaged businesses but they are not expressly required to do so (i.e., there are no SWaM or DBE contract goals that must be achieved). Proposals will be scored exclusively on Offeror's DSBSD-certified small business utilization commitments with the highest percentage commitment receiving the maximum available points.
31.	RFP Section 25	This section of the RFP indicates that prior or existing contractual obligations between a company and a federal or state agency could give rise to a potential Conflict of Interest. Which specific federal and state agencies would VRPA consider to be conflicts of interest?	Organizational conflict of interest determinations are fact specific inquiries. If an Offeror is uncertain as to whether an existing contractual relationship could give rise to an organizational conflict of interest, they should seek a determination in accordance with VPRA's Organizational Conflict of Interest Policy.
32.	N/A	What does VPRA like about its incumbent advertising agency? What would VPRA like to see improved in its advertising agency relationship?	VPRA will not be providing a response to this question.
33.	N/A	Why is VPRA issuing this RFP now? Is this part of a mandatory review of your existing advertising agency contract?	VPRA will not be providing a response to this question.
34.	N/A	What advertising for other railroad and transportation companies does VPRA admire and hope to emulate?	VPRA will not be providing a response to this question.
35.	N/A	Who is on the review committee for this RFP response?	VPRA will not be providing a response to this question.
36.	17.3 Tab 2	Are we limited to only provide resumes for the two key personnel positions identified in the RFP	Resumes for additional team members may be included with the Proposal.

		 project manager and contract manager? Can we provide resumes for additional team members who will perform the work? 	
37.	17.3 Tab 5. 3.	Are the annual budgets listed - \$100,000 for paid sponsorships and \$350,000 for paid advertising – inclusive of labor hours as well as direct costs?	VPRA will address this question in an addendum.
38.	17.3 Tab 5. 3.	Is there a budget you can share for the social media and website component?	VPRA will address this question in an addendum.
39.	General Question	Is there an incumbent agency and are they participating in this RFP?	See response to Question No. 26.
40.	General Question	Do you have a preference of working with a local agency or would an out of state agency have an equivalent opportunity to win the business?	See response to Question No. 28.
41.	General Question	To what extent can we use the Amtrak national database? Only when supporting a flash sale or can we leverage those assets any time?	These assets can be leveraged at any time.
42.	1.2.1 Task One	What type of email marketing platform do you use and what is the cadence of your emails currently?	Constant Contact, Quarterly newsletters and occasional solo emails.
43.	1.2.3 Task Three	Do you have a budget for Influencer Marketing or plan to offer trade deals? How many influencers do you currently work with? What has been the historical level of interaction with ambassadors in the past?	No specific budget has been developed for Influencer Marketing. In the past, we have worked with 2-4 influencers per year. They range from micro influencers willing to trade for travel to mid-range influencers seeking payment. We cover the travel portion and engage with local destinations to cover other portions of the trip.
44.	1.2.3 Task Three	Social listening – do you have existing tools you are using?	Hootsuite is currently used to schedule posts and generate reports. The Consultant will need to use their own scheduling tool to pinpoint trends, best time to post, etc.
45.	General Question	Do you own your existing Meta, Google, & Bing accounts or are they owned by an agency or will they be brand new accounts?	VPRA owns the Meta and Google accounts and will grant access to the successful contractor.
46.	1.1 Project Description	According to the 1.1 Project Description, "VPRA goals is to promote Virginia state-supported Amtrak service to increase ridership and maximize return on marketing investment." How will measure success and this something we can track in a real time manner?	See response to Question No. 5.

47.	General Question	Do you have a specific goal for our measurement of success? (i.e. An increase in ridership of 20% YoY)	See response to Question No. 5.
48.	General Question	Do you have any ticket sales partners? I.e., Expedia, Travelocity, Groupon, etc.	VPRA will not be providing a response to this question.
49.	General Question	Are there any known barriers to entry/purchase? (For example, users must create an account to purchase a ticket, you must be 18 to purchase, etc.)	No.
50.	RFP - 01-000-24-0002	Will offerors be awarded points for the Small Business and Diversity Contracting Plan or DBE Utilization Plan if they are a small business? Or must they still subcontract in order to score points for this element	Where an Offeror is certified as a small business by the Department of Small Business and Supplier Diversity at time of Proposal submittal, they will receive all ten points provided they will be self-performing the work.
51.	RFP - 01-000-24-0002	Form K (the Fee Schedule) does not allow for the inclusion of all Time & Materials projections. Can offerors attach a more detailed budget breakdown to include this information? And only list the Fee/escalation rates for Form K?	VPRA will address this question in an addendum.
52.	RFP - 01-000-24-0002	Is the Plan/Schedule listed in the RFP accurate in deliverables, or can VPRA provide ballpark quantities for deliverables Ex. a. Projected # of Campaigns/Ads a Month/Year Ex. b. Projected # of Emails a Month/Year Ex.c. Projected # of brochures a Month/Year Ex.d. Projected # of paid sponsorship events a Month/Year Ex. e. Projected # of social media posts a Month/Year Ex. f. Projected # of website edits/new pages a Month/Year	Yes, the schedule is accurate and should be used to estimate quantities for deliverables.
53.	RFP - 01-000-24-0002	Annually or over the length of the contract, what specific metrics or benchmarks does VPRA aim to achieve?	See response to Question No. 5.
54.	RFP - 01-000-24-0002	Can you elaborate on VPRA's primary and secondary audience for the Amtrak Virginia services.	No.

55.	RFP - 01-000-24-0002	Could you provide more details on the types of media channels that have been most effective in promoting VA Amtrak	No.
56.	RFP - 01-000-24-0002	Can you provide examples of successful past sponsorships and partnerships	No.
57.	RFP - 01-000-24-0002	Is there an existing VPRA Style or Messaging Guide that can be shared to help guide campaign ideas for the proposals	No, the successful Offeror will receive brand guides and sample messaging once the contract is awarded.
58.	RFP - 01-000-24-0002	What are the travel expectations for this effort?	Specific travel requirements are unknown at this time.
59.	RFP - 01-000-24-0002	Does VPRA currently have any existing media assets, such as previously created advertisements, imagery, or video content, that can be utilized or repurposed for the Amtrak Virginia marketing campaigns?	Yes; however, the Consultant will be required to develop such additional media assets as are necessary to fulfill the contract requirements.
60.	1.2.1 Task One Deliverable	The budget of \$350,000 per year is mentioned. Is this to include creative services, media spend, production (to include printing materials, TV/digital, etc.), general agency manpower, and social media content management and website management? Or is this strictly the consultation fee for the year and an other agency/agencies partner will perform the above activities?	VPRA will address this question in an addendum.
61.	Scope of Work, 1.2.3	Are the VPRA social channels the same as Amtrak - Facebook, Instagram, and Linked In?	Yes, Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn.
62.	Scope of Work, 1.2.2	Is the Offeror required to create, plan, and manage events or manage VPRA's participation in or attendance at events that others create and plan?	Consultant will be responsible for managing participation in pre-existing events.
63.	Fee Proposal	Should the fee proposal include the estimated direct purchases (e.g. the cost of the proposed media buys) or just the services required to facilitate those purchases?	VPRA will address this question in an addendum.

64.	Fee Proposal	Does the \$450,000 estimated budget represent the management fees only?	VPRA will address this question in an addendum.
65.	Fee Proposal	If the media costs are to be included, how should those be represented in the Form K?	VPRA will address this question in an addendum.
66.	Section 14.2	Section 14.2 states: "No SWaM or DBE contract goals are included within this solicitation." But under section 18.2 there are 10 points for Small/Small and Diverse Business Participation. On what basis will the 10 points be awarded if there is no SWaM or DBE contract goals? The Evaluation Criteria included in section 18.3 for Tab 6 (Small/Small and Diverse Business Participation) would indicate that there is a goal for SWaM and Diverse Business Participation.	See response to Question No. 30.
67.	Section 14.2	If it is determined that there are in fact no SWaM or DBE contract goals and you determine that no points may be awarded in the evaluation process, will you still require the forms under Tab 6 to be submitted?	Yes, forms C and D must still be submitted with the Proposal even where an Offeror has no plans to use SwaM or DBE firms on the Contract. In those instances, Offerors should designate "None" on the respective forms.
68.	Section 18.3, Tab 6	Tab 6 (Small/Small and Diverse Business Participation) there is a Note: "Note: Where an Offeror is a DSBSD-certified small business, they will be awarded all 10 points provided they are self-performing 100% of the Work." This is not the standard practice for Virginia State Agencies procurement. Will VPRA consider removing this condition to the evaluation criteria?	No. VPRA is not a state agency and conducts its procurements in accordance with its procurement rules.
69.	Section 17.3, Tab 2, Paragraph 3	You indicated two positions under Key Personnel. Do you only want resumes for these two key personnel positions? Or is the offeror permitted to provide resumes for other key personnel as well as those staff deemed not to be "key personnel"?	See response to Question No. 36.

70.	Section 17.3, Tab 2	If we are allowed to provide non-key personnel, are 3 references required for the non-key personnel?	No.
71.	Section 6.0	Is it VPRA's intention to have the new contract be in force and effective July 1, 2024?	Yes.
72.		In your words, what type of firm would best align with VPRA and the desired solution?	A full-service marketing and advertising firm with a proven track record of results.
73.	17.3 Tab 5.3	We are a bit confused on the budget totals Do the \$350k & \$100k, respectively for Task 1 & Task 2, encompass management fees for this consultancy, in addition to paid efforts (including influencer / sponsorship paid efforts)? If not, what is the management fee budget for this specific RFP?	VPRA will address this question in an addendum.
74.		Have you defined any key performance indicators (KPIs) that you are able to share?	See response to Question No. 5.
75.		How will you measure and track the success of this project? &/or are you looking for this consultant to fully handle that?	The Consultant will prepare monthly performance reports for paid campaigns, social media, newsletter sends, and sponsorship activities. Using these reports, the Consultant will optimize marketing efforts to meet goals and KPIs.
76.		Will the contractor for this effort be advising the digital AOR on their media buys or will the digital AOR be advising the contractor for this effort?	The Consultant will act in both roles. They will develop the creative for the paid media campaigns and use the established annual budget for media buys.
77.		Is there an incumbent who is currently providing these services?	See response to Question No. 26.
78.		Is the incumbent eligible to bid on this opportunity with ODU?	VPRA does not have sufficient information to answer this question.
79.		Can you provide an overview of your existing media plan?	The Consultant will be provided with past media plans.
80.		Are there any areas or tactics that VPRA cannot advertise in, that we should be aware of?	The prohibitions set forth in Va. Code §§ 2.2-5514 and 5514.1 are applicable to this procurement.
81.	1.2.1	Have these efforts been previously executed or does the RFP represent a brand new marketing effort?	Similar efforts have been previously executed.

82.	1.2.1	Will previous paid advertising campaign metrics be available to the awardee for analysis?	Yes.
83.	1.2.1	Will previously used vendors for digital assets and images be preferred?	No.
84.	1.2.1	Will the awardee have access to the previously executed media buying plan?	Yes.
85.	1.2.1	Does any of the marketing research regarding Target audience exist and will it be available to further build upon? Or, will all research need to be generated from scratch?	Current research exists and can be used to develop the marketing plan for the year.
86.	1.2.2	Will data and metrics from previous partnerships and sponsorships be made available to the awardee for analysis?	Yes.
87.	1.2.2	How many stand alone displays should be sourced for each of the 17 stations? Are these indoor or outdoor locations, or both?	One stand-alone display per station.
88.		Do you have an incumbent and would they be participating in this RFP?	See response to Question No. 26.
89.		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?	See response to Question No. 28.
90.	Addendum 2., Section 17.3, TAB 5, Scope of work section 1.2.1	Can you please clarify if media buying is still a part of the requested work? *It was present in one version of the RFP but not in another.	Yes. Please refer Section 1.2 of Exhibit 1 to the RFP.
91.		There are two amounts referenced in the Scope of Work, \$350,000 and \$100,000 - are these meant to include agency fees and ad buys, event sponsorships, etc., or are these the amounts designed for the buys / purchasing?	VPRA will address this question in an addendum.
92.	1.2.3	Is there a specific price in mind regarding agency fees for 1.2.3 (social media and website management). Additionally, would you be open to us including recommendations for influencer fees in this section?	No. Budget recommendations by Offerors may be discussed within the narrative submittal now required under Tab 5 as set forth in Addendum No. 3.

93.	Addendum 2	The second addendum did not include all pages of the original RFP, was this because those elements were removed? Do we follow the requirements laid out in the exhibits from the original RFP, or is the second addendum the changed RFP in its entirety?	Addendum 2 only included those materials which were amended. All other documents included within the initial RFP remain a part of the RFP Documents.
94.	Tab 2/Form I Key Personnel	 a. Regarding the 3 references for key staff, can these references be the same as agency qualification references or do they need to be different points of contract for each person? b. Is the Role of the Contract Manager administrative or is this a functional role working on the contract? c. Are all subject-matter team leaders—social media managers, media planners, creative, ect—considered Key Personnel? will all require three personal references? d. "Offerors shall guarantee that Key Personnel identified will be available for the duration of the Project" Since this is a 3 year contract, can this requirement be amended to make accommodations for staffing departures and changes? 	 a. Key Personnel references may be the same as Offeror's agency references provided these individuals have first-hand knowledge of the Kery Personnel's experience. b. The Contract Manager is a functional role working on the contract, but ensures the timely execution of the scope within budget. c. No. Key Personnel positions are as described in Section 17.3 of the RFP. d. Changes in Key Personnel during the life of the Contract are addressed in the General Terms and Conditions.
95.	Exhibit 3: Insurance	In regards to the \$2 million Cyber Insurance requirement, this coverage usually applies to entities that handle and host data. Is this coverage intentionally required on this contract? What does it need to cover specifically so we can make sure our insurance quotes are accurate?	Waiver's to the insurance requirements will be addressed during the negotiation phase of the RFP. Offeror's should not any exceptions on Form J.

96.	Tab 5: Fee Proposal	In the amendment lines for Tab 5: Fee Proposal, lines 2 and 3 are removed, are you only looking for hourly rates in the cost proposal?	VPRA will address this question in an addendum. Hourly rates for all Project staff should be designated in Form K.
97.	17.0 Proposal Submission	RFP states submissions will only be accepted electronically, then later mentions 8 ½ x 11 paper outside of forms. Is this just a page setup directive versus "printing" directive?	Page setup directive.
98.	2.0 Introductions/Exhibit 1 Scope of Work	Do we need to provide a comprehensive budget? If so, is there a separate budget for social media and website management? Or does it fit within one of the three categories below? a. Creative Campaigns: \$350,000 b. Sponsorships and Partnerships: \$100,000 Paid Media Budget: \$350,000	VPRA will address this question in an addendum.