



Request for Proposals

RFP0374

for

MARKETING, PROMOTING AND MARKET RESEARCH OF NEW YORK STATE APPLES FOR THE APPLE MARKETING ORDER

Release of Request for Proposals (RFP):	April 15, 2025
Deadline for Submission of Written Questions:	April 22, 2025
Last Update of answers or issuance of RFP Addenda posted in the Contract Reporter no later than:	April 29, 2025
Deadline for Applications:	May 6, 2025, by 3:00 PM EST

By:

Apple Marketing Order Advisory Board
&
New York State Department of
Agriculture and Markets
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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

This Request for Proposals (“RFP”) is issued by the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets (“the Department”), on behalf of the New York State Apple Marketing Order (“AMO”) Advisory Board (the “Board”), to invite qualified bidders to submit a proposal(s) to enhance the competitive position of New York’s Apple industry, increase consumer demand through advertising and promotional campaigns, and/or develop other creative approaches to increasing the sale and consumption of New York apples. The Board will consider funding efforts designed to promote, advertise and conduct market research on behalf of New York State’s apple industry.

1.2 Needs Statement

The Board and Department seek a qualified entity/entities to produce and provide a consumer facing advertising campaign, conduct promotional work in conjunction with retailers and apple shippers, create innovative marketing strategies, and conduct market research:

- Crafting compelling and effective advertising materials (e.g., digital, print, television, radio) to drive consumer awareness and increase the demand for New York apples. These campaigns should highlight the quality, freshness, and local value of New York-grown apples.
- Collaborating with retailers, distributors, and apple shippers to execute promotional strategies that increase apple sales. This could involve in-store promotions, special events, or joint marketing efforts that enhance the visibility of New York apples in the marketplace.
- Research and analyzing market data to better understand consumer preferences, trends, and purchasing behaviors related to apples, apple varieties, and processed apple products. This research will be provided to growers to help guide their orchard portfolio and to sales agents for the development of more targeted, effective marketing strategies and promotional campaigns.

1.3 RFP Goals

The purpose of this RFP is to retain one or more contractors to provide a marketing and advertising campaign, retail promotional activities, and/or market research for New York State apples and apple growers. The successful contractor will be expected to:

- A. Define a target audience and produce a marketing campaign that increases awareness and demand for New York State grown apples within that audience;
- B. Enhance retail and distribution partnerships to increase the presence and sales of New York apples; and/or
- C. Conduct market research that will help inform and give a competitive advantage to NYS apple growers, shippers, and processors.

1.4 Eligible Bidders

Any entity authorized to conduct business in New York State that can provide comprehensive marketing, advertising, promotional, or market research services is eligible to submit a proposal.

1.5 Term

The contract resulting from this RFP will begin on July 1, 2025, and end on June 30, 2026.

1.6 RFP Timeline

The following timetable is established for this RFP and is subject to change. The Department may extend the due date for proposals by issuance of addenda to this RFP. Prior to submitting a proposal, respondents should check the NY State Contract Reporter website (<https://www.nyscr.ny.gov>) to confirm the issuance of addenda relating to the RFP schedule.

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The Department intends to make any award within sixty (60) days of the Bid Response due date. The contract(s) will require approval from Empire State Development before becoming effective.

2 DESCRIPTION OF WORK TO BE PERFORMED

2.1 Background

New York State is the second largest apple-producing state in the United States, with an average annual production of approximately 30 million bushels. In 2024, the state's orchards yielded over 1.2 billion pounds of apples, contributing over \$500 million to New York's agricultural economy. The state's favorable climate for apples and fertile soil supports a diverse range of apple varieties, making it a significant player in the national apple industry.

Apples have long been a staple in the American diet, but per capita consumption has declined in recent years as competition from tropical and other novelty fruits, as well as processed snacks, have shifted consumer preferences. Increased national production combined with the decreases in consumption have created a highly competitive environment.

To remain competitive, New York apple growers must differentiate their products through targeted marketing efforts, innovative promotional strategies, and consumer education about the unique qualities of New York apples. Expanding market reach, strengthening retailer partnerships, and leveraging data-driven insights will be essential to reversing the decline in apple consumption and preparing growers and shippers to be ahead of shifting trends.

2.2 Scope of Work/Deliverables

Applicants can submit proposals for one or more of the following requested initiatives: Consumer Marketing; Retail Promotional; Innovative/Novel Marketing; Market Research. The total funding available for this request is \$1,750,000. Each initiative has a funding allocation, and the budget of any proposal for that initiative should not exceed the following: Consumer Marketing - \$650,000; Retail Promotional - \$850,000; Innovative/Novel Marketing - \$150,000; Market Research - \$100,000.

2.2.1 Consumer Marketing (*Budget \$650,000*)

A successful marketing program will develop and execute a comprehensive consumer-facing marketing campaign that promotes the quality, freshness, and locally grown benefits of New York apples. The campaign should utilize a mix of digital, print, social media, television, radio, and other consumer engagement tactics to increase brand recognition and demand. Deliverables can include but are not limited to:

- A. Creation of advertising materials for digital, social media, print, TV, and radio.
- B. Execution of seasonal advertising campaigns to align with peak apple sales periods.
- C. Social media content and influencer collaborations to engage targeted consumer demographics.
- D. Video content, storytelling, and brand messaging that highlight New York apples' unique attributes.
- E. Email marketing campaigns targeting consumers, grocery shoppers, and food enthusiasts.

Performance measures for the campaign should be well defined in the proposal and should include but are not limited to:

- A. Increase in brand awareness as measured by digital impressions, website traffic, and social media engagement and growth in consumer engagement (follower increases, shares, likes, comments, etc.)
- B. Development of creative assets that strengthen the “New York Apples” brand and prompt consumers to seek out New York grown apples.
- C. Increase in direct consumer inquiries and online interactions with New York apple promotions.
- D. Survey results demonstrating improved consumer awareness and perception of New York apples.

2.2.2 Retail Promotional (*Budget \$850,000*)

A successful retail promotional campaign will collaborate with grocery retailers, distributors, and apple shippers to execute retail-level promotions that drive sales and enhance visibility of New York apples in stores. This includes in-store marketing, shopper incentives, and cross-promotional partnerships. Deliverables can include but are not limited to:

- A. Development of point-of-sale (POS) materials, including signage, in-store displays, and branded packaging.
- B. Implementation of in-store sampling programs and apple tasting events.
- C. Coordination of retailer-specific promotions such as discounts, loyalty program tie-ins, and co-branded campaigns.
- D. Digital advertising placements targeted at grocery shoppers.
- E. Training materials for retail staff to educate them on New York apple varieties and selling points.

Performance measures for the campaign should be well defined in the proposal and should include but are not limited to:

- A. Measurable increase in apple sales at participating retail locations.
- B. Number and location of retailers/distributors engaged in promotional efforts.
- C. Customer engagement metrics from in-store activations and promotions.
- D. Retailer and shipper feedback and post-promotion performance reports.

2.2.3 Innovative/Novel Marketing (*Budget \$150,000*)

A successful proposal will develop and implement creative, out-of-the-box marketing strategies to attract new consumers and differentiate New York apples from competitors. These initiatives should leverage emerging trends, technology, and unique engagement tactics. Deliverables and

performance measures will be variable depending on the nature of the campaign but must be detailed and defined clearly in the proposal. Examples of sought after deliverables would include pilot programs featuring innovative marketing tactics or experimental advertising campaigns that if successful could be scaled up for a greater impact in subsequent years.

2.2.4 Market Research (*Budget \$100,000*)

A successful proposal will conduct data-driven research to analyze consumer behavior, market trends, and competitive positioning for New York apples. This research will provide actionable insights for growers, marketers, and retailers. The research should have three well defined components:

- A. For distributors and apple shippers: Comprehensive consumer preference analysis, including apple variety preferences, purchasing habits, and factors influencing buying decisions. Competitive analysis comparing New York apples with leading competitors, including apples from other regions and other fruit categories.
- B. For fresh- market apple growers: Inform future grower orchard portfolios by analyzing consumer preferences for apple varieties (e.g., Gala, Honeycrisp, Empire) based on demographic factors, regional differences, and buying trends. Identify which apple varieties are most popular and have room for growth without diminishing grower returns; provide recommendations on which varieties New York growers should prioritize, diversify, or discontinue.
- C. For processing apples: Research demand for processed apple products, such as sweet and hard cider, apple sauces, and dried apples, both domestically and internationally. Identify emerging trends in apple-based products that processors can capitalize on, as well as novel non-apple competitive or comparable products that could also be developed by apple processors using New York State apples. Research consumer preferences for processed apple products, focusing on factors such as packaging, convenience, and nutritional content.

Performance measures for the campaign should be well defined in the proposal and should include but are not limited to:

- A. A final report that includes actionable insights for the each of the groups identified above that includes the datasets used for research.
- B. Scheduling of at least one presentation/workshop open to all shippers, growers, and processors of New York State apples to review the final report and discuss the results and recommendations.

2.2.5 Performance Measures

Once selected, the vendor(s) shall work with the Department and Board to:

Further develop their strategic plan(s) that include measurable key performance indicators for monitoring the extent to which the selected proposals have had a positive impact on desired outcomes.

- A. Set specific targets, goals, and benchmarks for evaluating performance outcomes and use these measures to monitor program performance.
- B. Periodically evaluate the program outcomes associated with marketing and advertising

efforts, and use this information to adjust program goals, strategies, and resource allocations as needed.

2.2.6 Post-Campaign/Promotional Report

Following the conclusion of the activities, the contractor(s) shall provide a slide deck recap of the initiative, including total expenses and performance against established scope of work and goals to highlight outcomes and assist the Department in the evaluation of its success.

2.2.7 Reports to the Department

In addition to reports specified above, the selected contractor(s) shall be responsible for providing the following reports to the Department and understands and hereby agrees that any violation of the above terms and conditions could be considered cause for cancellation of the contract.

- A. Proof of Payment to contractors. The selected contractor must provide proof of payment by the contractor to its subcontractors. Acceptable proofs of payment include a copy of a cancelled check to the subcontractor for the invoice amount or a copy of a bank statement highlighting the payment(s) to the subcontractor(s)/supplier(s).
- B. Budget reports. The selected contractor(s) shall submit a monthly report to the Department of a cumulative budget to date by project assigned.

3 PROPOSAL SUBMISSION, CONTENTS AND FORMAT

3.1 Proposal Submission Requirements

Proposals must be received by the Department's Marketing Order Administrator by **3:00 PM EST** on **May 6, 2025**, by mail or email.

Mail your proposal, in one sealed envelope or package addressed to:

NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets
Marketing Order Administrator
10B Airline Drive
Albany, NY 12235

Or e-mail your proposal to:

MarketingOrders@agriculture.ny.gov

Proposers are solely responsible for ensuring the timely delivery of their proposal.

3.2 Proposal Content

The respondent is solely responsible for the content and completeness of the proposal. The Department may request clarification from any respondent regarding items in the proposal.

Project proposals may not promote a specific brand or trade name or seek to disparage the quality, value or sale of any other agricultural commodity or business. Only

reasonable and actual costs directly associated with the implementation of approved projects that are incurred during the contract period up to the amount awarded will be reimbursed.

3.3 Format

Emailed applications formatted as a PDF are highly encouraged.

A submitted proposal should address only **one** of the Scopes of Work that are outlined in 2.2.1-2.2.4. Vendors may submit multiple proposals if they wish to address more than one of the requested Scopes of Work. Each proposal submitted should conform to the following guidelines:

Applicants should submit to the Department a **2-4- page** proposal (multiple proposals may be submitted as outlined above) with the following information:

1. Name of project and Scope of Work being addressed
2. Project Description - Clearly and concisely describe the proposed project, strategies, and activities that will be undertaken. Describe the deliverables and the timeline for their completion.
3. Expected Outcomes - Describe in detail the expected outcome(s) of the proposal and the anticipated benefit to New York State's apple industry. Please include a specific goal(s) and what performance measures will be used to determine if the goal(s) has been achieved. List "key performance indicators" that can be used to measure the success of the project (See section 2.2).
4. Provide the applicant's qualifications and experience with implementing marketing strategies and/or performing proposed research. A summary (400 words or less) highlighting a past project, and the successful outcomes achieved may be included. A limited portfolio of collateral highlighting previous creative work may also be included as an attachment and will not count towards the 4-page proposal limit.
5. Proposed budget to implement the project's activities using the categories listed below. Include name/title and salary rate for personnel costs. Identify contractors and contractual rates for any contracted personnel or work.
 - A. Salaries
 - B. Fringe Benefits
 - C. Contractual
 - D. Travel
 - E. Equipment
 - F. Other

4 METHOD OF AWARD

4.1 Evaluation and Contracting

Proposals will be evaluated by the Apple Marketing Order Advisory Board, who will inform the

Department of Agriculture and Markets of the selected proposal(s) to fund. The Department will send out notice(s) of the award and then work with the selected vendor(s) to draft the applicable scopes of work and budgets which will be transmitted to Empire State Development for contract execution.