

**Agency of Commerce and Community Development
Department of Tourism & Marketing**

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Vermont Life magazine
Request for Proposal
Question and Answer Response

1. Please provide 5 years of detailed financials, including key factors such as ad pages, inserts, edit pages, book sizes, print order, number of sub copies and number of newsstand copies.
[See P&L attachment](#)
2. What is the total amount of debt currently affiliated with Vermont Life? Does the state have specific goals relating to retirement of that debt? [See P&L attachment](#)
3. Please provide an overview of your staffing structure including number of full-time employees, their roles and key freelance arrangements.

[Seven \(7\) full-time employees, freelance writers and photographers on contract. See attachment “org chart”](#)

- a. [Associate Publisher](#)
 - b. [Editor](#)
 - c. [Managing Editor](#)
 - d. [Managing Editor Vermont Life Media](#)
 - e. [Production Manager](#)
 - f. [Publishing Assistant](#)
 - g. [Director of Sales](#)
4. Does advertising include barter transactions? **No**. If so, how much is barter and are there any outstanding obligations? [N/A](#)
 5. What are outstanding advertiser commitments (bonus pages, make goods, rate adjustments etc.)? [There are no outstanding advertiser commitments however there are advertisers with contracts for multiple issues.](#)
 6. Do you use rep firms? If so, if this was a license deal and not an acquisition, would we have to honor those agreements? [Vermont Life has in the past. Currently No.](#)
 7. Are there any advertising obligations with the state of Vermont? [State of Vermont departments and agencies currently receive a 15% discount on advertising.](#)

8. What is your fulfillment arrangement? If this was a license deal, is there an agreement in place that has limitations or penalties if broken that would prevent us from moving fulfillment to our existing contractor to take advantage of our fee structure?

VL has two fulfillment contracts – one for products and another for subscriptions. The subscription contract is with CDS Global Inc. of Iowa, including a 120-day termination notice and an expiration date of December 31, 2017. The product fulfillment contract is with AIDC of Williston, VT, including a six-month termination notice and an expiration date of May 31, 2018.

9. What is the current source mix of your circulation? N/A
10. What are the 3-year renewal rates by source? N/A
11. Please provide earned income by source for the past year of issues. See P&L attachment
12. Please provide 3 -year circ profit/loss financials by account + next year if available. See P&L attachment
13. What were the last 4 direct mail campaigns and their results?

Vermont Life launches 1 or 2 campaigns per year.

14. What are your current direct mail campaigns for circulation? N/A
15. Are there any obligations on print order or distribution with the state of Vermont?

Under current Vermont law, Vermont Life must look to the Department of Buildings and General Services for its printing contracts under Chapter 53 of Title 29 of the Vermont Statutes Annotated. Those statutory requirements would not apply to a private entity.

16. What is the current print run per issue? PW – see Statement of Ownership Attachment
17. What requirements are in place regarding the magazine's trim size and paper stock for cover and body pages? None
18. Are there any requirements regarding where paper for the magazine is purchased? No
19. Where is the magazine currently printed? Lane Press, Burlington Vermont
20. Please summarize the products you sell and sales for the last 5 years.

Currently, Vermont Life produces, annually, seven (7) calendars, two (2) books, reprint as needed, eight (8) different sets of note cards, five (5) sets of Sabra Fields note cards, and one (1) set of Shawn Braley note cards. Sales for the last 5 years – see P&L.

21. How are products distributed? *Through a fulfillment company located in Vermont and from home office.*
22. Do you carry Inventory on products? How much? *Yes. Calendars based on previous year's sales. Note cards are reprinted as needed.*
23. Are calendars, notecards, etc. designed on staff or by a contractor? *Both by the artists that receive royalties and by a contracted vendor.*
24. What product partnerships are in place with people/brands like Sabra Fields? What is the typical structure of royalties, licensing fees, etc. on those deals? *Standard Royalties fee.*
25. Is the magazine offered at newsstand? What is the price? *Yes. Cover price \$5.95*
26. What is your newsstand distributor arrangement? Do you have pockets at retailers? *Vermont Life holds a newsstand contract. Yes we do have pockets at retailers.*
27. Please provide 5-year historical draw and sale. *See Statement of Ownership attachment*
28. Under a licensing agreement, what level of editorial control does the State of Vermont anticipate having over the magazine's content? Will lineups and individual stories need to be reviewed by a state representative?
- Depends on the details of the proposal. As the legislature indicated in Act 85 (2017), even sale of Vermont Life is as an enterprise is a possibility.*
29. Is there a bank of unused editorial content available? *Vermont Life currently operates as a quarterly magazine. We are always working on the next year in season.*
30. Do you use barter in creating content? If so, are there any outstanding obligations? *No.*
31. Is there a contract in place that has limitations or penalties that would prevent us from moving printing to our vendors to take advantage of our pricing structure?
- Printing contract is with Lane Press of South Burlington, VT, expiration date of September 30, 2018, with right to cancel all or part of the contract if in the State's opinion the services or materials provided by the contractor are not satisfactory or are not consistent with the terms of the contract.*
32. What costs/contracts are associated with your website?
- The website is managed internally by Vermont Life staff. Expenses are limited to hosting and payment processing through the websites shopping cart.*
33. What are the expectations and obligations related to operating the Vermont Life website?

Depends on the details of the proposal. As the legislature indicated in Act 85 (2017), even sale of *Vermont Life* as an enterprise is a possibility.

34. What are the expectations and obligations related to operating the Vermont Life social media presence?

This will depend on the bid response and whether the proposal is to acquire or license the Vermont Life magazine.

35. What is the arrangement regarding the retail component for product sales on the website? Vermont Life magazine utilizes Shopify for its digital shopping cart.

36. What newsletters do you currently support? Please provide details on their business model, distribution lists, etc.

Consumer E-news: A monthly compendium that has proven popular with readers, it brings together condensed versions of some of our magazine features and departments, as well as offering a timely platform for advertisers and a promotional venue for Vermont Life products.

E-News for Advertisers: A quarterly communication, and other times as needed, to remind advertisers of upcoming issues and deadlines.

37. Will there be additional or different contract provisions other than Attachment C that we will be expected to sign, or is Attachment C the entire contract?

Attachment C represents Standard State Provisions for Contracts, but is only part of the overall written agreement between the State and a contractor. Additional provisions may be appropriately requested by the State or contractor and would be reduced to writing and made part of an Attachment D list of other provisions. However, the specifications of the agreement between the parties would be set forth in an Attachment A of the overall contract.

38. Will the state consider our markups to the contract in good faith or are markups not allowed at all?

The legislature in Act 85 (2017) indicated an intent for the State to solicit and consider the widest range of proposals. Terms of a contract cannot be predicted and would not be possible to craft until the specific details of a winning proposal are known.

39. Can you provide a current balance sheet (statement of financial position). Could you provide profit and loss statements for the last two fiscal years and the budget and year to date for this year. Please provide revenue details by lines of business; (Vermont Life ad revenue – print, newsletter and on-line, Calendar/gift products and other Joint Products). See P&L attachment

40. Is Vermont Life a separate corporation or a division of State government?

Vermont Life is established in Vermont law in section 2473a of Title 3 of the Vermont Statutes Annotated:

<http://legislature.vermont.gov/statutes/section/03/047/02473a>

The Department of Tourism and Marketing within the Agency of Commerce and Community Development is responsible for publication of the magazine, as well as a range of other products and services. As such, Vermont Life is an instrumentality of the state, or a division of state government.

41. What is the history of the debt and details---to whom is it owed? Outstanding funds are owed to the State of Vermont.
42. Please explain the State subsidy of the magazine operations. Are these funds over and above the \$1,169,547 outlined in the RFP?

Vermont Life magazine does not receive subsidy from the State of Vermont. Vermont Life does receive spending authority for its operations. Revenues generated by the publication are used to replace the \$1,169,547.00 spending authority.

43. Are there any contracts with staff or consultants? Could you provide a current list of the staff and salaries and job descriptions? Where do the employees work - from a central office, or virtual office?

Vermont Life magazine has a staff of 7 FTE's. Please refer to the organizational chart for their job titles and salary ranges. Employees work from the Vermont Agency of Commerce offices in Montpelier, VT.

44. May I see a listing of short-term and long-term contracts/obligations - including printing, writers, distribution, software, design, etc. A list of Vermont Life contracts is attached with these answers.
45. What is the State's commitment to advertising? Is the State willing to sign a multi-year advertising agreement?

The legislature in Act 85 (2017) indicated an intent for the State to solicit and consider the widest range of proposals. Terms of a contract cannot be predicted and would not be possible to craft until the specific details of a winning proposal are known

46. Could you provide a list of advertisers and their annual expenditures and the rate card? What is the average A/R days outstanding? What percentage of advertising sales is bad debt? N/A
47. Would you consider a discussion of other tourism publications - example vacation planning guide - to be part of the media plan?

The legislature in Act 85 (2017) indicated an intent for the State to solicit and consider the widest range of proposals. Terms of a contract cannot be predicted and would not be possible to craft until the specific details of a winning proposal are known.

48. Who runs/hosts the website? Is there a contract for services that extends in the years ahead?

Vermont Life magazine manages the website internally. The site is hosted by Bluehost.

49. Who are the third party vendors for licensed products development, production, sales and distribution? N/A

50. Where is printing performed? Is there a long-term contract and what are the costs? Lane Press. See contract.

51. Who manages the reporting of sales through third parties and how is revenue collected? Is there information on customers through third party purchases?

The Associate Publisher is responsible for reporting through third parties. There is information about customer third party purchases.

52. Who is contracted for statewide distribution of the magazine and the length of that agreement?

Vermont Life holds a number of contracts each with varying terms of service.

53. How do subscribers sign up - by mail, by Internet? Where do you advertise for subscribers? Are there benefits to subscribing on line? Both. Online and Print. Not at this time.

54. Are the magazine's assets being sold or the entity?

The legislature in Act 85 (2017) called for consideration of the widest possible range of proposals and established no prerequisite details or preferences.

55. Who in state government has final say on purchase?

Act 85 (2017) lays out the process for a decision, whereby the Secretary of Administration, in consultation with the Secretary of Commerce and Community Development, will analyze the bids received and make a determination of acceptance. The Secretary of Administration, with the approval of the Emergency Board, is authorized to execute a contract for Vermont Life to maximize the State benefit.

56. Is there a draft copy of a purchase and sale agreement from state available?

No Draft Purchase and Sale Agreement has been prepared or exists, as Vermont Life is a unique State asset and the possibilities under consideration are out of the ordinary.

57. Is there any pending litigation either from vendors, employees, writers? No

58. Will the state accept a restriction that it will not publish a similar magazine for 25 years or any of its subdivisions?

Depends on the nature and specifics of the proposal. As the legislative directive in Act 85 (2017) suggests, the widest possible range of proposals are being solicited and considered.

59. Are there any state restrictions on additional media programming - YouTube, snap-chat, additional website content etc.? No

60. Please confirm that the new organization would have the opportunity bid on other state produced publications.

Yes, to the extent a state agency is soliciting proposals. Otherwise, the new organization would be free to solicit State business like any other private business.

61. Do you have content guidelines/restrictions or content requirements?

Depends on the nature and specifics of the proposal. As the legislative directive in Act 85 (2017) suggests, the widest possible range of proposals are being solicited and considered.

62. Does the magazine own any assets - equipment, space, furniture, etc.?

Yes, see Asset List attachment

63. Is the name Vermont Life part of the deal and to be owned by the buyer?

Depends on the nature and specifics of the proposal. As the legislative directive in Act 85 (2017) suggests, the widest possible range of proposals are being solicited and considered.

64. Would the buyer have full rights to copyrights and right to republish content from past issues including articles, illustrations and photos?

Depends on the nature and specifics of the proposal. As the legislative directive in Act 85 (2017) suggests, the widest possible range of proposals are being solicited and considered.

65. What is the current role of the Advisory Board? How does *Vermont Life* see the board's role changing specifically when *Vermont Life* engages an outside publisher/contractor?

The Advisory Board was created by Executive Order to advise the ACCD Secretary. Its future role depends on the nature and specifics of the proposal. As the legislative directive in Act 85 (2017) suggests, the widest possible range of proposals are being solicited and considered.

66. Would *Vermont Life* please provide a sample and details (Ex. revenues, expenses, quantities) of all products beyond the magazine (i.e. Calendars, Notecards and/or any other products)? see P&L attachment

67. What is the total dollar amount of debt referred to in the RFP?
Depends on the nature and specifics of the proposal. As the legislative directive in Act 85 (2017) suggests, the widest possible range of proposals are being solicited and considered.
68. Please provide a list of present employees, their responsibilities and salaries. See attached org chart attachment
- a. Associate Publisher
 - b. Editor
 - c. Managing Editor
 - d. Managing Editor Vermont Life Media
 - e. Production Manager
 - f. Publishing Assistant
 - g. Director of Sales
69. Would *Vermont Life* provide YE financials for 2014, 2015 , 2016 and current 2017 actuals and YE projections. See P&L attachment
70. Are all products developed (i.e. written, designed, sold) in-house?
Most products are designed in house.
71. Does *Vermont Life* own the following parts of the website:
72. Content (copywriting and photo image rights) Varies depending on agreements with authors and photographers.
73. What are the limitations of this content (if any)?
Limitations would be according to the terms and conditions of agreements executed with originators of the content.
74. Wordpress theme files and source code
Vermont Life owns the Wordpress theme, files and source code. The website was produced in house.
75. If the website is not owned, does *Vermont Life* currently have a contract for the site and/or hosting? If so, what are the terms of the contract? The website is owned by Vermont Life magazine. It is hosted by a third party called Bluehost.
76. Who is the current hosting provider? What are the annual hosting costs? Bluehost

77. Are there any existing contracts with outside vendors or service providers that can not be terminated at the commencement of this agreement?

All contracts can be terminated and each agreement has its own terms and conditions that govern how the parties may do that.

78. Does *Vermont Life* currently have any partnerships with vendors that would not continue as a result of a new owner/operator/partner/licensee?

No, not that we are aware of.

79. Does *Vermont Life* currently have an email or mailing list? If so, how many individuals are in each list? Is the list transferable?

Yes, but it Depends on the nature and specifics of the proposal. As the legislative directive in Act 85 (2017) suggests, the widest possible range of proposals are being solicited and considered.

80. Is *Vermont Life*'s email list a single or double opt-in list? **Single**

81. How is distribution currently managed (i.e. third party vendor, in-house, mail, drop shipped, etc.)? **Distribution is managed through a third party.**

82. Please provide the current "single copy magazine sales" numbers for the last 24 months by issue? **See Statement of Ownership**

83. Does *Vermont Life* currently receive any grants or outside funding? If yes, is the funding eligible if a new owner/operator/partner/licensee is selected? **No.**

84. What is the process for adjusting or modifying deadlines? **RFP deadlines cannot be modified.**

85. How many direct mail campaigns are currently being created each year? **Between 1 & 2**

86. How many homes are mailers sent to? **Product Gift Guide – approximately 134,000**

87. Will *Vermont Life* provide a contact list of all present clients? **Yes**

88. Will *Vermont Life* provide a contact list of all current advertising prospects? **Yes**

89. Will Vermont Life provide a detail of all "Joint projects with other State Agencies" as identified in section B.2. of the RFP? **Yes**

90. What roles will current staff play, when the vendor takes over? That is, what is the new vendor's role if the current staff is to remain in place? How is a new vendor going to make an impact if the entire business will stay the same?

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91. Please clarify the number of newsstands and the average sell-through rate.

Average sell-through rate 50.02%

92. Please clarify the current market share division between Vermont magazine and Vermont Life magazine (and any other major players in this competitive landscape).

We do not know at this time.

93. If the bidder intends to purchase Vermont Life magazine (option 1), would the bidder take on the organization's debt?

ANSWER: Depends on the nature and specifics of the proposal. As the legislative directive in Act 85 (2017) suggests, the widest possible range of proposals are being solicited and considered.

94. With any of the proposed arrangements (purchase, licensing agreement, partnership, or "other,") what is the bidder's responsibility and freedom with regard to the current staff, and current overhead expense decisions?

ANSWER: Depends on the nature and specifics of the proposal. As the legislative directive in Act 85 (2017) suggests, the widest possible range of proposals are being solicited and considered.

95. Please clarify the type of debt incurred and to what extent the bidder would be involved in paying it back and to what extent the bidder would take over accounting and business management, versus project management and fulfillment tasks.

ANSWER: Depends on the nature and specifics of the proposal. As the legislative directive in Act 85 (2017) suggests, the widest possible range of proposals are being solicited and considered.

96. Is Vermont Life magazine open to building the organization beyond the definition of "magazine?" There are several options available to create passive income streams that could help the organization. Yes

97. Can you send me specifics on the costs and revenues for "Vermont Department of Fish & Wildlife 2017 Fishing Guide & Regulations" and the 2012 "wildlife calendar"?

This is not a part of the contract at this stage. An agreement with the Vermont Department of Fish & Wildlife will need to be re-negotiated.

98. If specifics are available for other years that Vermont Life and Vermont Department of Fish & Wildlife cooperated on these products, that would also be helpful. 2017 is year two of this partnership. There is no prior year data.

99. Does *Vermont Life* have any current or expected future restrictions due to being a State owned/operated/associated business?

ANSWER: Depends on the nature and specifics of the proposal. As the legislative directive in Act 85 (2017) suggests, the widest possible range of proposals are being solicited and considered.

100. If yes, what are the restrictions?

ANSWER: Depends on the nature and specifics of the proposal. As the legislative directive in Act 85 (2017) suggests, the widest possible range of proposals are being solicited and considered.

101. Communication

ANSWER: Depends on the nature and specifics of the proposal. As the legislative directive in Act 85 (2017) suggests, the widest possible range of proposals are being solicited and considered.

102. Vendors

ANSWER: Depends on the nature and specifics of the proposal. As the legislative directive in Act 85 (2017) suggests, the widest possible range of proposals are being solicited and considered.

103. Revenue/Sales

ANSWER: Depends on the nature and specifics of the proposal. As the legislative directive in Act 85 (2017) suggests, the widest possible range of proposals are being solicited and considered.

104. Circulation

ANSWER: Depends on the nature and specifics of the proposal. As the legislative directive in Act 85 (2017) suggests, the widest possible range of proposals are being solicited and considered.

105. Non-compete

ANSWER: Depends on the nature and specifics of the proposal. As the legislative directive in Act 85 (2017) suggests, the widest possible range of proposals are being solicited and considered.

106. What is the total print run of the magazine? See Statement of Ownership Attachment

107. Total print order, subscriber copies, newsstand copies, verified/controlled copies, free copies. See Statement of Ownership attachment

108. Please detail where unpaid copies are going and in what quantities
[See Statement of Ownership attachment](#)
109. Total paid circulation, paid subscriber copies, paid newsstand copies
[See Statement of Ownership attachment](#)
110. Newsstand copies distributed and sell-through percentage, through what distributor(s)?
[See Statement of Ownership attachment](#)
111. Traffic: average monthly total visits, average monthly unique visits, average monthly page views
- a. Avg. Monthly Visits: 2,735
 - b. Avg. Monthly Unique Visits: 350
 - c. Avg. Monthly Page Views: 3,863
112. Enewsletter and Social
- a. Newsletter: 35,000
 - b. Facebook: 22,000
 - c. Twitter: 24,700
113. Enewsletter: Frequency, total audience, engagement

[Minimum of 2 emails per month to a list of 35,000 consumers.](#)
114. Social: Channels actively maintained, audiences, engagement

[Twitter, Facebook, YouTube](#)
115. Total print advertising revenue per issue for the last three years [See P&L](#)
116. also total ad pages per issue [Averages for 2016; 23 ad pages](#)
117. Avg discount off of rate card [No discount off rate card.](#)
118. Do you current accept advertising in trade? How much? [Yes. Varies](#)
119. Editorial and Production [See P&L attachment](#)
120. Costs for edit staff, manuscripts, photography, any contractors [See P&L attachment](#)
121. Costs for printing and mailing of print magazine [See P&L attachment](#)
122. Please provide current org chart [See attached attachment](#)
123. Current staff with brief summary of their experience and qualifications

See attached org chart

- a. Associate Publisher
- b. Editor
- c. Managing Editor
- d. Managing Editor Vermont Life Media
- e. Production Manager
- f. Publishing Assistant

124. Please list any obligations that must be assumed by a buyer

ANSWER: Depends on the nature and specifics of the proposal. As the legislative directive in Act 85 (2017) suggests, the widest possible range of proposals are being solicited and considered.

125. Will contracts for “joint projects with state agencies” be transferred to a buyer?

ANSWER: Depends on the nature and specifics of the proposal. As the legislative directive in Act 85 (2017) suggests, the widest possible range of proposals are being solicited and considered.

126. Please list current contracts with vendors and whether they can be or must be transferred to a buyer. [See contracts attachment](#)

127. Does *Vermont Life* have any other products besides the magazine and the products currently for sale on its website? **No**

128. What is the status of the Autumn 2017 issue? Will the Winter issue be published on schedule? **Autumn has published, Winter is at the printer.**

129. Please provide two years of history for all calendars and products sold by *Vermont Life*
[See P&L attachment](#)

130. revenue and units by product **N/A**

131. cost of goods sold by product [See P&L attachment](#)

132. fulfillment costs. How are orders fulfilled? [See P&L. Home Office, Third party](#)

133. Total revenues and costs [See P&L attachment](#)

134. Please provide an income statement accounting for all revenues and expenses for FY15-FY17 and a projection/budget for FY18. [See P&L attachment](#)

135. If you maintain a balance sheet for *Vermont Life*, please provide that. [See P&L attachment](#)
136. In an article in *Seven Days* about *Vermont Life* in 2016, Lucy Leriche, deputy secretary of commerce and community development, was quoted as saying about the possibility of selling the magazine, "The thing that stopped us dead in our tracks is the moment we move the magazine out of state government, the accumulated deficit becomes due." Is this true? Why would the state have to pay this amount and to whom? And what is the amount of the accumulated deficit?

The accumulated debt would be due to the State Treasurer if a sale of the enterprise occurs.

137. Is it your preference to...

sell *Vermont Life*? Or...

license *Vermont Life*? Or...

bring in a partner to help you operate *Vermont Life* on a break-even basis? Or...

The legislature in Act 85 (2017) indicated an intent for the State to solicit and consider the widest range of proposals. Terms of a contract cannot be predicted and would not be possible to craft until the specific details of a winning proposal are known.

138. Appendix I in the RFP suggests you are looking for a partner to work on contract to manage *Vermont Life*'s circulation. Is this your preference?

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139. If it is your preference to sell, is it your top priority to...continue to have *Vermont Life* operate and promote the state -- without subsidizing it. Or...

The legislature in Act 85 (2017) indicated an intent for the State to solicit and consider the widest range of proposals. Terms of a contract cannot be predicted and would not be possible to craft until the specific details of a winning proposal are known.

140. Maximize your financial return from selling *Vermont Life* (regardless of what happens to *Vermont Life* in the future.)

The legislature in Act 85 (2017) indicated an intent for the State to solicit and consider the widest range of proposals. Terms of a contract cannot be predicted and would not be possible to craft until the specific details of a winning proposal are known.

141. How many issues are distributed on:
 - a. Newstands [Average 7,750](#)
 - b. Subscriptions [See Statement of Ownership Attachment](#)
 - c. Complimentary [See Statement of Ownership Attachment](#)
142. Print circulation-subscriptions [See Statement of Ownership](#)
143. Number of: [See Statement of Ownership attachment](#)
144. Paid subscribers [See Statement of Ownership attachment](#)
145. Free/comp issues [See Statement of Ownership attachment](#)
146. Subscribers in VT [See Media Kit](#)
147. Subscribers in New England [See Media Kit](#)
148. General overview of marketing initiatives [N/A](#)
149. Current hosting, email, development and any other digital services expenses [SOV owned. See P&L attachment](#)
150. Financial Income and expense details for 2012-2017: [See P&L attachment](#)
151. Print ad gross revenue per issue [See P&L attachment](#)
152. Print ad gross revenue per issue from other state agencies [See P&L attachment](#)
153. Print subscription gross revenue per issue [See P&L attachment](#)
154. Newsstand gross revenue per issue/year [See P&L attachment](#)
155. Digital gross revenue per year [See P&L attachment](#)
156. Total gross income from catalog orders by year by promotion [See P&L attachment](#)
157. Joint inter agency project gross revenue per year [See P&L attachment](#)
158. List rental gross revenue per year [See P&L attachment](#)
159. Printing cost per issue [See P&L attachment](#)
160. Totals per issue spent on Art Freelance [See P&L attachment](#)

161. Totals per issue spent on Ed Freelance [See P&L attachment](#)
162. Breakdown of expenses in the Cost of sales and services account per year [See P&L attachment](#)
163. Domestic subscriber postage cost per issue [See P&L attachment](#)
164. International subscriber postage cost per issue [See P&L attachment](#)
165. Salary expense by position by year [See P&L attachment](#)
166. Contractual services expense detail-broken down by contractor by service [See P&L attachment](#)
167. Promotions and advertising expense detail by payer by year [See P&L attachment](#)
168. Other operating expenses detail by payer by year [See P&L attachment](#)
169. Combining Statement of Revenues, expenses and changes in net position for 2017, 2016, 2015, 2014, 2013, 2012 [See P&L attachment](#)
170. Detailed P&Ls by year for 2017, 2016, 2015, 2014, 2013, 2012 [See P&L attachment](#)
171. Statement of Net position by year for 2017-2012 [See P&L attachment](#)
172. Reader survey responses for last three years [See Reader Survey attachment](#)
173. USPS statement of ownership statements for last three years [See Statement of Ownership attachment](#)
174. Media kits for the last 10 years [See Media Kit](#)
175. Booked advertising revenue for remaining 2017 issues and 2018 issues [N/A](#)
176. 1 - Is there a weighted preference to one particular approach over the others? (Purchase, Partnership, Licensing Agreement) [No, we are open to all proposals that address the criteria listed in the RFP.](#)
177. Can we examine the financials for the past three years, including revenue detail? [See P&L attachment](#)

What are the actual revenues for each of the 3 quarters of 2017? What is projected for Qtr 4 2017 [See P&L attachment](#)

What are the revenues/revenue percentages for the revenue subcategories? [See P&L attachment](#)

What are the comparative actuals for 2016? [See P&L attachment](#)

What was the average subscription price for 2016? [N/A](#)

178. What is the average subscription price projected for 2017? [N/A](#)

What is the breakdown between subscriptions and single copy units and revenues?

What is the dollar value of advertising contracts that will extend beyond 2017? [N/A](#)

What is the total revenue derived from online sales? [N/A](#)

What is the total from the relevant sub categories? [N/A](#)

What were the 2016 press runs per quarter? [See Statement of Ownership attachment](#)

What was the cost of printing for each quarter? [See P&L attachment](#)

How many waste/unpaid copies were there per quarter? [See Statement of Ownership attachment](#)

What are the projected salaries and benefits for 2017 [See P&L attachment](#)

What is the annual cost of freelance writers and photographers? [See P&L attachment](#)

What percentage of magazine content is produced by freelancers? [N/A](#)

What are the lease terms and cost? [See P&L attachment](#)

What, if any, are the long term commitments. [See contracts attachment](#)

179. What is your current print run per issue? [See Statement of Ownership attachment](#)

180. Please provide a breakdown of how many subscribers and how many single copy newsstand are sold for each issue? Could we receive the past years' history of these sales? [See Statement of Ownership attachment](#)

181. For subscribers, are these mostly single year or multi-year subscriptions? [N/A](#)

182. What is the retention rate for subscribers? How many brand-new subscriptions are purchased each year? [N/A](#)

183. What are your top 10 newsstand sales outlets? [N/A](#)

184. How often do you conduct readership surveys to gather reader demographic data? IS this done in-house or by a third party? [Every two years](#)

185. Is the State Vacation Guide (published twice a year) related to this RFP for *Vermont Life*, and would it be included in the scope of this proposal? [No, this is not a part of this RFP.](#)

186. What are the current roles of the permanent employees and their job titles? [See Org Chart attachment](#)

- a. [Associate Publisher](#)
- b. [Editor](#)
- c. [Managing Editor](#)
- d. [Managing Editor Vermont Life Media](#)
- e. [Production Manager](#)
- f. [Publishing Assistant](#)
- g. [Director of Sales](#)

187. Referencing page 6 of the RFP, could we have insight into *Vermont Life's* current debt, as well as operating profit/loss annually? [See P&L attachment](#)

188. What is the retention rate of advertisers? What percent of the advertising revenue is on 4x frequency contracts? [N/A](#)

189. Of the different scenarios listed in the RFP, are you most interested in selling the magazine or finding a publishing partner to manage all aspects of the publishing process while you retain ownership?

[ANSWER:](#) The legislature in Act 85 (2017) indicated an intent for the State to solicit and consider the widest range of proposals. Terms of a contract cannot be predicted and would not be possible to craft until the specific details of a winning proposal are known.

190. Can you speak in more detail regarding the Product Sales portion of revenues? Is this managed by a current staff employee?

[Product wholesale is managed by the Director of Sales.](#)

191. How are the advertising sales employees paid, on salary? Base + commission? Commission only?

[The Director of Sales is a salaried position.](#)

192. P&L Statements for last three years. Also, current balance sheet. [See P&L attachment](#)

193. Last 5 years #s of subscriptions and newsstand sales.

[See Statement of Ownership attachment](#)

194. Name of distributor, national and/or regional. (If, that is, there is national distribution.)

[Howard White](#)

195. # of subscribers in-state & out-of-state. [See Media Kit](#)

196. Any available information on out-of-state advertisers. (We believe there is an opportunity here.) [At this time Vermont Life does not accept any out-of-state advertisers.](#)

197. Do the characteristics required of a successful vendor also apply to a successful "buyer?" That is: If an entity is *purchasing Vermont Life*, as opposed to leasing it, must it also meet the description of a successful vendor? (page 8, H.) [Yes](#)

198. Is it a requirement that an entity choosing to buy *Vermont Life* have experience running a subscription-based publication? (Page 8, H. 1&2)

[Such experience would most likely enhance an entity's proposal.](#)

199. Do the "performance measures" outlined on the bid, by which proposals will be evaluated, also apply to a potential buyer? (page 15, Appendix 1)

[ANSWER: Depends on the nature and specifics of the proposal. As the legislative directive in Act 85 \(2017\) suggests, the widest possible range of proposals are being solicited and considered.](#)

200. Are there sections of the RFP that don't apply to a potential buyer? Which ones?

201. What is the difference between purchasing Vermont Life as an "operating enterprise" and as "identifiable magazine?" (page 5, D.1.)

[Vermont Life has several lines of business that generate revenue, of which the magazine is one, as well as the greatest revenue generator.](#)

202. Will an entity purchasing *Vermont Life* be required to settle the publication's debt obligations? (page 5, D.1.)

[More likely than not based on the legislative intent expressed in Act 85 \(2017\)..](#)

203. What financial and business information related to *Vermont Life* will be made available for due diligence purposes and when? (page 5, B.2.)

[A greater amount of financial detail will be available as necessary during the states negotiation with the successful bidder.](#)

204. To what do you attribute the “double-digit ad sales increases” in your most recent issues? Increased rates? More total advertisers? Advertisers running larger ads? Was the same sales staff working in both 2016 and 2017? (page 5, B.2.)

Changed from a contract commission based sales representatives to an inhouse fulltime sales position.

205. Advertising sales [See P&L attachment](#)

206. Print subscription sales [See P&L attachment](#)

207. Single copy sales [See Statement of Ownership attachment](#)

208. Product sales [See P&L](#)

209. What are the current staff positions (filled and unfilled, salaried and contract), their FTE status, a description of basic job functions (design, editorial, business, sales, circulation, etc.) and annual compensations? (page 5, C.) [See attachment](#) [Org Chart attachment](#)

210. Who will be on the selection committee? (page 2) [TBD](#)

211. Page 9, I.13. reads: "Please answer the questions in the same order stated below, and label/begin your responses with the bold headings used below." Should "below" really be "above"? [Yes](#)

212. Are unsuccessful submissions a matter of public record and/or subject to a FOIA request? (page 10, M.6.)

[ANSWER:](#) Yes, but under the state’s Public Records Act, not until after a final contract has been executed.

213. Will the successful bidder ever have access to unsuccessful submissions? (page 10, M.6.)

[Yes, but under the state’s Public Records Act, not until after a final contract has been executed.](#)

214. If a reporter working for one of the bidders obtains information about the process from an external, unrelated source, would the bidder be barred from publishing it? Would participating in this process in any way impede a bidder’s ability to write about or otherwise cover the process? (page 10, L.)

Prior restraint of the publication of news is strongly disfavored under the law.

215. When will we know if you want an oral presentation? How much notice will be given to prepare it?

The State will provide 2 weeks notice for any presentations.