

Virginia Tourism Corporation

Non-Competitive Award Justification

Revision May 2025

NOTE: This form shall be used for all purchases of goods and non-professional services \$15,001 or more that are not being competed or do not fit under one of the other procurement methods outlined in the Policies and Procedures Manual. It is also required for Non-Competitive Award Marketing Exception Awards for goods and non-professional services when the dollar amount is \$200,000 or more, and professional services or non-transportational related construction is \$80,000 or more.

To: Procurement Office

Date Request Submitted: **October 29, 2025**

Name of Person Submitting Request: **Heidi Johannesen**

OVERVIEW

VTC's Policies and Procedures Manual recognizes several procurement methods, one of which is a Non-Competitive Award. (See Section 4.8 of VTC's Purchasing Policies and Procedures Manual.) A purchase of goods or services may be considered for a Non-Competitive Award if there is one source more feasible to meet VTC's immediate needs, even if there are multiple sources available. Authorization of a Non-Competitive Award indicates that in management's judgment, the chosen vendor best meets VTC's needs to supply the required good or service and in a timely manner.

A non-competitive award procurement is based on the need to procure a unique good or service and that unique good or service is not widely available, or has limited availability, or is essential to meet VTC's requirements. As a result, a non-competitive award procurement represents a unique exception to the requirements for competition. Completion of this form is intended to document, affirm, and justify the need for this product or service to be provided by a specific vendor in order to meet VTC's essential requirements.

Please note:

- Non-competitive awards are subject to VTC policy, audit, FOIA, and public review.
- Vendors are **not** permitted to complete this form on behalf of VTC.
- Price and delivery are **not** factors determining if a product/service is a non-competitive award.
- The final determination of non-competitive award justification validity will be made by the VP of Operations and Finance.
- Submission of this form constitutes acknowledgement the requester, or any VTC staff, has no personal, financial, or fiduciary relationship with the recommended vendor.

Pursuant to Section 4.8 of the VTC Purchasing Policies and Procedures Manual, this is a request to award the goods and services listed below to the vendor listed below without competition as justified below.

DOCUMENTATION

Proposed Vendor to Receive Award: **Cadence Medias**

Vendor Point of Contact (name and email): **Bri Belanger-Warner, briwarnerhabs@gmail.com**

Detailed Description of Product/Services: **Cadence Medias will provide the Virginia Tourism Corporation with full-service representation across the provinces of Quebec and Ontario, encompassing trade, public relations, and social media initiatives. Services include organizing sales and media missions, leading trade and media relations, managing VTC's French-language Facebook page for the Canadian market, and representing Virginia at educational, consumer, and travel industry events throughout the two provinces. These coordinated efforts strengthen Virginia's position as a year-round U.S. destination by leveraging Cadence Medias' market expertise and established relationships to drive awareness, visitation, and visitor spending.**

Expected/Approximate date of Award. If services, duration/period of performance: **November 6, 2025 – June 30, 2026 with four one-year options to renew.**

Anticipated Value of Award. Note: If it is for a one-year period with optional one-year renewal periods, provide details on the anticipated initial dollar amount along with costs for renewals and how many. The initial period is not to exceed one year with no more than 4 one-year renewal options, unless otherwise approved by the VP of Operations and Finance. Automatic renewals are not allowed:

The contract is for a seven month term, with four optional one-year renewals. The base amount is \$85,000 per year, for an estimated total of \$425,000 over five years, excluding expenses. Additional costs may include advertising, travel, campaign support, conferences, familiarization tours, events, meetings, and media engagements.

1. Please provide a brief background summary for why you need the product/services. Why is the requested product/services the only one that can satisfy your requirements? Provide specific details on any unique features of the product/services that are not available in any other product/services and are essential to your required minimum performance.

Canada is Virginia's top international market, and securing in-market representation is necessary to sustaining growth in visitation and travel spending. The services of planning and executing sales and media missions, managing bilingual public relations and social media, coordinating participation in major trade and consumer shows, and organizing journalist and influencer familiarization

tours that generate earned media coverage will strengthen Virginia's visibility and brand awareness among Canadian travelers. These combined services deliver an integrated marketing and communication framework that connects Virginia and its suppliers directly with key audiences and industry partners in Canada.

An in-country representative delivers on-the-ground market intelligence, provides direct access to trusted trade and media contacts, and ensures Virginia is represented at key events, training sessions, and meetings. This approach offers continuous coverage and is more cost-effective than relying on repeated travel between the two countries.

2. Why is this vendor the most feasible available source from which to obtain this product/service? Provide specific details on the expertise, experience and/or capabilities that support why the requested vendor is the most feasible, unique, and best choice without seeking competition to provide the required product/service that best meets VTC's needs. Note that if this product/service is available through multiple distributors, then provide specific details on why this product/service should not be competed.

Cadence Medias, led by owner Bri Belanger-Warner, is the most feasible and effective choice to represent VTC in Ontario and Quebec. Bri brings more than seven years of direct experience working within VTC, where she developed a deep understanding of VTC's brand, programs, and strategic objectives. This experience ensures a smooth transition to contractor status and immediate readiness to deliver on VTC's priorities without the learning curve required for a new vendor.

Bri's brings an extensive background and insight in tourism marketing with an established network of travel agencies, media contacts, and tourism partners across both provinces. Bri's fluency in French and understanding of Canada's bilingual market enable effective communication and representation of the Virginia brand.

With immediate operational capability, including fulfillment, media and trade databases, and tourism resources already in place, Cadence Medias can execute the full scope of work efficiently and maintain alignment with VTC's ongoing initiatives in Virginia's largest international market. These combined capabilities, along with direct VTC experience, market fluency, and established networks, make Cadence Medias the most qualified choice to represent Virginia in Canada.

3. Alternative vendors and products/services should be researched to substantiate why this is the most feasible source. What are the names of the vendors and products/services that were researched? What were the specific performance requirements that could not be met to make conducting a formal solicitation unnecessary or not in the best interest of VTC.

No other vendors were considered. Other firms lack the combination of direct VTC experience, established trade and media relationships, and bilingual capabilities that are essential to successful representation in Canada. Bri Belanger-Warner's prior employment with VTC provides an in-depth understanding of internal processes, messaging, and expectations, making Bri and Cadence Medias the most capable and efficient choice for this contract.

4. If no other vendors were considered, please denote **at least** one of the following:

- Exclusive distribution
- Integral part or accessory compatible with existing equipment
- Maintenance service for existing equipment
- Renewal License to existing software/services
- Upgrade or maintenance for existing software
- Used in research and is required to provide continuity of results
- Copyrighted or patented and only available from the recommended source
- Considerable re-orientation and training would be required
- Vendor specifically named in a grant and/or grant proposal
- Other [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

5. Will this purchase obligate the VTC to this vendor for future purchases (e.g., annual support/maintenance and/or future upgrade requirements)? If yes, provide details regarding the duration of any potential commitments as well as the estimated costs for such commitments.

No

6. Based on my professional experience and knowledge of the marketplace, submission of this document constitutes acknowledgment that the price offered is considered to be fair and reasonable based on **at least** one of the following:

- Prices charged for similar items
- Prices paid by other customers
- A Public price list or public catalog
- Historical/past pricing
- Other/stakeholder justification: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

7. In certain circumstances negotiations may have already taken place. Has the department already negotiated with the vendor or secured discounts? If so, please provide additional details.

No

8. Additional Information not already provided above.

N/A

If purchase request above is for goods or non-professional services under \$200,000 or professional services or non-transportational related construction under \$80,000, skip to approval section below.

If purchase request above is for goods or non-professional services of \$200,000 or more or for professional services or non-transportation-related construction of \$80,000 or more, and not already addressed elsewhere in the policies and procedures, then in addition to completing the requested information above, please provide the information requested below in items 9., 10., and 11, along with the approval section.

Pursuant to Section 4.15 of the VTC Purchasing Policies and Procedures Manual, for purchases of goods or nonprofessional services of \$200,000 or more or for professional services or non-transportation-related construction of \$80,000 or more, not already addressed elsewhere in these policies and procedures, VTC shall not be required to seek competition or competitive negotiations if VTC determines in writing that such purchase contributes to the public purpose and mission of the VTC as described in §2.2-2315. VTC shall state in such writing (a) an explanation of such determination, (b) that which is being purchased, (c) the contractor selected for such purchase, (d) the date of the award of such contract and (e) the relationship of such purchase to the public purpose and mission of the Authority. The determination and justification shall be approved by the VP of Operations and Finance prior to any such purchase taking place. Such notice shall be posted for a period of one year on VTC's website (vatc.org) on the day the VTC awards or announces its decision to award such contract, whichever occurs first.

9. Please provide an explanation of the determination that such purchase contributes to the public purpose and mission of the VTC as described in §2.2-2315.

Securing Cadence Medias as VTC's official representative in Canada supports the Commonwealth's public mission to expand inbound international travel and generate economic benefits for Virginia's tourism sector. The services align directly with VTC's strategic objectives to grow visitation, enhance awareness of the Virginia is for Lovers brand, and increase tourism-related revenue and employment statewide.

10. Please provide the relationship of such purchase to the public purpose and mission of the VTC.

Cadence Medias' in-market representation directly supports VTC's mandate to grow international tourism through localized expertise. Their work in Ontario and Quebec enables VTC to reach Canadian travelers through trade partnerships, earned media, and social media engagement that cannot be replicated from the U.S. office. By utilizing their relationships and knowledge of VTC's operations, Cadence

Medias ensures consistent, credible representation that builds awareness of Virginia's destinations, strengthens industry partnerships, and drives visitation that benefits local communities and businesses.

11. Additional Information not already provided above.

N/A

Department Approval:

I am the authorized approver of my department and on behalf of my department, I certify that the information submitted is accurate and complete. I understand that this document is subject to VTC policy, audit, foia, and public review.

Department: **Global Marketing**

Name: **Heidi Johannessen**

Signature: *Heidi Johannessen*

Date: **10/29/2025**

Appropriate VP Approval: *Catherine Marshburn*

Final Approval of VP of Operations and Finance is required below in order to proceed.

VP of Operations and Finance

Approved: _____

Not Approved: _____

Comments: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)