

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION FOR

**THIRD-PARTY REVIEWS AND RATINGS AND
RELATED SUPPORT SERVICES FOR
FineWineAndGoodSpirits.com**

ISSUING OFFICE

**PENNSYLVANIA LIQUOR CONTROL BOARD
PURCHASING AND CONTRACT ADMINISTRATION
ROOM 312, NORTHWEST OFFICE BUILDING
HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA 17124**

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DATE OF ISSUANCE

May 7, 2019

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PART I GENERAL INFORMATION

PURPOSE

The PLCB, through its Fine Wine & Good Spirits (FW&GS) retail brand, is the Commonwealth's primary retailer of wine and spirits and the agency responsible for regulatory control of beverage alcohol in Pennsylvania. The PLCB operates an e-commerce website, FineWineAndGoodSpirits.com (FWGS.com), and iOS and Android FW&GS mobile apps (apps) displaying thousands of products sold online and/or in the PLCB's roughly 600 FW&GS brick-and-mortar stores.

The PLCB seeks a third-party vendor to facilitate the provision of user-generated, product-specific content – including consumer ratings, reviews, photos and videos (collectively referred to as user-generated content, or UGC) – for wines and spirits sold by the PLCB. Such UGC will be featured on FWGS.com and may be incorporated into FW&GS.

This Request for Information (RFI) is issued solely for information and planning purposes and does not constitute a procurement solicitation. Responses to this notice are not offers and cannot be accepted to form a binding contract. Information provided in this RFI is not intended to convey any predisposition to a particular solution, method or service delivery methodology, nor does it intend to limit response creativity.

TIMELINE

Responses are due via email to George Peedikayil, RFI Issuing Officer, at gpeedikayi@pa.gov by **12 noon on Friday, May 24**.

RESPONDING INFORMATION

If you wish to respond, please submit a complete response using the format in Part III of this RFI. Although the PLCB may ultimately issue a competitive bid solicitation on the basis of the information gathered from this RFI, there is no guarantee that this will occur.

Responses should be prepared simply and economically, providing straight-forward and concise descriptions.

PROPRIETARY INFORMATION

To the extent permissible by law, responses will be held in confidence and will not be revealed or discussed with other responders. All material submitted in response to this RFI becomes property of the PLCB and may be returned only at the PLCB's discretion. Responses submitted may be reviewed and evaluated by any persons at the discretion of the PLCB, to the extent permissible by applicable laws and Commonwealth policies. The PLCB has the right to use any or all ideas presented in responses in any future formulation of a competitive bid solicitation.

SUBMISSION COSTS

The PLCB is not liable for any cost or expenses incurred by responders in the preparation and submission of responses related this RFI.

ELECTRONIC VERSION

This RFI is being made available by electronic means. If a responder electronically accepts the RFI, the responder acknowledges and accepts full responsibility to ensure that no changes are made to the RFI. In the event of a conflict between a version of the RFI in a responder's possession and the Issuing Office's version of the RFI, the Issuing Office's version shall govern.

PART II WORK STATEMENT

GOALS

The PLCB seeks to provide its customers with product-specific UGC on FWGS.com, in order to leverage the increasing influence of peer reviews and ratings in informing purchasing decisions to better serve its FWGS.com customers.

The PLCB seeks a solution including the following specific deliverables and services:

1. Provide syndicated UGC for as many products within the current wine and spirits catalogue on FWGS.com as possible, and on an ongoing basis provide syndicated UGC for new products as they are added to FWGS.com.
2. Provide a means of collecting organic UGC from users of FWGS.com and across all available channels.
3. Provide moderation/monitoring services, including review of all organic UGC to ensure compliance with pre-established parameters and facilitate appropriate PLCB follow up with UGC providers when warranted.
4. Provide a means of rendering and displaying UGC on FWGS.com, in apps and in digital ads including social and/or Google Ads.
5. Provide data analytics services related to UGC and a dashboard displaying key performance indicators.

PART III REQUEST FOR INFORMATION FORMAT

A. COVER LETTER

A cover letter must be provided with your RFI response. The cover letter should include:

1. An introduction of your company.
2. The name, title, mailing address, telephone number, and email address of the person to be contacted.
3. A description of specific experience and qualifications in providing third-party reviews and ratings for retail websites and related support services.

B. CONCEPTUAL SOLUTIONS AND STRATEGIES

Please address the topics and questions in Appendix A.

C. TRADE SECRET/CONFIDENTIAL PROPRIETARY INFORMATION

If applicable, complete the attached Trade Secret/Confidential Proprietary Information Form.

APPENDIX A: QUESTIONS FOR RESPONDENTS TO ADDRESS

1. What compensation model or models are common for the services requested? For example, are providers of third-party ratings/reviews and moderation and data analytics services typically paid by review, by webpage clicks (and to what pages), review clicks, at hourly rates for services, etc.? Additionally, what service level agreements are offered for these services?
2. PLCB is interested in better understanding both the experience of its own customers as well as that of consumers from which syndicated content is sourced.
 - a. Please describe the methods utilized to collect syndicated UGC.
 - b. Please describe the methods utilized to collect and encourage organic UGC submission on a website. For example, on a website, does a web-form for review entry pop up immediately after a purchase has been completed, after a certain amount of time has passed to allow for consumer receipt and usage of the product, etc.? If there is a delay in prompting a review, how is that prompt served to the consumer – via email, the next time the consumer visits the site, etc.? How do you provide consumers the ability to provide multiple reviews of products at one time?
 - c. Is UGC able to be collected in-store and/or from other sources, and if so, how?
 - d. Are incentives utilized to collect UGC? If so, are such incentives disclosed in the public-facing content?
3. What consumer and/or sales data does your company require from the PLCB to provide UGC collection services? Specifically, what information is required from any source to engage a consumer or otherwise prompt a consumer to provide a rating or review? For example, do you need access to browsing patterns, purchase history, user account information (user name, password, email address, etc.)?

Additionally, what consumer and/or sales data does your company collect during the course of providing UGC collection services? How is this data used by your company during the course of providing UGC collection services, and how is this data used at the conclusion of providing such services (e.g. is your company using this data for any other business purposes, selling consumer data and review to other companies, etc.)?
4. Understanding that a single review may apply to five different sizes of the same product, in your industry experience, what unifying code or relationship links products such that a single review can be associated with multiple products?
5. How would ratings provided to FWGS.com populate in digital ads including social media and/or Google ads?
6. What technical specifications and information do you need in order to determine compatibility with and understand integration into FWGS.com?

APPENDIX B
TRADE SECRET/CONFIDENTIAL PROPRIETARY INFORMATION
NOTICE

Instructions:

The Commonwealth may not assert on behalf of a third party an exception to the public release of materials that contain trade secrets or confidential proprietary information unless the materials are accompanied, at the time they are submitted, by this form or a document containing similar information.

It is the responsibility of the party submitting this form to ensure that all statements and assertions made below are legally defensible and accurate. The Commonwealth will not provide a submitting party any advice with regard to trade secret law.

Name of submitting party:

Contact information for submitting party:

Please provide a brief overview of the materials that you are submitting (e.g. bid proposal, grant application, technical schematics):

Please provide a brief explanation of why the materials are being submitted to the Commonwealth (e.g., in response to PLCB Request for Information #12345):

Please provide a list detailing which portions of the material being submitted you believe constitute a trade secret or confidential proprietary information, and please provide an explanation of why you think those materials constitute a trade secret or confidential proprietary information. Also, please mark the submitted material in such a way to allow a reviewer to easily distinguish between the parts referenced below. You may attach additional pages if needed.

Note: The following information will not be considered a trade secret or confidential proprietary information:

- Any information submitted as part of a vendor’s cost proposal
- Information submitted as part of a vendor’s technical response that does not pertain to specific business practices or product specification
- Information submitted as part of a vendor’s technical or disadvantaged business response that is otherwise publicly available or otherwise easily obtained
- Information detailing the name, quantity, and price paid for any product or service being purchased by the Commonwealth

Page Number	Description	Explanation

Acknowledgment

The undersigned party hereby agrees that it has read and completed this form and has marked the material being submitted in accordance with the instructions above. The undersigned party acknowledges that the Commonwealth is not liable for the use or disclosure of trade secret data or confidential proprietary information that has not been clearly marked as such, and which was not accompanied by a specific explanation included with this form.

The undersigned agrees to defend any action seeking release of the materials it believes to be trade secret or confidential, and indemnify and hold harmless the Commonwealth, its agents and employees, from any judgments awarded against the Commonwealth in favor of the party requesting the materials, and any and all costs connected with that defense. This indemnification survives so long as the Commonwealth has possession of the submitted material and will apply to all costs unless and until the undersigned provides a written statement or similar notice to the Commonwealth stating that it no longer wishes to exempt the submitted material from public disclosure.

The undersigned acknowledges that the Commonwealth is required to keep all records for at least as long as specified in its published records retention schedule.

The undersigned acknowledges that the Commonwealth reserves the right to reject the undersigned's claim of trade secret/confidential proprietary information if the Commonwealth determines that the undersigned has not met the burden of establishing that the information constitutes a trade secret or is confidential. The undersigned also acknowledges that if only a certain part of the submitted material is found to constitute a trade secret or is confidential, the remainder of the submitted material will become public; only the protected information will be removed and remain nonpublic.

If being submitted electronically, the undersigned agrees that the mark below is a valid electronic signature.

Signature

Title

Date