



MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

Policy Number	Responsible Department	Effective Date	Approval
BOD 9.01	Board of Directors	January 22, 2026	<i>Board of Directors</i>

I. PURPOSE:

The Rhode Island Public Transit Authority is a quasi-public corporation. The purpose of this Marketing and Communications Policy is to ensure compliance with R.I. Gen. Laws §42-155 – Quasi Public Corporations Accountability and Transparency Act.

RIPTA's Marketing & Communications Department manages all marketing, advertising, promotions, internal and external communications, media relations, government affairs, public relations, public hearings, special events, and external partnerships. It oversees RIPTA's website and social media, produces all printed materials, timetables, signage, fare products, and advertisements.

The success of any transit agency depends on how well its employees and the public understand, value, and utilize the services it offers. RIPTA shall engage in comprehensive marketing and communications efforts to retain and inform current riders and employees, attract new riders, and build broad support for upcoming transit initiatives and incentives—both internally and externally.

II. POLICY:

A. Strategy

The Deputy Chief of Communications shall set RIPTA's internal and external marketing and communications strategy.

This strategy may include expenses for the following categories:

Advertising & Promotion

- Digital advertising (social media, display ads, etc.).
- Print advertising (newspapers, magazines).
- Advertisements for radio, television, and streaming services.
- Outdoor media (billboards, bus wraps, transit shelter ads).

Creative Development

- Graphic design services.
- Photography and videography.
- Copywriting and content development.

Printing & Materials

- Brochures, schedules, posters, signage (including bus stop signage), fare products, decals, and informational materials.

Events & Outreach

- Community event registration fees.
- Tent rentals, tables, banners, and necessary display materials.
- Promotional items for public engagement.
- Light refreshments for public-facing events (when appropriate and pre-approved).

Public Relations

- Public relations services including strategic planning and implementation, copywriting, research, speech writing, press release writing and placement.
- Crisis communications.
- Special event planning and assistance.

Software & Tools

- Social media management platforms.
- Email marketing platforms.
- Website-related expenses (including content management systems).
- Real-time passenger information screen software and support (including content management systems).
- Analytics tools and marketing-driven software subscriptions.
- A/V equipment and software for photography, videography and audio needs.

Other Allowable Internal Marketing and Communications Expenses

- Employee engagement materials (e.g., newsletters, posters).
- Employee portal development or maintenance.
- Employee surveys.
- Internal signage or educational materials.
- Limited refreshments for employee engagement events (with prior approval).
- Training materials or software that support communications.
- Translation services

B. Trade Agreements (In-Kind Partnerships)

Trade agreements, also known as in-kind or value-for-value partnerships, allow RIPTA to exchange advertising, services, or promotional value without direct monetary payment. These must be used strategically and follow the guidelines below:

Requirements for Trade Agreements

- Partner provides goods or services (e.g., event space, promotional materials) in exchange for RIPTA advertising space.
- Must be documented in writing and signed by both parties.
- Must include:
 - Clear description of what each party provides.
 - Timeline of deliverables.
- All agreements must be reviewed by:
 - Deputy Chief of Communications
 - RIPTA Legal Counsel (when applicable)

Prohibited Trade Agreements

- Agreements that create conflicts of interest.
- Agreements involving political campaigns or lobbying activities.

C. Expenses

Any expense for internal and external marketing and communications must:

- Align with RIPTA brand guidelines.
- Reflect RIPTA's mission, values, and commitment to equitable transit.
- Be coordinated through the Marketing & Communications Department to maintain consistency and avoid duplication.

All expense requests must include:

- Purpose and justification aligned with RIPTA goals.
- Estimated cost and quote(s).
- Funding source (operating budget, grant-funded, project-specific, etc.).
- Post-purchase receipts and invoices.

The following expenses are explicitly not permitted:

- Alcoholic beverages at any event.
- Sponsorships or promotions that do not support RIPTA's mission or strategic goals.
- Unapproved branded merchandise or apparel.

D. Budget

The Deputy Chief of Communications shall develop a budget for marketing and communications expenses which will then be reviewed by the Deputy Chief of Finance. Once that budget is finalized, the budget shall be approved annually by the Board of Directors.