Project Name: Project and Program Management Services
Solicitation Number: RFP-2273

Addendum No. 2

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

PROJECT AND PROGRAM MANAGEMENT SERVICES

The Rhode Island Commerce Corporation seeks proposals from qualified firms to provide professional project and program management services on an on-call basis.

Prospective Proposers and all concerned are hereby notified of the following questions and answers regarding the Request for Proposals document for the above-listed RFP. These questions and answers shall be incorporated in and shall become an integral part of the RFP documents.

Do you know the timeline for the programs/projects that will be part of this RFP (start and end)? What is the timeframe to design and execute the grant?

This RFP is soliciting vendors on an "on-call" basis; there may be one or more programs with various start and end dates for which the Corporation will seek to contract vendors.

Can work under this contract be performed remotely?

Some or most work under this RFP may be performed remotely, depending on the task. However, there are some activities within certain tasks within the RFP that are best served by local and/or in-person engagements, such as the stakeholder engagement articulated in Task 2. The Corporation may choose to look favorably on those respondents who can perform in-person tasks in some cases and, in all cases, reserves the right to require in-person meetings with all vendors, provided reasonable notice.

What are the types of Projects and or Programs to design create, implement, and manage?

Examples of projects and program(s) include, but are not limited to, those that support Rhode Island small businesses and/or industries that have been impacted by the COVID-19 health pandemic. These may include but are not limited to: Grant and/or loan programs, technical

assistance and capacity-building programs, infrastructure efforts, and industry-specific support programs. Examples of comparable programs implemented in 2020-21 include RestoreRI, the Rhode Island Small Business Relief Grant Program, Business Adaptation, Remote Work, HArT ESR, HArT Direct Support, among others. Also included may be projects or programs to propose to the federal government in pursuit of federal dollars in the areas of economic and/or workforce development.

What are the scheme breadth [sic] of Grants the RFP suggesting will need to be serviced?

This is to be determined by the Corporation in collaboration with the selected vendor(s).

With regards to Stakeholder Engagement and Needs Assessment, what is the concept depiction?

In preparation for deploying stimulus and other state/federal funds, the Corporation seeks additional support in analyzing small business needs and developing solutions that address the challenges they are facing.

Is this a second attempt or next steps of the current stakeholder engagement and small business community and industries needs assessment?

This is intended to complement existing efforts which have involved selected vendors to prove direct technical assistance and outreach to *small business*es to inform them of certain programs and resources. In contrast, the stakeholder engagement and needs assessment described in Task 2 of this Project and Program Management RFP seeks proposals to assist the *Corporatio*n in assessing the needs of small businesses and industries impacted by the COVID-19 health pandemic, identifying any gaps in programs to address these needs ,and ways to fill such gaps.

Those who have previously responded to RFPs to provide technical assistance and/or marketing and outreach services to small businesses who are interested in providing stakeholder engagement and needs assessment services to the Corporation must submit proposals under this RFP to be considered.

Will it be assessing the program needs before release, through implementation and post / evaluation periods?

The scope may include any or all of these periods.

Is Commerce envisioning a single contractor or primary with subs?

Commerce anticipates selecting multiple contractors. We understand that the skillsets and experience required to complete each task is varied and understand that some Proposers may feel best suited to only one or a subset of the required Tasks.

Is there a determined timeline [for] platform development?

This RFP seeks to retain vendors on an on-call basis.

What [are] the elements of concern for this web-based grant servicing system oversight and development (Lessons Learned from previous engagements)?

The Corporation will review proposals for the oversight and management of any web-based servicing system on their ability to track progress of a program in real time, provide accurate data management as needed, detect and monitor fraud within the program, integrate well with other platforms and technologies used by Commerce as needed, and be user-friendly for Commerce staff. This is a non-exhaustive list.

Is there an expectation that the developer of the application portal and a back-end management system be the same or with partner organization or will commerce assign the processing organization separate from a developer partnership?

There is not an expectation that the developer of any application portal and/or back-end management system be the same entity. We appreciate Proposers who may apply together or forge formal or informal partnerships, but it is not required.

In question 1 of the technical proposal elements, it calls for timelines for major tasks that are specific, measurable, and time-oriented, but the items in the scope of work are for general services. This question implies a specific project/program to implement. Is generally detailing our work approach for each task sufficient for this section? Timelines and performance benchmarks would seem hard to assess without greater clarity of projects and desired deadlines from Commerce for program/project outcomes.

Yes, general work approach and basic outline of how long various stages of projects or programs take is sufficient for this response.

We have a related question for section 5 of the technical proposal elements. Again, the question seems geared toward a specific outcome monitoring and or evaluation plan and that varies greatly based on each task and what programs or projects are proposed by RI Commerce. Should we broadly describe one approach, or provide explanations for each task, even if those tasks have similar approaches to outcome tracking but that they are somewhat varied?

It would be preferred to provide explanations for each task, even if those tasks have similar approaches to outcome tracking.

For Task 2: Does the Corporation have previously collected data about the impact of the pandemic on small business?

The Corporation has some limited data and anticipates that additional data may be needed.

For Task 3: Who will be creating the Business and Functional Requirement?

Corporation staff and selected project/program management teams, including those selected through Tasks 1 and 4, are anticipated to collaborate with selected vendors on creating business and functional requirements. Note that these will be informed by the federal compliance team and business engagement feedback.

For Task 3: Will the vendor be handling the QA testing, or will we need to develop our own QA process?

We are expecting respondents to this RFP to manage QA testing.

For Task 3: Will the Corporation or the vendor choose the security protocols for secure file transfer, encryption, etc. or will we be responsible for the security architecture?

The Corporation will work in collaboration with the successful Proposers as well as our own IT service provider to determine security protocols in line with state regulations and compliance requirements. We are seeking experienced teams who can advise on options and assist in decision making.

For Task 3: Who will be responsible for the manual review of applications, and other clerical work?

The Corporation is requesting Proposals for administrative capacity as part of this RFP.

For Task 4: Point of clarity, the responsibility here is to develop a system of processes and controls that ensure integrity, transparency and consistency in the application workflow?

The Corporation seeks these responsibilities in addition to hands-on management of grant programs in task 4.

For Task 4: Are we documenting business and/or technical requirements?

Corporation staff and selected project/program management teams, including those selected through Tasks 1 and 4, are anticipated to collaborate with selected vendors on creating business and functional requirements. Note that these will be informed by the federal compliance team and business engagement feedback.

For Task 4: Are we evaluating the solutions designed by the vendor?

Corporation staff and selected project/program management teams, including those selected through Tasks 1 and 4, are anticipated to collaborate with selected vendors on solution designs.

For Task 5: Is this simply a compliance and accounting functionality?

Largely, yes.

For Task 5: Will we be responsible for actually writing the checks, or just ensuring that the disbursements get where they need to be when they need to be there?

We are preparing for programs that may require ACH transfers, distribution of checks, or distribution of other in-kind supports, including equipment or services. We are seeking to understand Proposers' capacity to administer grant programs, including but not limited to, directly distributing funds.

For Task 5: Will we be the custodians of the funds?

Options for custodianship of the funds include, but are not limited to, entities within the State of Rhode Island and the Commerce Corporation.

For Task 6: Will this require building a physical data store to merge disparate data sources, or will the tech vendors build out the data store?

The Corporation may issue scopes of work involving data management and integration. Vendors who can manage and ensure integrity of large data sets, potentially from various data sources, should indicate this in their responses.

Who will manage the data store?

The Corporation will require that it be able to access all data and welcomes proposals from respondents for secure data storage options.

Who is responsible for PII, financial or other sensitive data that may need to be stored?

We will ask our data storage vendor to be responsible for the safe storage of PII—as well as the appropriate destruction of those data when required.

Is the fraud detection to be fully automated, or will there be a manual process? If manual, who will own that process?

We are seeking responses for how Proposers would manage fraud detection. We imagine some may have an automated process and others a more manual process, or a combination of the two.

Is the deliverable an architecture document or a built system of reporting?

The deliverable would be the system of reporting as well as the secure operation and storage of the data.

Could an applicant submit a proposal for a discrete geographic area - such as Stakeholder Engagement & Needs Assessment in Central Providence?

Yes. Applicants may delimit their applications by geography. In these cases, we encourage applicants to show their unique capacity to support programs in that one region as well as ways the Proposer may work with others through a single program or project who support other geographies.

What is the amount for each awardee? What is the dollar range you are expecting from applicants?

This RFP is asking for support on an "on-call" basis. The amount contracted for each successful Proposer will depend on the scope of the proposal as well as the depth of engagement and the experience and skill of the Proposer.

What will the data gathered and results be used for moving forward?

The data will be used for multiple purposes including compliance, reporting, program evaluation, and continued engagement and support for Rhode Island small businesses.

What is the RFP # for this?

This is RFP RICC-2273.

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