

## Notice of Request for Proposals

**REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCILS**  
**Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council**  
**RFP for New Market Coordinator**

**SOUTHWEST FLORIDA REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL**  
**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**  
**Professional Consulting Services**  
**RFP Release Date: November 16, 2018**  
**Qualifications Due Date: January 2, 2019**

### **1. GENERAL INFORMATION**

#### **1.1 Purpose of this Request for Proposal**

The Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council (SWFRPC), through this Request for Proposal (RFP), is seeking a qualified consultant/consulting firm to provide assistance pursuant to the recently awarded United States Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration (EDA) Grant for the creation of a Sustainability Implementation Study for small to mid-sized growers in Southwest Florida.

#### **1.2 Background Information**

The SWFRPC recently completed an Agricultural Sustainability Plan for the small to mid-sized growers in the Southwest Florida region (includes Charlotte, Collier, Glades, Hendry, Lee and Sarasota counties). The SWFRPC's objective pursuant to the EDA Grant is to create new markets for the small to mid-sized growers by developing a regional branding initiative and marketing strategy and implementing several of the recommendations contained in this plan. The EDA grant project has five main components: 1) assist local growers in cultivating new markets, 2) creation of a template for food safety plans, 3) development of a regional branding initiative for the region's farms, including a logo and tagline, 4) hiring a marketing consultant to develop a marketing strategy, and 5) implementation of the initial marketing recommendations in order to create new markets and encourage local businesses, residents and visitors to purchase products grown in Southwest Florida.

This RFP is to solicit proposals for the development of: 1. A comprehensive contact list of potential new markets with unmet produce needs, 2. Identification of growers that can meet the needs of the identified markets and 3. Identification of issues and challenges the growers are facing to expand to new markets.

We are considering the Southwest Florida geographic region to be the same as that covered by the Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council: Charlotte, Collier, Glades, Hendry, Lee, and Sarasota Counties. The farms involved in this project mostly produce row crops.

#### **1.3 Type of Contract and Contract Term**

The SWFRPC will award a single one-year contract to one full-service firm to develop the following deliverables:

- A comprehensive list of potential new markets that includes names, contact information, produce needed, amount of produce needed and when produce is needed along with any special requirements.
- A comprehensive list of the growers that can meet the needs of the new markets.
- A comprehensive list of the issues and challenges the growers are facing to expand to the identified new markets.

The initial contract may be extended at the option of the SWFRPC.

### **2. TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS**

#### **2.1 Activities Required Under this Request for Proposals**

This RFP is to solicit for a qualified consultant who is expected to work with the SWFRPC, IFAS and the growers to meet the requirements of the grant. The scope of work to be performed under this contract by the consultant is expected to include, at a minimum:

- Assist the SWFRPC with ensuring that grant funds under this contract are used appropriately.
- Meet with the SWFRPC, IFAS, the growers, copackers, grocery stores, etc. to obtain input on potential new markets and issues, challenges and concerns the growers are facing to expand to new markets.
- Participate in and coordinate community outreach and public engagement activities as needed.
- Development of a comprehensive list of potential new markets that includes names, contact information, produce needed, amount of produce needed and when produce is needed along with any special requirements.
- Development of a comprehensive list of the growers that can meet the needs of the new markets.
- Development of a comprehensive list of the issues and challenges the growers are facing to expand to the identified new markets.

## **2.2 Minimum Requirements**

Demonstrated experience in developing new markets. Experience working with agricultural businesses is a plus.

## **2.3 Project Budget**

The total budget for this phase of the grant is \$40,000. It will be the SWFRPC's option to utilize this contract for future related grants beyond the initial EDA Sustainability Implementation Study grant should additional funds become available.

## **3. RESPONSE REQUIREMENTS**

### **3.1 General Expectations**

Consultants are asked to submit concise qualifications describing their experience and how their firm will assist the SWFRPC and IFAS in working with the growers to develop the deliverables.

### **3.2 General Process**

**The SWFRPC will review and evaluate qualifications with the following criteria in mind: expertise related to relevant project components; project approach; ability to facilitate public outreach activities; and demonstrated ability to meet deadlines. The SWFRPC reserves the right to accept or reject responses on any basis it deems appropriate.**

### **3.3 Qualifications**

Responses should be prepared on standard size 8 ½ x 11-inch paper. Standard advertising brochures should not be included in the response. The response shall include the following information in the order presented below. Qualifications will be evaluated based on a 100 Point Scale as follows:

#### **SECTION A Qualifications and Capabilities**

**0-25 pts.**

This section shall include the firm's name, areas of expertise, a brief history of the firm, size, number of office locations, and business address of the office responsible for this contract. The name, address, and telephone number of a contact person responsible for their submittal shall be included.

#### **SECTION B Technical Approach**

**0-30pts.**

Description of the firm's technical approach to complete the tasks required.

#### **SECTION C Local Experience and Knowledge**

**0-10pts.**

Demonstrated local knowledge of the SWFRPC's region and any understanding/experience working with growers/within the agricultural field.

### **SECTION D Project Staff**

**0-20pts.**

- Brief summaries of related experience for staff members working on the project.
- Organizational chart.
- Resumes for key project personnel assigned to this project.

**0-15pts.**

### **SECTION E References**

Contact information for three (3) recent (current project/project completed within the past three years) client references with name, email address, and phone number for each.

### **3.4 Terms and Conditions**

The SWFRPC reserves the right to accept or reject all proposals or portions thereof without stated cause. The SWFRPC reserves the right to re-issue any RFP or cancel the RFP if none of the proposals are deemed satisfactory to the SWFRPC.

Upon selection of a finalist, the SWFRPC by its proper officials shall attempt to negotiate and reach a final agreement with the finalist. If the SWFRPC, for any reason, is unable to reach a final agreement with this finalist; the SWFRPC then reserves the right to reject such finalist and negotiate a final agreement with another finalist who has the next most viable proposal. The SWFRPC may also elect to reject all proposals and re-issue a new RFP.

Clarification of proposals: The SWFRPC reserves the right to obtain clarification of any point in a Proposer's proposal or obtain additional information. Any request for clarification or other correspondence related to the RFP shall be emailed to [mwuerstle@swfrpc.org](mailto:mwuerstle@swfrpc.org) and a response shall be provided within two (2) business days.

The SWFRPC reserves the right to waive any formalities, defects, or irregularities, in any proposal, response, and/or submittal where the acceptance, rejection, or waiving of such is in the best interests of the SWFRPC. The SWFRPC reserves the right to disqualify any proposal, before or after opening, upon evidence of collusion, intent to defraud, or any other illegal practice on the part of the Proposer.

### **3.5 Public Information**

**Information supplied by the Proposer to the SWFRPC is subject to the Florida Public Records Law. Florida law provides that municipal records shall at all times be open for personal inspection by any person, Section 119.01, Fla. Stat. Information and materials received by the SWFRPC in connection with all Proposers' response shall be deemed to be public records subject to public inspection upon award, recommendation for award, or 30 days after bid opening, whichever occurs first. Section 119.071, Fla. Stat.**

### **3.6 Proposal Time Schedule**

The timeline for completion of this request for proposals is outlined below.

November 16, 2018 Formal announcement date for RFP.

January 2, 2019– 3:00PM EDT: Deadline for submittal of proposals.

January 7, 2019 Notification of award.

January 14, 2019 Award of contract by SWFRPC.

### **3.7 Notification of Award**

**The SWFRPC plans to select a consultant by January 7, 2019. Should either party fail to execute a contract within 30 days of notification of award, the SWFRPC reserves the right to rescind the award and select services from another interested firm.**

### **3.8 Number of Proposals to Submit; Deadline, Mail, and Hand Delivery Addresses**

**One (1) original and one (1) digital (PDF) copy** of the proposal must be submitted by **3:00 PM EDT on January 2, 2019**. The mailing and hand delivery address is:

Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council

Attn: Margaret Wuerstle, Project Manager  
1400 Colonial Boulevard, Suite 1  
Fort Myers, FL 33907  
(239)938-1813 ext. 222  
Email Contact: [mwuerstle@swfrpc.org](mailto:mwuerstle@swfrpc.org)

### **3.9 Late Proposals**

Proposals received after the deadline will not be considered.

## **4. VENDOR REQUIREMENTS**

### **4.1 Contracting with Disadvantaged Business Enterprises**

It is U.S. EDA policy to award a fair share of contracts to disadvantaged business firms. Accordingly, affirmative steps must be taken to ensure that disadvantaged businesses are utilized when possible as sources of supplies, equipment, and services. The SWFRPC will ensure, to the fullest extent possible, that at least the U.S. EDA "fair share" objectives for prime contracts and subcontracts are made available to organizations owned or controlled by socially and economically disadvantaged individuals, women, and historically black colleges and universities. The consultant shall agree to support the U.S. EPA's disadvantaged business enterprise contract procurement program ensuring those businesses' participation in subcontracts.

Affirmative steps include the following as a minimum:

- Including qualified disadvantaged businesses on solicitation lists;
- Ensuring that disadvantaged businesses are solicited whenever they are potential sources;
- When economically feasible, dividing total requirements into smaller tasks or quantities so as to permit disadvantaged business participation;
- Consultants are encouraged to procure goods and services from disadvantaged businesses.

### **4.2 Equal Employment Opportunity**

The Proposer agrees to comply with all federal, state, and local laws, resolutions, ordinances, rules, regulations, and executive orders pertaining to unlawful discrimination on account of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, sexual preference, disability, or age. When required by law or requested by the SWFRPC, the Proposer shall furnish a written affirmative action plan.

### **4.3 Insurance Requirements**

Prior to award of contract, the successful bidder will be required to furnish evidence of insurance as follows:

**WORKERS COMPENSATION:** Coverage to apply for all employees for Statutory Limits in compliance with the applicable state and federal laws. The policy must include Employers' Liability with a limit of \$500,000 each accident; \$500,000 each employee; and \$500,000 policy limit for disease.

**COMMERCIAL GENERAL LIABILITY:** Occurrence form required. Aggregate must apply separately to this contract/job. Minimum \$1,000,000 each occurrence; \$1,000,000 general aggregate; \$1,000,000 products and completed ops; and \$100,000 damage to rented premises.

**COMMERCIAL AUTOMOBILE LIABILITY:** To include all vehicles owned, leased, hired and non-owned vehicles with limits of not less than \$1,000,000 per each accident and for property damage and bodily injury, with contractual liability coverage for all work performed under this agreement.

**PROFESSIONAL LIABILITY INSURANCE:** Professional liability or malpractice or errors and/or omissions insurance shall be purchased and maintained with a minimum \$1,000,000 per occurrence with a \$1,000,000 policy term general aggregate. SWFRPC prefers all Professional Liability Insurance be written on an Occurrence Form; however, in the event that the professional liability insurance required by the Contract is written on a claims-made basis, Consultant warrants that any retroactive date under the policy shall precede the

effective date of this Contract; and that either continuous coverage will be maintained for a period of two (2) years or an extended reporting period (ERP) with tail coverage will be obtained and maintained for a period of two (2) years beginning at the time work under this Contract is completed.

***SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS:*** SWFRPC is to be named **additional insured** on Comprehensive Commercial General Liability Policy.

All certificates of insurance Certificates must be on file with and approved by SWFRPC before commencement of any work activities under this agreement.

Any and all deductibles to the above referenced policies are to be the responsibility of the successful consultant/firm. Current valid insurance policies meeting the requirements herein identified shall be maintained during the duration of the contract period. Renewal certificates shall be sent to SWFRPC thirty (30) business days prior to any expiration date. There shall be a thirty (30) business day notification to SWFRPC in the event of cancellation or modification of any stipulated insurance coverage. It shall be the responsibility of the Contractor to ensure that all subcontractors comply with the same insurance requirements that he/she is required to meet. All certificates of insurance meeting the required insurance provisions shall be forwarded to SWFRPC.