

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council
Professional Consulting Services with Expertise in Regional Food systems

RFP Release Date: November 15, 2021

Proposal Due Date: January 4, 2022

INTRODUCTION

The Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council (SWFRPC) is soliciting proposals from interested firms and individuals to provide expertise in regional food systems for a Community Development Block Grant – MIT General Planning Support (CDBG-MIT grant). The SWFRPC has received approximately \$350,000 in overall CDBG-MIT funding. The SWFRPC will receive proposals from Proposers having specific experience and qualifications in the area identified in this solicitation. For consideration, proposals for this project must contain evidence of the Proposer’s experience and abilities in the specified area and other disciplines directly related to the proposed service.

Background Information

The SWFRPC is seeking a national expert on food systems to assist with this project. The goal of this project is to develop a Resiliency Strategy for Local Food Systems in Southwest Florida that will provide realistic solutions for ensuring a healthy, sustainable and equitable food system for all people, at all times and that is resilient during times of disasters.

Type of Contract and Contract Term

The SWFRPC will award a single 24-month contract to one full-service firm to collaborate with project partners and provide regional food system, food hub and food hub network expertise and recommendations in order to develop an actionable food hub business model in SW Florida including start-up costs. The term of the contract will commence once both parties have signed the contract.

QUALIFICATIONS

The Proposer must show to the complete satisfaction of SWFRPC that it has the necessary facilities, ability, and financial resources to provide the services specified herein in a satisfactory manner. The Proposer should also give a past history and references in order to satisfy SWFRPC in regard to the Proposer’s qualifications. SWFRPC may make reasonable investigations deemed necessary and proper to determine the ability of the Proposer to perform the work, and the Proposer shall furnish to SWFRPC all information for this purpose that may be requested. SWFRPC reserves the right to reject any offer if the evidence submitted by, or investigation of, the Proposer fails to satisfy SWFRPC that the Proposer is properly qualified to carry out the obligations of the contract and to complete the work described therein.

Evaluation of the Proposer’s qualifications shall include:

- A. The ability, capacity, skill, financial and other necessary resources to perform the work or provide the service required;
- B. The ability to perform the work or provide the service promptly or within the time specified, without delay or interference;
- C. The character, integrity, reputation, judgment, experience, and efficiency of the Proposer, and;
- D. The quality of performance of previous contracts or services.

Minimum Requirements

- Experience with developing policy, programmatic and technical recommendations.
- Strong experience with robust public engagement programs.
- Adept at navigating diverse stakeholder groups,
- Operations experience focused on scaling innovative programs and networks that positively impact farmers, eaters and the environment.
- Ability to leverage collaboration at each point in the value chain: farmers, investors, operators, government and nonprofits, to develop clear and achievable paths to mutually beneficial goals.
- Recent work with similar projects.

*Respondents must provide a listing of the personnel to be assigned to the project, including organizational structure and each person's area of responsibility. Resumes for each professional assigned to this project are also required. Responders must have sufficient and qualified staff immediately available to contract solicitations and to enter into and manage any components targeted by the RFP.

SCOPE OF WORK

A. General Statement:

The SWFRPC requests proposals for services of providing expertise on regional food systems for all activities related to the CDBG-MIT allocations provided to SWFRPC.

B. Activities Required Under this Request for Proposals:

This RFP is to solicit for a qualified consultant who is expected to work with the SWFRPC 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.
- Participate in and coordinate community outreach and public engagement activities as needed.
- Identify, engage, and establish a collaborative regional food system stakeholder network
- Facilitate network to outline goals and objectives with actionable timelines
- Create an asset map for food system resources in the region to identify potential shared infrastructure and gaps
- Assess needs/opportunities for SWFL Food Hub and FL Food Hub Network specifically addressing:

- Ability to increase efficiency from farm to table through market systems, coordinated regional crop planning, logistics, and farmer training.
- Potential business models including 3-year budget for facilitating the aggregation, storage, processing, distribution, and/or marketing of locally/regionally produced food products.

C. Project Cost

Consultants are asked to submit a reasonable competitive project cost based on the Scope of Work section of this request for proposals. The SWFRPC will award the contract to the responsible firm whose proposal is most advantageous to the program, with price and other factors considered, see Qualifications section. It will be the SWFRPC’s option to utilize this contract for future related grants beyond the initial CDBG-MIT (Community Development Block Grant – Mitigation) General Planning Support funds should additional funds become available for implementation.

TIMELINE

It is expected that the Project will begin in March 2022

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

November 15, 2021 - Formal announcement date for RFP.

January 4, 2022 –5:00PM EDT: Deadline for submittal of proposals.

January 14, 2022 - Notification of award.

January 28, 2022 - Contract executed by both parties.

The SWFRPC reserves the right to make adjustments as needed to the above schedule.

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

A consultant, firm, or combination thereof wishing to submit a proposal must include the following in their response:

- A brief history of the proposing entity, including general background, knowledge of regional food systems, and experience working with relevant agencies.
- Resumes of the personnel assigned to the project.
- A statement substantiating the resources of the proposing entity and the ability to carry out the scope of work requested within the proposed timeline.
- Proposed fee structure, including billing rates, hourly rates, reimbursable expenses, etc. Preferences will be given to firm fixed pricing.
- References including contact information for at least three organizations.
- At least one (1) example of work.
- A statement of conflicts (if any) the proposing entity or key employees may have regarding these services. The statement should include conflicts, as well as any working relationships that may be perceived by disinterested parties as a conflict. If no potential conflicts of interests are identified, please state so.

• **Number of Proposals to Submit; Deadline, Mail, and Email Addresses**

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:

- **One (1) digital (PDF) copy** of the proposal must be submitted by **5:00 PM EDT on January 4, 2022**. The mailing and email delivery address is:

Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council

Attn: Margaret Wuerstle, Project Manager

P.O. Box 60933

Fort Myers, FL 33906

(239) 281-6978

Email Contact: mwuerstle@swfrpc.org

NOTE: In subject line of email put “Resiliency Strategy for Local Food Supply Project”

SELECTION CRITERIA

Proposals will be reviewed and evaluated by the project team. Criteria for evaluation will include:

SECTION A Qualifications and Capabilities **0-25pts.**

This section shall include the firm's name, areas of expertise, a brief history of the firm, size, 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 **0-25pts.**

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

SECTION C Project Cost **0-10pts**

This section shall include the project cost breakdown based on the tasks required to complete the project.

SECTION D Local Experience and Knowledge **0-20pts.**

Demonstrate local knowledge of the Southwest Florida region and understanding/experience working on local food supply systems.

SECTION E Project Staff **0-20pts.**

Brief summaries of the tasks for each staff member working on the project.

RFP SUBMISSION PROCESS

Proposal deadline: Proposals must be received no later than [Time and Date]. Late Proposals
Proposals received after the deadline will not be considered.

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.

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 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.

Public Information

Information supplied by the Proposer to the SWFRPC is subject to the Florida Public Records Law. Florida law, which 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.

Notification of Award

The SWFRPC plans to select a consultant by January 14, 2022. Should either party fail to execute a contract within 14 days of notification of award, the SWFRPC reserves the right to rescind the award and select services from another interested firm.

VENDOR REQUIREMENTS

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.

The SWFRPC encourages small & minority businesses, women business enterprises and labor surplus area firms to respond to this RFP.

QUESTIONS

Please direct all questions to: mwuerstle@swfrpc.org