

## **Notice of Request for Proposal**

[REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCILS](#)  
[Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council](#)

### **SOUTHWEST FLORIDA REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS Professional Consulting Services RFP Release Date: August 11, 2020 Qualifications Due Date: September 1, 2020**

#### **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 to support economic resilience efforts throughout Southwest Florida in response to the Coronavirus. As part of the project, the Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council intends to reach Black-owned businesses and communities of color in order to determine the impacts of the coronavirus on this segment of business ownership and to determine what their needs are to ensure recovery and resilience for the full regional economy in Southwest Florida. This segment of work requires the SWFRPC to contract with culturally-competent expertise to look across both the most densely populated Black census tracts by race and ethnicity and within the 23 federally-designated Opportunity Zones of Collier, Charlotte, Hendry, Glades, Lee and Sarasota counties and their 18 municipalities with particular attention to the commercial corridors in these counties.

##### **1.2 Background Information**

Our region has suffered significant economic impacts due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed weaknesses in the Region's economy and the need to diversify for economic sustainability that can withstand economic shocks. To respond to the unusual and compelling urgency of the coronavirus pandemic, extensive regional cooperation and coordination are necessary. This project will allow our Region to update and enhance its shared framework for economic development and resiliency through short-term and long-term economic development planning. It will allow us to assess impacts and provide support to our communities and business as we recover from COVID-19's devastating economic injuries. Furthermore, much has been reported on the fact that minority businesses have been affected at a higher rate than others. We intend to expand outreach to minority businesses and low-income communities to identify their needs and priorities. We will use data to identify areas of greatest need and develop effective solutions to achieve resilient and equitable outcomes.

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

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

- Evaluate coronavirus impact particularly on Black and minority-owned business enterprises (MBEs) of the region,

- Include metrics for economic recovery and resilience planning for MBE business owners that will be incorporated into the regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy
- Determine the essential technical assistance methods needed by local governments, MBE owners and other stakeholder organizations to ensure recovery

## **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 to meet the requirements of this 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.
- Administer one Regional Survey
- Targeted data gathering/informational interviews across each county with:
  - Key individual stakeholders in the economic development and small business support functions at the municipal or county level; and/or with
  - Representative leaders, leadership groups or trade organizations within the Opportunity Zone;
- Generation of GIS maps using relevant secondary data to visually highlight the trends in coronavirus impact on Black and minority-owned business in the region; and
- Discrete policy, programmatic and technical assistance recommendations for specific Opportunity Zones/local governments for overall inclusion into CEDS

### **2.2 Minimum Requirements**

- Demonstrated experience in working with Black and minority-owned business enterprises.
- Experience with evaluating business needs
- Experience with developing policy, programmatic and technical recommendations
- Experience in survey development and outreach
- An understanding of the Opportunity Zones in Southwest Florida

### **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 CARES ACT Funding for Coronavirus Response, Recovery, and Long-Term Economic Resilience Planning 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 in addressing this segment of the EDA grant project.

### 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**

**0-20pts.**

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**

**0-30pts.**

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

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

**0-30pts.**

Demonstrate local knowledge of the SWFRPC's region and any understanding/experience working with Black and minority-owned business enterprises.

#### **SECTION D Project Staff**

**0-20pts.**

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

### 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.

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.

August 11, 2020 - Formal announcement date for RFP.

September 1, 2020 – 5:00PM EDT: Deadline for submittal of proposals.

September 7, 2020 - Notification of award.

September 11, 2020 - Award of contract by SWFRPC.

### **3.7 Notification of Award**

The SWFRPC plans to select a consultant by September 7, 2020. Should either party fail to execute a contract within 15 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 Email Addresses**

**One (1) original and/or one (1) digital (PDF) copy** of the proposal must be submitted by **5:00 PM EDT on September 1, 2020**. 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](mailto:mwuerstle@swfrpc.org)

**NOTE: In subject line of email put "EDA CARES ACT Proposal"**

### **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.