



Northern
Maine
Development
Commission

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Comprehensive Economic Resiliency Strategy Development for Aroostook and Washington Counties, Maine

Statement of Confidentiality

This Request for Proposal (RFP) has been published for the sole purpose of permitting the recipient to submit a formal response to Northern Maine Development Commission (NMDC). The recipient agrees to maintain all submitted information in confidence and will not copy nor disclose any information contained in an official submitted proposal to any person outside the group directly responsible for responding to its contents. The contents of the proposals may not be used for any purpose other than in preparation of a formal response to this RFP.

Purpose

The COVID-19 pandemic has created lasting challenges from global to local, with businesses facing especially devastating consequences for short-term well-being and long-term growth. It is imperative to understand the extensive economic impacts COVID-19 has had on the two county region in order to identify needs and develop solutions that ensure economic recovery, growth, and continued sustainability. To support this regional effort (funded by a grant award from the [CARES Act Funding](#) initiative), NMDC is requesting proposals from an experienced professional Consultant to develop a Comprehensive Economic Resiliency Strategy – including stakeholder engagement activities and application of data analysis as part of the plan development process.

The outcome of this comprehensive strategy will provide municipal leaders and regional stakeholders the following:

- Alignment of strategic partnerships;
- Identification of critical investment priorities;
- Identification of critical gaps that identify needed outreach, support, and implementation of support measures related to regional economic vibrancy, and
- Development of informed strategies including a targeted action plan with outlined implementation activities, funding opportunities to support, and metrics to measure success.

In preparation for the activation of this project, the collection and analysis of comprehensive data sets cataloging the social, economic, and interrelated impacts of COVID-19 are being completed in a regional Economic Impact Analysis. The selected consultant will be expected to consider this analysis to inform the development of this Comprehensive Economic Resiliency Strategy and associated activities for implementation.

Objectives

For a successful recovery of the region's economy to occur, it is necessary that the trends, gaps, and needs caused by a pandemic are recognized, analyzed, addressed, and strategically targeted. The development of a Comprehensive Economic Resiliency Strategy is necessary to tackle the economic injury incurred by the disruption of the pandemic or other potential economic shocks.

Study Area

The primary study area shall encompass the Aroostook-Washington Economic Development District (AWEDD).

Products and Deliverables

The following is expected to be produced by the selected Consultant:

- A detailed Work Plan Schedule, including estimated completion times for each milestone, allocated staff time per phase, and an overall timeframe for completion of project;
- A detailed Stakeholder Engagement Strategy, including identification of critical regional participants and complete outline of methodology to be used, such as planned outreach and communications, surveys, workshops, meetings, and additional tools/resources required;
- A detailed outline of the Comprehensive Economic Resiliency Strategy structure, including but not limited to:
 - An Executive Summary;
 - Detailed methodology describing targeted use of data, analysis, and forecasted scenarios of the Economic Impact Analysis;
 - A comprehensive assessment of the current economic pulse of the region;
 - Integration opportunities within the regional CEDS;
 - Identified critical gaps in local/regional economic systems, structures, and support networks,
 - Targeted identified investment priorities;
 - Development of an action plan including metrics for measurements of success, implementation strategies, stakeholder alignment, and funding opportunities to support activation, and
 - Any additionally identified areas for opportunity to offer recommendations, including best practice observations within current/recent resiliency planning outputs, strategies, and planning processes.
- Draft Comprehensive Economic Resiliency Strategy, including complete narrative, executive summary, all data sets, related summaries of analysis, and an action plan that includes identified targeted strategies, related stakeholder ownership, and implementation activities;
- Final Comprehensive Economic Resiliency Strategy following input and edits provided by NMDC staff; and
- Any associated data, including GIS data (ESRI format), with ownership belonging to NMDC, and the ability to modify and update in the future.

The Consultant shall provide the completed plan with all associated text/tables/graphs/charts delivered via a digital platform, using a commonly available format(s) agreed upon by both parties.

Proposal Requirements

Proposals shall include a concise statement of the Consultant's approach to the project and a summary of the Consultant's ability to provide the required services. Proposals should, at a minimum, include:

- A Cover Letter with the following information attached:
 1. Name and address of firm(s) and identification and contact information of the Project Lead.
 2. Identification of Project Manager and all other team members – as well as any subcontractors to this project – and assigned duties, including a percentage breakdown of personnel hours and associated costs.
 3. Statement of qualifications. This statement should include a resume, a

- description of previous similar work, and a list of projects completed.
4. A clear description of how your firm would complete this project, including scope and methodology.
 5. A detailed Work Plan Schedule, including estimated completion times for each milestone, allocated staff time per phase, and an overall timeframe for completion of project.
- Names and contact information of at least three (3) client references to whom the applicant has provided services similar to the project described within this RFP. Include a brief summary of the project completed, outline of services provided, detailed schedule of work within timeframe, and approach to working with staff and community.
 - A proposed Scope of Work with total project budget and detailed workplan. At a minimum, the scope of work shall provide itemization of all costs and services and a billing schedule for each phase of the project as identified within the proposed timeline. The workplan also should include community engagement strategies, and recommendations for components and structure of the strategic planning document.
 - All prices quoted must be firm for a period of Ninety (90) days after the proposal due date.
 - A statement identifying any actual or potential conflicts of interest of any consultant or team member should be included as an addendum to your bid documents.
 - A cost proposal for a specific "not to exceed" fixed fee, including associated fees (i.e., printing costs, attendance at meetings, travel) shall be included with the initial submittal.
 - A requested payment schedule should accompany the work schedule.

Project Timeline

June 4, 2021	Request for Proposals Issued
June 25, 2021	Proposal Questions Due
June 30, 2021	Questions and Answers Made Available
July 2, 2021	Project Proposals Due
Mid July, 2021	Contract Awarded
Aug. 1, 2021	Project Start
Nov. 15, 2021	Draft for NMDC input due
Dec. 15, 2021	Final Documents, Data, Supporting Products, and Presentations Completed and/or delivered to NMDC

Evaluation Criteria and Selection Process

A review committee will evaluate all responses to the RFP that meet the submittal requirements and deadline.

Proposal Submissions

Interested candidates must submit complete proposals to rclark@nmdc.org by 4:30 p.m. EST (C.O.B.) on July 2, 2021. All questions pertaining to this RFP must be submitted electronically to jgulliver@nmdc.org by June 25, 2021 (C.O.B.). All submitted queries and formal responses will be shared publicly and made available on NMDC's website on June 30, 2021. Consultants that submitted any questions will also be notified directly upon posting. No verbal requests for information or contact with NMDC, its staff, or selection committee members will be accepted, and may result in disqualification.

Proposals must be submitted in a .pdf electronic format that allows for printing/viewing and distribution by NMDC to its staff and selection committee.