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Regional Strategic Workforce and Economic Recovery Plan RFP - Questions and Answers

The following questions were given to the Ottawa County Department of Job and Family Services at the Bidder Conference on May 3, 2019, or were sent to Stephanie Kowal by Wednesday, May 15, 2019. All Question/Answers will be sent to any Bidder who attended or later requested to receive the information, and be posted to the Ottawa County website:

www.co.ottawa.oh.us

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| Question: | What is the final deadline for the report? |
| Answer: | Feb for initial recommendations (soft deadline), in order to use information for a separate implementation grant. The full final report is due May 2019. May 2019 is final report |
| Question: | What is the funding source for this project? |
| Answer: | Funds are through the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), under Rapid Response funding. |
| Question: | Should the information completed for the soft deadline on the project be presented in any particular format? |
| Answer: | Yes, it will need to be in a format that can be copied and pasted into other documents. The intent of this study is to provide a framework to apply for federal funding to implement strategies identified in this study. |
| Question: | This is a small timeframe, and there is concern that with a nine (9) month timeframe, there may not be enough time to get ample responses from businesses. |
| Answer: | Our suggestion would be to survey more businesses than normal practice would dictate, and have a larger sample size, to make up for the response time and potential of not receiving answers back from businesses in the timeframe available. |
| Question: | Is there a group that is organized now that has been driving this project? Or is there an initial launch meeting needed to kick off project? |
| Answer: | For approximately the last 18 months, a team of Economic Development and Workforce Development professionals have been meeting to steer this project. However, that group has not included business representatives to date. |
| Question: | The group is a steering committee for this project? |
| Answer: | Yes, that group would be considered the steering committee for this project. |

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| Question: | What is Davis Besse's role on committee? |
| Answer: | <p>Davis Besse employs approximately 700 individuals. The facility also has challenges in meeting its current and projected workforce needs. Initially, the intent is to include Davis Besse as an employer facing workforce needs, along with other businesses in the region.</p> <p>This project is funded with WIOA/Rapid Response funding due to the potential for the closure of this facility. If that is not avoided, then the role of Davis Besse would be more to assess current staff skills and merge those into the balance of the local labor market. In that situation, the study would also be used as a tool in outplacement and assistance to individuals displaced from work.</p> |
| Question: | So, for the Davis Besse surveying, should the study start off with worker retention needs, or should it start off doing outplacement skills mapping? |
| Answer: | Start with retention survey and strategies. |
| Question: | Will the results of the study be reported only to the steering committee, or also reported to local elected officials or other public forums? |
| Answer: | Results will start with the steering committee. After reviewing, the committee will schedule a meeting to include local elected officials and other interested parties from the community. |
| Question: | Is this study looking for a regional approach? |
| Answer: | Yes, the goal of this study is to consider the needs of the region. |
| Question: | Who do you envision participating in the SWOT analysis? |
| Answer: | We envision the participation of businesses, workforce and economic development professionals, high school administrators or teachers, higher education, and local elected officials. |
| Question: | Are there additional industry segments to analyze, or should we work with those industries identified in the RFP for focus groups and assessments? |
| Answer: | The committee determined the industry clusters on which to focus, based on their experiences in their local communities. Start with the industries identified in the RFP. |
| Question: | How deep of a dive into training need assessments should this project take? Should it be by specific skill sets? How will we know who to talk to, without going too deep into the weeds? |
| Answer: | Work with steering committee in developing the questions, focus group members, assimilating information already gathered. It is not the committee's intent to have recommendations that are specific to one or two major businesses and then ignore other industry sectors. This should generate information and workforce strategies that span multiple businesses and industries. |
| Question: | Is there a contact list of businesses to start from? |
| Answer: | Yes, the Economic Development agencies will have a list of businesses that can be used to start from. |
| Question: | With the short timeframe of the project, and an expectation that the study will include wage and benefit surveys, will your local businesses share that information, or do you think they will keep the information "close to the vest"? |
| Answer: | This will likely vary with businesses, from county to county. |

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| Question: | Survey fatigue – Have there been any recent surveying done that may lead to businesses not participating due to survey fatigue? |
| Answer: | The results of surveys conducted by the Economic Development agencies will be shared with the selected provider. Provider can use that to modify surveys for those businesses that have recently participated in something similar. There is also a similar workforce analysis being conducted in a neighboring county, which has the potential to spill into surveying being done of some of our businesses. . |
| Question: | Is there anything happening with high school students in the workforce development area? |
| Answer: | All of the participating counties have Business Advisory Councils, which bring businesses and high school superintendents together to develop strategies and programs to promote in demand occupational areas throughout the K-12 curriculum. Each county has taken a different approach to how that works, based on the feedback of their local BAC members. We are hoping the results of these studies will help us to work with the post-secondary school providers to enhance how workforce needs are being met. |
| Question: | In Section 2(D) (5), you ask for a visual representation of strategies that includes GIS mapping. Can you give an example of what you are looking for? Relocation/ recruitment talent attraction example |
| Answer: | For example, one of the strategies may include a recruitment strategy that draws from individuals in other areas. We would hope to see a recruitment and talent attraction strategy that identifies through GIS mapping, what geographic region to draw from as well as look at statistics within the region on housing availability. |
| Question: | How would you plan to use the information gathered? Do you envision embedding this info on local websites as a talent attraction tool? |
| Answer: | Yes, that would be one way we would envision using the information. |
| Question: | For the “blind” copy of the proposal, how should we identify who does what within the organizational structure? |
| Answer: | Bidders should use job titles and not names to describe the work product. Ottawa County DJFS will do a final scrub of any identifiable information, before sending the proposals to the rating committee. After further consideration, the process outlined in the RFP is being modified. The “Company Results” and references will not be reviewed by the rating committee as part of the blind review and scoring process. They will be shared after initial rating has been completed. |
| Question: | When providing the entity’s experience, how should we talk about our experience in a specific area without identifying ourselves? Is it ok to describe the region worked with, but just not the specific business or city? |
| Answer: | Again, after further consideration, the Company Results of proposals will not be distributed to the rating committee until after the initial ratings have been completed. They will be shared at the end of the review process. |
| Question: | For the electronic copy of the proposal, is a flash drive ok? |
| Answer: | Yes |

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| Question: | What is the purpose of performance bond? |
| Answer: | We are asking for a performance bond is to ensure that once a selection has been made, we have the assurance that the project will be completed. The Bond provides financial coverage if a bidder abandons the project, and we have to start again. within the timeframe identified, and that we don't award a contract and Explained purpose of bond; get an affidavit from insurance carrier and attach to proposal packet |
| Question: | How do you want to have documentation of the performance bond included in the proposal? |
| Answer: | Bidders can get an affidavit from the insurance carrier for the bond and include the copy of the affidavit to the proposal packet. |
| Question: | Is that the same process to show proof of insurance? |
| Answer: | Yes – supply proof of insurance with the proposal packet. |
| Question: | Is it acceptable to use our current policy and then add Ottawa County Department of Job and Family Services, if get selected for the project? |
| Answer: | Yes |
| Question: | With regards to the performance bond and the proof of insurance coverage, where in the proposal packet should bidders identify they meet those requirements? |
| Answer: | Include the verifications for the performance bond and insurance coverage with Section IV – Representations, Assurances and Certifications (Attachment #5). |
| Question: | Do affidavits count toward 25-page limit for the proposal? |
| Answer: | No |
| Question: | Under Section IX – Staff, our staff may have multiple page resumes and accomplishments. Is boiling it down to a one-page resume sufficient? |
| Answer: | Yes, don't have to condense further |
| Question: | Do the resumes under the Staff section, count toward the 25-page limit for the proposal? |
| Answer: | Yes |
| Question: | Since you are changing the rating process to hold the Company Results section until the end of the rating, do we still need to submit a “scrubbed” copy of the Company Results that has no identifying information in it? |
| Answer: | No, because we are going to hold that information for the end of the project, so Section VIII – Company Results does not need to be include in the “scrubbed” copy of the proposal. |
| Question: | Do you have an approved grant amount for this project? |
| Answer: | Ottawa County received \$110,000 in WIOA Rapid Response funding the entire report. The recommendations and strategies from this study will then be used to apply for further federal funding to implement those strategies. |
| Question: | Will an in-person interview be used for the selection process? |
| Answer: | There is the potential for an in- person presentation, but it is not currently in the selection process. |
| Question: | Is there currently a joint economic development plan that pulls all 4 counties in together? |
| Answer: | No |

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| Question: | Do you envision any expenses or in-kind contributions toward this project for the steering committee members? |
| Answer: | The entire Rapid Response grant is being set aside for the contracted study. If any activities are provided through the steering committee, they would be “in kind.” |
| Question: | Should proposals set aside any money in the budget for meeting space or food for the focus groups? |
| Answer: | WIOA Rapid Response funding cannot be used for food or drinks. There may be free meeting space available in each of the counties through workforce development agencies or township halls, but a provider could also choose to pay for meeting space. |
| Question: | Could you explain the template for the budget section? |
| Answer: | The first page is the format for the budget to be submitted. Anything on this page should be accompanied with a narrative to describe what is included in that section of the budget. For example, explaining the cost allocation method for wages and other shared or administrative expenses. The second page is an example of an invoice, but entities do not have to use this format for invoicing. is 1 st page is format of budget to submit; accompanying narrative. |
| Question: | So, for Attachment 1 – bidders should list the estimated cost in salary box, identify any expected travel expenses, and then explain how they arrived at those amounts? |
| Answer: | Yes |
| Question: | For the Travel line – what level of detail is needed? |
| Answer: | Estimated miles and what level of reimbursement (can’t exceed IRS rate), anticipated accommodations costs, reimbursement for business related travel specific to this project. If your organization has a standard travel policy, you could also include that with the proposal, but it would be considered a part of the 25-page limit. |
| Question: | To complete the budget, we would need the total number of hours (units) we project will be needed for this project? Then we would multiply hour hourly rate by the total projected hours (units) to come up with the total cost proposed? |
| Answer: | Yes |
| Question: | How should bidders demonstrate they are in compliance with the items listed in Section 7(G) in their proposal? |
| Answer: | Attachment #4 of the RFP Packet (Competitive Proposal Affidavit) allows bidders to certify that they are in compliance with each of these provisions. Attachment #4 should be signed and notarized and included in the submitted proposal. |
| Question: | Do attachments 4 and 5 also need to be signed (and notarized) by any subcontractors? |
| Answer: | Yes |
| Question: | How will the answers to today’s questions be communicated to bidders? |
| Answer: | Those participating today at the bidder’s conference, and any requests with contact information provided by the deadline for questions, will have the information emailed to them. The information will also be posted to the Ottawa County website, where notice for the RFP and the RFP are posted. The website is: www.co.ottawa.oh.us and is under the “Legal Notices and Bids” section of the website. |

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| Question: | Will we receive help in coming up with a list of businesses and interested parties to include as part of the focus group portion of this study? |
| Answer: | Yes, the steering committee of Workforce Development and Economic Development professionals will assist in identifying focus group members for this project. |
| Question: | Is Attachment 6 part of our proposals or is it an internal document? |
| Answer: | Attachment 6 is provided to bidders in order for you to understand how our Cost/Price Analysis is conducted as part of the bid selection process. |
| Question: | When the project is fully completed, what do you want final deliverable to look like and how do you envision it will be presented and utilized in the region? |
| Answer: | The final report should be written in a way that outlines the labor pool and job opportunities, and has specific strategies identified on how to match those two together. Each recommendation should include the information gathered that lead to the recommendation and provide specific action items to implement those recommendations. |
| Question: | Knowing this project will include a lot of research, do you want the statistical research methodologies described in detail, or do you want more of a more high-level overview of the information gathering process that will appeal to researchers and implementers? |
| Answer: | In the main document, use the high-level overview, but please include statistical methodologies as appendix to the report. |
| Question: | The proposals are due on Tuesday May 28 th , which is the day after Memorial Day – is that correct? Any thought of moving that date? |
| Answer: | The deadline for responding is final, so our timeframe for selection and getting a contract in place can be met. We realize this is a tight timeframe for the entire project, and do not want to delay implementation any further. |
| Question: | Our organization is planning to do the certified check for 5% of total contract cost instead of the performance bond, which could be held until the project is completed. Can you please confirm who the check should be made out to? |
| Answer: | The contract will be between the Ottawa County Board of Commissioners, on behalf of the Ottawa County Department of Job and Family Services, and the provider. The Performance Bond, or in this case, certified check, should be made out to The Ottawa County Board of Commissioners, Ottawa County, Ohio. |
| Question: | When you talk about a Management Summary on page 8, Section 6(V), do you mean executive summary of proposal or management summary of firm? |
| Answer: | This should be an executive summary of the proposal. |
| Question: | Was the pre-bid meeting a mandatory meeting, or was it optional? |
| Answer: | The pre-bid meeting was optional. |
| Question: | Do you already have a set budget or grant amount for this project? |
| Answer: | Ottawa County received \$110,000 in WIOA Rapid Response funding the entire report. The recommendations and strategies from this study will then be used to apply for further federal funding to implement those strategies. |