



**REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS
INNOVATION CENTER FEASIBILITY STUDY**

Issue Date: December 11, 2020

Due Date: January 15, 2021, 4:00 P.M.

Notice and Instructions to Responders

1. Responses must be received at the location described below no later than 4:00 p.m. January 15, 2021, or they will be considered late and will be rejected.
2. Submit five complete printed copies, and one electronic copy (PDF format) of your response.
3. Deliver responses to:

Michelle Bostinelos
Siouxland Interstate Metropolitan Planning Council
(SIMPCO)
1122 Pierce Street
Sioux City, IA 51105
mbostinelos@simpco.org
4. Late and / or faxed responses will be rejected.

Introduction

Iowa's West Coast Initiative invites the submission of qualifications from experienced and qualified consultants to complete a feasibility study for a regional Innovation Center. The feasibility study is the first step in evaluating the concept, building/space layout, and sustainability of an Innovation Center as a means to successfully enrich the entrepreneurial ecosystem in the Siouxland region. The feasibility study will analyze the market demand, community needs, real estate requirements for proposed uses, and the costs associated with development and ongoing operations.

Background

Iowa's West Coast Initiative (IWCI) is a collaboration between the economic development organizations in Plymouth, Monona, and Woodbury counties. These organizations include the City of Sioux City, Siouxland Interstate Metropolitan Planning Council, The Siouxland Initiative, Siouxland Economic Development Corporation, LeMars Business Initiative Corporation, Woodbury County, and Monona County. The goal of IWCI is to encourage entrepreneurial activity and create a supportive culture by providing business and technical assistance, offering networking opportunities and increasing access to capital for entrepreneurs.

In August 2020, IWCI hired a full-time staff person as the *Entrepreneurial Community Navigator* to continue building the entrepreneurial ecosystem by engaging with entrepreneurs in the region and expanding programming. To build on these efforts, IWCI is considering the acquisition and renovation of a building in downtown Sioux City into an Innovation Center. The Innovation Center will serve as a hub for entrepreneurial activity and provide entrepreneurs with access to services, resources and programming to help commercialize emerging technologies and support business growth in the region.

The proposed building is envisioned to provide space and the latest equipment for technology startups interested in software development, robotics, and automation, as well as a community commercial kitchen for startups interested in food tech and product development. Additional amenities envisioned in the building include business coworking, a radio station studio and offices, a coffee shop, rentable offices/conference rooms and space to host workshops and events. The Entrepreneurial Community Navigator will be based out of the Innovation Center and will manage the facility.

I. Response Requirements

The response to this RFQ must include no more than 25 pages (front and back, including resumes) regarding how the consultant is qualified to address the requirements below.

The successful consultant will analyze the market demand and feasibility of a regional Innovation Center located in downtown Sioux City, Iowa with the following proposed uses:

- Business coworking
- Tech incubator/makerspace
- Community commercial kitchen
- Coffee shop/café
- Radio studio and offices

- Leasable offices and conference rooms
- Event space
- Additional services or amenities as identified

The successful consultant will be responsible for evaluating the concept and space requirements for each proposed use listed above, including but not limited to:

- Analysis of regional need/interest
- Preferred equipment/amenities
- Total square feet needed
- Number of offices/conference rooms
- Build-out expense
- Operational expense
- Membership fee/Operational revenue from rent

The successful consultant will be responsible for evaluating the sustainability of an Innovation Center, including:

- Refine and clarify objectives and vision: Propose an operations model based on market demand that will identify components needed for the Innovation Center to be the most utilized but offer room for new program development and future growth. Provide operation strategies for greatest success and industry development.
- Financial analysis: Identify projected revenue sources and expenses related to facility development and annual operations. Propose a management and organizational structure to achieve the highest level of sustainability. Provide sustainable funding recommendations for long-term viability.

Submissions should include the following elements (not to exceed 25 pages, front and back, including resumes):

- Qualifications of the firm and key project personnel who have worked on similar feasibility studies.
- Statement of project understanding;
- General approach to completing the project;
- Expected role of local staff;
- Proposed project schedule sequence;
- Sample deliverables from recent similar projects;
- References from similar projects.

A detailed *Scope of Work and Contract Amount* for this project will be further defined and negotiated with the selected consultant.

II. Selection

Responses will be evaluated on the following criteria:

- Team qualifications and previous related work experience from similar projects;
- Demonstrated knowledge of and familiarity with this type of project by key personnel to be assigned to the project;
- Understanding of project objectives as demonstrated by proposed approach to a scope of work;
- Quality and clarity of sample deliverables from similar projects;
- References from recent related projects of similar size and scope.

A Selection Committee comprised of IWCI's members may interview any or all consultants submitting responses; however, IWCI reserves the right to reject any or all responses or to request additional information, waive any conditions or criteria set forth in this RFQ and accept any response that it may deem to be in the best interest of IWCI.

By submitting a response, the consultant hereby authorizes IWCI to contact references and make such further investigation as deemed appropriate. IWCI shall not be liable for any costs associated with submittal of any response or expenses incurred to attend an interview.

III. Schedule

It is anticipated that work on the feasibility study will begin in February 2021 and completed within 3 months.

Responses are due at 4:00 p.m. on January 15, 2021. Proposals should be mailed or hand delivered to SIMPCO, 1122 Pierce Street, Sioux City, IA 51105. Listed below are estimated dates and times of actions related to this Request for Qualifications (RFQ).

DATE	EVENT
December 11, 2021	RFQ Issue Date
January 15, 2021	RFQ Due
January 2021	Consultant Interviews
February 2021	Contract Negotiations / Approval

Please Note: These dates are for planning purposes only. They represent IWCI's desired timeline for implementing this project. The timeline may be adjusted, however, as needs and circumstances dictate.

IV. Inquiries and Clarification of Request

Interested firms are asked to submit their questions either via email or phone call to the following staff contact:

Michelle Bostinelos
712-279-6286
mbostinelos@simpco.org

V. Acceptance / Rejection of Responses

IWCI reserves the right to accept or reject any or all responses submitted, in whole or in part, and to waive any informalities or technicalities which at IWCI's discretion are determined to be in the best interests of IWCI. Further, IWCI makes no representations that a contract will be awarded to any responder. IWCI expressly reserves the right to reject any and all responses without indicating any reasons for such rejection(s). IWCI reserves the right to negotiate with any responder it deems suitable to carry out this project. IWCI reserves the right to postpone due dates for its own convenience and to withdraw this solicitation at any time without prior notice.

VI. Miscellaneous Provisions

All documents, graphics, and exhibits produced by the successful proposer as part of this planning project shall be provided to IWCI, become the property of IWCI, and are to be available for use by IWCI in any manner IWCI deems appropriate. This RFQ does not commit IWCI to award a contract, pay any costs incurred in preparation of these applications, or to procure or contract for any services.

Consultant and subconsultants shall identify any group, individual or organization that they may have worked for, or currently work for, that has had ownership, lease, development, related or similar interest in IWCI. The IWCI reserves the right to reject any response or responder who it feels has a conflict of interest.