

Request for Proposals (RFP)
Siouxland Community Development Financing Gap Study
SIMPCO

March 15, 2021

Notice to Consulting Firms:

The Siouxland Interstate Metropolitan Planning Council (SIMPCO) requests written statements of qualifications and professional proposals from firms or teams of firms to complete a Siouxland Development Community Financing Gap Study in partnership with the Siouxland Economic Development Corporation (SEDC). The funding for this project is a part of an investment award from the United States Economic Development Administration's (EDA) CARES Act Recovery Assistance.

Project Background

COVID-19 has resulted in widespread unemployment and business closures. As with COVID-related infections and deaths, no population groups have been impacted economically more severely than the traditionally underserved populations of low income and immigrants. SEDC and SIMPCO seek to identify economic opportunities that can create jobs and support business formation in the underserved markets within the Sioux City metro area (IA/NE), and is willing to serve as a facilitator of key potential stakeholders in the community, and sponsor the preparation of a feasibility study to identify and access possible options. The research will identify needs in underserved areas and demand for specific products, services, or projects that would address those needs.

We envision the need to retain a consultant specializing in building sustainable organizations that help low-wealth individuals and communities create jobs and build small businesses. We envision specific focus will be given to predetermined census tracts consisting of the core metro area in Iowa and Nebraska. The study's analysis will be driven by exploring the viability of opportunities for low income or otherwise distressed communities. Opportunities would include investment that stimulates sustainable, positive change leading to the formation of new businesses and the creation of permanent, living-wage jobs. Metrics for success, in addition to jobs and new businesses in low-income communities, could include the provision of commercial goods and services as well as community goods and services (health care, education facilities, recreation opportunities, etc.), access to training and skill development, financing minority or low-income businesses, and access to healthy foods to name a few.

This study is designed to answer a number of key questions to determine potential opportunities in the target market, including:

- What can we learn about the people living in or near the target market?
- What are the symptoms of economic distress and what are the impacts of COVID-19?

- What can we learn about housing, transportation, education and skills (including language/cultural barriers), impacting upon business formation and job creation?
- Who are the primary lenders/investors?
- Are there gaps in the financing market?
- Who are the primary service providers and key community stakeholders?
- What are the most viable opportunities?
- What is the optimal structure of an organization best suited to cultivate, develop, and finance these projects?

Scope of Work

The scope of work will be finalized once a consultant is selected. At minimum, the following scope of work/approach is required:

1. Clarify the target market, identify/contact key stakeholders, identify and design research tools.
2. Secondary data analysis (census population, income, and poverty data; BLS employment data; County Business Patterns, etc.) focusing to the extent possible on specific census tracts.
3. Scan of relevant economic plans to understand the community's desired outcomes for business development, housing needs, community facilities, etc.
4. Key stakeholder interviews to understand the need from the perspective of service providers active in serving the target market.
5. Financial market scan documenting lenders active and financial resources available to the target market.
6. Preparation of a final report identifying the needs of underserved areas and individuals in the Sioux City metro area (IA/NE) as it relates to job creation, business formation and other economic opportunities.

Proposal Submittal Requirements

Any questions regarding this Request for Proposals (RFP) should be submitted via email to erinb@simpco.org using the subject line "Financing Gap Study." Please limit submittals to 20 pages (no smaller than 11pt font size) or fewer.

Responses to the RFP must be received by Erin Berzina as follows:

Due Date: **April 16, 2021**
 Time: Prior to 4:30 p.m. CST
 Deliver to: Erin Berzina, Regional Planning Director
 SIMPCO
 1122 Pierce Street
 Sioux City, IA 51105
erinb@simpco.org

Number of copies: 1 electronic (pdf) copy. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, delivery of hard copies is not required at this time.

Proposal Content

To standardize responses and simplify the comparison and evaluation of responses, all statements must be organized in the manner set forth below, separated into sections, and appropriately labeled. All information and materials requested shall be provided in the proposal under a single cover.

Cover Letter

The full name and address of the firm's organization and the branch office that will perform the services described herein shall be stated. The Principal-in-Charge of the branch office shall be identified. Summarize the Consultants' interest in the project as well as identify the name and contact information of the designated Project Manager.

Technical Approach and Scope of Work

The responding firm shall state its understanding of the project as outlined in the scope of work. The approach in rendering the services required shall be detailed in a proposed Scope of Services.

Company Profile(s)/Description

Provide a description of the team in as much detail as necessary to demonstrate the team's ability to carry out the scope of services as requested in this RFP.

Project Personnel

Qualifications of the project manager and personnel, including anticipated sub-consultants, with specialized skills shall be highlighted. Please provide an organizational chart of proposed team members. Information for all key project personnel shall be included and show the following:

- Name, specialty, and job title
- Years of relevant experience with firm (and previous employers)
- Academic degree(s) and discipline(s)
- Professional registrations
- Office location where employed
- A brief synopsis of experience, training or other qualities that reflect the individual's related experience and expected contribution to the project.
- A brief summary of professional certifications, registrations, and licenses that your firm / individuals hold that pertain to this project. If the firm or personnel have had their professional certification, registration, and / or license revoked, suspended, sanctioned please provide the dates and circumstances as a part of this response.

Past Performance and References

Please provide a maximum of three (3) examples of similar or related projects successfully completed within the last five years.

Project Approach

Provide a concise summary of the firm or team’s approach to the project. If your proposal includes any variation to the proposed scope of work (reduced or additional services), please identify and provide justification for any modifications.

Project Schedule and Budget

Discuss the consultant’s workload and its ability to complete the project in a timely manner and within budget. Provide a proposed timeline for completing deliverables, and outline the tasks and associated budget for each task.

Additional Information

Any additional information that is relevant for SIMPCO to consider in reviewing and comparing the firm’s proposal.

Evaluation and Selection Process

Qualifications will be evaluated by a selection committee established by SIMPCO using the Selection Criteria in the table shown below, to identify the firm or firms best qualified to meet the needs on this project. The firm(s) deemed best qualified by the selection committee may be invited for additional presentation and interviews. However, SIMPCO reserves the right to request interviews of any, all, or none of the consultants.

Item	Selection Criteria	Rating Ranges
1	Experience, Qualifications, and Expertise Firm's experience with similar projects, qualifications and expertise of key personnel based on each element in the RFP.	(0-30)
2	Capabilities and Resources Projects currently under contract involving equipment and key personnel that would also handle this project along with estimated time of completion.	(0-20)
3	Project Overview Convey your understanding of the project objectives. Identify major problems which you perceive at this time. Describe the overall approach you will use to overcome the problems and the anticipated project schedule.	(0-30)
4	Past Performance References Information on other organizations for which your firm has provided comparable consulting services.	(0-5)
5	Quality and Thoroughness of a Proposal	(0-5)
6	Geographic Location of your Firm	(0-5)
7	Additional Factors	(0-5)
TOTAL (100 pts max)		
ADDITIONAL COMMENTS		