



AGENCY OF COMMERCE & COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT

NATIONAL LIFE BUILDING
NATIONAL LIFE DRIVE, 6TH FLOOR
MONTPELIER, VERMONT 05620-0501
802-828-3230

TO: Parties Interested in Conducting Services - Vermont Regional Service Centers

FROM: Agency of Commerce & Community Development, Agency of Agriculture, Agency of Human Services and Department of Labor

DATE: May 3, 2010

SUBJ: Request for Proposals

The State of Vermont acting through the Agency of Commerce and Community Development, the Department of Labor, and the Agency of Human Services requests proposals from qualified and interested entities to provide an array of services as a State of Vermont Regional Service Center. The scope of work to be performed and the information that must be presented in your proposal are described in this Request for Proposals.

Three copies (3) of each proposal must be submitted no later than August 2, 2010 at 4:00 PM EST to:

Kevin L. Dorn, Secretary
Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development
National Life Building, Drawer 20
Montpelier, Vermont 05620-0501

The State reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals. A selection committee consisting of members of the Agency of Commerce & Community Development (ACCD), Department of Labor (DOL) Agency of Agriculture (AGR), and Agency of Human Services (AHS) will evaluate the proposals. If a proposal is selected, representatives will be invited to negotiate a contract.

If you have any questions about the proposal process, please feel free to call Catherine West at (802) 828-5678.

Enclosure



AGENCY OF COMMERCE & COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT

NATIONAL LIFE BUILDING
NATIONAL LIFE DRIVE, 6TH FLOOR
MONTPELIER, VERMONT 05620-0501
802-828-3230

**Request for Proposals
VT Regional Service Center**

This is a Sealed Proposal Response

RFP Issuance Date: **Monday, May 3, 2010**

Questions Due by: **Monday, May 24, 2010**

Questions concerning this request for proposals must be in writing (via mail, e-mail, or fax) and received by ACCD by 4:00 PM EST on Monday, May 24, 2010. Questions may be e-mailed to marketing@state.vt.us. The State will respond to written questions by Friday, June 4, 2010. Any responses will be in writing and posted on the State's website at www.vermontbidsystem.com (we need to insert Web location of RFP and where question responses will be posted. cw) under the 'Proposal Attachments' section. The State reserves the right to select which questions it will answer.

Proposal Due Date: **Monday, August 2, 2010 @ 4:05 PM EST**
Intent to Bid (Submission Form) **Friday, June 11, 2010 @ 4:05 PM EST**

Three (3) Copies of the proposal must be received by the Department in printed form and delivered to:

Kevin L. Dorn, Secretary
Vermont Agency of Commerce & Community Development
National Life Building, Drawer 20
Montpelier, Vermont 05620-0501

"Sealed Proposal Instructions" after this page.

RFP Contact Person: Catherine West, Agency of Commerce & Community Development, 1 National Life Drive, National Life Building, 6th Floor, Montpelier, Vermont 05620-0501, Voice-(802) 828-5678, Fax-(802) 828-3383, catherine.west@state.vt.us



AGENCY OF COMMERCE & COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT

NATIONAL LIFE BUILDING
NATIONAL LIFE DRIVE, 6TH FLOOR
MONTPELIER, VERMONT 05620-0501
802-828-3230

Request for Proposals VT Regional Service Center

Sealed Proposal Instructions

All bids must be sealed and must be addressed to the Agency of Commerce & Community Development, National Life Building, 6th Floor, Montpelier, Vermont 05620-0501. **BID ENVELOPES MUST BE CLEARLY MARKED 'SEALED BID' AND SHOW THE REQUISITION NUMBER AND /OR BID TITLE, OPENING DATE AND NAME OF BIDDER.**

All bidders are hereby notified that sealed bids must be in the office of the Agency of Commerce & Community Development by the bid due date and time. Bidders are cautioned that it is their responsibility to originate the sending of bids in sufficient time to insure receipt by the Agency on or before the bid due date. Hand carried bids shall be delivered to a representative of the Agency on or before the bid due date. Bids not in possession of the Department by the due date and time will not be considered.

The Agency may change the date and/or time of bid opening. If a change is made, the Agency will make a reasonable effort to inform all bidders.

All bids will be opened publicly. Any interested party may attend bid openings. Proposal results may be requested in writing and are available once an award has been made.

FAXED BIDS: FAXED bids will NOT be accepted.

ELECTRONIC BIDS: ELECTRONIC Proposals will NOT be accepted.

PROPOSAL TITLE: "VT REGIONAL SERVICE CENTER"

Included:

- Request for Information
- Attachment A - Customary State Contract Provisions
- Attachment B - Intent to Submit Form (Due June 11, 2010)
- Attachment C - Price Quote (**must accompany your proposal**)
- Attachment D - Vermont Tax Certificate (**must accompany your proposal**)



TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>SECTION</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
A. INTRODUCTION.....	5
B. BACKGROUND.....	5
C. KEY ASPECTS.....	5
D. SCOPE OF WORK.....	6
E. BASE CONTRACT TERMS.....	8
G. CHARACTERISTICS REQUIRED OF SUCCESSFUL BIDDER.....	8
H. FORMAT OF THE PROPOSAL.....	9
I. PAYMENT PROVISION.....	10
J. CONFIDENTIALITY.....	11
K. EVALUATION CRITERIA.....	11
L. ADDITIONAL PROVISION.....	12
ATTACHMENT A.....	14
ATTACHMENT B.....	14
ATTACHMENT C.....	20
ATTACHMENT D.....	21



AGENCY OF COMMERCE & COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT

NATIONAL LIFE BUILDING
NATIONAL LIFE DRIVE, 6TH FLOOR
MONTPELIER, VERMONT 05620-0501
802-828-3230

A. INTRODUCTION:

The State of Vermont is seeking proposals from existing entities currently funded by grants from ACCD that will provide economic development, regional planning and workforce development services through a Regional Service Center (RSC) over the course of three years. All State of Vermont contracts are performance based and will require work performance components. The State recognizes the importance of having a comprehensive service delivery system that provides assistance to Vermonters, Vermont's business community and its municipalities. In this regard, the State subscribes to a free and open bidding process structure.

For the purposes of this RFP, "Bidder" refers to existing entities being funded by grants issued by ACCD which may respond to this RFP to provide comprehensive services as outlined in this RFP.

The State of Vermont may contract with a qualified bidder for comprehensive services outlined in this RFP based upon the content of such submissions. The State of Vermont also may contract with a qualified bidder that submits a proposal as a combined group.

B. BACKGROUND:

Economic development, regional planning and workforce development are critical to the success of Vermont. It is imperative that we develop a delivery system that can meet the needs of every Vermont community in a way that is innovative; collaborative and with positive outcomes. Further, it is critical that delivery of these services be done in a manner that is cost-effective. In order to achieve this goal, we are seeking proposals that can address the following:

24 VSA Chapter 117, Subchapter 3 Section 4342 *"A regional service center shall be a non-profit organization whose principal purpose is to guide and accomplish coordinated, efficient and economic development of the region which will, in accordance with the present and future needs and resources, best promote the health, safety, order, convenience, prosperity and welfare of the inhabitants as well as efficiency and economy in the process of development"*

The language in this RFP has intentionally been kept broad, so as to elicit creative, innovative responses. It is not our intent to be prescriptive, but to encourage bidders to reply to this request in a way that most constructively advances its unique needs, address challenges and capitalize upon opportunities. Further, bidders are encouraged to expand on the information that is required in this RFP to promote the well-being of the territory sector that is being proposed

C. KEY ASPECTS:



1. One bidder per specified region will be offered a contract. The selected bidders will be expected to enter into a contract negotiated with the State of Vermont, and comply with applicable Vermont and federal contracting requirements and purchasing policies including, but not limited to, regulations such as Bulletin 3.5 State of Vermont Contracting Procedures and the Americans with Disabilities Act, where applicable.
2. If bidder is bidding with sub-contractors as partnering entities the proposal must include sub-contractor assigned staff resumes and at least two references projects and contacts.
3. Budgets are determined annually with funds appropriated by the Vermont General Assembly and in some cases by the federal government and, therefore, may vary substantially from year to year. In addition, departmental programs, goals and objectives are dynamic — making it difficult to accurately predict spending levels and budgets.
4. Selected bidders that sign contracts will be required to perform to the standards of the contract and scope of work as described in Section D.
5. Cost is a significant factor in selecting successful bidders, but it is not necessarily the determining factor. A bidder's comparative superior experience and knowledge may result in a proposal selection other than the lowest proposal submitted.

D. SCOPE OF WORK:

1. Services to Be Provided:

This RFP is seeking bidder(s) to propose the services that must include, but need not be limited to, the provision of regional planning, economic development, workforce development, and grant administration. Bidder should address the following components in their proposal as noted in Section H (“Format of the Proposal”)

- a. Describe the region (towns served, population, and other characteristics) that will be served by this regional service center. Boundaries must be established along existing municipal boundaries.

Provide a description and organizational chart explaining the governance of and operations model for the RSC (including a budget)

- b. What other funding resources will be pursued by the RSC? What other funding sources have already been committed?
- c. Explain the activities that the RSC will undertake to accomplish the following performance measures (Note: Each region will negotiate their performance measures):



- i. Economic Development
 - a. Net increase in jobs for the region
 - b. Existing business support and retention
 - c. New investment and business attraction
 - d. Increased household median income

- ii. Workforce Development (note: RSCs may create a workforce sub-committee of their board)
 - a. Coordination of existing workforce development programs to best serve the region
 - b. Conduct effective employer outreach to ascertain the workforce development needs of employers in the region
 - c. Identify specialized training needs for various populations of the region

- iii. Regional Planning
 - a. Ensure that all existing statutorily required services will be met or exceeded
 - b. Provide assistance for other planning activities as appropriate and requested by the region that will advance the goals of the region
 - c. Describe how economic development, workforce development and planning activities will be provided and coordinated by the RSC.

- iv. Grant Administration
 - a. Describe how the RSC will serve as a grant administrator and how this function will be made part of the overall operations. All RSC proposals shall include the delivery of grant administration services for municipalities, non-profits, businesses and other organizations. Address any prioritization or client selection for the grant administration services you will provide.

- d. There are three other organizations with whom an RSC must work. Explain how the RSC will negotiate Memoranda of Understanding with:
 - i. Department of Labor
 - ii. Agency of Human Services
 - iii. Small Business Development Center

- e. Describe expectations and the process envisioned for the eventual co-location of regional partners. Note: co-location is required within three years.



- f. Identify any impediments, conflicts or other factors that may negatively impact the establishment of the RSC, co-location or other features of the proposal.
- g. What other services will the RSC provide?

2. Implementation:

The selected RSC will be expected to:

- a. Execute all components of the scope of services
- b. Provide Agency with reports as required.
- c. Develop a comprehensive workplan that will implement the proposal, which will include benchmarks toward achievement of performance goals

3. Deliverables:

- a. In the first year, it will be expected that a grantee submit a quarterly report that will include the status of performance measures; budget expenses and other information requested by ACCD. In following years, reports will be submitted twice per year to ACCD. Contract renewal will depend on performance measurement accomplishments

E. BASE CONTRACT TERMS:

- 1. **Contract Period:** Contracts arising from this request for proposal will be for a period of 12 months renewable for up to 36 months.
- 2. **Contract Terms:** The selected Contractor/s will sign a contract with the State to provide the items named in their responses, at the prices negotiated. Minimum support levels, as well as terms and conditions from this RFP and the bidder's response will become part of the contract. The contract will be subject to review throughout its term. The State will consider cancellation upon discovery that a vendor is in violation of any portion of the agreement, including an inability by the vendor to provide the products, support and/or service offered in their response.

F. CHARACTERICS REQUIRED OF SUCCESSFUL BIDDER:

- 1. Bidder must be an existing grantee of ACCD and have a current grant agreement in place
- 2. Ability to provide comprehensive services to a defined region in Vermont.
- 3. Evidence of leadership and demonstrated capacity with economic development, regional planning and workforce development in Vermont.
- 4. Knowledge of Vermont geography, economy and industry, and business community and more importantly, knowledge of the RSC region.



VERMONT

AGENCY OF COMMERCE & COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT

NATIONAL LIFE BUILDING
NATIONAL LIFE DRIVE, 6TH FLOOR
MONTPELIER, VERMONT 05620-0501
802-828-3230

5. Experienced personnel to support service delivery.
6. Is likely to achieve the intended RSC results.
7. Will employ innovative and cost-effective practices to provide quality services.
8. Will lead to co-location within three years.
9. Meet statutory requirements.

G. FORMAT OF THE PROPOSAL:

1. The instructions and format for the submission of proposal information are designed to ensure the provision of data considered essential to the understanding and comprehensive evaluation of the bidder's proposal. There is no intent to limit the content of the proposals, nor in any way to inhibit a presentation in other than the bidder's favor.
2. The bidder may include such additional information or data as may be appropriate, or offer alternate solutions but should not exclude any portion requested in this document.
3. Submissions will be evaluated based upon their responsiveness to the RFP specifically the "SCOPE OF WORK" criteria stated in Section D.
4. Selection of, and an invitation to negotiate a contract or contracts with, a contractor or contractors may be made by ACCD, if in the best interests of the State of Vermont.
5. Bidders must demonstrate that they have the organization, experience, technical skill, equipment, financial resources, and proven ability to provide the service(s) and product(s) required.
6. The bidder's submission shall include the following sections:
 - a. **Identity of Transmittal/Cover Letter:** Submissions should be accompanied by a letter of transmittal acknowledging and agreeing to the provisions of this RFP, signed by individual(s) having authority to bind the firm to sign formal contractual obligations and to verify and authenticate the commitments made by the individual and/or firm in the submission. If the submission is from a team of, an individual having authority to bind each individual or firm must sign.
 - b. **Preparer(s).** A statement identifying individuals who were involved in the preparation of the proposal as well as a single point of contact for clarification of information must be included.



VERMONT

AGENCY OF COMMERCE & COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT

NATIONAL LIFE BUILDING
NATIONAL LIFE DRIVE, 6TH FLOOR
MONTPELIER, VERMONT 05620-0501
802-828-3230

- c. **Background and Experience:** Provide resumes of principal(s) with detailed qualifications and levels of expertise of key individuals will be involved in this organization and their scope of involvement. (Including additional information as required, see Section C paragraph 2)
 - d. **References:** Provide the names, address and phone numbers of at least three organizations, or individuals with whom you have transacted similar business with within the last 24 months – preferably state of Vermont clients. You must include the names of contacts who can speak knowledgeably about the quality of your services and their experience working with you.
 - e. **Narrative:** Provide a point by point narrative that describes how the requirements of this Request for Proposal will be met, specific to Section D “SCOPE OF WORK”. Narrative should include:
 - i. Quantitative measures or relevant evidence of abilities and performance.
 - ii. Proposed Work Plan - Your project management approach and schedule for accomplishing items outlined in Section D. Describe your understanding of the responsibilities and the vendor responsibilities.
 - f. **Acknowledgment of Terms:** A statement acknowledging the State’s Standard State Contract Provisions will be met.
7. Funds will be made to the selected RSCs as a block grant. In order to calculate your request, please use a formula that we have adapted from the existing RPC funding rule.
- a. 55% of the total funds (\$XXXXXXX) to be allocated to the regional service centers shall be divided equally among the RSCs.
 - b. 45% of the balance shall be allocated on a per capita basis, using US Census Data, etc.
 - c. 45% of the balance will be allocated based on the number of municipalities that the RSC serves as of July 1st of each year.
 - d. The remaining 10% will be held by the Agency to fund performance-based activities by the RSCs.

H. PAYMENT PROVISIONS:

Payments will be made on July 15th and January 15th of the given FY upon receipt of activity reports.



I. CONFIDENTIALITY:

The bidder must agree to keep identified confidential information that relates to the State and all related agencies and companies restricted. Bidder will take reasonable measures as are necessary to restrict access to confidential information in bidder's possession to those employees on his/her staff who must have the information to perform their job, and agrees to immediately notify, in writing, the State's authorized representative in the event bidder determines, or suspects, confidential information has been inappropriately disseminated. The bidder agrees not to publish, reproduce, or otherwise divulge such information in whole or in part, in any manner or form, or authorize or permit others to do so unless authorized in writing by the State.

J. EVALUATION CRITERIA:

1. Proposals will be evaluated by a committee comprised of representatives from ACCD; AHS; AOA and DOL based on the following criteria:
 - a. Prior experience and knowledge of economic development; regional planning and workforce development activity.
 - b. Understanding of, and demonstrated ability to provide, specific services required under the anticipated contract.
 - c. Experience related to specifications of work outlined in RFP, Section D "Scope of Work".
 - d. Ability to implement an approved workplan in accordance with the scope of services described in Section D.
 - e. Quality of references.
 - f. Vendor presentation if requested.
2. A selection committee consisting of assigned staff from ACCD, DOL, AGR, and AHS will independently evaluate each proposal on the above criteria. Each criterion is evaluated as either: "doesn't meet requirements", "meets requirements", or "exceeds requirements". Criteria evaluated as "doesn't meet requirements" are assigned a score of zero points; "meets requirements" are assigned a score of one point; criteria evaluated as "exceeds requirements" are assigned a score of three points. Each bidder's criteria score is totaled and evaluated for vendor selection. A recommendation for one or more vendors from this Request for Proposals to the State of Vermont is based on this evaluation.



AGENCY OF COMMERCE & COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT

NATIONAL LIFE BUILDING
NATIONAL LIFE DRIVE, 6TH FLOOR
MONTPELIER, VERMONT 05620-0501
802-828-3230

All submissions shall be further equally evaluated for overall cost effectiveness. The State reserves the right to narrow the selection of vendors and negotiate for the best and final offer furthering the best interests of the State of Vermont.

The State reserves the right to request an interview by bidder/s who will present their proposal to an evaluation committee. Interviews may include an oral presentation and/or demonstrations of bidder proposal, which will be clearly articulated to bidder prior to meeting. Bidders should be available to travel to Montpelier, Vermont at their own expense.

K. ADDITIONAL PROVISIONS:

1. **Taxes.** The State of Vermont is exempt under 32 VSA Section 9743(1) from payment of any Vermont sales and use taxes.
2. **Governing Law.** All submissions and agreement shall be in conformance with and governed by applicable laws of the State of Vermont.
3. **Submission Expenses.**
 - a. **Submission Preparation:** No expenses associated with the preparation of the submission response shall be borne by the State.
 - b. **Presentations and/or Demonstrations:** No expenses shall be borne by the State for oral presentations or demonstrations made by the individual and/or firm.
4. **Discrimination.** The contractor will be required to agree to comply with all requirements of Title 21, Chapter 5, Sub-chapter 6, Section 495A relating to fair employment practices.
5. **Tax Certification.** To meet the requirements of 32 V.S.A., Section 3113, no agency of the State may enter into, extend or renew any contract for the provision of goods, services or real estate space with any person unless such person first certifies, under the pains and penalties of perjury, that he or she is in good standing with the Vermont Department of Taxes. A person is in good standing when no taxes are due, if the liability for any tax that may be due is on appeal, or if the person is in compliance with a payment plan approved by the Commissioner of Taxes. In signing this submission, the bidder certifies under the pains and penalties of perjury that the company/individual is in good standing with respect to, or in full compliance with a plan to pay, any and all taxes due the State of Vermont as of the date that this statement is made.
6. **Proprietary or Confidentiality Information.** Submissions, with the exception of any materials deemed confidential, will be open for public inspection after a contract is executed. The successful submission will be incorporated into the resulting contract and will be a matter of public record.