

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
CONSULTANT SERVICES
EXPLORATION OF BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT FOR
MINORITY-OWNED BUSINESSES



NORTHFIELD ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
801 WASHINGTON STREET
NORTHFIELD, MINNESOTA
55057

DUE: April 15, 2019

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

The Northfield Economic Development Authority (EDA) is seeking a qualified consultant to assess the business environment for minority-owned businesses, to explore barriers to business, and to suggest potential program development to incentivize business opportunities for entrepreneurs.

Northfield is a historic community of more than 20,000 people, located 45 minutes south of the Minneapolis/St. Paul metropolitan area. Northfield is part of a larger region influenced by the Twin Cities metro area yet maintains a distinct identity in terms of its economy, land values, development patterns, and overall sense of community. Northfield is rich with landmarks and natural resources, and is defined by the Cannon River that runs through the historic downtown, abundant parks and open space, attractive neighborhoods, and two premier college campuses.

Within this setting, the EDA has identified a concern related to the potential barriers to entry and operation for minority entrepreneurs. The EDA recognizes that minority business owners and entrepreneurs can contribute significantly to a thriving local economy, and seeks to help remove existing barriers and incentivize growth so everyone can prosper. The EDA is committed to identifying these concerns as part of the 2018-2020 work plan. A working Socio-Economic Committee has proposed a process recommendation to the EDA with several expectations for the consultant services. The EDA has approved this recommendation and has established a budget.

Northfield is a city of deeply held values with residents that care about the city's history and are committed to ensuring that new businesses have equitable opportunities to operate and flourish within the business community.

The Northfield Economic Development Authority is requesting proposals from consulting firms to work with the Socio-Economic Committee to facilitate an exploration of the business environment for minority-owned businesses. Interested consultants may submit a proposal to:

Northfield Economic Development Authority
Attn: Nate Carlson
801 Washington Street
Northfield, MN 55057

All proposals must be received or postmarked by 12:00 PM. on April 15, 2019.

PART I: PURPOSE, PROPOSAL SPECIFICATIONS, & TIMELINE OF PROJECT

1.1 PURPOSE:

The EDA has adopted a 2018-2020 Strategic Plan, which includes a strategic priority of addressing current conditions for minority, women and veteran owned businesses. As an initial action, the EDA created a sub-committee to begin addressing this strategic priority. The Socio-Economic Committee is comprised of three EDA Board members, a member of the Human Rights Commission and Community Development Staff.

Over the past several months, Committee members have discussed how to begin information gathering related to the Committee's charge. It became apparent that this workload would require assistance from a third party. The Committee proposed solicitation of consultant services through a competitive bidding process with a corresponding budget to the EDA. The EDA Board approved this recommendation at the January 24, 2019 Regular EDA Meeting.

1.2 PROPOSAL SPECIFICATIONS

Proposals submitted to the City in response to this RFP must demonstrate how the following objectives will be fulfilled.

- Information gathering from local minority, immigrant, or foreign-born business owners and entrepreneurs regarding current barriers to entry and operation that exist in Northfield.
- Conduct listening sessions between business owners, entrepreneurs and Committee members.
- Propose services and/or programs that the EDA could develop to incentivize new business.

Preference will be given to proposals that demonstrate cultural competencies (i.e. language fluency, comprehension of cultural nuances, etc.).

1.3 PROJECT TIMELINE:

The Northfield EDA has approved the following timeline for project completion:

- Selection of a consultant/facilitator – April 25, 2019
- Consultant check-in with Committee – July 8, 2019
- Project completion – October 11, 2019

Following completion of the project, the consultant shall deliver to the EDA Board a final report, a final presentation, and all data series collected from project. The presentation will be provided to the EDA late October or early November.

1.4 INQUIRIES:

All inquiries related to this RFP should be directed to:

Nate Carlson
Economic Development Coordinator
801 Washington Street
Northfield, MN 55057
(507) 645-3069
E-mail: nate.carlson@ci.northfield.mn.us

1.5 PROPOSAL DUE DATE AND SUBMISSION:

One (1) original and three (3) copies of all materials constituting the proposal from consulting firms must be received by the Economic Development Coordinator or postmarked to the Economic Development Coordinator no later than 5:00 PM CDT, May 1, 2019.

All proposals shall be submitted to:

**Northfield Economic Development Authority
Attn: Nate Carlson
801 Washington Street
Northfield, MN 55057**

Any proposal received by the EDA after the date stated in this RFP will be rejected and returned unopened to the firm submitting the material. The EDA may request an oral interview with selected firms as determined by the Committee.

1.6 REJECTION OF PROPOSALS:

The Northfield EDA reserves the right to accept or reject any and all proposals received in response to this RFP. The EDA reserves the right to negotiate terms and performance expectations with the selected firm or firms. The EDA will not pay for any information requested, nor is it responsible for any costs incurred by the respondents in preparing and submitting a proposal.

1.7 SCHEDULE OF EVENTS:

- Any written or oral requests for information or clarification related to this RFP must be received on or before April 8, 2019.
- Proposals shall be received no later than 12:00 PM CDT, April 15, 2019.
- Committee members will score all proposals submitted according to the Evaluation Scoring (3.1). Finalists will be notified by April 18, 2019.
- The consulting firms whose proposal has been selected as finalists to the EDA will present at the April 25, 2019 EDA Meeting.
- A finalist will be selected by the EDA Board on April 25, 2019.

PART II: BUDGET OF PROJECT & SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS

2.1 BUDGET OF PROJECT:

The budget of this project is:

- A \$5,000 minimum budget has been set with a \$10,000 max budget.
- The EDA encourages the consultant to propose additional services beyond the initial scope of the project. Costs for said additional services should be included in the proposal.

2.3 INFORMATION TO BE SUBMITTED IN PROPOSAL:

Consultant firms are expected to submit sufficient information to assist the EDA in a complete and thorough review of the proposal. The following information must be included, at a minimum, in proposals in order to receive consideration:

- Name, address and office location of the consulting firm or firms included in the proposal.
- History of the firm or firms that demonstrates history and experience in conducting projects similar to the project described in this RFP.
- Names and resumes of all individuals from the firm or firms that will participate in the project and a description of the specific role or task of each individual who will be involved with this project.
- A detailed description in both narrative and graphic form as necessary that outlines how the firm or firms would propose to accomplish the tasks outlined in this RFP.
- An estimate of total cost or cost range for the work proposed to be undertaken by the firm or firms.
- A project timeline with major project milestones identified by either date of expected accomplishment or timeframe for accomplishment.
- A statement of the firm's availability to begin the project and the capacity of the firm with respect to other projects that are under contract that may affect the timely completion of the work outlined in this RFP.

PART III: EVALUATION

3.1 EVALUATION OF FINAL PROPOSALS:

Proposals will be evaluated using a 100 point evaluation system. The following criteria will be used to evaluate proposals received and each criterion will be assigned points up to the maximum number of points that have been allocated to each criteria.

- Qualification of Firm or Firms: The successful proposal will be evaluated on the basis of experience in performing similar projects. Particular attention will be focused on similar projects and the degree and extent to which people from the firm or firms who are assigned to this project have participated in similar projects. Preference will also be given to proposals that demonstrate cultural competencies (i.e. language fluency, comprehension of cultural nuances, etc.). (15 points)

- Quality of Work: Consulting firms will be evaluated on the quality, quantity, timeliness and value received for work similar to the work described in this RFP as determined from references provided by the consultant. (10 points)
- Project Approach: A consultant firm or firms will be evaluated on how the proposal addresses proposal specification described in Part I Sub-section 1.2 in this RFP. (50 points)
- Value: Proposals will be evaluated on the time necessary to complete the project with preference given to proposals adhering to the project timeline, the number and types of meetings and interaction the consultant proposes with City Staff and other groups in the City, and the final deliverables proposed by the consultant in relation to the proposed cost or cost range. (25 points)

PART IV: SELECTION OF CONSULTANT

4.1 SELECTION PROCESS:

Socio-Economic Committee members will score all final proposals according to the Evaluation Scoring above and will submit three (3) final proposals for EDA Board approval. The consulting firm whose proposal has been selected and has been awarded the project will enter into the Professional Services Agreement as approved by the entire Board of the EDA.

4.2 AWARD OF CONTRACT:

The consulting firm selected by the EDA will be expected to enter into a Professional Services Agreement (PSA) with the EDA using the standard agreement form of the City of Northfield.

The selected consulting firm or firms will be expected to prepare a detailed scope of work and will be required to meet the insurance requirements and all other requirements specified in the PSA of the City of Northfield.

4.3 SCHEDULE:

Requests for information or clarification – April 8, 2019
 Proposal submittal deadline – April 15, 2019 (12:00 PM)
 Initial proposal review complete – April 18, 2019
 Consultant finalist interviews – April 25, 2019
 Consultant selection – April 25, 2019