

**Request for Statements of Qualifications
Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy
Research, Development, Analysis, and Planning Support**

SCHEDULE

- RFQ Released: Monday March 14, 2022 (KTRCOG Website)
- RFQ Advertisement Published: Tuesday-Wednesday, March 16, 2022 (The Dispatch, Henderson, NC)
- Qualifications Package Due: Friday, April 8th, 2022, by 12:00 p.m. (EST)
- Package Review and Selection: Monday, April 18, 2022
- Project Period: May 1, 2022 – December 31, 2022

QUESTIONS

All questions regarding this Request for Qualifications should be directed to:

KTRCOG Regional Planning and Economic Development Director, Michael Kelly
(mkelly@kerrtarcog.org)

SUBMISSION

Proposals will be accepted in Word or PDF format. Submit all proposals to Michael Kelly via email at info@kerrtarcog.org by Friday, April 8, 2022, 12:00 p.m. (EST).

Response packages received after the stated deadline will not be considered.

PURPOSE

The Kerr-Tar Regional Council of Governments (KTRCOG) seeks proposals from qualified professionals skilled in research and development, data analysis, and comprehensive planning to assist KTRCOG planning and economic development staff in the update of the region's five-year (2023–2028) Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) using the framework provided by the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA).

The CEDS update process will take place between May 2022 – December 2022 and will include disseminating a survey across KTRCOG's five-county region, holding county-specific stakeholder meetings, and related data analysis required for developing the final CEDS document for presentation to regional stakeholders, KTRCOG Board of Directors and EDA. KTRCOG's region includes Franklin, Granville, Person, Vance and Warren counties.

CEDS BACKGROUND

As an EDA-designated Economic Development District (EDD), KTRCOG is required to maintain a current CEDS, including annual updates, and a comprehensive 5-year update. The CEDS contributes to effective economic development in KTRCOG's communities and regions through a locally based, regionally driven economic development planning process. Economic development planning – as implemented through the CEDS – is not only a cornerstone of the U.S. Economic Development Administration's (EDA) programs, but successfully serves as a means to engage community leaders, leverage the involvement of the private sector, and establish a strategic blueprint for regional collaboration. The CEDS provides the capacity building foundation by which the public sector, working in conjunction with other economic actors (individuals, firms, industries), creates the environment for regional economic prosperity.

Simply put, a CEDS is a strategy-driven plan for regional economic development. A CEDS is the result of a regionally owned planning process designed to build capacity and guide the economic prosperity and resiliency of an area or region. It is a key component in establishing and maintaining a robust economic ecosystem by helping to build regional capacity (through hard and soft infrastructure) that contributes to individual, firm, and community success. The CEDS provides a vehicle for individuals, organizations, local governments, institutes of learning, and private industry to engage in a meaningful conversation and debate about what capacity building efforts would best serve economic development in the region.

The CEDS must include the following:

- Summary of background information
- A SWOT analysis
- Strategic direction/Action plan
- Evaluation framework
- Concept of resilience & post COVID-19 recovery
- Details regarding Opportunity Zones

SCOPE OF SERVICES

The proposed scope of work will generally include, but is not necessarily limited to:

A. Data Analysis

- a. Work with KTRCOG and CEDS committee members to collect and analyze regional data, as required by EDA.
- b. Assist KTRCOG staff with updating demographic, economic, and industrial analysis using collected data.
- c. Develop easy to read graphs and visuals highlighting regional demographic, economic, and industrial trends.

B. Stakeholder and Public Outreach

- a. Assist KTRCOG staff market stakeholder meetings and evaluations by developing outreach materials. Participate in stakeholder meetings, note taking, and organizing information for the SWOT analysis.

C. Plan Development

- a. Coordinate with KTRCOG staff to develop an attractive, engaging, and accessible document that outlines a clear approach to economic development in the region. The report should include graphs, tables, visuals, an Executive Summary, appendices as needed, and county specific one-page snapshots.

D. Project Management

- a. Consultant will monitor progress and meet deadlines set by KTRCOG staff. Consultant will submit regular billing with costs tracked and backup documentation.

E. Schedule

- a. Selected consultant will be required to complete the project by December 2022, when the CEDS is due to U.S. EDA.

STATEMENT OF QUALIFICATIONS

Statements of Qualifications should include, but are not limited to, the following:

A. Organization Background & Experience

- a. Consultant should possess knowledge of databases related to demographics, socioeconomics, industry analysis, etc., and how to present the data in a concise, attractive manner.
- b. Consultant should possess experience-synthesizing information collected in public outreach, such as surveys and meetings.
- c. Consultant should possess experience in development of user-friendly, engaging reports, including graphs, tables, visuals, etc.
- d. Consultant should possess basic knowledge of EDA, CEDS, and related requirements.

B. Relevant Project Experience

- a. Project summaries for no more than five projects of similar scope. Each summary should contain the examples of work performed, schedules, and professionals involved.

C. Key Personnel

- a. Brief resumes including education, professional certifications, and relevant experience of key personnel who will be assigned to the project. Also, include the name(s) and telephone number(s) of key personnel in your organization authorized to negotiate the contract.

D. Resources & Capacity

- a. Capacity of the consultant to conduct the project (i.e. availability of personnel, access to databases and software, etc.) and whether these resources are available in-house or if they must be obtained through contracted services.

E. Project Service Area Knowledge & Experience

- a. Firm and/or personnel knowledge of, and experience in, the five-county KTRCOG service area.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

A consultant selection team comprised of KTRCOG employees and/or board members shall review and score the Statements of Qualifications based on the following criteria:

1. Consultant's knowledge and experience with databases, data analysis, and presentation of information. (25 points)
2. Consultant's experience preparing documents, reports, and information in an attractive manner. (20 points)
3. Consultant's knowledge and experience working with CEDS update processes and EDA requirements. (20 points)
4. Key personnel qualifications and experience. (20 points)
5. Familiarity with project service area and local factors. (15 points)

KTRCOG will enter negotiations with the top-ranked firm for the purpose of entering into an agreement for consulting services subject to the availability of funding, within the intended budget of approximately \$35,000. If such negotiations are not successful, the firm will be dismissed from further consideration and discussions will be initiated with the second ranked firm. This process will continue until an agreement is reached.

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

KTRCOG reserves the right to reject any Statements of Qualifications received in response to the RFQ. KTRCOG is not responsible for any costs incurred by consultants replying to this request. KTRCOG is an equal opportunity employer and encourages responses from all qualified firms.