



Request for Proposals

Region 2000 Entrepreneurship Initiative for Higher Education

Project Description

Virginia's Region 2000 Partnership's Economic Development Council is soliciting proposals for consulting services from qualified individuals or firms to develop the Region 2000 Entrepreneurship Initiative for Higher Education. The project seeks to create a new regional consortium that connects Region 2000's higher education leaders and their respective institutions with existing economic and workforce development activities. To date, the region has not engaged its higher education community in a collective and coordinated effort to help foster and advance regional economic development. This first-ever step will focus on growing opportunities and support for entrepreneurship to create jobs and business investment at these schools and throughout the region. From its outset, this higher education collaborative will focus on developing a joint work plan that targets activities related to entrepreneurship and small business development. This specific target area was selected because it aligns with the schools' strategic plans and also complements the overall entrepreneurship and small business development work now underway with the Region 2000 Partnership.

Leadership from the following schools will be included and comprise the project's working group: Central Virginia Community College, Liberty University, Lynchburg College, Randolph College, and Sweet Briar College, and Virginia University of Lynchburg. Collectively, these schools have a combined residential enrollment of over 20,000 students.

The Region 2000 Partnership's Economic Development Council will manage the project and retain qualified consulting services to manage the project and produce certain deliverables. The Region 2000 Partnership's Local Government Council and Workforce Investment Board will provide additional staffing support to the Economic Development Council. The project will be funded from Region 2000 resources and with a grant from the 2011 Virginia Collaborative Communities Program.

This project is intended to build a collaborative model for other regions of Virginia which may want engage community colleges and public and private four-year institutions to support entrepreneurship and small business development.

All activities associate with project development must be completed no later than August 1, 2012.

Scope of Services

The following is the draft work plan for the proposed project:

- Prepare, facilitate, and perform necessary follow-up duties for a series of four (4) progressive meetings with the project's working group;

- Identify and catalog each school's current entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship-related curriculum, activities, and programs for students, faculty, staff, and business operations.
- Research, evaluate, present, and prioritize national and international best practices for entrepreneurship in higher education in the context of how to best benefit each institution, potential financial resources to support these best practices, and potential types of regional economic development impacts for each best practice.
- Develop target areas of collaboration to include courses and curriculum; student outreach (e.g., camps, competitions, business plan development, venture financing, etc.); closer links between students/faculty and local businesses (e.g. internships, targeted assistance to local businesses, etc.); wider student/faculty engagement on entrepreneurial activities in Region 2000 and possibly the region's K-12 schools; and, building connections to entrepreneurial activities underway in other nearby regions (Charlottesville, Roanoke/Blacksburg, Northern Virginia/Washington, and Richmond).
- Prepare a prioritized list of individual and cross-campus pilot projects for implementation for academic Year 1 (2012-13), Year 2 (2013-14), and other larger-scaled projects for Year 3+ (2014-2015 and beyond)
- Responsive to emerging national funding opportunities for community colleges, develop a targeted workforce project(s) for Central Virginia Community College aligned with its regional workforce development role.
- Identify and develop measurements for the initiative related to potential business investment and job creation for the region's economy.

The consultant will be expected to make several trips to Lynchburg region for the meetings of the working group and to gather data and other related background information as necessary. The consultant should also be willing to communicate with the management team on a regular basis via phone, email or web based collaboration.

Proposal Content

1. Statement of Qualifications

Respondents must submit a written Statement of Qualifications to include information about the respondent directly related to each of the Selection Criteria. All information should be submitted succinctly.

2. Proposal

Respondents must provide an explanation of how they propose to accomplish the project outcome within the stated timeframe

Selection Process

Staff from the Region 2000 Partnership's Economic Development Council and the Local Government Council will review and evaluate all proposals submitted by individuals or firms responding to the RFP. Top ranked respondents may be scheduled to make a presentation interview as part of the evaluation process. Individuals or firms invited to interview should be prepared to have general discussions on non-binding estimates of cost to provide requested services.

At the conclusion of the evaluation process, firms will be ranked in priority order with the highest ranking firm being selected to negotiate a contract with Virginia's Region 2000 Partnership's Economic Development Council. If a contract satisfactory to both parties cannot be negotiated, the team will then enter into negotiations with the next highest ranking firm and so on until an agreement is reached. A contract will be signed by Virginia's Region 2000 Partnership's Economic Development Council acting as the fiscal agent for the project.

Selection Criteria

1. The consultant's understanding of the project and scope of work.
2. The consultant's proposed approach for completing the scope of work.
3. Any potential problems the Consultant perceives with the project as proposed.
4. Professional qualifications and experience of the individuals the Consultant will assign to provide the planning and engineering services.
5. Familiarity with the region in terms of its geographic, demographic and economic conditions as related to entrepreneurship and small business development.
6. Contact information of two (2) clients for whom the consultant has performed projects of a similar type and size within the last three (3) years.
7. Provide a sample of work.

Submittal

Respondents should one (1) reproducible copy or one (1) .pdf of the proposal to the person below by no later than 12:00 noon on Tuesday, January 17, 2012:

R. Bryan David
Executive Director
Virginia's Region 2000 Partnership
Economic Development Council
828 Main Street – 12th Floor
Lynchburg, Virginia 24504
bdavid@region2000.org
(434) 847-1447 ext. 312

*Time is of the essence, and all proposals received after the appointed hour for submission, whether by mail or otherwise, will be returned unopened.

**Nothing herein is intended to exclude any responsible firm or in any way restrain or restrict competition. On the contrary, all responsible firms are encouraged to submit proposals. Virginia's Region 2000 Partnership's Economic Development Council reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals submitted.

Note: This non for profit corporation does not discriminate against faith-based organizations in accordance with the *Code of Virginia*, § 2.2-4343.1 or against a bidder or offeror because of race, religion, color, sex, national origin, age, disability, or any other basis prohibited by state law relating to discrimination in employment.