

Request For Proposal

“Workforce Analysis and Emerging Sector Strategic Analysis & Action Plan” Workforce, Education & Economic Development Strategy Green River Region of Kentucky

The Green River Area Development District (GRADD) and the Green River Workforce Investment Board (GRWIB) are seeking proposals from professional firms to assist in the preparation of a *Regional Economic Growth Strategy* consisting of three components:

- Workforce Skills Analysis of the Green River seven (7) county region;
- Sector Analysis, identifying emerging sectors of the region's economy with the most promise for economic growth; and an
- Action Plan that outlines implementation strategies and specific action activities for the Region.

The focus of this project is to position our regional economy in the most competitive and sustainable position over the next five (5) to ten (10) years and beyond. The Region is seven (7) counties located in the North West area of Kentucky. Counties included in the regional analysis are Daviess, Hancock, Henderson, McLean, Ohio, Union, and Webster. The economic impact of the region also extends into several other counties in Western Kentucky and Southern Indiana.

To help identify these unique opportunities, the GRADD/GRWIB is seeking highly qualified professional and creative regional economic development assistance. The assistance includes not only the preparation of the report, but also the clear articulation of these findings and directions in communicating to the Workforce, Education, and Economic Development community for their understanding and support of these strategies/actions. Funding for the project is 100% federal funds provided by Workforce Investment Act.

1. REGIONAL OVERVIEW:

The GRADD, a planning and development agency, along with the Green River Workforce Investment Board, a seven (7) county workforce development agency; have a substantial amount of data and statistics to provide to this project. In addition, there are several planning and strategic documents that have been completed by professional firms for various parts of the Region that can be made available. Therefore, a lengthy Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, Threat (SWOT) analysis should not be necessary. With the exception of the Workforce Skills Analysis, the GRADD and GRWIB hope to concentrate on developing projects/strategies/ideas rather than just a planning document.

There are several county, regional, and overlaying organizations working in the area of workforce, education, and community & economic development in the GRADD. Most of these organizations have developed strategic plans which should be taken into consideration and action items should be developed that can be pursued collectively by the Region.

2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The primary goal of this project is to develop a “road-map” set of strategies and corresponding action items for the Region to pursue over the next five (5) to ten (10) years. The GRADD/GRWIB is NOT seeking simple projections based on broad economic trends. The finished product will be a well-articulated vision of our economic future and methods to actively promote that vision to acquire the community’s understanding and support of the strategies and implementation steps.

- 1) The first report component is a Workforce Skills Analysis, which will address the skills of the Region. To attract and develop quality enterprises and create jobs, Economic Developers must be able to demonstrate a quality, skilled workforce. This component of the study will define the current nature of the workforce skills and identify shortfalls in those areas needed to attract business investment in the future.
- 2) The second report component is an Emerging Sector Strategic Analysis. This component will identify emerging businesses and industries where the Region has a competitive advantage and the specific strategies needed to attract and develop these opportunities. Also, critical is the identification of declining industries and the skill sets of the displaced workers and how they may fit into the next generation. *Green River Preliminary Target Industries – Economic Analysis for Target Sector Identification* report was completed in May 2011 by Maher & Maher and EMSI. This report should be used as a starting point for this analysis.
- 3) The result of the analysis should be a Strategic/Action Plan that enumerates strategies and the steps necessary to pursue economic opportunities. This is the most critical part of the project. Outcomes should provide:
 - (a) An understanding of the economic forces at work at the regional, national, and global levels and the opportunities they may provide to our region for economic growth and sustainability over the next several decades.
 - (b) A vision of our economic future and recommended strategies and action steps that can be used in the implementation for the region as a whole, sub-regions, and communities.

3. SCOPE OF SERVICES FOR REPORT COMPONENTS

A. Report: Workforce Skills Analysis

The scope of this report component should include, but not be limited to:

- Assessment of the Workforce of the Region (including adjacent counties outside the Region, as required) to determine types of skills, credentials, age, work ethic, and other appropriate attributes.
- Comparison or benchmarking of the Region with similar regions or communities.

- Describe the unique regional assets and training challenges the region faces in attracting and retaining a quality workforce.
- Develop the basis for a well-defined vision and a specific action plan to improve our ability to train, attract, and retain a quality workforce into the future.
- Identify any weaknesses in skill sets or educational opportunities available in region and the gaps in those offerings that present barriers to the attraction, development, and retention of workers.

Factors to be considered and evaluated include, but are not limited to, the following:

- availability/productivity
- workforce skills and education levels
- diversity of employment and career growth opportunities
- educational opportunities at all levels
- population and workforce diversity
- impact and opportunities of foreign immigration, if any
- government and non-profit/community support activities
- incumbent worker issues and opportunities
- transportation costs and accessibility
- marketing efforts describing the overall quality of life and the positive characteristics that distinguish the Region in the larger market place
- drug and alcohol issues
- workforce age and pending retirements
- National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) attainment

B. Report: Regional Economic Emerging Sector Strategic Analysis and Action Plan

The scope of this report component includes:

- Use sector analysis and other appropriate research methods to summarize and evaluate the structure and health of our current economic base;
- Identify and describe specific regional, national, and global economic trends that may create opportunities for the economic growth of our region in the next five (5) to ten (10) years and beyond;
- Describe the unique assets and challenges of our region in competing for these growth opportunities;
- Identify and describe specific regional strategies and actions as keys to future economic growth;
- Educate and conduct a dialogue with the community about future economic trends and regional economic development strategies, plus appropriate activities to pursue these trends and strategies.

A wide array of data and reports currently exist to give the firm chosen a framework from which to build an analysis. The Green River Workforce Board, Regional Leadership Team, and GRADD staff will provide community insight and other assistance as required in support of the project. The Team is specifically interested in the workforce sectors of advanced manufacturing, professional and business services, transportation, distribution & logistics, and healthcare (a regional economic driver) and the identification of common skill sets within these sectors, such as Quality Process Control. Key components include, but are not limited to, the following:

- A description of the existing and future economic trends at the local, regional, national, and global levels and the specific industries that would logically be attracted to the Region;
- The current assets and challenges of the Region in attracting the identified industries and an identification of our likely competitors;
- Comparison or benchmarking of the Region with competitor or similar regions or communities;
- Development of an Entrepreneurship component;
- A well articulated strategic vision of our economic future, leading to an action plan that can be developed into a detailed, step-by-step implementation plan for the region.

Some or all of the following areas should be considered in the research and the development of the report:

- ✓ governmental structure
- ✓ state and local corporate taxation
- ✓ state and local regulatory environment
- ✓ state and local economic development incentives
- ✓ business capital availability
- ✓ business innovation
- ✓ general business climate
- ✓ land availability and land development policies
- ✓ infrastructure (including technology and communications)
- ✓ transportation
- ✓ research and development

The report should lay out specific steps to pursue in developing a future that looks at a regional economy. The action plan should identify specific resources/assets that can be used in support of the strategies and implementation steps. Taken with the workforce report component, the report will form a strong basis for enacting a regional strategic vision and will become our **Regional Economic Growth Strategy**.

Community/Regional Leadership Forums: *The firm chosen to lead this project is expected to prepare and present a series of interactive community forums (the number to be determined, based on the proposal) with representatives from critical sectors, education, economic development, and community leadership concerning trends and the need for regional workforce, education, and economic development strategies. Individual meetings with some key employers may be necessary. Industry representatives from the identified critical sectors should be tapped for ongoing involvement in visioning, regional planning, and monitoring.*

4. REPORT COMPONENT ACTIVITIES:

- a. The firm chosen to conduct this work will be required to develop a project timeline along with the awarding agency to include regular reports of progress at agreed upon intervals. These interim reports will include drafts of documents for each of the three major components for review and comment as well as an on-going dialog of the report activity.
- b. Work with the regional leadership team and GRADD/GRWIB staff in developing community input sessions.
- c. Work with a regional leadership team in the development of the report.
- d. Deliver periodic updates and progress reports, as required.

5. RESOURCES

There are numerous resources available in support of this project. The GRADD/GRWIB staff will make every effort to provide these data pieces in a timely and user-friendly format; and work with the chosen firm to facilitate the project.

6. TIMELINES – MAJOR BENCHMARKS

- a. RFP issued – On or about September 1, 2011
- b. Proposals due – Close of business on October 5, 2011
- c. Leadership Team Review - Completed by October 20, 2011
- d. Contract award – On or about November 1, 2011
- e. Contract ends – No later than April 30, 2012

7. BIDDER QUALIFICATIONS/REQUIREMENTS:

The Green River Area Development District and the Green River Workforce Investment Board seek experienced firms or organizations to conduct workforce and economic development research as it relates to Growth Strategies – particularly economic positioning and human capital analyses. Key staff for the project is required to have individual experience in the appropriate field. Once an award is made, the GRADD/GRWIB project coordinators must approve any changes to key staff assigned to the project. Knowledge of the Green River Region and experience with the federal funding agencies are very important.

8. COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS/SUBCONTRACTING:

Bidders should specify in the proposal, the name and qualifications of any “subcontractor(s)” that are to be used for this project. Subcontractors will be held to the same terms and conditions as the contractor in order to meet the statement of work, method of payment, and deliverables. All subcontractors must make

available to the Contractor and GRADD/GRWIB, if requested, copies of personnel records and documentation of employee's compliance with the contract.

9. PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE:

Any contract awarded as a result of this procurement is contingent upon the continued availability of funds. The period of performance for any contract resulting from this RFP may be subject to change. Amendments extending the period of performance, if any, shall be at the sole discretion of the GRADD/GRWIB.

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GREEN RIVER WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR REGIONAL ECONOMIC STRATEGY

1. The strategic plan is goal oriented and goes beyond the scope of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) funded activities.
 - 1.1 The goals are clearly articulated and strategic.
 - 1.2 There is an action plan related to and sufficient to meet the goals that go beyond WIA metrics.
 - 1.3 There are clear, measurable, and broadly agreed upon outcomes/metrics included in the plan.
2. The strategic plan emerged from a broadly inclusive process, reflecting the participation of economic development, employer, human service, education, and other relevant stakeholders.
 - 2.1 The strategic plan was shaped by data from a comprehensive regional labor market analysis.
 - 2.2 The strategic plan was guided by public and private sector input (board members and non-board members) from critical sectors of the region.
 - 2.3 It is evident that the board's strategic plan aligns with the plans of relevant stakeholder organizations in the region, as well as the goals of the Kentucky Workforce system.
3. The strategic plan is a "living" document; it is part of a continuous improvement process.
 - 3.1 The strategic plan describes timeframes and mechanisms for updating the plan.
 - 3.2 The board periodically seeks input on their strategic plan from non-board stakeholders.
 - 3.3 The board tracks progress on the strategic plan, makes adjustments accordingly, and communicates progress to stakeholder and partners.
 - 3.4 The board updates its strategic plan based on stakeholder input, changing economic conditions, and developing opportunities and challenges.
4. The board has adopted a sector strategy approach to employer engagement.
 - 4.1 Target sectors are identified using the most currently available regional labor market data.
 - 4.2 The sector strategy approach is clearly defined in goals and actions of the strategic plan and is in alignment with the seven (7) critical factors for sector partnerships.**
 - 4.3 The skill needs of local employers are communicated to human service, education and training providers, and industry associations in the region.
 - 4.4 Industry partnerships include key employers in the sectors who are driving the initiative forward.
 - 4.5 The board gives clear direction to the one-stop operator regarding industry sectors to be targeted, including quantified expectations and targeted service and training resources for addressing sector needs.

**World –class sector strategies for Kentucky include: 1. Sectors based on real-time data; 2. Sectors reflect regional consensus; 3. Employer talent needs identified; 4. Partner's plans and organizations support sectors; 5. Education and training aligned; 6. Business services aligned; 7. Continuous improvement and sustainability.

GENERAL INFORMATION FOR BIDDERS

Bidders should rely on the detailed information in the RFP, which is available at www.gradd.com.

Point of Contact (POC):

The POC for all components of this project is:

Name: Tonya Logsdon
Address: Green River Area Development District
3860 US Highway 60 West
Owensboro, Kentucky 42301
Email: tonyalogsdon@gradd.com
Phone: 270.926.4433
Fax: 270.684.0714

Any other communication will be considered unofficial and non-binding. Vendors should rely on written statements, including e-mail response and the Q & A issued by the POC. Any communication directed to parties other than the POC is not binding.

ISSUANCE OF QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Written questions should be submitted to the POC during the open proposal period. All written questions must be submitted by email to: tonyalogsdon@gradd.com. All responses will be issued by email. Emails will be sent individually to each vendor who posed the question and will also be listed under a Q & A section on the website with the RFP. The GRADD/GRWIB shall be bound only by written answers.

SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

Vendors are encouraged, but not required to submit proposals electronically. Proposals, whether mailed, hand delivered, or submitted electronically, must arrive at the GRADD no later than 4:30 pm (CST) on October 5, 2011. The proposal should be sent to the POC at the address listed above. If mailed, the envelope should be clearly marked to the attention of the POC and contain an electronic version (USB drive) of the proposal and one printed copy of the proposal.

Vendors mailing proposals should allow for delivery time to ensure timely receipt of their proposals by the POC. Vendors assume the risk of meeting the delivery deadline for the method of delivery chosen. The GRADD/GRWIB assumes no responsibility for delays caused by any type of delivery service. FAX proposal submission will not be accepted.

REVISIONS TO THE RFP

In the event it becomes necessary to revise any part of this RFP, the revision will be posted on the website with the RFP and the Q & A at www.gradd.com and will be sent via email to all vendors that submit a question. For this purpose, the published questions and answers document and any other pertinent information shall be provided as an addendum to the RFP.

PROPOSAL FORMAT

Bidders responding should respond using the format below. Each proposal should include the following sequence:

- Letter of Submittal (Cover Letter) - a cover letter, signed, and dated by a person authorized to legally bind the Vendor. Along with introductory remarks, the cover should include (by attachment) the following information about the vendor and any proposed subcontractors:
 - Name, address, principal place of business, telephone and fax numbers, email address of legal entity or individual with whom contract would be written;
 - Name, address, and telephone number of each principal officer;
 - Legal status of the vendor and the year formed;
 - Federal Employer Tax Identification Number or Social Security Number; and
 - Location of the facility from which the vendor would operate.
- Summary of type and qualifications of responding organization(s), including experiences of individuals involved with the organization(s);
- Experience with Similar Projects;
- Project Understanding and Approach;
- Scope of Work;
- Schedule of Work;
- Team Participants and Key Personnel;
- References;
- Organizational Financial Information;
- Project timeline;
- Project Budget – should include individual fees and other costs associated with proposal. Any cost outside the proposal budget should be clearly stated;
- Proposals must be signed by an authorized official of the proposer’s organization agreeing to the general assurances and expressing a willingness to provide the certifications required. A contact person for follow up questions should also be identified;
- Identify any GRADD employees or former GRADD employees associated with the firm currently, or for the past three (3) years.

RESPONSIVENESS

All proposals will be reviewed by the POC to determine compliance with administrative requirements and instructions specified in this RFP. Failure to comply with any part of the RFP may result in rejection of the proposal as non-responsive. The GRADD/GRWIB reserves the right to accept or reject any proposal and to waive bidding irregularities at their sole discretion.

COSTS TO PROPOSE

The GRADD/GRWIB will not be liable for any costs incurred by the vendor in preparation of a proposal submitted in response to this RFP, conducting a presentation, or any other activities related to responding to this RFP.

NO OBLIGATION TO CONTRACT

This solicitation does not obligate the GRADD/GRWIB to contract for services specified herein.

REJECTION OF PROPOSALS

The GRADD/GRWIB reserves the right, at its' sole discretion, to reject any and all proposals received without penalty and not to issue a contract as a result of this RFP.

COMMITMENT OF FUNDS

No cost chargeable to the proposed contract may be incurred before the execution date specified in the contract.

EVALUATION PROCEDURE

Responsive proposals will be evaluated in accordance with the requirements stated in this solicitation and any addenda issued. The evaluation of proposals will be accomplished by a review team. The review team, at its' sole discretion, will select the vendor and make a recommendation to the GRWIB Executive Committee for approval. Finalist may be contacted for an interview during the evaluation period. There is no redress process to the team's decisions.

EVALUATION CONSIDERATION

The evaluation team will review all proposals. Each reviewer will independently review and score proposals on a 100 point scale using the following criteria:

- **Experience of organization with similar projects – 15 points**
 - Include examples of work, clients, and references
- **Project Team Structure, Staff Qualifications – 15 points**
- **Proposed Methodology - 25 points**
 - How the vendor will organize and execute the work
 - as described in project activities and deliverables
- **Overall Responsiveness to the RFP - 20 points**
 - How the proposal meets the RFP requirements, and
 - not necessarily the vendor with the lowest cost
- **Budget Justification and Cost – 20 points**
 - Cost reasonableness and competitiveness
- **Other Considerations as they may apply - 5 points**

ASSURANCES

By submitting a proposal in response to this RFP, the following assurances are made:

1. All answers and statements made in the proposal are true and correct.
2. The prices and/or cost data have been determined independently, without consultation, communication, or agreement with others for the purpose of restricting competition.
3. The attached proposal constitutes a firm offer for a period of 60 days following receipt, and it may be accepted by the Green River Area Development District/Green River Workforce Investment Board without further negotiation (except for points of clarity) at any time within the 60-day period.
4. In preparing this proposal, no assistance was provided by current or former employees of the Green River Area Development District whose duties relate (or did relate) to this proposal or prospective contract, and who was assisting in other than his or her official, public capacity.
5. It is understood that the Green River Area Development District/Green River Workforce Investment Board will not reimburse for any costs incurred in the preparation of this proposal. All proposals become the property of the solicitor and no proprietary rights to the ideas, writings, items, or samples are claimed, unless so stated in this proposal.
6. Unless required by law, the prices and/or cost data that have been submitted have not been knowingly disclosed by the Bidder and will not knowingly be disclosed prior to opening, directly or indirectly, to any other Bidder or to any competitor.
7. The submission of the proposal constitutes acceptance of the solicitation contents and the attached general terms and conditions. If there are any exceptions to these terms, they have been described in detail within the proposal.
8. No attempt has been made or will be made by the Bidder to induce any other person or firm to submit or not to submit a proposal for the purpose of restricting competition.

GENERAL CERTIFICATIONS

The successful vendor will be required to certify compliance with the following Federal requirements at the time of award.

- . 29 CFR Parts 96 and 99, Audit Requirements
- . 29 CFR Part 93, Lobbying Certification
- . 29 CFR Parts 37 Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity Requirements
- . 29 CFR Part 98, Debarment and Suspension; Drug Free Workplace
- . 20 CFR Part 671 – National Emergency Grants for Dislocated Workers