

Questions and Answers – as of April 11, 2008

(newest questions after 4/3/08 begin with #8)

1. Is the entire response to the RFP to be limited to 5 pages? If no, can you clarify?
Yes, the response is limited to 5 pages, but you may include attachments as appropriate.
2. Should the respondent define the geography of the area as part of the response (including the areas in Vermont and Maine)?
No, the role of the consultant will be to facilitate the decision making process with RIG group members (group meetings process), and provide information and analysis of labor market and relevant economic development conditions necessary to inform the decision making process.
3. Is the development of the “Core Leadership Group” the consultant’s responsibility?
The consultant shall be responsible for facilitating the decision making process with RIG stakeholders and documenting process outcomes, which shall include a plan for how the governance of the project will operate (including identification of a core leadership group), how each of the component parts of the project will be integrated, and the role of each partner in the delivery of specific activities relative to implementation of the strategic plan.
4. The RFP shows show a three month window to complete the work (start at the end of May, end in late August). This is an extremely aggressive schedule for completing this type of study, especially given the scope of services. Can this timeline be extended?
Within reason, timelines for completing the scope of work outlined within the RFP can be negotiated when the service contract is developed. Additional adjustments to deliverable deadlines after the point of contract execution may occur as approved by the Council based on actual experience.
5. The November 2007 NEG RIG proposal to the US DOL includes a timeline showing an initial strategic plan outline to be submitted to the Workforce Board at their June 2008 meeting. Is this the responsibility of the consultant?
Yes. However, as stated above we understand the need for flexibility based on actual experience.
6. The November 2007 NEG RIG proposal to the US DOL also calls for additional funding sources to be identified in June 2008. Is this the responsibility of the consultant?
No, however the consultant will be required to address this issue as part of the overall planning process with RIG stakeholders and include identified strategies in the implementation plan.
7. What connection, if any, does this RFP have to the recent solicitation for proposals for a “Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy”, issued by the Groveton Grant Advisory Committee?
A member of the Groveton Grant Advisory Committee is directly involved in the RIG Strategic Plan project. The goal is to create synergy between the two projects and ensure that efforts are not duplicated i.e., the work products for each grant shall be coordinated to the extent possible to promote information sharing and ensure effective use of limited resources.
8. This RFP is very comprehensive in its scope, and yet not very specific as to deliverables and process. It is clear that the issuer is using some of its limited RIG funding for staff. Further, only five double-spaced pages are allowed to describe our approach. Therefore, far more focused proposals could be developed if we knew about how much money is being made available to hire a consultant(s). Of the \$250,000 RIG grant, how much do you anticipate using to hire a consultant(s)?
We anticipate using \$100,000 of the total grant to cover consultant costs. Attachments may be included with your proposal and will not be considered part of the five page proposal limit.

9. Can you explain more about what it means on page 8, when the WOC "...will negotiate a contract with successful respondent". What will be negotiated?

The Council reserves the right to negotiate a best and final offer with the applicant selected based on the exchange of information between the Council and respondents inherent in the RFP process that may impact initial proposal assumptions.

10. Are there specific VT and ME communities to be included in the initial community outreach to build-up the Core Leadership Group?

Initial outreach efforts will include reaching out to community leaders in Essex County Vermont and Oxford County Maine to identify key stakeholders from communities economically linked to Northern NH. However, as the process unfolds it may become evident that a wider geographic outreach effort may be needed to ensure a comprehensive approach to development of a "region" for the purpose of this grant project.

11. Same question for the Region specifically defined?

No. We do not want to limit our concept of a "region" to geographic boundaries. The work undertaken in response to this grant will take a fresh look at how the economy of the region is or can be intricately linked to other areas within the state, New England or even Canada. The definition of a "region" for the purpose of this grant will be defined by the key stakeholders as an outcome of the planning process in response to the analysis of specific data gathered throughout the process.

12. On page 6, 1st PP: "...resource and education strategy development..." What kind of "resource" does this refer to (Natural, Human, Economic) or is this meant to be open-ended?

The implementation of the plan developed as an outcome of this project will be focused on aligning the economic development, workforce development and education systems to respond to the economic needs of the "region". Therefore, the statement is somewhat open-ended but within the context of the intent of the project. Resources in this context are typically defined as the services, funding and other available goods.

13. Applicant Eligibility and Narrative (page 6): What constitutes "Demonstrated experience...demonstrated knowledge...demonstrated ability"? Does the contractor need to have performed other RIG work? Other WOC? Other ETA works? Or is similar – non-ETA work sufficient?

Similar experience is sufficient, provided the respondent has specific experience with working within established economic, workforce and education systems, and in the use of specific planning tools such as those identified in the RFP (i.e., resources mapping and service network mapping). This is also true of "similar services".

14. Who – what organizations are to be represented on the Decision subcommittee? (Page 7)

This will be an anticipated outcome from the facilitated group process with key stakeholders to identify a governance approach for the project and plan implementation.

15. How does this relate to the "Coos County/Great North Woods Regional Marketing Plan"? How about the integration with the existing CEDS (in addition to the Groveton proposal?)

There are many economic development plans either developed or in process. The planning process for the RIG project will build on the work that is underway and expand efforts as appropriate to develop a holistic (non-duplicative) approach to developing a newly defined region that is focused on creating a talent development system of services.

16. Will the contractor be required to meet federal requirements for the grant (Environmental Findings, Compliances, ADA, etc), or are these WOC (private) funds? If "yes", what are the required provisions?

The grant is federally funded. The respondent must comply with the Certification and Other Terms/Conditions provided as an attachment in the RFP, as well as all ADA standards as they apply to ensuring equal access to participation in meetings.

17. How have the other NC economic and workforce development organizations indicated that they would coordinate their activities and priorities to merge with those identified by the Leadership group? Have these organizations "signed-off" or is this part of the Contractor's responsibility to seek and obtain consensus? As a colleague has asked me: "How is this initiative intended to relate to other programs already in place focusing on paper/pulp mill closings, the new federal prison, and other economic development and workforce development initiatives?"

The Contractor, working with the Project Manager will play a key role in "seeking and obtaining consensus" among partners to the process. Individuals from economic, workforce, and education systems have been engaged in early discussions about the scope and direction of the RIG project, but no formal agreements are in place at this time. It is understood that the goal of the RIG project is to create a synergy, and to organize the leadership group into a "social network" that "leverages, combines and integrates" all the assets within the region.

18. How is the funding allocated?

\$100,000 is expected to be used for the consultants. The balance of the grant is dedicated to supporting the project manager position and other requirements. The consultants are expected to complete their work within a period of 12 months as negotiated with the Council based on availability of the consultant and/or the stakeholders to the process. It is not anticipated that the consultant will be working on the project for a full 12 month period.

19. Planning and/or implementation tools/resources necessary to support the planning (resource mapping software -- is this more for the consulting team or for the CLG post consulting engagement or both? Cost of a website?) Cost for planning tools is included in the total available funds of \$100,000. The proposal does not require the development of a website.

20. Would our team be using the WOC field offices?

No.

21. Most often, we create 10 year plans with most of the detail front loaded in the first two years with a sustainable governance system for the care and feeding of the plan after the first two years as it evolves. Are we correct to assume this is the scope of the time focus?

No, please refer to question #18 for projected time frames.

22. Is there anything else that must be covered in the 250K so we can use a process of elimination to come up with funds available for our team and finalize our proposal?

The funding available for consultant services is limited to \$100,000.