



State of New Jersey

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Questions Posed to the Highlands Council
by Potential Respondents to the Request for Proposals to
Develop an Economic Sustainability Plan for the Highlands Region
October 10, 2019

Question #1:

Is there a list of firms that have downloaded the RFP or have attended a pre-submittal conference?

Response #1:

There is no list of firms that have downloaded the RFP and the Highlands Council did not hold any pre-submittal conferences.

Question #2:

The RFP does not provide a budget for the project. Can you advise what fee the Highlands Council paid for the preparation of the Fiscal Impact Assessment of 2017? Since this project can be completed with different levels of depth for each component, has the Highlands Council established a budget range for this project, and if yes, may this range be shared?

Response #2:

The Highlands Council does not typically reveal a budget for proposed projects. We anticipate that respondents will submit a proposal that they believe best addresses the scope of work, along with an associated cost. Should respondents wish to do so, they may propose varying levels of depth for some or each component with a concurrent range of costs.

The Budget for the Fiscal Impact Assessment was \$135,455. Two budget revisions were made over the course of the project to accommodate additional data processing resulting in a final budget of \$144,974.

Question #3:

Section VI B of the RFP addresses the form of professional services contract that shall be offered to the winning consultant, but it describes two contradictory bases for fee determination. On the one hand it refers to "a time and materials basis" for compensation, but in the same sentence also proposes a "total costs not to exceed" basis for compensation. Our team would be happy to provide a "not to exceed" fee in our proposal, and agree to that in a professional services contract. We are opposed to the notion of providing timesheets and bills of lading breaking out hours spent and materials used as if this project were for the construction of a building. Would our proposal and subsequent contract be acceptable to the Highlands Council if it provided a "not to exceed" fee that would be based upon projections of time and materials to be used?

Response #3:

The proposal should include a not to exceed fee for the total estimated project cost. However, the contract requires that the contractor submit monthly invoices for work satisfactorily completed. Invoices must specify in detail the costs incurred and must be in strict accordance with the hourly rates and costs agreed to by the Council. The contractor will also be required to submit any other supporting documentation necessary for the Council to determine that costs incurred during invoiced periods have in fact been incurred.

Question #4:

Regarding the data to be used in preparing the Economic Sustainability Plan for the Highlands Region, will the Highlands Council be able to secure non-public establishment-level industry employment data from the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development for use in the economic analysis of the region?

Response #4:

The Highlands Council has, in the past, received access to the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) from the Department of Labor. As this is confidential information, the Highlands Council is required to sign a confidentiality agreement with the Department in order to obtain the data. Similarly, the chosen consultant will be required to sign a confidentiality agreement prior to accessing the data.

Should the chosen consultant request access to the QCEW, the Highlands Council will make application to the Department and furnish the data at no cost to the consultant.

Question #5:

Is there a maximum budget or fee associated with the contract? If so, what is the maximum budget/fee?

Response #5:

There is no maximum budget associated with this contract.

Question #6:

What is the expected start date of the contract?

Response #6:

The Highlands Council anticipates a start date approximately February/March 2020.

Question #7:

Is 18 months the maximum term desired by the Highlands Council to complete work?

Response #7:

The Highlands Council anticipates an 18-month timeframe for completion of the project, however an alternate timeframe may be proposed.

Question #8:

Has the Highlands Council hired economic development planners in the past, and if so, which firm(s)?

Response #8:

Yes, the Highlands Council has hired economic development planners in the past, however the majority of these projects were completed so long ago as to not be relevant to the work at hand. The Highlands Council contracted with PlaceWorks of Santa Ana, CA, in 2014 to conduct the Fiscal Impact Assessment referenced above.

The complete RFP along with this Q&A can be found at the link below:

www.nj.gov/njhighlands/news/rfp.html#1