



RHODE ISLAND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
Economic Development Data Analysis and Assessment
Request for Proposals

The Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation (the Corporation) is requesting proposals from firms to analyze existing assets and identify challenges to strengthening economic growth in Rhode Island using existing documents, data, and input from the Rhode Island Sustainable Communities Consortium and other stakeholders. This includes providing analysis and comparison, where relevant, with neighboring states.

Note: This project is part of a larger initiative funded by a U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Sustainable Communities Regional Planning grant awarded to the State of Rhode Island, the final product of which will be a Regional Plan for Sustainable Development (RPSD) that integrates land use, transportation, water, housing, and economic development issues into a coherent implementation plan, all of which will seek to produce positive, equitable outcomes for all Rhode Islanders. As such, **HUD reserves the right to approve the selected consultants and the consultant contracts prior to execution.** The final contract will state that the consultant agrees to provide professional services in support of the **HUD Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant** for which the RI Statewide Planning Program is the Grantee. By signing the contract agreement, the consultant will confirm that it has reviewed the Terms and Conditions of the HUD Cooperative Agreement entered into with the State of Rhode Island and will comply with applicable provisions. For more information, please see the attached FAQ.

Further, any respondent to this RFP should be aware of a concurrent and parallel effort to establish a baseline data analysis and assessment for social equity in the State of Rhode Island. This work will be conducted by PolicyLink, a national research institute committed to advancing economic and social equity, which has contracted with HUD to provide technical assistance to Sustainable Communities grantees. The Equity Analysis developed by PolicyLink, which will have a strong emphasis on economic development related indicators, and the deliverables of this RFP will together serve to inform our broader work on economic development, housing, social equity, growth centers, etc. as the State develops its RPSD.

The economic development planning component of the RPSD will seek to answer the question of why Rhode Island's economy continues to lag behind those of its neighboring states, the region, and the rest of the country. Through the data analysis and assessment described in this RFP, we ask respondents to help the State answer the following questions: What economic development indicators can Rhode Island influence or control? What can Rhode Island influence in partnership with its neighbors in the greater New England region? What indicators are out of

our control? Knowing what we have the ability to influence will enrich our economic development planning process, and enable everyone to make better informed, data-driven policies and strategies. Tasks 1-6 below also include a series of more specific questions for each topic. These are questions we would like to address through the RPSD planning process. The questions should guide respondents towards compiling the types of data and information the State and its stakeholders need to consider and address them.

The successful respondent shall demonstrate their ability to satisfy the following specific outcomes:

1. Business Climate Analysis

What this data will help us answer:

- What are the specific business climate factors for which Rhode Island scores poorly? For which does it score well or average?
- How does Rhode Island compare with Connecticut, Massachusetts and other states in the region?
- What is the story behind national business climate rankings? What are the various indicators used, and what do they really mean? Which indicators improve both our business climate AND our standards for quality of life, social equity, and a healthy environment? Which would sacrifice these for economic growth?

Analyze existing business climate reviews from the past three years, such as the Tax Foundation's State Business Tax Climate Index, Beacon Hill Institute's State Competitiveness Rankings, and Forbes Best States for Business to determine the reasons for Rhode Island's performance in these studies. Use previous analyses from the Rhode Island Public Expenditure Council as a starting point for the analysis, and build on work to establish basic data on the cost of doing business in Rhode Island compared to other states in the region. Determine the indicators used by each review and lay out the short- and long-term actions the state would need to take to improve its current rankings. The State intends to grow its business environment in a way that maintains high standards for development that equitably serves all our residents, protects the environment and builds on our assets. This analysis will help the State determine which indicators to improve, emphasizing those that further our standards of equitable growth as well as nurture our business environment. It will also help determine what data and information must be tracked and collected to provide a baseline from which to build future work.

2. Targeted Cluster Analysis and Validation

What this data will help us answer:

- What are Rhode Island's most effective existing industry clusters based on number of employers, number of employees, average pay roll, benefits provided, taxes paid, profits earned, etc.?
- What industries are indigenously emerging as effective clusters, either locally or as part of a regional system, with an opportunity for strong growth in the coming years?
- What are the business climate, regulatory, workforce, siting, capital, and marketing challenges facing these industries in the Rhode Island context?

Identify Rhode Island's existing industry clusters, considering work done previously by RIEDC. Based on the state's economic development assets and strengths, determine existing and emerging indigenous candidate economic networks or clusters. Use standard NAICS codes whenever possible so that other existing data from the Department of Labor and Training and the Governor's Workforce Board may be integrated. Analyze the list of target networks/clusters and sub-clusters, and explain how these networks or clusters are either unique to Rhode Island, or complement/connect to rather than compete with successful or emerging networks and clusters in other New England states. Incorporate existing work by the Governor's Workforce Board and its Industry Partners into the inventory and analysis, including the Strategic Workforce Plan for Rhode Island (2009-2014) and the Biennial Employment and Training Plan (FY2014 and FY2015). Additionally, coordinate with PolicyLink's work on identifying industries with "high-opportunity" for meaningful, well-paid jobs accessible to our existing workforce. Note: a location quotient analysis alone will not be considered responsive. Further, this work should compile both the number of firms/employers and the number of jobs/employees.

3. State Economic Development Regulatory Environment

What this data will help us answer:

- Is the Rhode Island regulatory landscape an impediment to establishing or expanding businesses in Rhode Island? If so, are some types of businesses more affected by this than others?
- How does our regulatory climate compare with that of Connecticut, Massachusetts and other states in the region? Are there new or emerging regulatory policies and /or practices that incentivize and promote business growth?
- To what extent do disparate municipal regulations impede economic growth?

In coordination with the RIEDC Office of Regulatory Reform (soon to be the Office of Regulatory Reform in the Office of Management and Budget), inventory and assess Rhode Island's existing economic development regulatory environment. Identify existing strengths as well as inefficiencies and inconsistencies within existing regulations. Note that while this analysis will be done at the State level, it must ultimately align with similar analyses at the municipal level.

4. Financial Resource Assessment

What this data will help us answer:

- Is private capital any more or less accessible in Rhode Island than it is in Connecticut, Massachusetts and other states in the region? If so, why? And what factors are within the State's control to change?
- What level of public financing would be necessary to fill any gaps in private financing?
- What other non-traditional financial resources are being employed successfully around the region and elsewhere?

Inventory and evaluate existing financial resources and funding mechanisms from various federal, state and municipal sources. The analysis should consider how well existing programs work together and what leverage they provide. Make recommendations of other

funding resources available to fuel economic growth in Rhode Island. Assess the capital environment in the state, including firms' access to private capital.

5. Marketing Analysis

What this data will help us answer:

- What assets does Rhode Island possess that are marketable to our strongest clusters and potential clusters? Are these industries most likely to respond to quality of life/quality of place attributes, physical infrastructure assets, or the regulatory environment? What are the needs of these clusters in regard to land use, and where does Rhode Island have the physical capacity and infrastructure to support business growth?
- What type of marketing structure would allow the state to attract business to Rhode Island as a whole, while still celebrating the qualities of specific cities and towns throughout the state?
- What types of marketing strategies are most effective for the employers we seek to attract? How do we target our marketing dollars to have the greatest impact? Can marketing be used to encourage "home-grown" entrepreneurs as well as existing businesses?

Understanding Rhode Island's assets and strengths is one thing – celebrating and marketing them, both internally and externally, is quite another. Identify and assess existing state, regional and municipal business marketing efforts. The analysis should consider the various entities responsible for marketing, the messages conveyed, and the audiences targeted.

6. Economic Development Assessment Report

Assemble the data analysis and assessment into a single, written report that describes and analyzes Rhode Island's existing economic development assets and challenges. It must be suitable for use as the basis for the development of both short-term economic development strategies and a separate but related long-term economic development plan.

Deliverables shall include, but are not limited to:

- Written analysis of Rhode Island's performance on business climate reviews, the indicators used in these reviews, and actions the State could choose to make to improve its rankings.
- List of target networks/clusters and sub-clusters (starting with the infrastructure hubs previously identified by RIEDC and the Industry Partners identified by the Governor's Workforce Board). Written analysis of each of the targeted industry networks/clusters and sub-clusters.
- Inventory and assessment of Rhode Island's existing state economic development regulations. Recommendations on how to advance this task in a long-term economic development strategy.
- Written report that includes an inventory and assessment of existing federal, state and municipal financial resources and funding mechanisms.

- Written report that describes and assesses Rhode Island's (state and municipal) existing economic development marketing efforts and suggests ways they can be improved. Recommendations on how to advance this task in a long-term economic development strategy.
- Final written report, including economic development inventories, analyses, and assessments in printed (25 copies) and digital formats (Adobe InDesign or .pdf format).

Proposal consideration will be measured based upon the following criteria and point scale:

- **Project Approach and Understanding of Work (35 pts.).** Project approach including the proposed work plan and timeline as well as a demonstrated understanding of the tasks described in the scopes of work, the HUD Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Program objectives, and the Rhode Island context.
- **Relevant Experience and Expertise (35 pts.).** Capacity of the consultant team to manage the project effectively based on its experience in Rhode Island and in managing multidisciplinary projects of similar size, scope, and complexity. Experience with the development of regional, long-term economic development visions, goals, and strategies. Past performance as reflected by the evaluation of private persons and officials of other government entities that have retained the services of the firm will be considered strongly.
- **Capacity, Resources, and Level of Effort to Accomplish Tasks (20 pts.).** Ability to perform the services as reflected by workload and the availability of adequate personnel, equipment, and facilities to perform the services expeditiously. Include a list of all staff and sub-consultants and the hours or percentage of time they will spend on the project by task.
- **Cost of Proposal and Estimated Date of Completion (10 pts.).**
Note: We expect proposals to range from \$30,000 to no more than \$60,000.
- Consultant teams are encouraged to work with capable **local firms, including minority and women-owned firms**, wherever possible and appropriate.

The actual scope of any work will be negotiated in a contract between the Corporation and the firm(s) deemed to be the most qualified. **Please note that time is of the essence for this project, with a completion deadline of February 8, 2013.**

In order to be considered responsive, firms shall submit, at a minimum, the following as part of their Proposal:

- Letter of transmittal signed by the authorized owner, officer or authorized agent of the firm with acknowledgment of understanding the terms of this request for proposals.
- An executive summary, outlining a brief history of the firm, the firm's current workload, its understanding of the project and the benefits the applicant will bring to the project.
- Identification of the project team and an organization chart. All requested information shall be provided for all subcontractors or collaborating firms.

- Listing and description of projects the firm(s) has been responsible for which demonstrate ability to perform all aspects of the Project. The description shall include the specific portion(s) of the project that the firm was responsible for completing.
- Listing of the respective qualifications of individual team members and their past experience on projects of this type.
- References that can verify the firm's capabilities around projects performed, project performance, management of budget/cost, schedule, and quality of deliverables.
- Documentation which demonstrates the firm(s) has the legal ability to perform the services in the State of Rhode Island.
- The submitted bid shall include the cost of all labor, research, presentations, materials, fees, taxes, delivery, and any other associated costs required to provide a finished product. The budget shall be broken out per each task and related deliverables described above.
- Timeline for deliverables (must conform to project completion deadline).
- Proposal document should be no more than 15 pages long (including cover), double-sided, and single-spaced in 11-point size, Times New Roman font.

One original and four copies of the submittal along with a digital copy on CD-Rom shall be delivered to:

Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation
315 Iron Horse Way, Suite 101
Providence, RI 02908
Attn: Judy Chong

A pre-proposal meeting will be held on November 13, 2012 from 11:00 AM to 12:00 PM at the RIEDC Offices (see address above), and all interested respondents are encouraged to attend. However, attendance is not a condition for consideration of an award.

Questions regarding this Request for Proposals will be accepted by e-mail at jchong@riedc.com or in writing to the address listed above on or before November 16, 2012. All inquiries with responses will be made available daily (until November 20, 2012) without the disclosure of the originator through postings on the RIEDC and State Purchasing websites.

Responses are due by **2:00 p.m. EDT on November 30, 2012**. Phone calls, electronic and late submissions will not be accepted.

The selected consultant will be expected to engage in weekly conference calls with RIEDC, SPP and any other stakeholders deemed necessary to ensure that work is being completed according to this scope and on time.

The Corporation reserves the right to terminate the Project prior to entering into any negotiated contract with any qualified firm or firms pursuant to this request for Proposals, and by responding hereto, no firms are vested with any rights in any way whatsoever.