

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS (RFQ)

BUSINESS CONSULTANTS TO ASSIST WITH FINANCING APPLICANTS

RFQ Issue Date: February 13, 2018

Proposal Due Date: March 6, 2018

GOAL OF THE RFQ

The Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh (the “URA”) requests qualifications from individuals or consulting firms (the “Consultant”) to provide pre-loan and post-loan assistance to businesses going through the URA’s Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (“CIE”) loan process. The URA would like the Consultant to assist businesses going through the loan process with accounting, marketing, business operations, and more to ensure a strong loan application and a sustainable business post-loan.

The URA plans to select one or more respondents to be a part of an approved list of consultants to provide pre-and post-loan assistance to businesses in CIE’s portfolio. Each approved consultant will remain on the list from the date approved by the URA board of directors during 2018 through December 31, 2021.

BACKGROUND

The URA is the City of Pittsburgh’s (“the City”) economic development agency, committed to creating jobs, expanding the City’s tax base, and improving the vitality of businesses and neighborhoods. Incorporated in 1946 as one of the first redevelopment authorities in the United States, the URA achieves this mission by assembling, preparing and conveying sites for major mixed-use developments; and by providing a portfolio of programs that include financing for business location, relocation and expansion, housing construction and rehabilitation, and home purchases and improvements. The URA conducts these activities using unique powers granted by the Commonwealth’s Urban Redevelopment Law to deploy and attach condition to the use of public subsidy and the disposition of publicly-owned land.

Due to the URA’s mandate and a citywide push to expand economic opportunity throughout the City, CIE works extensively with entrepreneurs and small to medium sized businesses to assist them in starting and growing their businesses.

OBJECTIVES

The URA seeks to provide entrepreneurs and businesses going through its financing programs with additional business assistance. This will enable CIE to provide comprehensive financial services and to help businesses have strong applications and sustainability.

To effectively accomplish its objectives, the URA is soliciting information from qualified parties with experience in advising businesses in operations, accounting and marketing. Industry experience in restaurants and retail is particularly desired.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Experience, training and expertise are required in the following areas: business operations, accounting, marketing, and in the hospitality industry. Knowledge of business loans is a plus. The work required will be on an as needed basis.

An applicant must provide an hourly rate for the technical assistance services that it provides. Compensation will be discussed with selected Consultant(s).

SCOPE OF SERVICES

Applicants may choose one or more of the areas below to include in their submission.

1. Business Operations
2. Accounting
3. Marketing
4. Hospitality Industry
 - a. Restaurants
 - b. Breweries
5. Retail
6. Startup and early stage business consulting experience

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

1. One electronic copy of respondent's qualifications
2. Please limit total submission to 10 pages or less
3. Title Page – include the Consultant's name, contact person and contact information
4. Table of Contents
5. Qualifications:

Please respond to the following sections, clearly marking them accordingly. If you are unable to provide a response to a particular question, leave the section blank. Please do not provide any information other than what is specifically requested.

 - a. Experience
 - i. Briefly describe similar consulting work you or your firm has completed
 - b. Organization Profile

Provide a brief profile of your firm using the format below:

 - i. Number of total employees
 - ii. Hourly rate charged for technical assistance services

The respondent shall submit with its proposal:

 - i. Resumes of Consultant(s) to provide the service
 - c. References – Provide three (3) references from other entities or business clients that have worked with you or your firm on similar projects. Include the reference's name, title, address, direct telephone number, and email address.
 - d. Primary Qualification – Provide a brief narrative that explains why you or your firm are qualified to provide the scope of services discussed above
6. Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprise (MWBE) Narrative – State as succinctly as possible how your firm will incorporate MWBE participation on the contract.

MWBE participation can be satisfied by:

 - Ownership/partnership of firm
 - Use of minorities and/or women as part of consultant team
 - Focus on MWBE clients or businesses

7. Other Information – Please provide any other information you believe is pertinent to the URA’s consideration of your firm. Please limit your response to this question to no more than two (2) pages.

INQUIRIES

Inquiries related to this RFQ are to be directed by email to:

Ellen Bateman
ebateman@ura.org

Inquiries related to MWBE participation are to be directed by email to:

Diamonte Walker
dwalker@ura.org

SUBMISSION DEADLINE:

The respondent should submit one (1) electronic copy delivered in PDF format via email, CD or flash drive to:

Ellen Bateman
Innovation and Entrepreneurship Specialist
Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh
200 Ross Street, 11th Floor
Pittsburgh, PA 15219
ebateman@ura.org

REVIEW OF QUALIFICATIONS

- The qualifications review committee will consist of relevant staff from the URA’s Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, and relevant URA senior leadership.
- The qualifications review committee will check responses against mandatory criteria.
- Formal interviews with respondents may be scheduled at the discretion of the qualifications review committee.
- During the evaluation process, the URA reserves the right to request additional information or clarifications from the respondents or to allow or waive corrections, errors, or omissions.
- A qualification review committee will review each response submitted and shall recommend to the URA board of directors a list of respondents based upon their response to this RFQ.

SELECTION CRITERIA

- Experience – The respondent’s experience in providing services similar to those within the Scope of Services described herein; the quality of the respondent’s management, reputation and references; the respondent should have at least 3-5 years of experience providing the services specified in its response.

- Quality of Submission – The quality of the submission and the degree to which it demonstrates a full understanding of the ability to perform the services to be rendered; the content of the response should demonstrate the respondent’s full understanding of the Objectives, along with the samples and other materials.
- MWBE participation on the contract or if the respondent is an MWBE

MANDATORY ELEMENTS

1. The respondent, including any and all team members, must have no conflict of interest with regard to any other work performed by the respondent for the URA or any related entity.
2. The respondent must adhere to the instructions contained in this RFQ in preparing the submitted proposal.

LEGAL INFORMATION

The URA intends to select one or more respondents based upon information in the response to the RFQ submitted by the respondents, performance in previous undertakings, and other pertinent factors. The selected respondent(s) will be chosen on the basis of the selection criteria listed above. The URA reserves the right to verify the accuracy of all information submitted.

The URA shall be the sole judge as to which respondent(s) meet the selection criteria. The URA reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to reject any or all responses received, to waive any submission requirements contained within this RFP, and to waive any irregularities in any submitted response.