



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Co-operative Community Engagement and Facilitation

The Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission (CVRPC) is requesting proposals from qualified individuals or firms well-versed in co-operative principles to engage a 1,060-member food co-operative in the process of helping the membership to reach decisions about the business's future.

I. SCHEDULE

Date	Item
March 9, 2023	Request for Proposals issued
March 29, 2023	Deadline for submission of questions in writing
March 31, 2023	Response to questions posted at www.centralvtplanning.org
April 7, 2023	Proposals Due
April 14, 2023	Contractor Notification

Questions in writing and inquires may be directed to Jon Ignatowski, Planner, ignatowski@cvregion.com.

Proposals must be submitted via email. Proposals must be clearly marked "Co-op Community Engagement and Facilitation" and delivered via email to Jon Ignatowski, Planner, ignatowski@cvregion.com.

Proposals received after the submittal deadline will not be considered. Proposals sent via fax or mail will not be considered.

Qualified disadvantaged (DBE) and women-owned (WBE) businesses are encouraged to submit proposals. Proposers are required to document whether the individual is a DBE or WBE.

CVRPC, in accordance with the provisions of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (78 Stat. 252, 42 U.S.C §§ 2000b to 2000b-4) and the Regulations, hereby notifies all proposers that it will affirmatively ensure that any contract entered into pursuant to this advertisement, will afford disadvantaged business enterprises full and fair opportunity to submit proposals in response to this invitation and will not be discriminated against on the grounds of race, color, or national origin in consideration for an award.

II. INTRODUCTION

The Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission (CVRPC) was awarded a Rural Business Development Grant (RBDG) to provide business development assistance to the Winooski Valley Co-operative Market, d.b.a. Plainfield Co-operative in Plainfield, Vermont.

The CVRPC is working with the Co-op Board of Directors, its General Manager and members, and public partners to 1) update designs for an expansion of the Co-op's existing structure at 153 Main Street in Plainfield's historic Designated Village Center; 2) analyze and compare the economic viability of that expansion versus purchasing, retrofitting, and relocating elsewhere; 3) engage the Co-op's membership in the grant process and facilitate decision making; and 4) develop an Action Plan in response to the analysis and choice. Project beneficiaries will include the Co-op and its supply chain businesses who are seeking to maintain and expand product sales and viability. It is anticipated that the final designs for the proposed building expansion, financial feasibility analyses and market study results will be delivered by June 15, 2023.

As a co-operative, the Plainfield Co-op is owned by its members, and thus any major decisions must be made through community discussion and decision-making. Member and community engagement are paramount to ensure that membership is aware of the grant project, understands the results from each grant component, and participates in decisions regarding the future of the store.

The consultant will be expected to meet regularly with the advisory committee and Co-op Board. Advisory committee and Co-op Board meetings are held virtually; Co-op Membership meetings are held in person or virtually.

This is the second time an RFP has been released for this task. The first RFP was titled "Internal Readiness Assessment." In this second RFP, operational assessment and capacity elements have been removed, refocusing the request on community engagement.

Community engagement and facilitation is one out of four components in the grant project. The scope of this request for bid only pertains to community engagement and facilitation, and no other portion of the project.

III. SCOPE OF WORK

The proposed cost of these services will be one factor in choosing the consultant.

SERVICES REQUIRED

- 1) Working closely with an advisory committee of Co-op members, staff and other stakeholders, develop and implement a communication plan that will ensure that the Co-op membership is fully engaged with the grant process, facilitate meetings and conversations about the results from other grant tasks which are expected by June 1, 2023, and assist the Co-op leadership to communicate these results. While the communication plan will be driven by results that are unknown at this time, the consultant should be, if needed, able and prepared to:
 - a. design and conduct a survey of the Co-op membership and community,
 - b. design and facilitate meetings,
 - c. guide conversations about future decisions, and
 - d. assist with conducting discussions and/or membership votes.
- 2) With the results from the other components of the grant, work with Board and committee members to conduct 2-3 focus groups to seek feedback on possible scenarios for the business's future and guide the Board and committee members on the next steps of the communication plan.
- 3) Meet with the advisory committee and Co-op Board monthly to provide progress updates on deliverables.

PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENTS

The following performance measures must be adhered to by the consultant as part of this contract.

- 1) Attend a kickoff meeting with the project team.
- 2) Meet with the advisory committee and Co-op Board monthly.
- 3) Develop a communication plan for Co-op engagement that indicates the proposer's ongoing involvement in facilitating Co-op member involvement.
- 4) Develop one or two surveys of the Co-op members and larger community.
- 5) With Co-op Board and advisory committee assistance, conduct 2-3 focus groups of Co-op members.
- 6) Provide a brief final report summarizing the takeaways of the engagement and facilitation activities conducted.

IV. PROPOSALS

SCOPE OF SERVICES

General Requirements

Proposals must:

- explain how the contractor intends to carry out the services requested by specifically describing how a communication plan would be designed and what processes would be used to engage the Co-op membership.
- describe tools and strategies that can be employed in a variety of hypothetical situations.
- describe how the proposer will work with a committee of Co-op members, staff and other stakeholders, and if the proposer can attend in-person meetings.
- provide examples of how the proposer has engaged and facilitated other co-op or community efforts.
- propose a contract start-date and schedule.
- describe any changes to the scope of work identified in Section III of this RFP.
- identify what support, if any, will be required from CVRPC during all phases of work.

Technical Qualifications

Proposals must include the following:

- 1) A description of the firm, including addresses of all offices proposed for involvement in this project, structure of the firm, size of the firm, number of years the firm has been in business, the firm's experience with similar projects, including retail grocery operations and cooperative businesses, and experience working collaboratively with an advisory committee.
- 2) Assurances that the consultant is able to complete all services.
- 3) List of people who will work on the contract, including names, education, professional licenses, registrations or certifications, relevant experience (resumes are acceptable), and role in the contract. CVRPC must preapprove use of any staff not identified in the proposal.
- 4) Examples of relevant past experience and three references, which will include project description, contact person, phone number, and address of reference. References should demonstrate the experience of the specific staff proposed to work under the CVRPC contract. CVRPC reserves the right to check references beyond those provided by the contractor.
- 5) Proof of insurance.

COST PROPOSAL

The cost proposal must:

- identify costs by task and person hours.
- identify an hourly rate(s) by individual(s) providing services.
- detail other expenses (travel, etc.).

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Proposals must be submitted electronically to Jon Ignatowski, Planner,
ignatowski@cvregion.com

The CVRPC assumes no responsibility and no liability for costs incurred relevant to the preparation and submission of the proposal or any other costs prior to issuance of a contract.

Proposals received after due date and time will not be considered.

Upon submission, all proposals become the property of the CVRPC. The expense of preparing, submitting, and presenting a proposal is the sole responsibility of the contractor. The CVRPC retains the right to reject any and all proposals received, to interview or not interview any or all firms responding to this RFP prior to selection, to negotiate with any qualified source, or to cancel in part or in its entirety this RFP if it determines such action to be in the best interest of the CVRPC or that of eligible parties. Reasons for cancellation or rejection will be provided to all registered vendors in writing. This solicitation in no way obligates the CVRPC to award a contract.

PROPOSAL EVALUATION

Contractor selection will be based on the following factors:

1. Completeness and responsiveness of submission
2. Scope of Work Format and Contents
3. Qualifications and Responsiveness
4. Cost Proposal
5. References

If any changes are made to this RFP, an addendum will be posted to the CVRPC website and sent to contractors expressing interest and providing CVRPC with contact information.

Alternative delivery methods may be arranged by request. A contractor may correct, modify, or withdraw a response to this RFP via written notice received by CVRPC prior to the submission deadline. Modifications must be submitted electronically and clearly labeled "Modification No. ____". Each modification must be numbered in sequence, and must reference the original RFP.

After the opening of responses to this RFP, a contractor may not change any provision of the response in a manner prejudicial to the interests of CVRPC or fair competition. If a mistake and the intended correct wording are clearly evident on the face of the response document, the mistake will be corrected to reflect the intended correct meaning and the contractor will be notified in writing. Contractors may not withdraw responses to this RFP so corrected. A contractor may withdraw an opened response to this RFP if a mistake is clearly evident on the face of the response document, but the intended correct wording is not similarly evident.

CVRPC reserves the right to seek clarification of any statement submitted, conduct interviews with contractors, and to select a contractor that is best able to address the services requested and promote the public interest.

CVRPC reserves the right to examine all aspects of responses submitted, tangible and intangible. CVRPC reserves the right to withdraw this Request for Proposals, and/or to advertise for new submissions at any time if it is in the best interest of the CVRPC to do so. A contract will be awarded as deemed to be in the best interest of the CVRPC.

Pursuant to State of Vermont Laws, anyone in any matter relative to the procurement of services who intentionally makes a material statement that is false, omits or conceals a material fact in a written statement, submits or invites reliance on a material writing that is false, submits or invites reliance on a sample or other object that is misleading, or uses any trick, scheme or device that is misleading in a material respect will be subject to sanction pursuant to the laws of the State of Vermont.

IV. STANDARDS AND DELIVERABLES

1. Except for appendices, all reports are to:
 - a. be presented for ease of readability by the average citizen;
 - b. include charts, graphs and other graphics as appropriate;
 - c. include executive summaries or abstracts suitable for broad distribution;
 - d. include a glossary of technical terms, and a list of references or citations for all sources of data and information.
3. All documents must be provided in digital form (Microsoft Office format for report text and

PDF format for full report). Images (photos, maps, drawings, graphics, etc.) must be provided as separate files for use by CVRPC.

4. All written reports must be provided double-sided. The use of recycled paper is strongly encouraged.
5. Copies of all reports and documents, including drafts, should be provided to CVRPC no less than one week prior to any scheduled review or discussion.
6. All data, databases, reports, programs and materials, in digital and hard copy formats, created under this project must become the property of the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission.

V. CONTRACTING PROVISIONS

CONTRACT COMPLETION

Performance under the scope of work must be completed by the dates indicated in Section I.

PAYMENT

The amount and timing of payments will be determined during contract negotiations. Requests for payments must be made directly to the CVRPC, and payments made must be 100 percent of the amount requested for eligible services. CVRPC anticipates making payments within 30 days of receiving an accurate and complete invoice.

OWNERSHIP OF MATERIAL

All rights, titles to and ownership of the data, material, and documentation resulting from this contract project and/or prepared for the CVRPC pursuant to a contract between CVRPC and the selected contractor must remain with the CVRPC.

COMPLIANCE WITH STATE AND FEDERAL LAWS

All contractors must comply with any and all applicable laws, statutes, ordinances, rules, regulations, and/or requirements of federal, state, and local governments and agencies thereof, which relate to or in any manner affect the performance of this agreement. CVRPC receives funding from numerous state and federal agencies. Those requirements imposed upon the CVRPC as a recipient or subrecipient of state and federal funds are thereby passed along to the contractor and any subcontractors, and those rights reserved by the state or federal government are likewise reserved by the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission.

All contractors and any subcontractors must carry adequate insurance coverage and must affirm being an equal opportunity employer with an affirmative action plan. The contractor must further certify that it will comply with the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

It is the policy of the CVRPC that Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE) have the opportunity to participate to the maximum extent feasible in procurement and contracting.

If the contractor is a natural person, not a corporation or partnership, the contractor states that, as of the date the contract is signed, he/she:

- a. is not under any obligation to pay child support; or
- b. is under such an obligation and is in good standing with respect to that obligation; or
- c. has agreed to a payment plan with the Vermont Office of Child Support Services and is in full compliance with that plan.

The contractor makes this statement with regard to support owed to any and all children residing in Vermont. In addition, if the contractor is a resident of Vermont, contractor makes this statement with regard to support owed to any and all children residing in any other state or territory of the United States.

**The Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission
is an Equal Opportunity Employer.**