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Request for Qualifications

Purpose

Aspyr, formerly known as the Workforce Development Board of Central Ohio (WDBCO), is soliciting a qualified vendor to guide and execute a strategic visioning and planning process for the newly created Central Ohio Workforce Development Network. The vendor must demonstrate experience in developing strategic plans for community-focused collective-impact initiatives, gathering community sentiment on crucial topics, and possess strong facilitation skills.

Contact

Jennifer Roy, Project and Contract Manager
rfp-proposal@aspyrworkforce.org
614.559.5064

About Aspyr

Founded in July 2016, Aspyr was established as a 501c(3) nonprofit to be the designated workforce board for Franklin County under the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA). Aspyr assists employers with developing talent pipelines and jobseekers with acquiring the education, credentials and skills to obtain work in careers that pay a living wage. Aspyr is also responsible for the administration of the WIOA funds.

The organization is governed by a private sector led, 27-member Board appointed by the Franklin County Board of Commissioners and the Mayor of the City of Columbus. Business representatives come from the healthcare, manufacturing, IT, insurance, and financial services sectors. Other members represent education, community action, United Way, Mid-Ohio Food Bank, labor, government and economic development. The list of Board Directors is included in the appendix. Aspyr currently employs thirteen (13) full-time staff members and one project consultant. Aspyr provides operational and fiscal oversight of the OhioMeansJobs Columbus-Franklin County Job Center. Job Center Operations and Career Services service provision are provided under a contract that is competitively bid at a minimum of every four (4) years. The current contract is held by Equus Workforce Solutions and a consortium with two community organizations – Goodwill Columbus and the Columbus Urban League.

About the Central Ohio Workforce Development Network

As a pillar of Aspyr's strategic plan, the Central Ohio Workforce Development Network was created with Aspyr as the backbone of the workforce development ecosystem in Franklin County. The Central Ohio WDN is a collective-impact collaborative focused on providing equitable economic mobility through the work of thirteen member organizations. Members have currently aligned to focus on creating a no-wrong door service delivery model, shared data system for more effective service delivery, and aligned service delivery for increased grant funding opportunities.

Scope of Work and Deliverables

The scope of work includes the following:

- Project management
- Design and execution of a strategic visioning and planning process
- Development of an actionable strategic plan
- Development of recommendations regarding the plan's implementation and support structure

The proposal should include:

- Understanding of the work to be performed, estimated hours, and other pertinent information
- Organization description, size and structure. Indicate whether the firm is a small, woman- or minority-owned business
- Qualifications of all staff to be assigned to the project with a specified project manager
- Resume of staff to be assigned to the project

It is expected that these tasks will be accomplished through a combination of activities, including:

- Environmental scan of member organizations, industry, chambers of commerce, and economic development
- Community stakeholder engagement to include but not limited to residents, community-based organizations, community development organizations, and faith-based organizations.
- Focus groups, interviews, surveys and/or other methods that will be useful in receiving member and community input
- Facilitated group meetings with the Central Ohio WDN Strategic Plan work group to create consensus regarding a strategic vision and plan
- Development of recommendations regarding the implementation of the strategic plan
- Presentation of finalized strategic plan to full membership in electronic and print formats

Ownership and Confidentiality

All intellectual property will become the property of Aspyr. All data remains the sole property of the organizations. The vendor shall further agree to keep information related to any contracts with Aspyr in strict confidence, including, but not limited to, the terms of the contract and any confidential business information or proprietary information learned through its dealings with Aspyr.

Proposal Format

To best evaluate the ability of the vendor to meet our goals, please include the following in your proposal:

- Examples of similar projects
- Three client references
- Suggested project timeline with major tasks and milestones
- Project budget by line item
- Sample project plan
- Identification of who will be involved in the project team, their role, and their relevant experience

Proposal – Must include the following:

General Information

Aspyr understands that the scope of work requested may be conducted by a single consultant, a consultant group, or by a partnership of consultants. The proposal should provide the name, title, address, telephone number, and email address for each person engaged in the project. If a consultant group or partnership of consultants, the proposal should indicate who will serve as the point person.

Consultant Qualifications

The proposal must describe the consultant's qualifications to conduct the RFP scope of work activities, expertise, knowledge and experience. Experience should include examples of conducting similar or related work (i.e., working with other collaborative or collective impact initiative to create a strategic vision and strategic plan), as well as experience working with non-profits or other similar organizations.

To accomplish the scope requested, the consultant will need to possess the following qualifications:

- Experience at successfully developing consensus-based strategic plans
- Knowledgeable of collective impact or collaborative strategic initiatives
- Strong facilitation skills
- Experience at creating a neutral environment for, and soliciting input from, individuals in various sectors
- Experience at gathering and utilizing data to inform the strategic planning project
- Ability to constructively challenge key stakeholders
- Experience inspiring others to think innovatively
- Project management experience

If a consultant group or partnership of consultants is proposed to conduct the RFP scope of work, the proposal must indicate which activities each consultant will conduct as well as information about their level of expertise, knowledge and experience to conduct those specific activities.

Work Plan

The proposal should contain a detailed description of the activities to be conducted by the consultant to complete the requested scope of work, including:

- The specific activities to be conducted at each stage
- A timeline for the activities at each stage
- Milestones and deliverables tied to those activities, and
- A detailed budget for each task, along with a proposed payment schedule tied to project milestones and/or deliverables.

References

The proposals should include at least three references from individuals who can speak to their experience with the consultant in conducting projects of similar scope. Information regarding each reference should include the individual's name, address, telephone number, and email address.

Process for Proposal Submission and Evaluation

Instructions for submission

a) Closing Submission Date

Proposals are due by 5:00 pm EST on July 19, 2024

b) Inquiries

Inquiries concerning the RFQ should be made before 5:00 PM EST on July 12, 2024

Jennifer Roy

rfp-proposal@aspyrworkforce.org

Email Subject: Central Ohio WDN Strategic Plan RFQ

Answers to questions will be published in an FAQ document on the website on July 15, 2024, by 5:00 PM. It is the responsibility of the interested parties to check the website.

c) Conditions of Proposal

All costs incurred in the preparation of a response to this RFQ are the responsibility of the bidder and will not be reimbursed by Aspyr.

d) Submission Instructions

Proposals should be submitted in PDF format via email to Jennifer Roy at rfp-proposal@aspyrworkforce.org before the closing submission date and time. If the file is too large for email, a link to the file should be provided.

Late arrivals will not be accepted. Mail submissions will not be accepted. It is the responsibility of the bidder to ensure that the response is received by Aspyr. A response may be judged nonresponsive and excluded for further consideration if it is not received by the deadline or does not follow the specified format.

e) Right to Reject

Aspyr reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to reject any and all responses received in response to this RFQ. A contract for the accepted response will be based on the factors described in the RFQ.

f) Confidentiality

If the bidder deems any material submitted to be proprietary or confidential, that must be indicated in the relevant section(s) of the response.

g) Notification

It is expected that a bidder will be selected within two to three weeks of the closing submission date, although this timeline is subject to change. Aspyr reserves the right to cancel this RFQ at any time. Upon conclusion of negotiations with the successful bidder, all bidders submitting responses to this RFQ will be informed in writing.

RFQ Released: June 27, 2024

Proposals Due: July 19, 2024

Selection Made: On or about August 1, 2024

Project Begins: August 12, 2024

Criteria for Selection

Aspyr will select the proposal which it feels will deliver the highest quality deliverable at the best value. The proposal will be initially reviewed by the Director of the Central Ohio Workforce Development Network. Selection of the vendor will be made by the Central Ohio WDN Strategic Plan workgroup which includes the CEO.

Price will be a significant, but not the only, criteria in evaluating the proposals. Consideration will also be given to the following:

- Ability of the bidder to provide all aspects of the proposal
- Compliance of the vendor and proposal with the project requirements outlined above
- The extent to which the proposed deliverable meets the scope and goals outlined in the RFQ
- Experience with similar organizations and portfolio of work

The award will be made to the qualified bidder whose proposal is most advantageous to Aspyr with price and other factors considered.

Aspyr, in its sole discretion, may request proposal presentations by meeting with any or all bidders to clarify or negotiate modifications to proposals; However, Aspyr reserves the right to make an award without further discussion of the proposals submitted. Therefore, proposals should be submitted initially on the most favorable terms, from both technical and price standpoints, that the bidder can propose.

Aspyr contemplates the award of the contract to the responsible bidder with the most cost-effective solution and the capabilities to perform the contract services.

Conflict of Interest

The bidder must disclose, in an exhibit of the proposal, any possible conflicts of interest that may result from the award of the contract or the services provided under the contract. Except as otherwise disclosed in the proposal, the bidder affirms that to the best of its knowledge there exists no actual or potential conflict between the bidder, the bidder's project manager(s), or its family's business or financial interest and the services provided under the contract. In the event of any change in either interest or the services provided under the contract, the bidder will inform Aspyr regarding the possible conflicts of interest, which may arise as a result of such change and agrees that all conflicts shall be resolved to Aspyr's satisfaction, or the bidder may be disqualified from consideration under this RFQ. As used in this Section, "conflict of interest" shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

1. Giving or offering a gratuity, kickback, money, gift, or anything of value to a Aspyr Director or employee with the intent of receiving a contract from Aspyr or favorable treatment under a contract;
2. Having or acquiring at any point during the RFQ process or during the term of the contract, any contractual, financial, business or other interest, direct or indirect, that would conflict in any manner or degree with the bidder's performance of its duties and responsibilities to Aspyr under the contract or otherwise create the appearance of impropriety with respect to the award or performance of the contract; or
3. Currently in possession of or accepting during the RFQ process or the term of the contract anything of value based on an understanding that the actions of the bidder or its affiliates or interests on behalf of Aspyr will be influenced.