

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

For

Mahoning Valley Manufacturers Coalition

Good Jobs Challenge Project Management & Implementation Services

Date of Issuance: May 12, 2023

Proposal Due Date and Time: **Wednesday, May 31, 2023 at 5:00 EDT**

Proposals must be delivered **via email** to the contact information listed below before the Due Date and Time.

Barbara Ewing

CEO/Youngstown Business Incubator

and

Procurement Officer/Mahoning Valley Manufacturers Coalition

MVMC@ybi.org

Section 1: OVERVIEW

The Mahoning Valley Manufacturers Coalition (MVMC) requests proposals from qualified firms interested in providing consulting services in order to accomplish the goals and objectives established in the Good Jobs Challenge. To be considered, an interested party must submit a Proposal in accordance with the requirements set forth in this Request for Proposals (RFP).

Only qualified firms with a minimum of five (5) years of verifiable experience in providing similar services will be considered. The selected Consultant will provide, pay and be responsible for all personnel, material, equipment, utilities, required training, and other goods or services necessary to fulfill the obligations of the grant agreement as outlined below and described in the attached documents. Proposers may propose all or some of the services.

- Execute business outreach strategy
 - Increase committed employer group.
 - Actively inform companies about earn and learn opportunities
- Execute community partner outreach.
 - Increase number of referral partners to WorkAdvance
- Attend state convenings
- Maintain data entry
- Help companies increase diversity in their workplace through WorkAdvance
- Fulfill program coordination, including coordinating partners to ensure seamless delivery of services – recruitment, work readiness, job training and career coaching – to meet the workforce needs of local manufacturing companies
- Develop and monitor workplans and supporting service providers, building on their organizational expertise by guiding them through model integrity and grant requirements and ensuring each community partner carries out the duties defined in their scope of work
- Oversee the quarterly reporting for Region 10
- Ensure grant compliance for reimbursement
- Provide oversight of Region 10 budget
- Work with other ISP's to help them start a WorkAdvance program
- Convene committed employer group
- Develop relationships with local training providers
- Promote earn and learn opportunities.
- Organize companies to fill training programs
- Outreach and communications services, including, but not limited to, social media management, newsletter, blog and website content creation

Section 2: BACKGROUND and SCHEDULE

Section 2.1 - MVMC Background

The Mahoning Valley Manufacturers Coalition includes more than 60 local manufacturers who are collaborating with education and workforce partners to find solutions to grow the Mahoning Valley economy. MVMC's

education partners include Choffin Career and Technical Center, Trumbull, Mahoning and Columbiana County career centers, Eastern Gateway Community College, Youngstown State University, and Kent State University Trumbull Campus.

Their goal is to attract the workforce needed for growth and expansion by offering seamless career pathways that enable individuals to enter and advance in strong and fulfilling manufacturing careers.

MVMC provides a network for Mahoning Valley manufacturers to identify common needs and problem-solve with their partners, sharing ideas and resources to develop a skilled workforce.

For additional information on their work, membership and programs, visit www.mahoningvalleymfg.com

2.2 - Issuing Office

This RFP is being issued by the Youngstown Business Incubator (YBI). YBI has a contract to provide services to the MVMC, including support for procurement processes. Contact information for this proposal is:

Barbara Ewing
CEO
Youngstown Business Incubator
241 W Federal Street
Youngstown, Ohio 44503
MVMC@ybi.org

No telephone inquiries will be accepted and may result in the Proposer's disqualification.

Section 2.3 - RFP Schedule

ACTIVITY or MILESTONE	DATE	TIME
Issuance of RFP	May 12, 2023	
Proposal Due Date and Time	May 31, 2023	5:00 pm EDT
Selection Committee Initial Review	June 6, 2023 (week of)	
Interviews (if needed)	June 14, 2023	9:00 am to 1:00 pm EDT
Selection Committee Meeting	June 19, 2023 (week of)	
Issuance of Notice of Intent to Award (approx.)	By June 23, 2023	
Anticipated Contract Start Date	July 1, 2023	

SECTION 3: INSTRUCTIONS TO PROPOSERS

Section 3.1 - Proposal Submission

Proposers shall submit a PDF copy of the proposal via email to MVMC@YBI.org. **Proposals must be received no later than 5:00 P.M. EDT on May 31, 2023.** It shall be the Proposer's responsibility to confirm receipt of the Proposal.

The MVMC may reject any Proposal not in compliance with this RFP and requirements of other applicable laws. The MVMC may reject any or all Proposals in whole or in part at no cost to the MVMC when the rejection or cancellation is in the best interest of the MVMC.

No late proposals will be accepted.

Section 3.2 - Cancellation

The MVMC reserves the right to cancel award of a contract resulting from this solicitation at any time before execution of the contract by both parties if cancellation is deemed to be in the MVMC's best interest. In no event shall the MVMC have any liability for the cancellation of award.

Section 3.3 - Late Submittals

All Proposals that are not received by the Proposal Due Date and Time stated in this RFP will be considered late and will be not accepted. Delivery delays for any reason do not excuse the Proposer's responsibility for submitting the Proposal by the stated deadline.

Section 3.4 - Disputes

In case of any doubt or differences of opinions as to the items or service to be furnished hereunder or the interpretation of the provisions of this RFP, the decision of the MVMC shall be final and binding upon all parties.

Section 3.5 - Proposer's Representations

Proposers, by the act of submitting their Proposal, represent that:

- They have read and understand this Request for Proposals, including any issued addendum, and their Proposal is made in accordance therewith
- They have familiarized themselves with the local conditions under which the work will be performed, including the Standard Services Agreement of the MVMC; and
- Their Proposal is based upon the requirements described in this RFP without exception

Section 3.6 - Cost of Proposals and Associated Responses

The MVMC is not liable for any costs incurred by a Proposer in the preparation and/or presentation of a Proposal.

Section 3.7 - MVMC Requests for Clarification, Additional Research & Revisions

The MVMC reserves the right to obtain clarification of any point in a Proposal or to obtain additional information necessary to properly evaluate a particular Proposal. Failure of a Proposer to respond to such a request for additional information or clarification could result in a finding that the Proposer is non-responsive and consequent rejection of the Proposal.

The MVMC may obtain information from any legal source for clarification of any Proposal or for information

on any Proposer. The MVMC need not inform the Proposer of any intent to perform additional research in this respect or of any information thereby received.

The MVMC reserves the right to request revisions or clarifications of Proposals after their submission and before a final award.

Section 3.8 - Rejection of Proposals

The MVMC reserves the right to reject any or all Proposals received in response to this RFP. Proposals may be rejected for the following reasons, including but not limited to:

- Failure of the Proposer to adhere to one or more of the provisions established in this RFP
- Failure of the Proposer to submit a Proposal in the format and with the content specified herein
- Failure of the Proposer to submit a Proposal within the time requirements established herein
- Failure of the Proposer to adhere to ethical and professional standards before, during, or following the solicitation and contracting process

The MVMC may reject any Proposal not in compliance with all prescribed public procurement procedures and requirements and may reject any or all Proposals if the MVMC determines that it is in the public interest to do so.

Section 3.9 - Modification or Withdrawal of Proposal by Proposer

Proposals submitted before the Proposal Due Date may be modified or withdrawn only by written notice to the MVMC. Such notice of modification or withdrawal of a Proposal shall be submitted in writing over the signature of the Proposer and shall be submitted prior to the Proposal Due Date and Time and shall be submitted to the MVMC's Project Manager at the Proposal submittal location.

No modifications to proposals may be made after the Proposal Due Date.

Section 3.10 - Affirmative Action / Nondiscrimination

By submitting a Proposal, the Proposer agrees to comply with the Fair Labor Standard Act, Civil Rights Act of 1964, Executive Order 11246, Fair Employment Practices, Equal Employment Opportunity Act, Americans with Disabilities Act, and Ohio Revised Statutes. By submitting a Proposal, the Proposer specifically certifies, under penalty of perjury, that the Proposer has not discriminated against minority, women, or emerging small business enterprises in obtaining any subcontracts.

Section 3.11 - MVMC Code of Conduct

As representatives of MVMC, all officers/members/designees are expected to conduct themselves in a professional and ethical manner, maintaining high standards of integrity and the use of good judgment. Representatives of MCMC are expected to be principled in their business interactions and act in good faith with individuals both inside and outside the MVMC, including Board members, employees, directors, volunteers, or agents who are engaged in any aspect of procurement, including – but not limited to– purchasing goods and services; awarding contracts and grants; or the administration and supervision of contracts.

- No employee, officer, director, volunteer or agent of MVMC shall participate in the selection, award or administration of a bid or contract supported by Federal funds if a conflict of interest is real or apparent to a reasonable person
- Conflicts of interest may arise when any employee, officer, director, volunteer or agent of MVMC has a financial, family or other beneficial interest in the vendor firm selected or considered for an award
- No employee, officer, director, volunteer or agent of MVMC shall do business with, award contracts to, or show favoritism toward a member of his/her immediate family, spouse's family or to any company, vendor or concern who either employs or has any relationship to a family member; or award a contract or bid which violates the spirit or intent of Federal, State or Local procurement laws and policies established to maximize free and open competition among qualified vendors
- MVMC's employees, officers, directors, volunteers or agents shall neither solicit nor accept gratuities, gifts, consulting fees, trips, favors or anything having a monetary value in excess of \$25 from a vendor, potential vendor, or from the family or employees of a vendor, potential vendor or bidder; or from any party to a subgrant agreement or ancillary contract

General

To promote compliance with federal regulations, MVMC requires buyers to perform some measure of cost/price analysis when making purchases under federal grants. Buyers shall avoid purchasing unnecessary items. All vendor bids and quotations must be evaluated on the basis of product quality, technical compliance with specifications, total cost, and the vendor's acceptance of MVMC's terms and conditions.

Once a vendor relationship is established, additions, upgrades and changes will be procured without quotes for the enhancements. The vendor relationship will be reviewed and reevaluated as deemed necessary.

Section 3.12 - Vendor Selection and Bidding Requirements

Buyers shall consider the following Bidding Requirements before making a vendor selection:

- Does the vendor provide the best mix of quality, service and price for the specified need? Federal regulations require that the lowest price have priority, unless quality, service or delivery time takes priority as to need
- Does the vendor qualify as a small, disadvantaged, minority or woman-owned business? Qualifying vendors should be given preference to the extent practical or economically feasible
- Preference, to the extent practical and economically feasible, for products and services that conserve natural resources and protect the environment and are energy efficient

SECTION 4: PROPOSAL FORMAT & CONTENT

Section 4.1 - Proposal Format

Proposals shall generally conform to the following requirements:

- Proposals should be prepared simply and economically. Emphasis should be on completeness, efficiency, and clarity of content. Brevity is encouraged
- Proposals must be printed on letter-sized (8.5" x 11") paper, with margins of at least ½" on all sides. Font size can be no smaller than 11
- The maximum total number of pages in the proposal shall not exceed ten (10) pages if printed single-sided. Pages that are formatted for 11x17 inch paper, such as oversized illustrations and maps, will count as two (2) pages. Unless otherwise specified herein, allocation of the number of pages within the sections of the Proposal are at the Proposer's discretion
- Proposal content that will not count against the total page limit includes: Introductory Letter (maximum two pages)-and Appendices (resumes should not exceed two pages per team member)

Section 4.2 – Proposal Content

Proposals shall include the following elements. Proposals that fail to meet these requirements may be deemed non-responsive.

- A) Introductory Letter. This letter should:
- Signed by an officer of the firm authorized to bind the firm to all statements made in the Proposal. Provide contact information, including telephone number(s), e-mail address(es), and physical address(es) to which correspondence should be addressed
 - Acknowledge the Proposer accepts all terms and conditions contained in the RFP and supporting documents or specifically identifies any and all exceptions
 - Name the person(s) authorized to represent the Proposer in any negotiations and the name of the person(s) authorized to sign any contract that may result
 - Confirm the Proposer's ability to begin service on August 1, 2023.
- B) Qualifications of Proposer. This section should identify the capabilities and resources of the Proposer's firm to furnish the requested services. The Proposer should provide:
- Proposer's areas of expertise, length of time in business, number of employees, and other information that would be helpful in characterizing the Proposer. Provide the same information for any subconsultants to be utilized on the project.
 - Lines of authority and responsibility, Proposer's approach managing projects to achieve intended goals and processes to identify and respond to problems and changes in scope, schedule, or budget. Describe the processes and resources to be used to manage the services and achieve the project objectives
 - Women or Minority Owned Business as applicable
 - Existing contract obligations for contracted services.
 - Overview of Proposer's capabilities and experience related to:
 - Project management
 - Program coordination

- Budgeting and financial planning
- Financial management, budgeting, and reporting

C) Qualifications of Proposer's Team. This section should identify the capabilities, experience, and qualifications of the Proposer's team members. Identify the Proposer's Project Manager or Principal, and other key staff, and extent of their involvement if selected for this project, including key staff from subconsultants.

The following should be included in this section:

- Team members' individual roles, responsibilities, credentials, and related experience that will allow the MVMC to evaluate the qualifications of the individuals proposed for this work. Describe team members' qualifications and experience on similar assignments.
- An organizational chart under which the Proposer's team will provide the requested services to the MVMC, if selected.
- Individual team members' availability as a percentage of time that can be dedicated to this contract.
- Resumes of key team members shall be included as an appendix to the Proposal and shall generally be limited to two pages per team member.

D) Past Performance. This section should identify the Proposer's capabilities and past performance history related to:

- Comparable workforce development projects
- Regulatory compliance and regulatory reporting
- Service recognitions and awards
- Examples of coordination and collaboration with contract managing agency to enhance efficiency, effectiveness, safety, and customer service

E) Approach. This section should identify the Proposer's proposed approach to the following responsibilities associated with this contract:

- Approach and schedule for contract start-up
- Incorporation of sustainability and environmental concerns into the project
- Approach to maintain adequate staffing to provide the proposed services, including anticipated driver recruitment and retention plan
- Approach to ensuring high-quality customer service and providing services responsive to the needs of all customers

F) References. Provide reference contracts, including a minimum of three (3) contracts. For each reference, include the client's name, description of services, duration, start and end date, and contract value.

- List any individuals in the proposed Project Team who participated in each reference contracts.
- Provide the name, address, phone number and email address of a person who can be contacted regarding your performance for the referenced contracts.

- G) Budget. Selection will be based on the proposed budget as well as the vendors' capabilities/experience in fulfilling the scope of work.

A Budget and a Budget Narrative should be provided that details all costs for which you request funding through this RFP. The Budget should show both annual and total costs. All included costs must be reasonable, allowable, necessary, and allocable among the stated cost categories, and based on cost principles from 2 CFR 200 and CFR 2900. Provide a Budget Narrative that describes and breaks down all expenses in the Budget Worksheet, including sufficient details to enable assessment of cost reasonableness. The Budget and Budget Narrative are not included in the ten (10) page limit and should include:

- Personnel (salary and benefits)
- Travel
- Staff training
- Supplies
- Equipment
- Contractual
- Other

The Period of Performance ends June 31, 2025.

SECTION 5: PROPOSAL EVALUATION and SELECTION

Section 5.1- General Information

Each Proposal will be judged on its completeness and quality of content based on evaluation criteria identified below. Upon completion of the evaluation process, the MVMC intends to negotiate a final scope of work, fee, and contract with the Proposer whose Proposal is deemed to be most advantageous to the MVMC. The MVMC reserves the right to contact references as part of the decision-making process and prior to making a final selection.

Section 5.2 - Proposal Evaluation

A) Responsiveness and Responsibility Determination

- Responsiveness Determination. A Proposal received prior to the Proposal Due Date will be reviewed by the Procurement Officer (delete-Project Manager) to determine if it is responsive to all RFP requirements. If the Proposal is unclear, the MVMC reserves the right to request clarification from the Proposer. However, clarifications may not be used to rehabilitate a non-responsive proposal. If the Project Manager finds the Proposal non-responsive, the Proposal shall be rejected; provided, however, the MVMC may waive minor informalities and/or mistakes at their discretion.

B) Evaluation Criteria

- All Proposals initially deemed responsive by the Procurement Officer will be provided to the Proposal Evaluation Committee and will be scored based on the criteria and maximum scores specified below. If required, interviews will be scored, and interview scores added to the Proposal evaluation scores.

Evaluation Criterion	Maximum Score
Qualifications of Proposer	15
Women/Minority Lead	5
Past Performance	15
Qualifications of Proposer's Team	15
Approach	15
Environmental/Sustainability	5
References	5
Budget	15
Subtotal: Maximum Proposal Score	90
Interview, if needed	25
Total: Maximum Total Score	115

Section 5.3 - Optional Interviews

The MVMC anticipates making an award based on Proposals, without interviews. However, at the MVMC's option, interviews may be conducted with one or more Proposers after Proposals have been evaluated. If required, interviews will be scheduled and arranged by the MVMC (see Section 2.3 RFP Schedule).

Section 5.4 - Selection and Award

The MVMC will enter into negotiations with the highest ranked Proposer. If a contract with the highest ranked Proposer cannot be reached, the MVMC reserves the right to commence negotiations with the second highest ranked Proposer. The MVMC reserves the right to negotiate individually with one or more firms, to negotiate a contract using best and final offers, to select one or more firms, or reject all Proposals and cancel the solicitation if determined to be in the best interest of the MVMC.