

Request for Proposals
For
Economic Recovery & Resiliency Strategic Action Plan
Proposals

Accepted until April 26th, 2024 at 2:00 PM ET

Ashtabula County Port Authority

35 West Jefferson St.

Jefferson OH 44047

Attn: Mark Winchell, Executive Director

LEGAL NOTICE

Sealed Proposals will be accepted until **April 26th 2024 by 2:00 PM ET**, at Ashtabula County Port Authority 35 West Jefferson St. Jefferson OH 44047.

Each team shall submit a total of six (5) copies of the Proposal, along with a digital copy on a USB Drive in a sealed envelope marked on the outside “ACPA Strategic Action Plan”.

We are an Equal Opportunity Employer.

BY ORDER OF THE
Executive Director, Ashtabula County Port Authority

Mark Winchell

NEWS PRESS/POSTED **Thursday, March 28th 2024**

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
For
ACPA Economic Recovery & Resiliency Strategic Action Plan

Introduction

ACPA Economic Recovery & Resiliency Strategic Action Plan will include a comprehensive assessment of the economic competitiveness of Ashtabula County and a required action plan to ensure equitable investment in the region going forward. The Strategic Action Plan will supplement and build on the Eastgate regional CEDS by providing a more detailed analysis of issues specific unique characteristics of Ashtabula County based on its rural Great Lakes location centered between the Cleveland-Elyria, OH, Youngstown-Warren, OH-PA, and Erie, PA metropolitan areas with influences from each adjacent market.

General Scope of Services

ACPA will engage a consultant to:

- **ASSESSMENT OF EXISTING TRADEABLE INDUSTRIES:** Research of current tradable industry sectors (e.g., chemicals, composites, health care, tourism, etc.) that bring money and wealth into the county, create quality living-wage direct jobs, and have a strong multiplier effect that creates indirect and induced economic activity and job creation:
 - Consultant will perform Location Quotient analyses for NAICS Industry Sectors at the 4-6 Digit levels to assess local export industries based on employment and wages.
 - Consultant will perform a Shift-Share analysis to identify high-growth industries locally compared to national trends.
 - Consultant will evaluate County Business Patterns to identify regional clusters of closely related industries where locally available technology, skills, and production capabilities may present upstream/downstream supply chain opportunities.
- **SWOT ANALYSIS:** Consultant will conduct a SWOT analysis will be performed related to the retention and expansion of Ashtabula County's existing tradable industry sectors:
 - Consultant will facilitate roundtable discussions with local industry leaders identified with the assistance of ACPA and other key stakeholders to supplement desktop data review and provide a thorough understanding of local economic issues.
- **ASSESSMENT OF FUTURE TARGET INDUSTRIES:** Consultant will identify potential new tradable industries to target for business attraction efforts based on the county's competitive assets including workforce, low cost of business/living, infrastructure, proximity/ease of access to global markets, and site availability/readiness.
 - Consultant will analyze recent market trends to identify industries with potential for future growth with the support of future investments in capital infrastructure, placemaking, workforce, and targeted marketing.
- **CAPITAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT:** Consultant will identify competitive assets that exist and assess what capital projects are needed to serve existing and targeted tradable industries:
 - Consultant will assess county's multimodal transportation (e.g., ports, rail, highways, etc.) using available mapping/data with an emphasis on access to global markets.
 - Consultant will provide a summary of locations where utility infrastructure carrying capacity (e.g. water, sewer, power, broadband) is inadequate to support target industry sector attraction and major investments required to spur private investment
 - Consult will recommend opportunities to integrate climate resilient infrastructure including opportunities for sustainable modes of transport (e.g., electric vehicle, hydrogen fuel cell, etc.) and renewable energy (e.g., solar, wind, biomass, etc.)

- **COUNTY MARKETING STRATEGY:** Consultant will create a marketing strategy for reaching target industry sectors with an emphasis on increasing Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in Ashtabula County:
 - Consultant will identify the global regions/markets that are most feasible as trade partners based on their supply chains and intellectual property resources.
 - Consultant will prepare a value proposition for foreign investment based on Ashtabula County's competitive advantages.
 - Consultant will recommend mediums for direct marketing to target trade partners and evaluate the potential for trade mission opportunities.
- **WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY:** Consultant will identify existing and needed workforce development resources/partnerships required to meet the needs of the existing and targeted industries.
 - Consultant will provide a list of current workforce skills gaps identified through socioeconomic data indicators and stakeholder discussions.
 - Consultant will recommend a list of workforce programs/partners to ensure a 21st Century workforce to support target industry sector growth.
 - Consultant will recommend a series of support programs/initiatives for wrap-around services (e.g., financial literacy/coaching, childcare, transportation, etc.) to ensure employment opportunities are readily available to historically underserved communities.
- **PLACEMAKING PLAN:** Consultant will recommend strategic placemaking initiatives to support above industry targeting strategy including the identification of community resources that need to be improved or added to keep existing residents here and engaged in industry opportunities as well as resources needed to attract key talent needed by those industries.
 - Consultant will present a summary of applicable Case Study investments for placemaking that resulted in workforce and business attraction in similarly situated regions.
 - Consultant will create a summary map showing the recommended location of major placemaking investments across the County.
 - Consultant will provide a summary matrix of placemaking initiatives with estimate timelines for completion, rough order of magnitude cost, and responsible parties.
- **FUNDING PLAN:** Compile a comprehensive list of applicable funding sources to implement the needed investments in the competitive assets identified in the above tasks:
 - Consultant will provide a matrix of potential funding sources including new and emerging federal programs through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and Inflation Reduction, and recent state commitments to fund brownfield remediation, water quality enhancement, and transformational mixed-use development.
 - Consultant will identify models for public-private partnerships that maximize private investment in the county.
 - Consultant will recommend strategies to fully leverage private investment in the County's federally-desired Opportunity Zones.
 - Consultant will explore potential for land value captures (e.g., TIF), and innovative financing mechanisms that leverage maximum partner investments to capitalize on ACPA's ability to champion complex economic projects by leverage their ability to offer bond financing and sales tax exemptions on lease structures.

Project Deliverables

- Recommend and prioritize assessments from the above scope of work
- Actionable items for both public and private partners in a recovery plan
- Detailed analysis of resiliency strategies for the county
- Evaluate public-private partnerships and how they would be implemented

Proposal Contents

The objective is to enter into a contract with a Consultant to provide the above-referenced Work.

Minimum Qualifications

In this section, provide documentation that the Consultant has at least two years' experience performing Comprehensive Plan Studies.

Failure to meet these minimum qualifications will cause the Proposal to be considered non-responsive, and it will be removed from further consideration.

Section A. Vendor's Experience/ Available Staff's Experience

In this section of the Proposal, provide information regarding the Consultant's experience with Economic, Industrial and Community related development, implementation, and planning.

Provide the resumes of the key personnel (prime and/or subcontractor) capable of providing the services across each scope of work item and project deliverable. Please also include an organizational chart identifying the name, title, and firm for each key staff member and how the project team will interact with the ACPA.

Section B. Project Scope of Work

In this section of the Proposal, describe your proposed approach to the project and your methodology for providing the services. Take this opportunity to specify any unique characteristics that may distinguish you from other potential consultants for these services. Please include a timeline for each activity and limit your response to **ten** pages.

Section C. Other Categories

In this section of the Proposal, submit internet addresses of favorable reviews of the Coordinator's work, providing the similar services offered to the ACPA. Provide other relevant information that was not illustrated in the previous two sections.

Proposal Evaluation Criteria

A selection committee will rank each item of the Proposal based on the maximum possible points listed below. Listed categories will be evaluated by each member of the selection committee.

There is no category for rating a narrative approach on its merits. A narrative approach may be considered, where appropriate, to expand a consultant's explanation regarding any of the following evaluation categories.

A. (Up to 30 points) “Coordinator's Experience” / “Available Staff's Experience”

Consider the Coordinator's experience within the past 3 years with the type of service offered to the ACPA. Review the references provided by the consultant and evaluate the firm in each of the following categories:

- Quality of services provided
- The relevance of the services provided to the project's mission, goals, and main priorities
- Consider the resume of the key personnel in each applicable area of services to be authorized.
- Evaluate the "Available Staff's Experience" in the following categories:
- The project manager or lead
- Additional experiences relevant to the outlined scope of work and project deliverables

B. (Up to 50 points) “Project/Contract Methodology”

Evaluate each firm based on its proposed methodology for the execution of this contract. Consider each firm's understanding of the purpose and scope of this project/contract. Evaluate the soundness of the strategy and actionable items; assess how achievable the deliverables are for the contract period.

C. (Up to 20 points) “Other Evaluation Categories”

Evaluate each vendor based on the favorable internet reviews provided by the vendor and any additional information relevant to the proposed project. This may include, but is not limited to, innovative ideas and previous experience of working in the Great Lakes or Midwest Region.

Requirements for the Proposals:

Instructions for Preparing and Submitting a Proposal

1. Provide the information requested in the Request for Proposals Content in the same order listed, in a letter signed by an officer of the firm. Do not send additional forms, resumes, brochures, or other materials.
2. Proposals shall be limited to fifteen (15) 8½" x 11" single-sided pages.
3. Please adhere to the following requirements in preparing and binding letters of interest:

- a. Please use a minimum font size of 12-point and maintain margins of 1" on all four sides.
- b. Page numbers must be centered at the bottom of each page.
- c. Use 8½" x 11" paper only.
- d. Bind proposals by stapling at the upper left-hand corner only. Do not utilize any other binding system.
- e. Do not provide tabbed inserts or other features that may interfere with machine copying.

Each Team shall submit a total of six (5) copies of the Proposals in a sealed envelope marked on the outside proposals for "ACPA Strategic Action Plan", as well as a digital copy on a USB Drive.

The ACPA will accept Proposals until **2 PM, Friday April 26th**, at the Director of Planning's office, 100 E. Federal St. Youngstown, OH 44503

Eastgate retains the option of rejecting or accepting any RFP.

Schedule

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| 1. Request for Proposals (RFP) Advertisement: | March 28th |
| 2. Proposals due: | April 26th |
| 3. Proposal Review completed | May 3rd |
| 4. Target award date: | May 10th |