



WNY Planning and Implementation Support Services Request for Proposals

Release Date: November 5, 2024

The following is a list of questions submitted by prospective respondents and respective answers provided by the originating team:

Q&A Matrix

Table with 3 columns: No., Question, Answer. Contains 3 rows of Q&A pairs regarding contract participation and project readiness.



No.	Question	Answer
4	<b>Is the successful respondent responsible for coordinating public forums/events for ESD? Including identifying venues, developing invitation lists, and coordinating event staff.</b>	Yes, for selected activities, the Consultant would be responsible for supporting ESD public information and engagement activities (See Section III, subsection ii, public/internal engagement, marketing and communications services to be provided).
5	<b>Is the successful respondent responsible for the drafting of media content, including but not limited to press releases and media advisories?</b>	Yes, the Consultant may be responsible for drafting portions of various multi-media content outlining aspects of subject projects/programs, in conjunction with ESD media/communications staff (See Section III, subsection ii, public/internal engagement, marketing and communications services to be provided).
6	<b>Is the successful Consultant team precluded from responding to any future RFPs issued in relation to the projects that are managed under this contract?</b>	The selected Consultant team would be precluded from participating in specific future projects directly related to, or arising from, the planning services specified in this RFP, if this would pose a conflict of interest.
7	<b>Will the successful respondent be responsible for the coordination of the drafting and approvals of board materials, incentive proposals, contracts, and grant disbursement agreements?</b>	No, it is not anticipated that the Consultant would be directly responsible for drafting ESD internal approval/agreement documents. However, the Consultant would be responsible for helping shape (in conjunction with ESD staff) the aspects or components of a particular effort that may ultimately receive ESD assistance, and the language/descriptions of those efforts may be incorporated into future ESD internal approval/agreement documents (e.g., board materials, incentive proposals, contracts, and grant disbursement agreements). See Section III, subsection ii, strategic planning and project management services to be provided.



No.	Question	Answer
8	<p><b>Once funding is awarded to approved projects, what is the expectation of the successful respondent’s role in the administration of the funds and relationship with the grantees?</b></p>	<p>As noted on Section III, subsection ii (in general), and in subsection iii (more specifically related to anticipated needs for current projects/programs), the Consultant is anticipated to: (as an extension of ESD staff): work to track and monitor progress on all ESD-WNY efforts listed; work to anticipate and resolve any challenges/barriers that may occur; and assist in addressing any problems incurred that would prevent implementation, with an overall goal to shepherd all component efforts to successful implementation/completion.</p>
9	<p><b>Will the successful respondent be responsible for the MWBE/SVDOB Utilization documentation related to funding sources for approved projects?</b></p>	<p>The successful respondent would only be responsible for tracking their <i>own</i> MWBE/SVDOB contracting goals for the Consultant contract arising out of this RFP, in conjunction ESD’s Office of Supplier and Contractor Diversity (OSCD). OSCD staff will be solely responsible to track utilization/documentation of grantees MWBE/SVDOB goals associated with various ESD-WNY activities, programs, and projects.</p>
10	<p><b>Is there an expectation of a licensed professional to complete any project assessments that involve design and construction and provide a report/monitor as the project progresses?</b></p>	<p>It is not anticipated that any of the services listed in the Scope of Work in Section III would legally require a licensed professional (e.g., architect, engineer, surveyor, etc.) to undertake, insofar as the Scope of Work does not involve Architecture/Engineering (A/E) or construction efforts.</p>
11	<p><b>Will there be a need for cost-estimating services?</b></p>	<p>It is not anticipated that any of the services listed in the Scope of Work in Section III would require cost-estimating services in the context of an A/E or construction effort. However, expertise in broad public sector budgeting for projects and programs could be required.</p>



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12	<b>Will the successful respondent be responsible for developing marketing materials and/or maintaining social media presence?</b>	Yes, this may be a requirement (See Section III, subsection ii, public/internal engagement, marketing and communications services to be provided).
13	<b>Is there an expectation of creating a new initiative/brand for the implementation of these programs?</b>	In the context of strategic planning, there is the potential of re-shaping/re-branding a new East Buffalo program component in the overall portfolio of ESD-WNY efforts. However, from a marketing perspective, this would not likely require an original “branding exercise” (i.e., would not involve original graphic messaging, logos, etc.)
14	<b>Is there an expectation of maintaining community engagement/updates throughout the entirety of the projects, including during construction?</b>	Yes, there is a potential for supporting such efforts (See Section III, subsection ii, public/internal engagement, marketing and communications services to be provided).
15	<b>Is the successful respondent expected to work with ESD originators or independently in identifying potential projects, meeting with potential grantees, proposing incentives, and doing outreach into the various communities?</b>	The Consultant would be responsible for supporting ESD-WNY leadership and staff in broad strategic planning for potential projects/programs to achieve overall regional objectives. While they would likely coordinate with ESD originators and project managers over the course of such efforts, direct ESD grant/incentive administration tasks would not part of the Consultant responsibilities.



No.	Question	Answer
16	<p><b>Based on “[t]he intent of these Consultant services is to develop a deep partnership with ESD-WNY leadership, project management, and planning teams to essentially act as an extension of the Corporation’s WNY staff resources,” can you please provide details of the current team that we would be working with on this effort (org chart, job/role descriptions, etc.) so that we can determine the best way to integrate with the existing team?</b></p>	<p>The ESD-WNY Leadership is led by the WNY Regional Director (RD), which also serves as the Executive Director of the WNY REDC. The RD is assisted by a Deputy Director that focuses on the operations of the REDC and ESD’s roles in efforts such as the Consolidated Funding Application (CFA). The RD oversees a staff of loans/grants personnel including six loan/grant project managers.</p> <p>Outside of the REDC support efforts, the majority of the Consultant work in East Buffalo would be through the ESD WNY Director of Community Development, which also reports to the WNY RD and receives additional support through ESD’s Vice President of Policy &amp; Planning for WNY.</p> <p>Incidental Consultant support work for the two WNY subsidiaries (USA Niagara Development Corporation and Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation), which also report to the Vice President of Policy &amp; Planning for WNY, would be coordinated with the President of each subsidiary.</p>
17	<p><b>On these specific projects/programs/initiatives, what strategic planning has already been completed? Is there any related program/project management infrastructure (including related tracking, monitoring, and reporting) already in place?</b></p>	<p>Links are provided in the RFP to all strategic planning documents that have been completed to date related to the Scope of Work. The ESD WNY Director of Community Development and the VP of Policy and Planning maintain progress tracking files for each of the programs and individual capital projects list in the portfolio of efforts listed in the RFP.</p>



No.	Question	Answer
18	<b>In relation to “Experience of the Team,” will similar experience in the areas of expertise and a strong portfolio of economic development efforts in areas outside of WNY (different regions in NY, different states, etc.) also be considered acceptable or does the experience have to be limited to this region?</b>	As noted in the first bullet of the cited “Experience of the Team” evaluation criterion on page 12 of the RFP, the relative experience of respondents in “support efforts of a similar in size and scope” will be considered, but the level of acceptability would be fully dependent on the content of the proposals received.
19	<b>If a vendor’s New York state Women Owned Business Enterprise (WBE) certification application is still in process, will a national WOSB (women owned small business) certification be considered acceptable for the 30% MWBE Participation Goal?</b>	Only fully NYS-certified MWBEs would be able to be credited toward applicable MWBE contracting goals in this solicitation.
20	<b>Will the planning consultant be expected to coordinate or liaise with other local, state, or federal agencies in addition to ESD? If so, can ESD share any information about which ones and in what capacity at this time?</b>	At present, only local agencies (City of Buffalo and City of Niagara Falls departments) have been involved with ESD/Consultant coordination efforts thus far on the subject initiatives listed in the RFP.
21	<b>Does ESD anticipate extending the deadline for the submission of proposals (RFP p.11)?</b>	No.
22	<b>Most of the subtasks entail “supporting,” “assisting,” “facilitating,” etc. Besides WNY REDC briefings and reports and standard (internal) progress updates and reports for ongoing projects and initiatives, can ESD identify any specific deliverables at this time?</b>	In terms of published reports, the REDC annual reports are the only fully defined deliverables in the Scope of Work. However, in implementing the individual programs and projects, the Consultant will be expected to regularly report out on the status of projects, occurrences of problems/barriers to successful implementation and recommendations on addressing these barriers to improve performance.



No.	Question	Answer
23	<p><b>The required skills (RFP p.7) do not explicitly include detailed market/financial analysis—i.e. benefit-cost analysis; feasibility analysis; cost estimating; etc.—beyond strategic and economic development planning and base data analyses. Should we assume that specialized quantitative analysis is beyond the scope of this RFP?</b></p>	<p>The subject quantitative analysis work efforts are not included in the anticipated skills needed, as listed in the Scope of Work.</p>
24	<p><b>Can you clarify the following service under Project Management (RFP p.7): “Work with ESD-WNY to ensure that the appropriate infrastructure, staff and other supports are in place for delivery of programs...” Does this mean infrastructure/staff from the consultant team, ESD staff, or external organization(s)?</b></p>	<p>It could entail any one or a combination of such entities; such a planning effort would literally involve determining what is specifically required to administer or implement a particular program or project, and determining how such administration would be best undertaken.</p>
25	<p><b>Under Public/internal engagement, marketing and communications (RFP p.8), can ESD elaborate on the second and third items, “Provide assistance with ongoing multi-media communications...” and “Participate and support branding/messaging, marketing and communications...?” Would this be for any/all of the capacities listed (“website, video, slide, social media, etc.”), and/or would this entail full marketing scope—i.e. branding, copywriting/editing, graphic design, etc.—beyond typical planning and community engagement materials? In other words, would it be appropriate to include subconsultant services for graphic design and marketing, or is that outside the scope of these planning services?</b></p>	<p>It would be expected that the Consultant team maintain or have access to some level of graphic and written communications capabilities to support on-going ESD efforts, but it is unlikely that that a fully new branding exercise (original logo, messaging, website design, etc.) would be required for the portfolio of initiatives listed in the RFP, insofar as most are now already established.</p>



No.	Question	Answer
26	<p><b>Regarding Task 1: WNY REDC support (RFP p.8), can you confirm that the consultant will lead the preparation of the annual progress reports?</b></p>	<p>Yes.</p>
27	<p><b>We understand that ESD and its subsidiary USAN may have engaged external consultants in various capacities for the projects listed in Tasks 2–4 (RFP pp.8–10). Given that some current or previously completed scope may fall within the scope of the current RFP, to what extent, if any, will the planning consultant engage with current and future external consultants? Conversely, will the planning consultant be excluded from any opportunities that follow from the work completed under this contact?</b></p>	<p>Depending on the effort, the Consultant team may peripherally engage with A/E teams of selected capital projects or programs. In terms of other work, the selected Consultant team would be precluded from participating in specific future projects directly related to, or arising from, the planning services listed in this RFP, if this would pose a conflict of interest.</p>
28	<p><b>For Tasks 5 &amp; 6 (RFP pp.10–11), can ESD indicate its existing capacity, if any, for these activities, i.e.:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Support/coordination of the WNY Manufacturing and Tech Workforce Coalition</b></li> <li>• <b>Research, mapping, data analysis for internal review</b></li> <li>• <b>Developing public presentations on ongoing programs and initiatives</b></li> <li>• <b>Planning, graphic, and communications support</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Acknowledging that it may be difficult to anticipate future needs in these areas, any indication of estimated effort for all/any of these subtasks would be appreciated.</b></p>	<p>ESD-WNY has no current in-house capacity for any of the skill areas listed; this is why they are listed in the skill sets required under this RFP. Unfortunately, it is not possible to give a specific list of possible needs over the term of this contract, insofar it is intended to provide access to such skills on an as-needed basis. Respondents are suggested to review the listed tasks and background documents provided to make reasonable estimations of required levels of effort.</p>





No.	Question	Answer
29	<b>Task 7 (RFP p.11) indicates that regular progress meetings will be virtual. Does ESD anticipate any in-person meetings, events, and/or outreach at this time?</b>	ESD does not have a scheduled calendar of in-person events; however, the implementation support anticipated in the Scope of Work, particularly for small business/community development programs, would require regular, in-person presence in the WNY geography (i.e., primarily in cities of Buffalo and Niagara Falls).
30	<b>Under Task 7 (RFP p.11), should we assume bi-weekly project-specific meetings for each of the four projects listed?</b>	Yes.
31	<b>Regarding relevant past projects (RFP p.14), our team may have examples of program-level and/or task-order-based projects that are best represented in multi-page format. Would it be acceptable to present them as such with respect to a 10pp. total page count for past projects, or should we adapt or condense these projects into individual one-page experience sheets per RFP specifications?</b>	For purposes of limiting page length of proposals, ESD would prefer project descriptions of no more than one page each.