



Request for Proposals (RFP) to Conduct a Feasibility Study Involving Expanded Business Incubation and Employee Training Services to Meet the Future Economic and Workforce Development Demands of the Region.

Issued by:	Western Wisconsin Workforce Development Board, Inc. Coulee Region Business Center, Inc.
Contract Period:	January 2, 2018 – August 15, 2018
Estimated Funding:	Not to exceed \$81,000
Questions/Clarification Period	All questions about this RFP must be emailed to the Contract Point of Contact by <u>December 1, 2017</u> . To ensure fair and open competition, all questions received will be answered and posted by December 5, 2017 at www.westernwdb.org . No questions or requests for additional information will be accepted after December 1, 2017.
Submission Requirements:	<u>Proposals due by 4:00pm CST on Monday December 18, 2017</u> One (1) clearly marked ORIGINAL and five (5) COPIES must be received, in the mail or delivered in person, by the Contract Point of Contact prior to the time and date indicated above. For document integrity purposes, no proposals will be accepted by email or fax.
Contract Point of Contact:	Julie Mitchell, Executive Director Western Wisconsin Workforce Development Board, Inc. 2615 East Avenue South, Suite 101 La Crosse, WI 54601 608-789-4584 mitchellj@westernwdb.org

The Western Wisconsin Workforce Development Board (WWWDB) and The Coulee Region Business Center (CRBC) are submitting herewith with for your consideration a Request for Proposals (RFP) to undertake consultant services to prepare a Feasibility Study involving expanded business incubation and employees training services to help meet the future economic and workforce development demands of the region. The following are the terms, conditions and Scope of Work of this Request for Proposals.

It is the proposer's responsibility to ensure proposals are complete and received by the WWWDB prior to 4:00 PM, Central Standard Time, Monday, December 18, 2017 at the following U.S. Mail address:

- US Mail:
Julie Mitchell, Director
Western Wisconsin Workforce Development Board
2615 East Avenue South, Suite 101
La Crosse, WI 54601

Any RFP submitted shall be binding for sixty (60) calendar days following the RFP opening date. Funding budgeted for this Request for Proposals is not to exceed \$81,000 to conduct the research and prepare the Feasibility Study. Proposals demonstrating the ability to perform all elements of the contract at lower costs will receive special consideration as noted in Section B. Elements of Proposal and Proposal Rating Criteria. The sources of the funding for this Study come from: the U.S. Department of Commerce – Economic Development Administration (EDA), the Coulee Region Business Center Inc., The La Crosse Industrial Park Corporation and the City of La Crosse.

The WWWDB and the CRBC reserve the right to accept the proposals in whole, or in part, and to reject any and all proposals and negotiate separately or solicit new proposals to better serve its interests without penalty. This Request for Proposals does not commit the WWWDB or the CRBC to award a contract nor to pay for costs incurred by successful or unsuccessful consultants in the preparation or presentation of their proposals. The WWWDB will issue written notification of its selection decision to both the successful and unsuccessful consultants.

A. Scope of Work

This project involves a feasibility study to analyze the cost and benefits of development alternatives for the Coulee Region Business Center (CRBC). The CRBC is a 35,000 SF business incubator located at 1100 Kane Street in La Crosse, WI. The CRBC has been serving entrepreneurs for over 30 years. Since its inception, the CRBC has produced 60 graduates from the incubator, leading to an estimated 200 jobs being created in the marketplace. The CRBC operates at or near full rental capacity until graduations, at which time the CRBC struggles with cash flow. This varied vacancy situation is an impediment for new businesses needing start-up space and other fulfillment services provided by the CRBC, and is a hindrance to the fluid operation of the CRBC. These circumstances along with the critical need to fix the workforce gap between available positions and qualified workers in the region has led the CRBC to partner with the WWWDB and other workforce and economic development organizations to analyze how and where it's growth should occur to best meet the region's needs over the next 20 years. More information about the CRBC and WWWDB can be found on their websites: www.crbc.biz and www.westernwdb.org. The WWWDB and CRBC have developed the following research subjects and tasks to address these needs.

1. Area(s) of Emphasis. Market research and analysis on reasons for and against areas of emphasis for the CRBC to focus on (The following by way of examples not limitation) that are to be considered: coworking, makerspaces, hackerspaces, advanced manufacturing, software design, information technology, advanced materials, supercomputing, Big Data, robotics, nanotechnology, synthetic biology, autonomous vehicle technology, informatics, artificial intelligence, biomedical, commercialized research projects, technology development/testing, and others.
Deliverable: Recommendation describing viable options (including supporting data) for emphasis and further development in a business incubator/training center facility to ensure regional economic and workforce needs are met now and in the future.
2. Fabrication Lab Provisioning. Research, analysis and recommendation on the regional demand, design and outfitting of a fabrication lab in the CRBC that would house tools and equipment such as: laser engravers, CNC machines, computer controlled shop-bot production technology, laser cutters, vinyl cutters, presses, drills, CAD software, 3D printers, personal work stations, and rolling work tables etc. so entrepreneurs in the region have easy and affordable access to these resources to prototype and develop their products. The region's strong manufacturing base, a formalized manufacturing industry cluster organization – The Upper Mississippi Manufacturing Alliance (TUMMA), Western Technical College's new Integrated Technology Center and UW-La Crosse's Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation offer unique resources and synergy opportunities for a fab lab.
Deliverable: Recommendation describing the regional demand for a fabrication lab as described, or otherwise equipped, including analysis of how the fabrication lab could be coordinated with existing resources to meet regional demand. Recommendation should also evaluate current space capacity to house such a lab with growth potential.
3. Coordinating Fabrication Lab Resources with CRBC Tenants. Analysis and recommendations on how to coordinate time, space, work stations, offices, and equipment for entrepreneurs to develop, prototype, test and manufacture their products in a collaborative environment while also enjoying the additional support services of the CRBC (business planning, mentorship, marketing, etc.) and coordinating with supports available through UW-L, Viterbo University, and Western Technical College.
Deliverable: Time study with recommendations for maximizing current efficiency and promotion of growth, including capacity of current space.
4. Coordinating Fabrication Lab Resources with Non-Tenants. Analysis and recommendations on how to coordinate fab lab time, space with existing companies and entrepreneurs in the region to conduct off-site research and development, prototyping, testing and manufacturing of new products in the CRBC.

Deliverable: Time study with recommendations for incorporating regional businesses into the CRBC strategy for growth, including research and development activities and capacity of current space.

5. **Second Stage Food Processing Facility.** Research the regional demand and feasibility for a Second Stage Food Processing, Packaging and Distribution Services Center and other commercial food preparation needs the CRBC could fulfill that would complement existing food production resources in the CRBC. The region's strong food processing industry, a formalized manufacturing industry cluster organization -TUMMA, the CRBC's existing commercial kitchen, Western Technical College's new Integrated Technology Center and UW-La Crosse's Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation offer unique resources and synergy opportunities for a Second Stage Food Processing Center.
Deliverable: Report describing regional demand for commercial food preparation facilities, including a second stage food processing and distribution center. Report should include capacity of current site, growth potential, and how addition of a second stage food processing facility could be coordinated with existing resources.
6. **Coordinating Food Processing Resources with CRBC Tenants.** Research, analysis and recommendations on how best to optimize and coordinate time, space, work stations, offices, and equipment for food processing businesses.
Deliverable: Time study with recommendations for maximizing current efficiency and promotion of growth, including capacity of current space.
7. **Coordinating Food Processing Resources with Non-Tenants.** Analysis and recommendations on how best to optimize and coordinate time, space, work stations, offices, and equipment for non-tenant food processing businesses.
Deliverable: Time study with recommendations for incorporating regional businesses into the CRBC strategy for growth, including capacity of current space.
8. **Research the Feasibility of a Transitional Jobs Training Program.** Research, analysis and recommendations on how to institute a Transitional Jobs Training Program. The concept includes a public/private partnership Social Enterprise Transitional Jobs Program model to assist individuals with barriers to employment. The proposed program would include a system whereby individuals with barriers to employment could work and receive training by a business in the CRBC or a non-tenant business tied into the CRBC Transitional Jobs Training Program. Upon completion of the program, these workers would then be better positioned to serve the needs of CRBC businesses and other employers in the region. The WWWDDB will provide sources of information on existing Transitional Jobs Training programs for consideration in consultant's analysis and recommendations.
Deliverable: Report on resource and space needs to accommodate a transitional jobs program. Report should include analysis of regional workforce demographics, regional business needs in the food processing industry and other viable options for training entry-level workers. Report should evaluate capacity of current space for transitional jobs program.
9. **Research Successful Incubators for Best Practices.** Research successful incubators around the nation similar in size and regional characteristics that the CRBC deals with for best practices in operations and corporate organization that the CRBC should take under advisement in setting future goals.
Deliverable: Best Practices Report with supporting documentation.
10. **Research Market and Building Alternatives for Future Space Needs.** Market analysis and recommendations on CRBC future site and space needs to accommodate the recommendations from above and existing tenants of the CRBC. Both expansion on the CRBC existing site and alternative sites in the City of La Crosse are to be considered. The CRBC will assist the consultant in identifying other potential sites in the City of La Crosse, including those that offer the possibility of a storefront for tenants. Provide recommendations for ways to connect the area resources with redevelopment of the CRBC or its expansion and/or other spaces that serve such purposes.
Deliverable: Report on the space needs to implement all activities being considered in this study, including growth potential. Report should include evaluation of the current site and other sites as identified.

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11. CRBC Redevelopment Design and Cost Estimates. Analysis and recommendations on site, space, equipment and building infrastructure needs and cost estimates to renovate the CRBC or another building to accommodate the findings and recommendations in the Scope of Work Elements 1 – 9 above.
Deliverable: Cost Estimate as indicated.
12. Stakeholder Meetings.
Deliverable: Consultant shall attend and participate in at least 3 stakeholder public meetings coordinated by the WWWDB and CRBC to receive input from stakeholders on needs, information sources, ideas, regional resources, networking capacity, and to answer questions and report on findings. The Small Business Development Center at UW-L, UW-L Center for Entrepreneurship, Viterbo University, Western Technical College, and The Upper Mississippi Manufacturing Alliance (TUMMA) are partners that need to be consulted regarding their ideas and resources.
13. Progress Reports.
Deliverable: Monthly progress updates (written, teleconference, or in-person) to WWWDB and CRBC.
14. Invoices.
Deliverable: Invoices must be submitted monthly or quarterly to the WWWDB for services rendered. Reimbursement will be made quarterly, based on services and costs outlined in invoices. All activities contained on the invoice for reimbursement must be allowable as per the scope of work outlined in this RFP. Unapproved activities will not be reimbursed.
15. Study Design.
Deliverable: Prepare a “Study Design” of the Feasibility Study that illustrates the proposed (not completed) chapters, sections, tables, maps and charts etc. that are being proposed for inclusion in the Feasibility Study within the first 3 months of the study.
16. Final Study Production Requirements.
Deliverable: Provide the WWWDB and CRBC with one digital copy that can be edited for future updates, one copy in PDF format; two compact disc copies, and 12 colored paper copies of the final study.

B. Narrative Elements of Proposal and Proposal Rating Criteria (100 points possible)

Proposal Cover Sheet: On a separate sheet that will serve as the cover of your proposal type the following on the top of the page:

- “Feasibility Study Involving Expanded Business Incubation and Employee Training Services to Help Meet the Future Economic and Workforce Development Demands of the Region”
- Organization Name
- Organization Address
- Contact Person’s Name
- Contact Person’s Telephone Number
- Contact Person’s E-Mail Address
- Cost of Services using the following cost categories: Personnel, Travel, Subcontracts, and Supplies with a Total Cost listed on a not to exceed basis.

Statement of Qualifications: **15 points**

The consultant shall provide a description of their history, size, location, existing and staff longevity. The consultant shall also provide a description of their expertise in: economic development, business incubation, and workforce development activities.

Proposed Approach to Complete the Feasibility Study: **30 points**

Provide a summary of the approach and methodologies you plan to use to accomplish the Scope of Work and other RFP requirements.

Ability to Subcontract to Meet Project Requirements: **10 points**

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The consultant must be able to complete this project with or without a need to subcontract out services. If additional expertise outside of your company is needed to complete this project, please include the description of what you plan to outsource and the cost in your narrative. The WWWDB and CRBC must approve ALL subcontracts prior to being issued. Identify if your company has systems in place, including fiscal systems that allow for subcontracting.

Describe why your organization should be selected to conduct this Feasibility Study. 10 points

Name and background of the individual(s) who would be assigned to the project: 5 points

Identify specific personnel, their experience and qualifications that will be assigned to the project and the number of hours each will spend on the project. The list shall be organized to show personnel and time commitments in relation to the activities outlined in the Scope of Work, Other RFP Requirements and the Schedule of Deadlines above. Please provide resumes for all staff and identify the individual that will lead the project and serve as the main contact for the project.

Cost of Services: 15 points

Provide a detailed breakdown of all costs. Use the following categories to itemize your Cost of Services: Personnel (supported with personnel time and hourly billing rates), Travel, Subcontracts, and Supplies. PROVIDE A COST NOT TO EXCEED FIGURE FOR THIS REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS. Points will be awarded based on the reasonableness of itemized costs, including cost effectiveness of overall proposal. Proposals coming in under the maximum award will receive special consideration for cost effectiveness.

References. 15 points

Provide at least two (2) references on similar projects that have been completed in the last 8 years by your organization.

C. Submission of Proposals

Deadline: Proposals shall be delivered by U.S. mail to the Contract Point of Contact - Julie Mitchell, Executive Director, Western Wisconsin Workforce Development Board, 2615 East Ave. South, Suite 101, La Crosse WI 54601 on or before December 18, 2017, 4:00 p.m. CST. The WWWDB and CRBC will not be liable for any costs incurred by the proposer in responding to this RFP or participating in the RFP process.

Submission of Proposal: One (1) clearly marked ORIGINAL and five (5) COPIES must be received, in the mail or delivered in person, to the Contract Point of Contact prior to the time and date indicated above. For document integrity purposes, no proposals will be accepted by email or fax. Proposals must be on standard 8 1/2" X 11" paper, 11-font or larger, single spaced. Page limit for proposals is five (5), not including the cover page and resumes of staff. Proposals should be securely bound. Any proposals that are submitted after the deadline or that do not follow the instructions for submission will be deemed non-responsive and will not be considered.

D. Process to Select Consultant

This procurement process conforms to the written Procurement Policies of the WWWDB which reflect the requirements set forth in 2 CFR 200.317-200.326. The consultant selection process will involve evaluation of consultant's responses to the Narrative Elements of Proposal described above. Interviews will then be scheduled either in person or teleconference with the top three highest scoring proposers. Interviews will include separate scoring criteria which will be added to the proposal scores for a total. Interview candidates will be given the scoring criteria prior to the interview. If the WWWDB and CRBC and selected consultant are unable to reach an agreement on the Scope of Work and other RFP requirements and/or compensation, the WWWDB and CRBC will terminate discussions and begin negotiations with the next ranked proposer. The WWWDB and CRBC reserve the right to reject any or all proposals. The WWWDB and CRBC reserve the right to accept the proposals in whole, or in part, and to reject any and all proposals and negotiate separately or solicit new proposals to better serve its interests without penalty. This Request for Proposals does not commit the WWWDB and CRBC to award a contract nor to pay for costs incurred by the successful or unsuccessful proposers in the preparation of their proposals. The WWWDB will issue written notification of the selection decision to both the successful and unsuccessful proposers.

E. Amendments, Addenda or Questions

The WWWDB and CRBC reserve the right to modify or issue amendments to this RFP. If questions result in the modification of this RFP, the written modifications will be distributed to known proposers, or anyone who has indicated an interest in writing a proposal. All

questions about this RFP must be emailed to the Contract Point of Contact by December 1, 2017. To ensure fair and open competition, all questions received will be answered and posted by December 5, 2017 at www.westernwdb.org. No questions or requests for additional information will be accepted after December 1, 2017.

F. Insurance

If selected, the consultant shall provide appropriate levels of insurance coverage, see below.

G. Withdrawal of Proposals

Proposals may be withdrawn at any time by notifying the Contract Point of Contact in writing. Any proposal requested to be withdrawn will be returned to the proposer after the proposal deadline.

H. Contract Time Period

The term of the contract will be consistent with the Time Line below:

1. RFP issued: November 20, 2017
2. RFP Response deadline: December 18, 2017
3. Contract awarded and parties of unsuccessful proposals notified: January 2, 2018
4. Service Initiated: January 2, 2018
5. Project start up meeting with stakeholders and consultant to maximize networking capability of consultant and stakeholders: January 2018.
6. Consultant prepares and submits Feasibility Study "Study Design" to WWWDB: February 2018.
7. First quarterly invoice due by March 31, 2018
8. Hold second stakeholder consultant meeting to hear consultants progress, findings to date and help trouble shoot problems: March/April 2018
9. Consultant submits draft of feasibility to WWWDB and CRBC: June 2018. Second quarterly invoice due by June 30, 2018.
10. Feasibility study completed and consultant makes presentation to WWWDB, CRBC, and other stakeholders on feasibility study's findings and recommendations: by August 1, 2018.
11. Final Invoice submitted for reimbursement by August 15, 2018.

I. Professional Services Liability Insurance

It is to be agreed that the WWDB and the CRBC or the insurance they carry will not contribute to a loss by the consultant. The following levels of insurance are required to be in place to indemnify the consultant from any losses incurred by this project. If circumstances exist where coverage or liability amounts are not obtainable or practical the WWWDB and the CRBC may waive coverage and liability amounts.

Commercial General Liability

- (1) \$1,000,000 each occurrence limit
- (2) \$1,000,000 personal liability and advertising injury
- (3) \$2,000,000 general aggregate
- (4) \$2,000,000 products - completed operations aggregate

Claims made form of coverage is not acceptable.

Insurance must include:

- (1) Premises and Operations Liability
- (2) Contractual Liability
- (3) Personal Injury
- (4) The general aggregate must apply separately to this project location

Business Automobile Coverage

\$500,000 combined single limit for Bodily Injury and Property Damage each accident

Must cover liability for Symbol #1 - "Any Auto" - including Owned, Non-Owned and Hired Automobile Liability.

Workers Compensation and Employers Liability

Must carry coverage for required Statutory Workers Compensation and an Employers Liability limit of:

- (1) \$100,000 Each Accident
- (2) \$500,000 Disease Policy Limit
- (3) \$100,000 Disease - Each Employee

Additional Provisions

Acceptability of Insurers - Insurance is to be placed with insurers who have an AM Best rating of no less than B+ and a Financial Size Category of no less than Class VI, and who are authorized as an admitted insurance company in the state of Wisconsin.

Additional Insured Requirements - The WWWDB and the CRBC and their officers, commissioners, agents, employees and authorized volunteers must be named as additional insureds on the General Liability and Business Automobile Liability coverage arising out of project work. This does not apply to Workers Compensation and Employers Liability.

Certificates of Insurance acceptable to the WWWDB and the CRBC shall be submitted prior to commencement of the work to the Contract Point of Contact. These certificates shall contain a provision that coverage afforded under the policies will not be canceled or non-renewed until at least 30 days' prior written notice has been given to the Contract Point of Contact.