

City of Minneapolis
Community Planning and Economic Development
Small Business Technical Assistance Program
Request for Proposals



Proposals due April 13, 2012

Introduction

The City is seeking proposals from local non-profit organizations that provide technical assistance services to small businesses and microenterprises located in Minneapolis. The total funding available for the Small Business Technical Assistance Program in 2012 is up to \$500,000 and we expect to receive multiple proposals. Collaboration is suggested and encouraged. During the contracting process, the selected service providers and the City will agree upon the contract outcomes and deliverables. These will be outcomes-based contracts. Recipients will periodically submit invoices in accordance with the terms of their contracts. Contract payments are based on successful completion of the outcomes in the contract (see Exhibit B for contract Scope of Services template).

Objectives

The goal of the Small Business Technical Assistance Program is to help Minneapolis-based businesses startup or expand their business and to support job creation in the City. The assistance provided through this program is intended to facilitate economic development through the establishment, stabilization, and expansion of small businesses and microenterprises.

Program Details

Funding for the Small Business Technical Assistance Program will be separated into two categories. Organizations may apply for Category 1, 2, or both. Your proposal should clearly indicate which category or categories you are applying for. Up to \$300,000 of the overall Small Business Technical Assistance Program budget will be dedicated to funding Category 1 activities; Up to \$200,000 will fund Category 2.

Category 1 – Small Business Support

Funds dedicated to Category 1 may be used to support any legitimate small business located in Minneapolis. Please see the 'Eligible Activities' section below for examples of acceptable technical assistance support services.

Category 2 – Microenterprise Support

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds have been used since 1981 to support neighborhood revitalization, economic development and improved community facilities and services. CDBG funds may be used for financial assistance to business enterprises through grants, loans, loan guarantees, and by providing training, technical assistance, and support services for small businesses. The City of Minneapolis now intends to use a portion of its economic development block grant funds to increase the level of technical assistance available to Minneapolis-based businesses that can be specifically categorized as microenterprises. By definition, microenterprises have 5 or fewer employees with at least one being the business owner. Organizations will need to comply with reporting requirements such as income verification.

It is important that applicants understand that CDBG funds must be used only to serve persons qualifying as low and moderate income individuals that own or wish to establish a microenterprise. Organizations must be able to collect information on each person receiving assistance, including, but not limited to: data on the individual's family size and income. The assistance provided must support a federally identified national objective. The City will not reimburse any organization that fails to document and support the established criteria.

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Eligible areas

The program is available throughout the City of Minneapolis.

Eligible activities

Activities are eligible if they support the economic vitality of local small businesses and microenterprises through technical assistance, which may include, but is not limited to: educational classes or one-on-one sessions on legal, regulatory, and tax issues, financial record keeping, marketing and merchandizing, financial management, business operations, and business planning.

Applicants should be able to complete the activities within one year of executing a contract with the City.

Staff will prepare a Scope of Services that will be based on your proposal. The Scope of Services will be a part of your contract. Please only include activities in your proposal which you are committed to doing through a contract with the City.

Staff may request to observe training sessions administered in classroom settings for informational purposes.

Activities not eligible for these funds include financing for real estate development, physical improvements to any property, or loans to businesses. See the City's Great Streets website (http://www.minneapolismn.gov/cped/great_streets_home.asp) for information on City assistance for commercial real estate development and business finance tools.

Eligible organizations

Eligible organizations include non-profit business consulting organizations that have demonstrated capacity to perform the work. This includes staff devoted to business development, establishment, and expansion activities, past organizational and staff experience providing assistance to businesses, and managing contracts. If a consultant will do some of the work through a subcontract, identify that consultant (or pool of possible consultants) and provide the consultants' qualifications.

Proposal submission and deadline

Applicants must submit one unbound copy and five bound or stapled copies of the proposal and one electronic version. Proposals must be on standard 8½" by 11" paper. All supporting documentation must be on paper no larger than 11" by 17". Proposals and supporting documentation must be submitted in a sealed envelope labeled "Small Business Technical Assistance Program Proposal." The electronic version should be on a CD or jump drive (but not emailed). Faxed proposals will not be accepted. Applicants may choose to provide additional sets if and when invited to do so for presentation purposes. Submissions will not be returned.

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Proposals shall be delivered to the City on or before:

April 13, 2012, 4:00 pm

To:

**Contract Services
Department of CPED
105 Fifth Avenue South, Suite 200
Minneapolis, MN 55401
Attn: Jessica Green**

Proposals received after the deadline will not be accepted. It is neither CPED's responsibility nor practice to acknowledge receipt of any proposal. It is the responder's responsibility to assure that a proposal is received in a timely manner. Please make sure your proposal is complete.

RFP Inquiries

Prospective responders should direct questions in writing to the department contact person:

Jessica Green
Community Planning and Economic Development
105 Fifth Avenue South, Suite 200
Minneapolis, MN 55407
Email: jessica.green@minneapolismn.gov
Fax: 612-673-5232

All questions are due no later than April 4, 2012. Questions will be answered in writing and posted on the CPED web site (www.minneapolismn.gov/cped). The department contact cannot vary the terms of the RFP. **A pre-proposal meeting will be held on March 26, 2012 from 9:00 – 10:00** at the Crown Roller Mill located at 105 Fifth Ave. South, Suite 200. Attendance is recommended but not required.

Proposal Contents

Proposals must include the following:

A **cover page** that includes the following information:

- a. Applicant's name, mailing address, and federal ID number.
- b. Contact person's name, title, phone number, and e-mail address.
- c. Category for which you are applying (1,2, or both)
- d. Signature of an individual authorized to sign on behalf of the proposing organization. If a partnership or team is proposing, an authorized signature is required from each entity.

Please number your answers and provide succinct narrative that addresses the following. Be sure to review and address the **evaluation criteria** (see page 5) in your answers.

1. A **description of the activity** that clearly defines the nature and extent of the activities proposed, identifies the intended service area and population, articulates the need for the proposed activity, and defines the objective of the proposed activity. Include a description of the organization's intake and screening process.

City of Minneapolis
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Proposals due April 13, 2012

Include a description of the model of service delivery including how the services will be marketed and to whom, how participants will be selected, and how services will be evaluated and measured. If the organization is unable to assist a client, will the client be referred to another service provider? If so, please describe your referral process and network.

If your organization has experience working with CDBG, please provide a narrative of your experience and familiarity with the documentation process.

2. An **identification of the entities** that will be involved, including staff and consultants, a description of the roles they will play and a description of each of the entities' experience in conducting similar types of work.
3. A **description of the specific expected outcomes and deliverables** that will result from the activity. How will you measure success? What outcomes do you expect? **Be specific.** Your Scope of Services (Exhibit B) will be based on the narrative provided. The more specific you are in your proposal, the easier and faster it will be to develop a Scope of Services.
4. A **description of how the proposed activities and outcomes will support multiple City goals.** For example, perhaps the technical assistance provider anticipates working with local food businesses, thus supporting the City's goal of becoming more Eco-Focused as well as enhancing Jobs & Economic Vitality. A complete listing of the City's goals can be found at: http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/council/council_goals_index.
5. A **project budget** including the total cost of the activity, funds requested from the Small Business Technical Assistance program, staff hours or consultant time and billing rate, other anticipated expenses, and funds or staff resources from other sources. Please see the Exhibit C for a listing of the maximum allowable billing rates for suggested services.

If funds from another source are committed, provide a letter from the funder indicating the amount of funding provided, expected deliverables, and any restrictions on the funding.

5. Any **other information** that would help City staff understand and evaluate the concept.

Your proposal must include an executed "Consent for Release of Response Data" form (Exhibit A), included in this RFP document. Proposals that do not include an executed "Consent for Release of Response Data" form shall be considered incomplete. Omission is grounds for rejection of the entire proposal.

The contents of the proposal and any clarification to the contents submitted by the successful proposer may become part of the contractual obligation and be incorporated by reference into the contract between the proposer and the City.

City of Minneapolis
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Evaluation criteria

In reviewing Small Business Technical Assistance Program proposals, the review team will consider the following criteria. The maximum score a proposal can receive is 100.

1. Leverage: Do the City funds leverage other resources? Leveraged funds are those that are committed to the specific activity that is the subject of this proposal (10 points)
2. Impact and visibility: What is the magnitude of the anticipated project outcomes? Would the activity directly strengthen the economic vitality of the City? Are the public benefits commensurate with the public investment requested? (25 points)
3. Capacity: Describe the organization's intake and screening process. Does the organization have the experience and capacity to conduct the work proposed? Does the organization have a track record and the ability to keep appropriate documentation? (20 points)
4. Feasibility and readiness: Does the organization have the structure in place to begin delivering services immediately? Are other necessary resources committed? (10 points)
6. Evaluation: Does the organization currently have evaluation methodology in place? Does the organization measure impact? Are there "best practices" or "lessons learned" that will be transferrable? Are the proposed activities the most effective way to deliver technical assistance to Minneapolis-based businesses? (20 points)
7. Alignment with City Goals: Does the organization's proposed activities and outcomes support multiple City goals? The City strives to provide assistance to underserved populations. Will the proposed activities fill an unmet need in these populations? (15 points)

The City may, in its sole discretion, expand or reduce the criteria upon which it bases its final decisions regarding selection of which business district support activities to fund.

Review and selection process

A committee of City staff and partner organizations will review proposals that have been received by the due date of April 13, 2012 and make a recommendation to City Council for funding.

The City reserves the right to reject any or all proposals or parts of proposals, negotiate modifications to an entire proposal or specific components of the scope of work within a proposal to create a project of lesser or greater magnitude than described in this RFP or the submitted proposal.

Anticipated timeline

| | |
|------------------------------------|----------------|
| RFP Issued: | March 12, 2012 |
| Informational Meeting | March 26, 2012 |
| Submission deadline for proposals: | April 13, 2012 |
| Staff evaluation of proposals: | April 23, 2012 |
| Recommendation to City Council | May 15, 2012 |
| Contracting: | June 2012 |

City of Minneapolis
Community Planning and Economic Development
Small Business Technical Assistance Program
Request for Proposals



Proposals due April 13, 2012

Contracts

This is a *reimbursable* performance-based contract. Organizations with contracts will periodically submit invoices for payment for the delivery of outcomes in accordance with the terms of their contracts. During the contracting period, organizations will work with City contract managers to develop a Scope of Services (see Exhibit B). The Scope of Services will be the basis for contract payments. By signing the contract the organization is committing to **completion of all of the deliverables** in the Scope of Services.

City Contracting Requirements

City and Federal requirements are extensive. The following list is not exhaustive.

1. **Data Practices** – The recipient must agree to comply with the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act and all other applicable state and federal laws relating to data privacy or confidentiality and hold the City, its officers and employees harmless from any claims resulting from the recipient's unlawful disclosure or use of data protected under state and federal laws.
2. **Intellectual Property** – The recipient must agree to provide the City with the right to royalty-free, non-exclusive license to reproduce, publish or otherwise use and to authorize others to use any intellectual property created using the grant funds. Work covered by this provision shall include inventions, improvements, discoveries, databases, computer programs, reports, notes, studies, photographs, negatives, designs, drawings, electronic files, specifications, materials, tapes or other media.
3. **Billboard Advertising** – Through Ordinance 109.470, City and City-derived funds are prohibited from use to pay for billboard advertising as a part of a City project or undertaking.
4. **Conflict of Interest/Code of Ethics** – The recipient must agree to be bound by the City's Code of Ethics, Minneapolis Code of Ordinances.
5. **Hold Harmless** – The recipient shall agree to defend, indemnify and hold the City harmless from any and all claims or lawsuits that may arise from the recipient's activities under the provisions of the Contract, that are attributable to the acts or omissions, including breach of specific contractual duties of the recipient or the recipient's independent contractors, agents, employees or officers.
6. **Insurance** - Insurance secured by the Contractor shall be issued by insurance companies acceptable to the City and admitted in Minnesota. The insurance specified may be in a policy or policies of insurance, primary or excess. Such insurance shall be in force on the date of execution of the Contract and shall remain continuously in force for the duration of the Contract. The Contractor and its sub-contractors shall secure and maintain the following insurance:
 - a) **Workers Compensation** insurance that meets the statutory obligations with Coverage B- Employers Liability limits of at least \$100,000 each accident, \$500,000 disease - policy limit and \$100,000 disease each employee.
 - b) **Commercial General Liability** insurance with limits of at least \$2,000,000 general aggregate, \$2,000,000 products - completed operations \$2,000,000 personal and advertising injury, \$100,000 each occurrence fire damage and \$10,000 medical expense any one person. The policy shall be on an "occurrence" basis, shall include contractual liability coverage and the City shall be named an additional insured. Amount of coverage will be automatically increased if the project amount is expected to exceed \$2,000,000 or involves potentially high risk activity.
 - c) **Commercial Automobile Liability** insurance covering all owned, non-owned and hired automobiles with limits of at least \$1,000,000 per accident.

City of Minneapolis
Community Planning and Economic Development
Small Business Technical Assistance Program
Request for Proposals



Proposals due April 13, 2012

- d) **Professional Liability** Insurance or Errors & Omissions insurance providing coverage for 1) the claims that arise from the errors or omissions of the Contractor or its sub-contractors and 2) the negligence or failure to render a professional service by the Contractor or its sub-contractors. The insurance policy should provide coverage in the amount of \$2,000,000 each occurrence and \$2,000,000 annual aggregate. The insurance policy must provide the protection stated for two years after completion of the work.
- e) **Computer Security and Privacy Liability** for the duration of this agreement providing coverage for, but not limited to, Technology and Internet Errors & Omissions, Security and Privacy Liability, and Media Liability. Insurance will provide coverage against claims that arise from the disclosure of private information from files including but not limited to: 1) Intentional, fraudulent or criminal acts of the Contractor, its agents or employees. 2) Breach of the City's private data, whether electronic or otherwise. The insurance policy should provide minimum coverage in the amount of \$1,000,000 per occurrence and \$2,000,000 annual aggregate. If written on a Claims-Made basis, the policy must remain in continuous effect for at least 3 years after the service is provided or include a 3 year extended reporting period.

Acceptance of the insurance by the City shall not relieve, limit or decrease the liability of the Contractor. Any policy deductibles or retention shall be the responsibility of the Contractor. The Contractor shall control any special or unusual hazards and be responsible for any damages that result from those hazards. The City does not represent that the insurance requirements are sufficient to protect the Contractor's interest or provide adequate coverage. Evidence of coverage is to be provided on a current ACORD Form. A thirty (30) day written notice is required if the policy is canceled, not renewed or materially changed. The Contractor shall require any of its subcontractors, if sub-contracting is allowable under this Contract, to comply with these provisions, or the Contractor will assume full liability of the subcontractors.

EXHIBITS

- A. Form of Consent for Release of Response Data
- B. Scope of Services template
- C. Technical Assistance Standard Deliverables
- D. General Conditions for Request For Proposals (RFP)