



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
Comprehensive Pandemic Economic Recovery Strategy
of the Novel Coronavirus Pandemic

A. STATEMENT OF INTENT:

The North Iowa Area Council of Governments (NIACOG) and the Southern Iowa Council of Governments (SICOG), hereafter the Parties, issues this Request for Proposal for the purpose of having a vendor prepare a written response for the PARTIES to submit a formal response for the direct purpose of preparing an analysis and recovery document to be used by the solicitors to assist area business to prepare for, prevent, and overcome the effects of the **Coronavirus Pandemic**. This strategy is in direct response to the current economic climate as a result of the 2020 pandemic and will complement the organizations' Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy.

B. BACKGROUND:

The COVID-19 pandemic has cause long-term challenges with businesses facing overwhelming consequences for the short-term economic well-being, continued operations and long-term growth. It is crucial for stakeholders throughout the counties served by the Parties to understand the current comprehensive economic impacts that COVID-19 has had on the regions, its communities and businesses. The purpose is overcome the current economic situations, assist with overcome the immediate effects and prepare for any projected economic shifts in the immediate future. The Parties are requesting proposals from experienced professionals to develop a comprehensive regional economic impact analysis.

C. GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS:

The Vendor should address as many items as possible and provide supporting documentation as required.

D. PURPOSE

Project includes an economic review of the NIACOG and SICOG regions with a risk analysis for specific businesses. An initial focus will classify businesses based on NAICS with a grouping identifier of low, medium, and high impact of the businesses from the recent pandemic. All sectors are to be analyzed including retail, services, manufacturing, and agriculture.

Vendor is also to provide innovative strategies for advancing economic recovery, as well as, prepare for and minimize economic injury caused by future pandemics. This may include research through data collection on business survival levels pre and post pandemic, survey, individual discussion, and focus group involvement such as a typical SWOT Analysis for the regions through survey instruments and data collection.

E. OBJECTIVES

The activity to be completed would entail preparing an adaptable process flow chart for future events or reoccurrences of the existing event. This would entail group meetings, individual meetings and preparation of documents (such as an easy to understand flow chart, source of technical assistance, financial assistance, a resource to access information) that continue to be a regional source for economic and technical assistance. Additionally, NIACOG and SICOG

will work with local development corporations and chambers to conduct meetings, workshops, and individual assistance with effected businesses to present and provide alternatives to them to insure resilience and sustainability for the coming years.

All of these activities would result in the development of an economic recovery and resilience plan, tied to NIACOG and SICOG's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy's, and address the economic impacts of the coronavirus pandemic specifically and to future events. Without question, working with local businesses and existing providers (LDC/Chambers/SBDC) will insure resiliency into the future. Finally, a coordinated effort will provide needed information to identify:

1. Which industries have been hit the hardest and why
2. Which industries will have trouble recovering and why
3. What if anything can the regions do to offset losses or stimulate stability
4. What will be the consequences of labor surpluses and an under-utilized skill base
5. A listing of resources and strategies to prevent what will likely become a rash of business failures. (This is inevitable, and it will have significant consequences in the more rural areas where investment capital is reluctant to flow.)
6. A defined timeline of economic trends and analysis prior to COVID-19 impact
7. A defined timeline of economic trends and analysis during the COVID-19 pandemic
8. A defined forecasted timeline of projected economic trends following the post COVID-19 pandemic

F. PROJECT AREAS AREA

The primary study area shall encompass:

Cerro Gordo County, Floyd County, Franklin County, Hancock County, Kossuth County, Winnebago County, Worth County including all their municipalities in the NORTH IOWA AREA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS region

and

Adair County, Adams County, Clarke County, Decatur County, Madison County, Ringgold County, Taylor County, and Union County, including all their municipalities in the SOUTHERN IOWA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS region

G. OUTLINE

There are the categories that will be analyzed during this effort and they include the following:

- **Executive Summary**
- **Methodology**
- **Regional basis – Identifying out what is and is not coronavirus related**
- **Survey Analysis**
- **NAICS Business Overview – Pre Covid 2019**
- **NAICS Business Overview – 2021**
- **Shift Share Analysis**
 - What sectors are analyzed
 - Retail
 - Industrial
 - Professional
 - Service
 - Can we solve everyone's problem
 - Do we want to solve every problem
- **Identification of All Industries and Rate of Growth**
- **Industrial Mix – which are growing and at what rate**

- **Develop coronavirus risk index**
 - Level of risk
 - Who is at risk and who can be helped?
 - Simple
 - High medium low
 - Very high, high, moderate, low, very low,
- **Identifying short-term risks / impacts and longer term consequences**
- **Identify industrial/business strengths**
- **Industrial Competitiveness**
- **Identify supply chain disruption, issues, or risks**
- **Review of Innovation Indicators for the Region**
 - Solutions
 - Financial
 - Step to save
 - Steps to recover
 - Steps to avert
 - What is interest in using information?
 - What is time to implement?
 - Method to access funds
- **Potential Economic Strategies for the Region**
- **Appendix**

The comprehensive economic impact analysis is to include the following data considerations for both urban and rural communities within the region:

1. Impacts on locally owned small businesses and entrepreneurs;
2. Impact on the region's top industry clusters and largest employers;
3. State of the region's workforce, such as: availability, access and alignment, and talent retention;
4. Present employment characteristics and trends;
5. Impacts on tourism;
6. Effects on the supply chain, such as: impacts of outsourcing, reliance on globalization, need for economic diversification, need for circular economy, second tier impacts on local business revenues;
7. Effects on the agricultural industry;
8. Any additional and interrelated disruptive economic impacts resultant of the COVID-19 pandemic.

GUIDANCES FOR COMPLETING Comprehensive Pandemic Economic Recovery Strategy

H. PRODUCTS AND DELIVERABLES

The following is expected to be produced by the selected agency/firm:

Project outcomes to include an economic review of the regions with a risk analysis for specific businesses. An initial focus will classify businesses based on NAICS codes with a grouping identifier of low, medium, and high impact of the businesses from the recent pandemic. All sectors will be analyzed including retail, services, manufacturing, and agriculture.

Vendor is also to provide innovative strategies for advancing economic recovery, as well as, prepare for and minimize economic injury caused by future pandemics. This may include research through data collection on business survival levels pre and post pandemic, survey, individual discussion, and focus group involvement such as a typical SWOT Analysis for the

regions through survey instruments and data collection.

The analysis will provide regional stakeholders and municipal leaders with the following:

- Better understanding of the continuing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic;
- Identification of investment priorities;
- Identification of critical gaps in service networks and support structures;
- Development of useable strategies; and
- Identified implementation activities for short and long-term actions in support of economic resiliency, sustainability, and vibrancy.



- A detailed Work Plan Schedule, including estimated completion times for each milestone;
- Monthly progress reports/billings, including summary of outputs and associated staff time;
- Draft narrative report, including all data sets and related summaries of analysis;
- Final narrative report with executive summary; and
- Any associated GIS data (ESRI format).

The agency/firm shall provide the complete text with all associated tables/graphs/charts delivered, using a commonly available format(s) agreed upon by both parties. In addition, Parties expect the following:

- Regional Survey with assistance from local economic development groups for survey distribution/completion/collection as coordinated by NIACOG and SICOG
- Interactive focus groups Chambers of Commerce, Economic Development Organizations, and others as needed or helpful
- Economic data analysis for the region as of January 2019, January 2020, and projected January 2021
- Assess leading NAICS codes for the region and the level of impact (survey, interviews) for each one
- Provide a listing of recovery strategies for the region

I. OUTCOMES

This project will provide a historical snapshot, state and federal analysis, and a strategy for moving forward post pandemic for the regional economy. This effort is anticipated to complement the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for the regions although not replace it and should address the following for the specified regions.

1. Which industries have been hit the hardest and why
2. Which industries will have trouble recovering and why
3. Are there regional differences, and what accounts for those differences?
4. What if anything can the regions do to offset losses or stimulate stability?

5. What will be the consequences of labor surpluses and an under-utilized skill base?
6. How might the region partner with state and federal resources to stabilize its industrial and labor bases?
7. Focus on community / regional social resilience in light of profound economic change – can we maintain our regional QOL with an altered industrial structure?
8. A comprehensive listing of resources and strategies to prevent what will likely become a rash of business failures. This is inevitable, and it will have significant consequences in the more rural areas where investment capital is loath to flow.
9. A defined timeline of economic trends and analysis prior to COVID-19 impact
10. A defined timeline of economic trends and analysis during the COVID-19 pandemic
11. A defined forecasted timeline of projected economic trends following the post COVID-19 pandemic

J 10 MONTH TIMEFRAME FOR COMPLETION OF THE PROJECT.

Timeline

- Month 1 Regional basis – Identifying out what is and is not coronavirus related**
- Month 1-2 Develop Survey Questions**
- Month 2- Initiate Survey**
- Month 4 NAICS Business Overview – Pre-Covid 2019**
- Month 4 NAICS Business Overview – 2021**
- Month 1-6 Begin data collection and economic review of resources
Key here are the data points for 2019, 2020, 2021 for a comparison**
- Month 5 Complete survey analysis section for the report, methodology and
presentation back to EDD**
- Month 6 Initiate Shift Share Analysis, begin review of innovation indicators**
- Month 7 Develop coronavirus risk index**
- Month 8 Begin compiling full reports and analysis**
- Month 9 Draft report submitted to EDD**
- Month 10 Final report submitted to EDD**

PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

Proposals shall include a concise statement of the consultant's approach to the project and a summary of the Consultant's ability to provide the required services. Proposals should, at a minimum, include:

- A Cover Letter with the following information attached:
1. Name and address of firm(s) and identification and contact information of the Project Lead.

2. Identification of Project Manager and all other team members - as well as any subcontractors to this project - and assigned duties, including a percentage breakdown of personnel hours and associated costs.
3. Statement of qualifications. This statement should include a resume, a description of previous similar work, and a list of projects completed.
4. A clear description of how your firm would complete this project, including scope and methodology.
5. A detailed Work Plan Schedule, including estimated completion times for each milestone, allocated staff time per phase, and an overall timeframe for completion of project.
6. All prices quoted must be firm for a period of Ninety (90) days after the proposal due date.
7. A statement identifying any actual or potential conflicts of interest of any consultant or team member should be included as an addendum to your bid documents. A cost proposal for a specific "not to exceed" fixed fee, including associated fees (i.e. printing costs, attendance at meetings, travel) shall be included with the initial submittal. A requested payment schedule should accompany the work schedule.

K. EVALUATION CRITERIA AND SELECTION PROCESS

A review committee will evaluate all responses to the RFP that meet the submittal requirements and deadline. The members of the committee shall be comprised of two individual from SICOG and NIACOG. Submittals that do not meet the requirements or deadline will not be considered. The review committee will rank the proposals and may arrange interviews with the finalist(s) prior to selection. Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

Criteria	Points Possible
Demonstrated understanding of the problem and objectives, ability to meet the RFP requirements, and effectiveness at addressing the proposed Scope of Work.	15
How well the proposal addresses techniques for collecting and analyzing data and determining corresponding economic impacts	15
The proposed schedule and the ability to complete the work by the scheduled due date as well as the timely delivery of deliverables at defined milestones	20
The consultant's experience and demonstrated willingness and success working as a cooperative team with other firms, local units of government, and stakeholder groups	15
Originality and/or innovativeness	20
Price and ability to complete the proposed work within the defined budget	15
Total Possible Points	100

L. PROPOSAL SUBMISSIONS

Interested candidates must submit complete proposals to Timothy Ostroski <Ostroski@sicog.com> and Myrtle Nelson <mnelson@niacog.org> by 5:00 p.m. CST (COB) on February 26, 2021.

Proposals must be submitted in a .pdf electronic format that allows for printing/viewing and distribution by the Parties to its staff. The entire proposal submission, including all materials, attachments, appendices, diagrams, etcetera must be less than 20 pages, with one-inch margins and 11 point font or larger.

The total budget for the PARTIES for this project is not to exceed \$50,000.

As this contract will be funded by federal grant dollars allocated to NIACOG and SICOG, the selected firm must comply with all terms and conditions under the provisions of the Federal Procurement Regulations. All information provided within submitted proposals, and any resulting contracts, are subject to disclosure under the provisions of the "Freedom of Information Act," 1976 Public Act No. 442, as amended, MCL 15.231, et seq.

The Parties reserve the right to revise any part of this RFP or to provide additional information.