REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

Regional Sector Partnership Convener

RFP RELEASE DATE: March 15, 2024

PROPOSAL SUBMITTAL DEADLINE: April 30, 2024, 5 PM EST

PURPOSE: The Midlands Workforce Development Board (MWDB) is seeking the submission of Proposals to provide consulting services for the Central Regional Sector Partnership. The consultant will act as a Convener whose role will include bringing together employers, economic development entities, educators, and workforce development agencies to collaborate on addressing the skills gap in the local workforce.

The MWDB implements the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) in the Richland, Lexington, and Fairfield counties of South Carolina. Appointed by the Chief Local Elected Officials (CLEO), the MWDB is responsible for planning and overseeing local workforce development programs. The majority of the MWDB members are business representatives while other members include representatives of education providers, labor organizations, community-based organizations, economic development agencies, and partners participating in the SC Works system.

The Central Region consists of three Workforce Development Areas: Catawba (York, Chester, and Lancaster counties), Lower Savannah (Aiken, Allendale, Bamberg, Barnwell, Calhoun, and Orangeburg counties), and Midlands (Richland, Lexington, and Fairfield counties) as lead. This larger regional partnership promotes regional collaborations of employers, educators, workforce developers, and other stakeholders that address the skills gap of critical industries across the super region. 20 CFR § 679.300(a) mandates that, among other critical tasks, the vision and purpose of the Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) include "the development of effective approaches including local and regional sector partnerships". WIOA requires each "Super Region" to develop and submit to the Governor a comprehensive four-year plan. This plan serves as a four-year action plan to develop, align, and integrate regional service delivery strategies with those that support the State's strategic and operational goals.

The proposal MUST be received by the Midlands Workforce Development Board by Tuesday, April 30, 2024, at 5 PM EST. Any proposal received after the deadline will be considered non-responsive. An electric copy of the proposal should be emailed to mwdb@midlandsworkforce.org.

This solicitation does not commit the MWDB to award a contract, to pay any cost incurred in the preparation of the RFP, or to procure or contract for goods or services. It is the responsibility of each offeror to see that the RFP is received by the MWDB on or before the date and time specified for the opening. No RFP will be accepted thereafter. The MWDB reserves the right to reject any or all bids and to waive any informalities and technicalities in the selection process.

The term of any Contract(s) resulting from this RFP is for the period beginning May 15, 2024, and ending March 31, 2025.

# **VISION**

The MWDB is seeking a consultant to serve as a Convener to assemble a sector partnership for the diversified manufacturing industry. The Region intends to develop the partnership in two sub-sets (North and South) to improve communication among the industry leaders with coordination of the groups’ leadership to maximize benefits.

One of the most important roles in creating a successful sector partnership is the Convener. The Convener plays an essential role in keeping a sector partnership on track and moving forward to accomplish the goals of the businesses in the partnership. This role is the backbone of the sector partnership, providing administrative, project management, and facilitation support to keep the partnership focused and productive.

# **SCOPE OF WORK**

The Convener will bring together employers, economic development entities, educators, and workforce development agencies to collaborate on addressing the skills gap in the local workforce. Through these partnerships, employers will have a direct role in shaping the training and education programs that prepare workers for the jobs of the future.

The Convener will be responsible for coordinating full regional meetings twice in the duration of the grant period year and establishing, managing, and facilitating local area partnerships at a minimum of once before the first regional meeting and following the second regional meeting.

The job duties would include the following:

* Coordinate and schedule upcoming meetings at the local level;
* Arrange lunch logistics of meeting locations (ideally at business locations) and food;
* Arrange planning calls with business leaders and key support partners to develop an agenda and plan for partnership meetings;
* Serve as the primary point of contact for both business leaders and public partners for the sector partnership;
* Recruit support partners to help advance partnership priorities;
* Facilitate partnership meetings without pushing an agenda.

## **FUNDING**

The funding for this consultant is through a grant received by the SC Department of Employment and Workforce. The maximum available funding is $155,600 and will be from May 15, 2024, and continuing through March 31, 2025.

The Contractor shall be compensated for the services to be performed by monthly reimbursement based on allowable expenditures made.

The Contractor shall submit proper budgets, invoices, and reports as required by the LWDA to be reimbursed.

All costs incurred by the Contractor must be within budget amounts in the line item budget in the proposal or an approved amended budget. Costs will be reimbursed at a rate not to exceed the approved budgeted program expenditures monthly.

## **SUBMISSION INFORMATION AND REQUIREMENTS**

### General Submission Information

To be considered, a proposal must be submitted along with other supporting documentation under the instructions in this RFP. When evaluating a proposal, the MWDB and its review committee will consider how well the respondent has complied with these instructions and provided the required information. Any offeror may be requested to make an oral presentation of its proposal. Such presentations provide an opportunity for the offeror to clarify its proposal and to ensure mutual understanding. Any presentations will be determined and scheduled solely by the MWDB.

No questions can be answered by telephone at any time during the response period. All questions must be communicated through mwdb@midlandsworkforce.org. Questions submitted should be electronic and include in the subject line Questions — Sector Strategies Partnership Convener Procurement. Questions without the assigned subject line will not be considered. All questions and answers will be posted on the MWDB website (www.midlandsworkforce.org) on the page with the original RFP.

The proposal, as well as any reference materials presented, must be typed in English on a standard portrait 8 1/2 " by 11" size and no longer than five pages. Landscape orientation containing charts, spreadsheets, and oversized exhibits is permissible.

Number of Proposals to be Submitted

Each offeror must submit one electronic proposal via email to mwdb@midlandsworkforce.org.

### Format for Proposal

Proposals are to be prepared in a manner designed to provide the MWDB with a straightforward presentation of the offeror's capability to satisfy the requirements of this RFP. Please address each section in your proposal submission and divide each section of your proposal by the identifying section headers.

**Section I**

Provide a brief history of the firm and its experience providing services for organizations such as ours. Describe relevant individual experience for key personnel proposed for the project.

**Section Il**

Describe the proposer's purpose and approach to address the requirement in this RFP in detail. Consultant shall provide a detailed approach to undertaking the tasks proposed in the Scope of Services including a recommended methodology for each task. Consultant shall highlight opportunities, challenges, and priorities of this project.

**Section Ill**

State the schedule and availability of the proposer to undertake the project. The schedule should demonstrate how the Consultant intends to complete the work within the timeframe specified in this RFP. At a minimum, the schedule should include a breakdown by tasks, milestones, major deliverables, and critical events to include a timeline for the regional meetings.

**Section IV**

Provide a list of at least three references. Include a contact name and telephone number. Consultant shall provide three (3) references that have contracted with the submitting Consultant for which similar services and technical analysis have been performed.

## **BASIS OF SELECTION**

All responses will be reviewed by the MWDB Review Committee. The award of the contract is expected to take place within 60 days of the proposal's due date. Each proposal will be ranked using the following criteria:

### Proposer Capability and Experience: 40 percent

Consideration will be given based on the following:

* General summary of Proposer's history
* Number of years working with regional and/or sector partnerships
* Number of years working with Employers and Local Governments

### Understanding of the Purpose and Approach: 30 Percent

A determination will be made of the consultant's understanding of the purpose and tasks as presented in the RFP. Evaluation will be based on the information presented in the consultant's proposal, and the allocation of time on specific tasks. Proposer must address their approach to the project, the comprehensiveness of the proposed approach, and the techniques to be used.

### Staff Qualifications: 20 Percent

Qualifications of professional personnel will be measured by both education and experience and with particular reference to experience on similar projects.

* Include summary resumes of key staff to be involved in technical assistance.
* Include experience of other organizations where technical assistance was provided.

### Schedule/Timeline: 10 Percent

The prospective consultant will be evaluated on their ability to follow a schedule that will complete the project within a reasonable time frame.

Selection Criteria Summary:

Proposer Capability and Experience 40 Percent

Understanding of the Purpose and Approach 30 Percent

Staff Qualifications 20 Percent

Schedule and Timeline 10 Percent

Total: 100 Percent

### Contract Award

A contract shall be awarded to the responsible offeror whose proposal is determined to be most advantageous, taking into consideration the evaluation factors set forth hereinafter. However, the right is reserved to reject any proposals received, and in all cases, the MWDB will be the sole judge as to whether an offeror's proposal has or has not satisfactorily met the requirements of this RFP.

The MWDB may require Best & Final Offerors selected to participate in negotiations, technical revisions, or other revisions to their proposals before contract finalization. There may be a preliminary selection for Best and Final Offerors. Terms and conditions that are included in this RFP will be a part of all Contracts awarded.

# **CONTRACT AND NOTICE OF AWARD**

## Notice of Award

Notice of "Intent to Award Contracts" will be e-mailed to offerors, informing them of the success, or lack thereof, of their proposal.

A proposer has seven (7) days from the "Intent to Award" notification to file a protest. Protest procedures are available upon request.

# **CONTACTS**

All questions regarding this project should be directed to: mwdb@midlandsworkforce.org.