



**Southwestern Commission Region A-
Request for Proposals
to Create a Strategic Plan for the Utilization of Opioid
Settlement Funds for Region A**

Date of Issue: February 8, 2023

Proposal Due Date: March 22, 2023

Direct all inquiries concerning this RFP to:

Tonya Snider

Phone: 828-631-0310

Email: tonya@tenbizinc.com

Sealed, Hard Copy Responses ONLY will be accepted for this solicitation.

Section 1: Geography, Background and Purpose

Geographic area to be served: The Region A counties in North Carolina to include Cherokee, Clay, Graham, Haywood, Jackson, Macon and Swain.

Background: In the summer of 2021, national settlements were reached with opioid distributors McKesson, Cardinal Health and AmerisourceBergen and opioid manufacturer Johnson & Johnson. Under the settlements, a historic \$26 billion agreement will help bring desperately needed resources to communities harmed by the opioid epidemic. A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the State and local governments directs how the opioid settlement funds are distributed and used in our state. To maximize funds flowing to North Carolina communities on the front lines of the opioid epidemic, the MOA allocates 15 percent of settlement funds to the State and sends the remaining 85 percent to NC's 100 counties and 17 municipalities. The counties in Region A are set to receive approximately \$20,000,000 over an 18-year period. Before spending settlement funds, they must first select which opioid mitigation strategies they would like to fund.

In November 2022, representatives from the region convened and decided to support the development of a regional strategic plan that will provide direction for the effective utilization of the opioid settlement funds in Region A. This RFP seeks qualified applicants seeking to lead a regional strategic planning process and deliver a strategic plan that includes the interests of each county and the region as a whole.

Purpose: The purpose of this RFP is to seek proposals from qualified applicants to facilitate a strategic planning process for Region A that will result in an actionable plan to develop and implement a scope of services to prevent, treat and maintain long-term recovery of substance use and addiction. The services will be grounded in principles of equality and fairness and be fiscally sustainable. The outcome of this process will be a strategic plan that presents a clear approach and planning process supported by relevant data and analysis of trends, identification of opportunities and strategies, a process to prioritize and focus county programs and services, and an implementation plan with performance measures that track progress on achieving the goals of the plan.

The successful applicant will have broad experience and knowledge of:

- public sector strategic planning, plan implementation, and performance measurement
- the roles, responsibilities, and authorities of county government and its programs and services as well as the roles and responsibilities of the Southwestern Commission
- the legislative, governmental, administrative, financial, programmatic, and support functions of county government
- substance abuse and addiction challenges within rural communities as well as the resources and lack of resources currently available
- excellent facilitation, consensus building and communication skills

Applicants responding to this solicitation will be expected to provide solid references and examples of strategic plans created for other public sector entities.

Proposals shall be submitted in accordance with the guidelines of this RFP and any addenda issued hereto.

Section 2: General Information

2(A) Notice to Applicants

It is the applicant's responsibility to read the Instructions, all relevant exhibits and attachments, and any other components and Addenda made a part of this RFP. Compliance with all requirements and specifications herein is also required.

If applicants have questions, issues, or exceptions regarding any term, condition, or other component within this RFP, those must be submitted as questions in accordance with the instructions in Section 2(C)- Proposal Questions. If Southwestern Commission determines that any changes will be made as a result of the questions asked, then such decisions will be communicated in the form of an RFP addendum.

2(B) RFP Schedule

Listed below are the dates and times by which stated actions must be taken or completed. The Commission may determine, in its sole discretion, that it is necessary to change any of these dates and times. Should changes be required, proper notice will be provided. All listed times are EST.

Action	Time	Date
Bid issued	5:00 PM	February 8, 2023
Deadline for Questions	5:00 PM	February 17, 2023
Commission Responses	5:00 PM	February 24, 2023
Bid Due	1:00 PM	March 22, 2023

2(C) Proposal Questions

Upon review of the RFP documents, applicants may have questions to clarify or interpret the RFP in order to submit the best proposal possible. To accommodate the proposal questions process, applicants shall submit any such questions by the deadline for questions indicated in Section 2(B).

Questions shall be written and shall be emailed to tonya@tenbizinc.com by the date and time specified above. Applicants should enter "RFP-Opioid Settlement Strategic Plan" as the subject for the email. Questions submitted should include a reference to the applicable RFP section. Questions will not be answered by phone.

Questions received by the deadline date, all responses, and any additional terms deemed necessary by the Commission will be posted in the form of an addendum to the Southwestern Commission website <https://regiona.org/> and shall become an Addendum to this RFP. No information, instruction or advice provided orally or informally by any Southwestern Commission personnel, whether made in response to a question or otherwise in connection with this RFP, shall be considered authoritative or binding. Applicants shall rely only on written material contained in an Addendum to this RFP.

2(D) Proposal Submittal

- **SUBMIT SEALED PROPOSALS by March 22, 2023 by 1:00 PM EST**
- Provide (2) complete sets of your bid per Section 2(E)- Proposal Requirements in hard copy paper format (on 8-1/2" x 11" size paper, printed one side, only bound with a single staple in the upper left corner or with a single removable clip (no 3-ring binders) and must be SEALED in an envelope. **NO EMAILED OR FAXED BIDS WILL BE ACCEPTED.**
- All bids must be mailed or delivered as follows in enough time to ensure receipt by the Commission on or before the time and date specified in Section 2(B)- RFP Schedule. Bids not received by the time and date specified will not be opened or considered. Applicant's whose submissions are received after the deadline will be allowed to pick-up or can arrange for return of their submission. Southwestern Commission will bear no responsibility or expense associated with the return of materials.
- Mailing & Delivery Address:
Southwestern Commission
ATTN: RFP for Region A- Opioid Settlement Strategic Plan
125 Bonnie Lane
Sylva, NC 28779
- Any costs associated with the preparation and delivery of a submission related to this proposal will be the sole responsibility of the applicant.
- Submittals are neither a contractual offer nor a commitment to purchase services. The Commission assumes no contractual obligation because of the issuance of this RFP.

2(E) Proposal Requirements

Applicants should include all attachments of this RFP that require the applicant to provide information and include an authorized signature where requested. Applicant RFP responses require the following items and should be arranged in the following order:

- 2.E.1 Cover Letter (Identify Project Manager)
- 2.E.2 A written narrative response to address the Project Organization
- 2.E.3 A written narrative response to address the Technical Approach
- 2.E.4 Applicant Experience and Qualifications as it relates to the scope of services and project deliverables

The applicant will provide information on its experience and qualifications, which enable it to provide a suitable solution described herein, including, but not limited to the following:

- Brief history of the company
- Timeline of incorporation, ownership, parent company, partners and

- suppliers
- Financial viability of applicant
- Examples of experience in grant compliance
- Any other information regarding the applicant's experience, which will assist the Commission in evaluating the proposal and making an ultimate decision.

2.E.5 Applicant's capability and capacity to perform project

The applicant will provide a comprehensive project implementation plan. This plan should include:

- Project management and support personnel, with a brief description of each person's qualifications and experience
- Project timeline for each phase of the project
- Provide experience, qualifications, and role for each person who will be participating in the project. State the background of each team member, years of experience, length of employment with your firm, and experience providing the deliverables as described herein
- Include a list of relevant and successfully completed projects by these team members
- Provide the name of the person who will direct the overall project throughout the duration of the contract and key responsibilities, including any subcontractors
- Include an organizational chart for the proposed project team, identifying the team leader and all roles and areas of responsibility
- Please note a personnel change **CANNOT** be made on the project team without prior written notice and approval by Southwestern Commission

2.E.6 Applicant's references

The applicant must supply three (3) references for similar work it has undertaken over the past three (3) years, preferably with a unit of local government. This shall include one reference that involves the use of grant funds.

Please provide:

- Entity name.
- Contact name(s).
- Email address.
- Telephone number.
- Brief description of the work performed, including products provided and date of installation

Southwestern Commission may contact these users to determine if the services provided are substantially similar in scope to those proposed herein and if

applicant's performance has been satisfactory. The information obtained may be considered in the evaluation of the proposal.

2.E.7 Total cost for the proposed services and a cost for each work element or project phase.

2.E.8 Executed copies of any addenda.

2.E.9 Attachment I: Vendor Information Form

Section 3: Method of Award and Proposal Evaluation Process

3(A) Method of Award

The method of award will be based on the most advantageous proposal as defined by the Commission considering technical merit, past performance and price as defined by Section 3(D)- Selection Criteria.

Southwestern Commission reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, waive technicalities and to be the sole judge of suitability of the services for its intended use as allowed by law and further specifically reserves the right to make the award in the best interest of the region.

3(B) Public Record

Proposals submitted shall not become public record until a contract is awarded by Southwestern Commission.

3(C) Proposal Evaluation Process

Southwestern Commission will review responses to this RFP to confirm that they meet the specifications and requirements of the RFP. The selection committee may request additional clarifying information from any applicant that submits a proposal. The selection committee will evaluate the responses, may interview the top-rated applicants and will make a recommendation to the Southwestern Commission Executive Director for the applicant determined to be the most qualified for the project. Any requests for clarifying information and/or the determination to hold interviews of top-rated applicants shall be at the sole discretion of the Commission.

Proposals will be evaluated according to completeness, content, and experience with similar projects, ability of the applicant and cost. Specific evaluation criteria are listed in 3(D)- Evaluation Criteria.

3(D) Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based upon the matrix below:

Criteria	(a) Weight	(b) Score (1-5)	(a) X (b) Weighted Score
Capability and capacity to perform the project	25		
Technical approach to the project, proposed, tasks, and timeline to complete work	25		
Project organization	20		
Experience as it relates to the scope of services and project deliverables	20		
Budget and budget narrative	10		
Final Score			

Proposals will be evaluated using a standardized scoring system. Each criteria component will be assigned points ranging from 1 - 5 according to the extent to which the proposed system meets the stated requirements. The points will be assigned as follows:

- 5 points: Fully meets
- 4 points: Meets with minor gaps (no compromise required)
- 3 points: Meets with moderate gaps (some compromise required)
- 2 points: Partially meets with significant gaps (compromise required)
- 1 point: Does not meet

The points for each criteria component will be multiplied by the percentage weight listed above and totaled.

Section 4: Scope of Services

4(A) Scope of Services

Development of Strategic Plan

The applicant will assist the Commission (and county leadership) in developing a comprehensive strategic plan for the usage of Opioid Settlement Funds for Region A. The Plan is intended to assist with county planning efforts as needed and consolidating county efforts into a collective, regional approach. The plan should also direct efforts and resources toward a clearly defined vision for the utilization of these funds using a strategic planning framework. The Plan will be data driven, grounded in the principles of equality, position the region to address the challenges of the future and will be fiscally sustainable. The Plan will articulate a vision, mission, core values, priorities, goals and objectives, implementation plans, performance measures and a procedure for Plan review and maintenance. The Plan will capitalize on the opportunity to leverage the

Settlement Funds and identify potential funding sources for a sustainable program moving forward.

The Commission acknowledges that each applicant may have a different approach and model to develop a strategic planning document. The proposal should clearly discern the approach and how that will best enable the region to achieve maximum effectiveness related to the roll-out of Opioid Settlement Funds. With that flexibility in mind, the scope of work should include but not necessarily be limited to the following elements:

- A timeline and schedule for the project that identifies major milestones, opportunities for meaningful information sharing and decision points. So that the counties may have an opportunity to act on key information sooner rather than later, a gradual rollout of information is preferred, as opposed to one final deadline in the distant future.
- Data on demographic, economic, social, and environmental factors and trends that are impacting or are expected to impact Region A residents, Region A government, and other institutions, programs and services as it relates to the impacts of substance abuse.
- A schedule and format to provide information and receive guidance from the Commission. The proposal should include an estimated number of facilitated discussions with the Commission as well as county managements in order to accomplish the development of the desired strategic plan.
- Engagement with county leadership and other stakeholders as subject matter experts in strategy, initiative development and performance measurement.
- A framework to align other countywide plans connected to behavioral health, inclusive of mental health and substance abuse for county departments including but not limited to law enforcement, emergency services, social services and the justice system.
- A decision-making framework that helps set both regional and county-specific priorities.
- An effective, innovative and fiscally sustainable strategic plan document that prioritizes both individual county and Region A initiatives, and resources to achieve specific goals within a designated period of time. The plan should identify commonalities and potential collaborative opportunities amongst county priorities.
- Goals and objectives and/or initiatives that support the vision, mission and values of the Plan.
- An implementation plan that transforms conceptual goals into realistic, achievable targets.
- Performance measures or key indicators and outcomes that will serve as the basis for measuring progress in Plan implementation.

- Analyses of any potential partnerships that could be leveraged to advance the Plan more efficiently and effectively, including identification of future funding sources.
- Tactics for effectively communicating the outcomes of the strategic planning process and for providing ongoing information on progress to improve transparency and accountability during Plan implementation.
- A recommended process for periodic plan reviews, updates, and/or other plan maintenance in accordance with the North Carolina Opioid Settlement Memorandum of Understanding.
- The following strategies should be fully considered for integration within the plan:
 - Recovery support services
 - Recovery housing support
 - Early intervention/prevention
 - Evidence-based addiction treatment
 - Employment-related services
 - Criminal diversion justice programs
 - Re-entry programs
- Analyses of long-term sustainability concerns, including budget projections and needs analysis for keeping the programs going into the future, along with suggestions for being able to do so.

4(B) Task Deliverables

Strategic Plan

The successful applicant will:

- Attend a kickoff meeting with the Commission and other key personnel to understand the goals and purpose of the project, identify potential issues to resolve; gather financial, demographic and related documents and data; and develop a detailed timeline based on scheduled of applicable personnel.
- Engage county leaders and partners in facilitated discussions and work sessions as needed to achieve the required project scope
- Meet with a project coordinator as needed to achieve the required project scope within the project timeline
- Prepare a comprehensive strategic plan including a clear and concise executive summary of the plan
- Provide a draft plan to the Commission electronically in Microsoft Word format. That draft will be presented to stakeholders for input and direction prior to finalizing the plan
- Present the final plan to the Commission and prepare and execute a

communications plan to introduce the final strategic plan to county leadership and key stakeholders from each county, as well as other jurisdictions as applicable

- Be or can become a subject matter expert of the State of North Carolina Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for Opioid Settlement Funds. All sections of the MOU shall be substantially complied with and integrated within the strategic plan.

Section 5: Requirements

5(A) Pricing

Proposal price shall constitute the total cost to Southwestern Commission for complete performance in accordance with the requirements and specifications herein, including all applicable charges, handling, administrative and other similar fees. Applicant shall not invoice for any amounts not specifically allowed for in this RFP.

The applicant shall provide both a total cost to perform all work and a cost for specific project elements or phases to perform this work. The cost by project element or phase would be used as a basis to modify the scope of work and associated costs if deemed necessary by Southwestern Commissions.

5(B) Funding Source

This RFP is funded with money from Dogwood Health Trust. All provisions within the memorandum of understanding (MOU) of the Opioid Settlement and the grant agreement with Dogwood Health Trust agreement are applicable. The most restrictive requirements between the two funding sources shall be followed.

5(C) Contract

Once the most advantageous proposal has been selected and approved by Southwestern Commission, the successful applicant will provide to the Commission for execution, a contract inclusive of all terms, conditions, specifications, deliverables contained herein.

Attachment I: Vendor Information Form

Company/Firm Name			
Mailing Address			
Contact Name		Contact Title	
Phone Number	Fax	Email	Website
Federal Tax ID Number		Unique Entity Identification Number (SAM.gov)	
Required Documentation		Internal Routing	
Completed IRS W-9 form dated within calendar year and signed by authorized personnel.		W9 Received	YES
Minority and Women Owned Business (MWBE) certification, if applicable.		MWBE Certification Received	YES N/A
		Unique Entity Identification Number confirmed in SAM.gov	YES