

Addendum #1- Responses to Questions
to the **RFP to Create a Strategic Plan for the Utilization of
Opioid Settlement Funds for Region A**

Southwestern Commission- Sylva, NC
February 24, 2023

To all respondents:

Please carefully review the questions and answers below and incorporate the information accordingly into your proposal that is due to the Southwestern Commission Office on or before March 22, 2023 at 1:00 PM. Applicants submitting proposals that do not reflect the information provided below may be deemed non-responsive and not accepted by the Commission.

**** ANSWERS TO RESPONDENTS' QUESTIONS ****

Question #01- Will out-of-state vendors be considered for this project?

Answer: Yes

Question #02- Is there a budget range or not-to-exceed amount for this project?

Answer: The budget range is \$100,000-\$250,000.

Question # 03- Is there a desired timeline for implementation (start/end date) for this project?

Answer: The desired start date is within two weeks of contract award and end-date approximately 9-12 months from start date. That timeline is flexible and should be recommended in the proposal.

Question # 04- Is in-person or virtual facilitation preferred, or a mix of both methods?

Answer: A mix of both methods is preferred.

Question # 05- The RFP states that the scope of work should include “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.”. To what extent will the Commission facilitate access to needed data sources?

Answer: The applicant is expected to obtain and report this data as it is a critical element that will inform the planning process. The Commission will facilitate access to any needed data that is available but recognizes much of this does not currently exist.

Question # 06- How large is the Commission? Is this the primary group that the vendor will facilitate plan development with?

Answer: Southwestern Commission is the local Council of Governments representing the 7 western counties of North Carolina, along with the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians and the Qualla Boundary. The Commission Executive Director and the Project Coordinator will work with the applicant to provide support and guidance throughout the planning development process.

Question # 07- If already known, what other primary partners in the region (in addition to leadership from all counties) will be deeply involved in the planning process?

Answer: County leadership will be actively involved, as they will need to approve the final plan and support its implementation. Other partners within the region to be involved have been identified at prior planning sessions and a list of those will be provided to the applicant once the contract has been awarded. The applicant should also work to identify any additional partners that should be included in the process that have not been previously identified.

Question # 08- What is envisioned in terms of community engagement in the planning process?

Answer: It is anticipated that a mixture of the general public, industry professionals and government leaders will be engaged in the planning process. The full scope of that engagement has not been pre-determined and anticipated steps to facilitate community engagement should be outlined by the applicant in the proposal.

Question # 09- What is the hoped-for/desired start date and length of time for implementation of this scope of services?

Answer: See response to Question # 03.

Question # 10- Is there a planned project team/steering committee/etc. to provide guidance and support implementation of the planning process, such as making key decisions along the way to help shape the direction of the process?

Answer: Yes

Question # 11- The RFP says “The services will be grounded in principles of equality and fairness...” Can you clarify what is meant by "principles of equality?"

Answer: The services proposed in the plan should be accessible to all the people in the region while recognizing and respecting their values and each community’s unique qualities and attributes.

Question # 12- The RFP requests the proposed scope of work should include, among other elements, “A decision-making framework that helps set both regional and county-specific priorities.” Can you clarify what you have in mind related to the “county-specific priorities?” Will there already be county-level plans being developed or implemented separately from this scope of work that will be built upon?

Answer: The strategic planning document should first and foremost include a regional plan/approach that highlights collaboration and overlap opportunities. However, when putting together the plan it is important to keep in mind that each county will independently execute implementation. Therefore, the plan may identify any unique opportunities/issues within each county as well. Each county will use the regional strategic plan recommendations to follow as a specific roadmap OR may choose to use the information to adapt their own customized plan of action.

Question # 13- What percentage/proportion of County Commissioners in the region are supportive/on board with this proposed regional approach? What concerns or hesitations have they raised about this approach?

Answer: County leadership from all of Region A have been involved in the pre-planning process and are supportive of the regional approach.

Question # 14- The RFP describes one of the key tasks for the successful applicant as “Meet with a project coordinator as needed to achieve the required project scope...” Our assumption is that the project manager will be internal to the Commission and will be a key liaison to support implementation. Please clarify if that is an incorrect assumption, and also please describe in more detail what the key roles and functions of that coordinator will be. For example, will they be able to support meeting logistics, communications, coordinating with key partners and stakeholders, etc?

Answer: The Project Coordinator is a part of the Commission team and will be the key liaison to support implementation. The Project Coordinator will be the applicant’s point of contact and will provide support and guidance throughout the process. Typical Coordinator responsibilities could include things such as making key introductions, attending or facilitating the scheduling of key meetings where needed, and/or assisting when roadblocks arise with communication or logistic concerns. The Coordinator will schedule routine check-ins with the applicant to receive updates and deliver feedback, and will be available for questions throughout the planning process.

Question # 15- What is the start date for services to begin?

Answer: See response to Question #03.

Question # 16- What is the duration of contract? How will the renewal process work over the 18 years of funding?

Answer: This RFP is for developing the Strategic Plan, which should be completed in a reasonable timeline determined by the applicant. There is no renewal process in place, as it is anticipated that each County will move forward with implementation once the Strategic Plan has been provided. Future additional planning services are possible, but nothing has been determined at this time.

Question # 17- How often will the strategic plan be refreshed? Will additional RFPs be released over the course of the 18-year funding period?

Answer: This information is unknown at this time.

Question # 18- What will the frequency be for kickoff meetings?

Answer: Currently, there are no regularly scheduled meetings as part of this project. The applicant will help determine the frequency needed and outline in project proposal.

Question # 19- What will the frequency be for regular commission meetings?

Answer: Currently, there are no regularly scheduled meetings as part of this project. The applicant will help determine the frequency needed and outline in project proposal.

Question # 20- Are there any issues with referring patients in need to *our company's* site to receive medical services or treatment?

Answer: There are no issues identified at this time.

Question # 21- How will funding be distributed for strategic planning services vs. the distribution of medical treatment and other services?

Answer: It is anticipated that all NC Settlement Funds will go towards plan implementation (services outlined in Strategic Plan) and not towards the current planning project or future planning.

Question # 22- What qualifications are requested or required in order to become a subject matter expert for the State of North Carolina Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for Opioid Settlement Funds?

Answer: No specific qualifications are required. However, it is expected that the applicant has both knowledge and experience in planning, mental health, substance abuse and other relevant areas as outlined in the RFP.

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