



RAPPAHANNOCK-RAPIDAN REGIONAL COMMISSION
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Project: Consulting Services for Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Food System Assessment

Summary: The Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission (RRRC), located in north central Virginia, seeks the assistance of a consulting firm well-versed in economic analyses related to agriculture, to conduct an economic assessment of the region's food system. The award will be based on best value.

Date Issued: [DATE]

Award Period: [MONTHS] from date of award

Due Date: PROPOSALS WILL BE RECEIVED UNTIL 4:00 P.M., [DATE].

Proposal Submission: See Sections 5 for specific instructions for the completion of proposals. Proposals should be submitted via email in pdf or MS Word format to: Michelle Edwards, medwards@rrregion.org

Questions related to this RFP should be submitted by email, no later than [DATE], to: Michelle Edwards, medwards@rrregion.org. Questions and responses will be posted by [DATE] on the RRRC website at: www.rrregion.org.

Note: RRRC does not discriminate against faith-based organizations in accordance with the *Code of Virginia, § 2.2-4343.1* or against a bidder or offeror because of race, religion, color, sex, national origin, age, disability, or any other basis prohibited by state law relating to discrimination in employment.

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Request for Proposal (RFP) and the resulting contract is to compile comprehensive, quantitative economic and production data concerning the conditions in the local farm and food economy of the Rappahannock-Rapidan Region's food system. This project defines a food system as a collaborative network that integrates food production, processing, distribution, consumption, and waste management. This assessment is not to include non-edible agricultural products such as equestrian and horticultural operations, but will encompass all other components of the agricultural economy, including commodities and wineries.

II. STUDY AREA

For the purposes of this assessment, the food system will encompass the following Virginia Counties and Cities: Loudoun, Fairfax, Prince William, Fauquier, Stafford, Rappahannock, Culpeper, Madison, Greene, Orange, Spotsylvania, Albemarle and Louisa Counties, and the cities of Arlington, Alexandria, Fairfax, Falls Church, Manassas, Manassas Park, Fredericksburg, and Charlottesville.

III. Project Goals:

- Provide a better understanding of existing conditions within the region's agricultural economy
- Quantitatively pinpoint issues with the local food system
- Establish a baseline to measure progress

IV. BACKGROUND

The Rappahannock-Rapidan Region is located in the Northern Piedmont of Virginia. The five counties that make up the region – Culpeper, Fauquier, Madison, Orange and Rappahannock – cover 1,965 square miles and are home to 166,054 persons. RRRC is the Commonwealth-chartered planning district commission for the five-county region (Planning District 9).

A predominantly rural region, agriculture and related business remains a key component of the Rappahannock-Rapidan Region's economy. The main agricultural products are commodities, including beef cattle, hay and grains; and specialty crops, such as greenhouse-grown products, apples and grapes. Small vegetable farms are beginning to emerge in modest numbers, and agritourism is also key component of the economy. However, according to local experts, the region's agricultural economy is in decline. Mid-sized farmers are finding it increasingly difficult to compete with larger operations, and while there has been a surge in new farmers coming into the region, their operations are small and frequently fail.

Initial studies have shown that there is untapped demand for locally grown food and agricultural products in the Washington D.C. food shed. There are many small-scale farmers in the region that may scale-up with assistance, through promotion of agricultural and rural economic development, local foods and tourism. Agriculture and agro-tourism are key to the success of the Rappahannock-Rapidan region's overall economy.

RRRC held a workshop on Fostering Sustainable Agriculture for Economic Development in April 2012, to kick-off its regional sustainable agriculture effort. Responses indicated strong interest in this topic throughout the region and amongst a broad range of stakeholders, though several issues were also raised. One of those issues was a lack of detailed data concerning the regional food system from a trusted source that local organizations could draw from in convincing local elected officials and funders to pursue projects to foster the local food economy. Another issue was a lack of focused goals and priorities amongst the stakeholders. RRRC's food system planning effort seeks to address these issues.

As the first phase of its regional food system planning effort, RRRC, together with its partners, seeks to conduct an in-depth regional food system assessment to gather critical data on local food economies.

Significant outreach to the agricultural community and other key local stakeholder groups will accompany this effort in order to raise awareness, solicit local input and build partnerships to carry forward into future phases. The assessment will cover RRRC's five-county region, plus an additional six to encompass the region's food system.

Two public meetings and multiple steering committee meetings have been held to define the scope of this assessment, which is the first phase of this effort. Future phases will include 1) a local resource assessment and stakeholder surveys, and 2) development of a regional food system plan.

V. SCOPE OF SERVICES

- A. Compile data from the 2007 and 2012 Agricultural Censuses showing farm and production characteristics; acreage devoted to organic food production and value of commodities produced; and value of direct sales from farms to consumers.
- B. Compile food consumption estimates for the region using Bureau of Labor Statistics data.
- C. Compile data published by the Bureau of Economic Analysis data covering personal income in various industries, including farming, for the period 1969-2013, for the region's food system.
- D. Compile additional data from these and other public databases to illuminate issues that are unique to the region.
- E. Having compiled this data, consultant will prepare (a) a written summary and (b) a PowerPoint presentation illustrating the most important findings, which may include several charts or tables, for local partners' use in outreach, publicity and marketing. Local partners will have access to any data compiled for this report.
- F. Present assessment results three times: (a) once to the regional project steering committee and (b) twice to larger groups of stakeholders during public meetings held within RRRC's five county region.
- G. As a potential option: conduct an input-output analysis using IMPLAN software. The report will estimate the overall employment, sales, and income impacts of agriculture in the five-county RRRC region only. Economic impacts will be identified as direct (the expenditures attributable to agriculture and related activities such as agri-tourism), indirect (impacts attributable to purchases of local production inputs), and induced (impacts attributable to additional worker household spending). The study will acknowledge and attempt to quantify when possible other economic contributions of agriculture to the region. They include beneficial environmental effects, effects on quality of life (e.g., open space preservation), and health and wellness. (To be cost out separately)

VI. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

One electronic copy of the completed proposal must be received by RRRC by the deadline referenced on the cover page. Failure to answer all questions will result in disqualification of the proposal.

Offerors are required to submit the following as a complete proposal:

- A. Proposal Cover Sheet (Attachment 1), signed and filled out as indicated.

- B. A detailed explanation of the expertise and experience of the offeror in completing similar projects relative to the scope of work contained in this RFP. This section should include recent similar experience, professional capabilities of resource persons, the names and telephone numbers of past clients and references for whom such described work has been performed. The proposal must identify the lead project manager who will do on-site work. The offeror shall provide resumes giving the educational background, professional experience and special qualifications of personnel providing services for this contract.
- C. A detailed proposed approach to accomplish the Scope of Work outlined in Section 5. This explanation should identify a preferred method of interacting with RRRRC, a preliminary estimate of the time needed to complete the work, and any anticipated limitations in completing the scope of work.
- D. A budget that includes hourly rates, an estimate of the number of hours required to complete each of task, and any other anticipated expenses, including travel.
- E. Names and contact information of three references familiar with the work of the applicant on similar projects.

VII. PROPOSAL EVALUATION

A review committee will evaluate proposals based on the following criteria. The contract will be awarded on the basis of best value. RRRRC reserves the right to conduct interviews with organizations submitting qualified proposals prior to contract award.

<u>Factors:</u>	<u>Point Value</u>
1. The Proposal	30
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Quality and completeness of the submitted proposal ▪ Content of the proposal 	
2. Experience in conducting food system assessments or similar analyses of agricultural economies.	30
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Specialized experience, expertise and qualifications of key project team members who will be assigned ▪ Knowledge of the agricultural sector in the project area, or at a minimum Virginia 	
3. References	20
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The record of the firm/team in completing quality of work on similar projects within budget and on schedule, based on assessment of references 	
4. Resources	20

- Availability of personnel to perform the work within the specified time following request for such work

Total

100

VI. TERMINATION OF CONTRACT

RRRC may terminate the contract at any time for cause, including Service Provider's default or failure to comply with terms of the Scope of Service.

The contract may also be terminated upon mutual agreement of RRRC and Service Provider.

VII. GENERAL CONTRACT TERMS

This project is funded by Culpeper County's CBDG Regional Planning Grant funded by the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development and is governed by terms and conditions set forth in the [CITATIONS OF MASTER AGREEMENT/POLICIES], incorporated herein by reference. The successful applicant must also be compliant with these terms and conditions, which include, among others, requirements for non-discrimination and drug-free workplace assurances, audit and record retention and Small, Women-owned and Minority (SWAM) reporting. The awarded contract will include similar provisions.

Attachment 1

PROPOSAL COVER SHEET

Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission

Request for Proposals:

Consulting Services for Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Food System Assessment

Organization Name: _____

Contact Person: _____

Title: _____

Address: _____

Email contact: _____

Phone: _____