

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

&

SCOPE OF WORK

FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF:

A Feasibility Study for a

**Food Innovation Center and
Business Incubator**

Date: August 3, 2020



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Region IV Development Association, Inc. (RIVDA) is requesting proposals from qualified consultants to conduct a feasibility study for the development of a food innovation center and business incubator in South-central Idaho. More detailed information regarding the scope of work, submittal requirements, and additional details of the project can be found on RIVDA's website at rivda.org. Proposals will be evaluated and ranked on the following criteria. The maximum point value of each criterion is shown in parentheses:

Capability to Perform Project	(20)
Relevant Project Experience	(30)
Qualifications of Project Team	(30)
Project Approach and Schedule	(10)
<u>Pricing</u>	<u>(10)</u>
<i>Sub-Total</i>	(100)
Committee Interview (optional)	

Top ranking firms accumulating the most points based on their submitted proposal may be asked to make presentations covering their relevant experience, their understanding of the project's requirements and their own approach to conducting the study. Final decisions will be made based on the consideration of the proposal and the interview.

Proposals are to be submitted electronically to jmccurdy@csi.edu. Proposals must be received by RIVDA no later than August 31, 2020 at 5:00 p.m. MDT. The subject line should read: Magic Valley Food Innovation Center and Business Incubator Feasibility Study Proposal

Published: The Times-News August 3 and August 10, 2020

Introduction

Region IV Development Association, Inc. (RIVDA) is looking for qualified consults to conduct a feasibility study, business plan and prepare a final written report. RIVDA and our partners are proposing the development of a food innovation center and business incubator that provides co-workspace and services to support business and contribute to the economic vitality of South-central Idaho and create new job opportunities throughout the region. This initiative is being undertaken in partnership with U.S. Department of Agriculture – Rural Development (USDA-RD), Dairy West, the College of Southern Idaho (CSI), University of Idaho (U of I), Southern Idaho Economic Development (SIED), and the Idaho Small Business Development Center (SBDC). RIVDA has been awarded funding from USDA-RD through their Rural Business Development Grant (RBDG) program to help fund a portion of this study. We have also received funding from private donors to complete this study.

Background

RIVDA is a private, not-for-profit corporation that was established in 1975 to encourage the development and diversification of the economy in South-central Idaho. Since its inception, RIVDA has been recognized by U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration (EDA) as the regional Economic Development District (EDD) serving the eight counties of South-central Idaho, which includes Blaine, Camas, Cassia, Gooding, Jerome, Lincoln, Minidoka, and Twin Falls (this geographical area is often called the "Magic Valley"). As a result of this designation, our organization is tasked with the responsibility for preparing a regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) and implementing the plans and objectives outlined in this planning document. One of the initiatives identified in this planning document is the evaluation and, if feasible, the creation of a food innovation center and business incubator.

The South-central Idaho economy is strongly supported by the agriculture and food processing industry sectors. The Magic Valley has been labeled "America's Most Diverse Food Basket". In 2015, the U.S. Department of Commerce designated South-central Idaho as an "All Things Food" Manufacturing Community. Unfortunately, our region is missing opportunities for entrepreneurs and food companies alike to develop and test new ideas. The creation of a food innovation center and business incubator will provide opportunities for entrepreneurs, food companies, small businesses, and existing processors as well as for dairymen, farmers, and ranchers to develop, test, and bring new products and services to the marketplace. The envisioned facility will have components such as a commercial kitchen, laboratories, cold storage, research facilities, classrooms, event space, office space, commercial/retail space, sales/marketing space, and other components and resources such as: business plan preparation, legal, finance, marketing, messaging, packaging, food safety and regulatory support, processing capabilities, connection to suppliers, distributors, and retailers, all of which, are integral components to commercializing a food product.

The involvement of CSI, U of I, and other educational partners are critical to the success of this initiative. This food innovation center and business incubator will not only benefit entrepreneurs and food processing companies but can also serve our regional educational partners. This facility can be used by educators to train with the most modern and latest food science technology available to better prepare students to enter the workforce. Allowing educators to use this space will help students learn in the classroom and transition that knowledge to hands-on experience. This Center will enhance public-private partnerships and collaboration that will

further strengthen the economy in South-central Idaho. Depending on the location, the Center can bring together programs and initiatives already underway in the Magic Valley that could include, but would not be limited to, current and future U of I-CSI Food Science programs; CSI Food Processing Technology and Advanced Food Manufacturing; CSI Culinary Arts and Baking and Pastry programs; the CSI Advanced Technology Innovation Center (ATIC building), certain CSI services as available such as career, advising, and veterans services; Southern Idaho Small Business Development Center, the U of I Center for Agriculture, Food and the Environment (CAFE) project, and all the research, business development, and educational activities related.

The Western Dairy Center (WDC), which operates regionally across Utah, Idaho, Washington and Oregon, is a potential interfacing organization for the food innovation center. WDC has dairy process capability to manufacture pilot quantities of cheese, ice cream and yogurt. Such process connection to the innovation center will allow prototype dairy products to be produced for potential customer introductions. We plan for WDC to be a resource to the food innovation center.

SCOPE OF WORK

Phase 1 – Feasibility Study

The consultant shall assess market demand for food innovation and business incubator space and services. This assessment should include surveys, interviews, and evaluation of regional economics, entrepreneurial and intellectual property activities, and potential job creation. This assessment of market demand should, at a minimum, address the following:

1. Determine if the focus on the establishment of a food innovation center and business incubator is an appropriate business model and that there is enough demand within the region for this facility or should additional industry sectors be considered.
2. Assess the level of community and business support for this food innovation center and business incubator facility.
3. Assess the opportunities, challenges, strengths, weaknesses, suitability of the proposed facility to be located at the following locations:
 - a. CSI – Twin Falls Campus
 - b. Jerome County – CAFE Campus
 - c. City of Twin Falls – Downtown Location
4. Determine long-term sustainability of the proposed facility and potential funding sources for creation of the facility as well as operations.
5. Development of a financial analysis of the ability for the facility to be self-sustaining.
6. Identify other institutions and organizations that could be partners in the incubator effort.
7. Recommend a general operational and management plan for the incubator.

Economic Development Purpose: The consultant shall determine the role of the food innovation center and business incubator in supporting the region's economic development objectives by strengthening the post-secondary presence, nurturing an atmosphere of entrepreneurialism, and increasing the viability of food innovation throughout the region.

Community and Stakeholder Support: The consultant should detail the level of regional and stakeholder support for the incubator and its expected impact on the overall success of the

project. This will include face to face interviews with local community, business, education, and government leaders to gauge the potential level of interest in the facility. The consultant should also determine the services and equipment needed within the facility to generate willingness and desire for entrepreneurs within the region to see this as a viable location and local business leaders to support the project.

Market Analysis Report: Market research and community outreach should culminate in a market analysis, which clearly and fully demonstrates why the incubator/co-workspace is or is not feasible and should address the identification of critical “go/no-go” criteria. The consultant should provide viable recommendations that would strengthen the Center’s sustainable success.

Facility Components/Design Recommendation: From the research collected, the selected consultant shall provide recommendations of components of the facility that would be necessary for a food innovation center and business incubator to be sustainable. Consultant will need to provide recommendations for food testing/processing space, laboratory space, retail space, office/meeting space, and other services that should be rendered to make this facility sustainable.

Site Analysis: The consultant will provide an assessment of the opportunities, challenges, strengths, weaknesses, and stability of each of the three locations identified. The consultant will provide cost estimates of construction associated with each of these locations and identify potential financial partners and resources associated with each location.

If the outcome of the Phase 1 determines the development of the Center is not feasible, a written report is required along with all supporting documentation. If the outcome of the Phase 1 Feasibility Study is favorable, contractor will need to proceed with requirements in Phase 2.

Phase 2 – Business Plan Development

If the outcome of the Phase 1 Feasibility Study is favorable and acceptable by RIVDA, the consultant shall prepare a business plan and financial pro forma for the project. The Business Plan should include structure and implementation plans to address appropriate vision, objectives, and goals for the facility and the methodology for measurements.

1. Identify management, staffing and operational model for the facility.
2. Outline a plan for marketing and fundraising including potential grants and other resources for start-up, operational, and capital investments.
3. Determine all appropriate partners as well as how CSI, U of I, and other education partners could most effectively be incorporated into the facility.
4. Define services, support functions, as well as business related equipment to be included
5. Client entrance and exit criteria, pricing guidelines, job creation measurements, etc.
6. Revise and expand financial analysis and models
7. Prepare a cohesive and complete business plan that is ready for fundraising and anticipates an organization that will achieve sustainability.

Final Report

The results of the study and a description of the individual tasks and activities conducted by the consultant will be included in the final report to be provided to RIVDA in written and electronic format. The final report will identify the next critical steps for how staff and stakeholders should

proceed. Included in the final report will be a projection of new job creation benefit identified through the study. Copies of any survey results, interview transcripts, and other work materials generated by the consultants shall be provided with the final report.

Evaluation

Proposals from interested firms will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

Capability to Perform Project – (i.e., firm’s history, areas of expertise, address of office that will manage project, length of time in business, firm’s legal structure, firm’s commitment to provide necessary resources to perform and complete project). (20 pts.)

Relevant Project Experience – (i.e., description of other projects completed by the firm that demonstrate relevant experience. List of public sector clients for whom you have performed similar work in the past five years, which should include name, address, and phone number of a person who can be contacted regarding the firm’s performance on the project. Provide web links of studies published on the web). (30 pts.)

Qualifications of Project Team – (i.e., résumé for the key people assigned to the project including sub-consultants. Key personnel roles and responsibilities on this project. Identify project manager who will be responsible for the day-to-day management of project tasks and will be primary point of contact). (30 pts.)

Project Approach and Schedule – (i.e., the tasks that must be accomplished to complete the project. How the firm proposes to execute the tasks. Unique aspects of the project and alternative approaches the owner might wish to consider). (10 pts.)

Pricing – (Proposal must include the complete cost of the services and anticipated expenses referencing key areas of delivery with separation of Phase 1 and Phase 2 activities of the project with specific budgets and work plans for each phase, with logical flow between the phases. Provide a complete cost of services including all professional fees, travel, lodging, meals, reports, and all other costs associated with the project presented with a total not to exceed cost.) (10 pts.)

Total Written Proposal Points Possible = 100

Committee Interview (optional) – Top ranking firms accumulating the most points based on their submitted proposal may be asked to make presentations covering their relevant experience, their understanding of the project’s requirements and their own approach to designing and supervising the job. Final decisions will be made based on the consideration of the proposal and the interview.

Submission Requirements:

Required Information – Please submit the following information in the order requested:

1. Cover including the name, address, phone number, and email address of the person or firm submitting the proposal. Provide the name of the contact person and person authorized to contract for the firm if the proposal is being submitted by a firm.

2. Cover Letter
3. Proposal and relevant information to address the evaluation criteria and scope of work based on the objectives outlined in this RFP. Include performance standards appropriate to the proposed work.

Award will be made to the most qualified offeror who is deemed most advantageous to RIVDA, all evaluation criteria considered. RIVDA may choose to interview only the top-ranking firms as based on proposal review and scores. Unsuccessful offerors will be notified.

Submittals:

Proposals are to be submitted electronically. Proposals must be received by RIVDA no later than August 31, 2020 at 5:00 p.m. MDT.

Submit electronic proposals to:

jmccurdy@csi.edu

Subject Line: Magic Valley Food Innovation Center and Business Incubator Feasibility Study Proposal

Point of Contact and Questions can be directed to:

Jeff McCurdy, President

Phone Number: (208) 732-5727 ext. 3010

Email: jmccurdy@csi.edu

The agreement will be on a fixed price basis, with payment terms to be negotiated with the selected offeror. RIVDA reserves the right to negotiate an agreement based on fair and reasonable compensation for the scope of work and services proposed, as well as the right to reject any and all responses deemed unqualified, unsatisfactory or inappropriate. RIVDA reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, to award separate sections, to waive formalities, and to reject non-conforming, non-responsive, or conditional proposals.