



Lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Governments

145 Dennison Road Essex, CT 06426 | +1 860 581 8554 | www.rivercog.org

Request for Proposals (RFP)

On-Call Economic Development Services

Issued by: Lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Governments (RiverCOG)

I. Introduction

The Lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Governments (RiverCOG) is soliciting proposals from qualified consultants, firms, or teams to provide on-call economic development services to municipalities to support the region's ongoing and future growth. Services will include organizational development and capacity building, economic development policy and program planning, property development support (including brownfields), and neighborhood/Main Street business retention and attraction.

II. Background

RiverCOG serves the Lower Connecticut River Valley region, working with 17-member municipalities to foster sustainable development, coordinate planning, and advance regional economic opportunities. The selected consultant or team will provide technical expertise, strategic guidance, and project-specific services on an as-needed basis under a task-order contract. A contract award under this RFP will enable RiverCOG's 17-member municipalities to use the economic development on-call services, as needed. Because all work is on-call as needed, no guarantee of work is provided to the contract awardee(s).

III. Scope of Services

The consultant(s) may be asked to provide services in one or more of the following areas:

i) Organizational Development & Capacity Building

1. Support municipalities and Regional Economic Development Committee (REDC) in developing economic development capacity.
2. Provide training, workshops, and strategic facilitation for boards, commissions, and staff.
3. Assist with governance structures, funding strategies, and organizational effectiveness.

ii) Economic Development Policy & Program Planning

1. Identify policies and programs to strengthen competitiveness and resiliency.
2. Provide guidance on drafting municipal economic development plans.
3. Recommend strategies to support implementation of economic development plans.
4. Conduct market analyses, economic impact studies, and feasibility assessments.

iii) Property Development/Redevelopment Services including Brownfields

1. Help identify and prioritize property revitalization/redevelopment opportunities.
2. Provide technical assistance with grant writing to secure funding for revitalization projects.



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3. Provide guidance on public–private partnerships and developer engagement.
 4. Develop stakeholder engagement strategies for redevelopment planning.
- iv) **Neighborhood & Main Street Business Retention and Attraction**
1. Assist in the development and implementation of small business retention and expansion strategies.
 2. Provide technical assistance to local business districts and Main Street programs.
 3. Help design placemaking, storefront improvement, and business recruitment initiatives.

IV. Deliverables

Deliverables will vary by assignment and may include written reports, presentations, data analyses, grant applications, and implementation plans.

V. Contract Term

RiverCOG intends to award one or more contracts for a one-year term, with the option to extend for an additional year, subject to performance and funding availability. A contract award under this RFP enables RiverCOG's 17member municipalities to use the economic development on-call services as needed. Because all work is on-call as needed, no guarantee of work is provided to the contract awardee(s). RiverCOG may select multiple firms to provide services based on qualifications, experience and fees.

VI. Proposal Requirements

Interested consultants shall submit proposals including:

- i) **Firm Profile:** Background, ownership, size, office location(s), and areas of expertise.
- ii) **Relevant Experience:** Examples of similar work for municipalities, COGs, or other regional agencies.
- iii) **Project Team:** Qualifications of key staff and areas of expertise.
- iv) **Approach:** Description of how the firm would provide on-call services across the scope areas including availability for in person and digital meetings and support.
- v) **References:** Contact information for at least three relevant clients.
- vi) **Fee Schedule:** Hourly rates by staff and service provided plus any reimbursable costs.

VII. Response Requirements

By responding to this RFP Respondents will affirmatively represent that they have read, examined and understand the Project as set forth in the Proposed Scope of Work and can perform the work to achieve the objectives of the Project, including the provisions of paragraph XII, below. The following information must be submitted with the proposal. Any additional information should be contained in a clearly marked appendix.



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- i) **Current Projects & Contractual Commitments:** A list of current projects/contractual commitments with end dates for each. Please include an explanation of how this project will fit in with existing work.
- ii) **Proof of Insurance:** Proof of appropriate insurance (general liability, auto, workers compensation, and/or professional liability coverage) for the firm and its subcontractors. RiverCOG requires Consultants to provide and maintain adequate professional liability for errors and omissions in the minimum amount of Three Million Dollars (\$3,000,000) and automobile liability insurance in the minimum amount of One Million Dollars (\$1,000,000). The Consultant(s) and subcontractors shall carry workman's compensation insurance. Proof of adequate insurance must be included in the bid application.
- iii) **Compliance with Laws:** Statement of compliance with all federal and state laws and local ordinances.
- iv) **Representation of the Respondents Pertaining to Due Diligence:** Provisions will be incorporated into any Agreement/Contract.

VIII. Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated on the following criteria:

- i) Demonstrated expertise and relevant project experience.
- ii) Depth and qualifications of project team.
- iii) Understanding of, municipal economic development and its impact on economic development in the RiverCOG region.
- iv) Proposed approach including availability to provide services in person.
- v) Fee schedule and overall value.

IX. Information and Questions

- i) **Addenda and Supplements.** In the event that it becomes necessary to revise any part of these instructions, a supplement will be posted to <https://www.rivercog.org/publicnotices>. Respondents are free to amend or replace an already- submitted proposal up until the RFP submission deadline.
- ii) **Inquiries.** Questions may only be submitted in writing and sent to Susie Beckman at sbeckman@rivercog.org. All questions submitted and responses will be made publicly available at <https://www.rivercog.org/publicnotices>. The identity of persons submitting questions will not be posted.

X. Submission Instructions

- i) **Deadline:** Thursday, November 20, 2025, 4pm EST.
- ii) **Format:** Submit one (1) electronic PDF copy via email to Susie Beckman, sbeckman@rivercog.org.



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- iii) **Questions:** Submit questions to Susie Beckman via sbeckman@rivercog.org. Deadline for questions is November 10, 2025 no later than 4pm. All questions and answers will be posted on the RiverCOG website by November 13, 2025 along with the RFP (<https://www.rivercog.org/publicnotices/>).

XI. Timeline

- i) **RFP Issued:** November 3, 2025
- ii) **Questions Due:** November 10, 2025 no later than 4pm EST. Questions received after the deadline risk not being answered.
- iii) **Proposals Due:** November 20, 2025 no later than 4pm EST
- iv) **Interviews (if needed):** December 1-5, 2025
- v) **Selection:** December 15, 2025
- vi) **Notification:** December 18, 2025

XII. By submitting its Proposal, Respondents represent that:

- i) Respondents have examined and are thoroughly familiar with each of the elements of this RFP, the facilities, if any, covered by the RFP and the services to be provided under the ensuing Agreement. The Respondents will acknowledge that these representations shall be considered of significant importance in the evaluation of Proposals and shall be included in the Agreement for its duration.
- ii) Respondents shall describe in the Proposal, any discrepancies or inaccuracies in the information assembled in this RFP, any Schedules thereto, observations during site visits, if any, and any information otherwise provided by RiverCOG. An explanation shall be provided for each discrepancy or inaccuracy, giving in detail, the extent of the discrepancy or inaccuracy, and the Proposer's plan for addressing such discrepancy or inaccuracy.
- iii) Respondents shall agree that if selected it shall be solely responsible for all aspects of the implementation of its Proposal (as agreed to and authorized by RiverCOG) and all applicable governmental approvals if needed. Accordingly, Respondent is ultimately responsible for verification of all data relating to the plans for design, development, improvement, reconstruction, construction, renovations, organization, maintenance, legal requirements and contracts, operations and management of the facilities and Respondent warrants and represents that its failure to make investigation and verification of any data or conditions shall, in no way, be cause for a future claim of ignorance of such data or conditions, nor shall such failure to investigate and verify be the basis for any claim whatsoever, monetary or otherwise.
- iv) Respondents' proposal for the plans for design, development, improvement (including any land use issues and the environmental requirements, reconstruction, construction, renovations, maintenance, operations, organization, legal requirements and contracts and management of the facilities shall meet all requirements of this RFP and applicable



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- governmental authorities and laws). Respondents understand that they must describe all components of each activity proposed, and must take special care to identify all details of each activity within the Redevelopment Process.
- v) Respondent shall be deemed to have warranted and represented that it has had the opportunity to:
- a) Inspect and evaluate all facilities during any site visit and reviewed all statistical data representing pertinent to the Project;
 - b) Familiarize itself with the nature and extent of the facilities and the municipalities in which the facilities are located and has reviewed local conditions and all Legal Requirements, including all Environmental Laws, that in any manner may affect cost, progress or performance of its services and plans for design, development, improvement, construction, renovations, maintenance, operations and management of the facilities;
 - c) Independently review the data provided by RiverCOG and analyze the quality and completeness of the information provided or made available to the Proposer; draw their own conclusions as to the quality and completeness of the data and information provided or made available to the Proposer; accept the scope of work requested and required to be performed under this RFP and agree to perform all such work if selected as the Consultant;
 - d) Independently review and verify, all data necessary for the facilities, including all data necessary for the proposed Improvements and plans for design, development, reconstruction, construction, renovations, maintenance, operations and management of the facilities;
 - e) Review and make itself aware of each and every Legal Requirement applicable to the services covered by this RFP and that it will be at all times during the term of the Agreement be in compliance with all applicable Legal Requirements, including but not limited to those relating to Environmental Laws, the Worker's Compensation Act, the Fair Labor Standards Act, ADA, the Family and Medical Leave Act and all Occupational Safety and Health Legal Requirements applicable to the work covered in this RFP.
 - f) Any Respondent's failure or omission to review or verify the data, information or conditions provided by RiverCOG or otherwise referenced in this RFP, shall in no way be cause for future claim, by such Respondent, of ignorance of such data, information or conditions nor shall such failure to review be the basis for any claim whatsoever, monetary or otherwise.

XIII. Reservation of Rights

RiverCOG reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, to waive informalities, to accept proposals in whole or in part, and to award contracts deemed to be in the best interest of the region. Award of contract is dependent on availability of funds.



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XIV. Freedom of Information

Respondents are advised that any and all materials submitted in response to this RFQ/RFP shall become the sole property of RiverCOG and shall be subject to the provisions of §1-210 of the Connecticut General Statutes (re: Freedom of Information), upon the conclusion of the RFQ/RFP.

XV. Rejection Rights: Waiver; Notification in Writing.

RiverCOG reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to:

- i) Accept or right to reject any or all of the proposals submitted for consideration.
- ii) Waive any informalities and/or technicalities; however, notwithstanding the foregoing, RFP responses arriving late or not meeting these minimum requirements may be disqualified.
- iii) Amend or cancel this RFP, prior to the due date and time, if it is deemed in the best interests of RiverCOG to do so. Nevertheless, RiverCOG reserves the right to cancel the RFP or portions of the draft RFP scope at any time or for any reason before execution of an agreement between RiverCOG and the selected consultant.
- iv) Negotiate separately in any manner necessary to serve the best interests of the RiverCOG.
or,
- v) Re-solicit if deemed to be in their best interest to do so. Respondents whose responses are not accepted shall be notified in writing.

XVI. Incurred Costs of Proposal Preparation; Payment. No reimbursement will be made by RiverCOG or any of its municipalities for any costs incurred by Respondent in the preparation of a response to this RFP or during the selection process. Moreover, no payment shall be made for consultant work made prior to execution of an agreement.

XVII. Proposals to Be In Effect. Each proposal shall state that it is valid for a period of not less than one hundred and twenty days from the date of receipt.

XVIII. Affirmative Action. RiverCOG and its member municipalities participating in this RFP are equal opportunity employers and require an affirmative action policy from all Respondents as a condition of doing business with the RiverCOG or its member municipalities, as per Federal Order 11246. By responding to this RFP, all Respondents agree to this condition of doing business with the RiverCOG or its member municipalities and, should they choose to audit for compliance, the Respondent agrees to cooperate fully.

XIX. Minority-owned Business Enterprise (MBE)/ Woman-owned Business Enterprise (WBE)/ Small Business Enterprise (SBE). It is the policy of RiverCOG to practice nondiscrimination based on race, color, sex, or national origin in the award or performance of this contract. All firms qualifying under this solicitation are encouraged to submit a proposal and selection will be based on and conditioned upon satisfying the requirements described in this RFP and Proposed General Scope. These



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requirements apply to all proposers, including those who qualify as an MBE, WBE or SBE. Proposals from firms that help RiverCOG meet MBE, WBE, or SBE goals will be given favorable consideration.

- XX. Length of Service.** It is expected that the agreement and work covered by this RFP and Proposed General Scope shall extend for twelve months from the date of execution of an agreement between the RiverCOG and the consulting firm(s) or team(s). No delivery of services shall start without written contract issued by the RiverCOG. Nothing in this RFP or in a resulting contract will guarantee work to the consulting firm(s) or team(s). Services will be on-call as needed by municipalities.
- XXI. Disclaimer.** RiverCOG is providing the Respondents with data that it believes to be accurate; however, Respondents should not rely on that statement alone. RiverCOG is not making any representations or warranties with respect to the accuracy or completeness of the data or any other reports, information or documents provided to Respondents. Respondents should draw their own conclusions/make their own assumptions and assess risk based upon the due diligence it performs.
- XXII. Submittals:**
An electronic submittal is required and must be received by 4pm on Thursday, November 20, 2025. Digital storage media may be mailed to RiverCOG, 145 Dennison Rd., Essex, CT, 06426. Emailed submission shall be addressed to Susie Beckman, at sbeckman@rivercog.org.

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