

Questions & Answers from 09/07/2022

Can the business incubator be conducted virtually? *It is envisioned that there will be virtual programming, although some in-person events are expected, but the number and frequency will be decided with the selected consultant.*

Does MEWS+ already have a relationship with The Hive in Chester? *Yes they do.*

Will this contract provide funding for home-based business owners to cowork, meet, or use the event space at The Hive? *Yes it should include funding for home based business owners meet ups at The Hive. I do not believe The Hive will be charging for use of their space by MEWS+.*

Does the MEWS+ have a relationship with Wesleyan University and local schools? *The Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce, who is the host of MEWS+, has relationships.*

The scope of work is for one year. How will all aspects of these services be sustainable after the project's end period? i.e.: entrepreneurial training and support, networking, coworking availability, resource availability? *RiverCOG and the Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce will see additional grant funds to continue MEWS+ activities.*

What is the anticipated budget for this program? *Unfortunately our procurement doesn't allow for us to provide the budget data, therefore I recommend including as much as possible hourly or task based prices so we can assemble a menu of activities to fit our budget. The budget will be discussed and negotiated with the selected consultant.*

Can you provide examples of previous similar initiatives by MEWS+? *Prior to the pandemic the MEWS+ was an in-person program and this effort is to revitalize it but in more of a virtual form.*

Questions & Answers from 08/29/2022

To fulfill the statement of compliance with all federal and state laws and ordinances response requirements, is there a specific form that we should fill out?
No, there is not a specific form.

Questions & Answers from 08/26/2022

Do you have a budget in mind for this project? *We do have a budget, but in general we do not release that information as part of the RFP. Therefore I suggest providing hourly or monthly task costs.*

Just to double-check, the submission can be done to your email? *Yes, the submission can be submitted via email to elopresti@rivercoq.org*

What's the budget allocated for this project? (If you're able to provide insight, specifically for the hired contractor/firm, the programming itself--particularly in-person events, and guest speakers/experts?)

There is a budget for this project, though our procurement process, governed by our agreements with the State of Connecticut, do not allow us to release it. Therefore, I recommend submitting hourly rates or monthly costs.

The RFP mentions virtual programming generally, but references hybrid offerings under Project Tasks and Deliverables. Can you confirm if the project will consist of virtual programming primarily (with the exception of the quarterly community start up nights and in-person programs held in the 17 municipalities in the Lower Connecticut River Valley?)

This project was originally envisioned as virtual, because of the uncertainties of COVID-19. However, as things permit, we would like to incorporate some in-person events into this project, as well as virtual options.

To what staffing capacity does the Middletown County Chamber of Commerce or RiverCOG have to assist with the execution of marketing strategy and management of marketing channels? In addition to programming/project management, is this RFP also requesting a fully developed and executed marketing and communications strategy for MEWS+?

The Chamber of Commerce and RiverCOG have some capacity to promote the MEWS+ programming through their email lists, members, and social media. We can also issue press releases. This RFP is not requesting a fully developed and executed marketing and communications strategy for MEWS+, however communication and marketing of MEWS+ to our target audience will be important.

How many participants are in the program now?

I do not have the answer to this because the physical MEWS+ space was closed by COVID-19 and has not reopened. MEWS+ is being reinvigorated though this programming effort.

Do you have existing data (demographics, geographics, and industry) on the current participants to ensure programming is sustained/created to best serve the target audience?

RiverCOG does not have this information, but the Chamber of Commerce will provide whatever data they have to the selected consultant and will work with them to craft programming targeted to the expected audience of entrepreneurs and small business owners.

Is the contractor/firm also responsible for reviewing program applications, where relevant? Is the contractor/firm also responsible for creating/updating program applications, where relevant?

No. I do not think that will be a responsibility of the consultant.

How soon are you looking for the selected contractor/firm to start working?

I hope to have this project commence in October 2022.

Are there any travel requirements for the contractor/firm representative to meet or facilitate programming in-person? If so, how often?

Some travel may be required to Middletown and potentially other locations in Middlesex County. However, most work should be able to be accomplished remotely.