

IMPLEMENTATION OF DIGITAL ECONOMY PLAN

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

NORTHWEST GEORGIA REGIONAL COMMISSION

**P.O. BOX 1798
1 JACKSON HILL DRIVE
ROME, GEORGIA 30162-1798**

March 12, 2015

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

IMPLEMENTATION OF DIGITAL ECONOMY PLAN

Submittal Deadline: March 30th, 2015 Email to dperry@nwgrc.org or bring hard copy to NWGRC Rome Office, 1 Jackson Hill Drive, Rome, GA 30161.

GENERAL PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Northwest Georgia Regional Commission seeks proposals from qualified firms to provide technical services to implement the Digital Economy Plan. (<http://www.nwgrc.org/publications/regional-digital-economy-plan/>) The Northwest Georgia Regional Commission with support from the Georgia Technology Authority, has developed the Digital Region 1 (DR1) plan to grow business, recruit and retain industry, and support local institutions with technology. The strategic focus of DR1 is top-line growth via investments in software and workforce that capitalize on and foster additional investments in hardware and infrastructure. The goals of DR1 are to:

- Increase the benefits and reduce the costs of using digital technologies
- Address common issues, needs, opportunities, problems, etc., across the following sectors:
 - Education
 - Healthcare
 - Local government
 - Manufacturing
 - Tourism
 - Small business
- Share best practices and other knowledge to increase use of, investment in, and benefits from technology

The DR1 plan is a starting point for that process, focused on northwest Georgia's economic drivers and supporting institutions. DR1 is a blueprint for doing more with hardware and infrastructure by investing in software and workforce. As an economic development plan, DR1 must have measurable impacts on productivity and prosperity. For all sectors and the entire regional economy, the objectives of the plan are to increase:

- Technology investment and use by organizations
- The number and sizes of the region's technology companies
- The number of technology jobs and occupations
- Income & wages via digital leadership and workforce skills

Implementation of the DR1 plan is contingent upon funding from the Department of Community Affairs and other funding sources.

SCOPE OF WORK

- Establish a team of technology champions from leading organizations in target sectors to share expertise and promote digital technology
- Develop a technology financing program, leveraging commercial lenders and economic development agencies
- Provide a digital strategy template/tool for organizations based on information technology best practices
- Provide Branding, and marketing of Digital Region 1
- Assess demand for and supply of digital skills, particularly for industrial automation and web sites via events to promote digital occupations
- Conduct “Grow Digital” programs for small businesses, non-profits, and government agencies
- Convene large conferences about how to make the most of digital technology
- Conduct multiple small hands-on workshops highlighting particular technologies to engage and inform leaders and workers
- Offer “externships” for students and job-seekers to explore tech occupations by helping others use digital technology
- Establish a network of “maker spaces” oriented towards automation and other top-line applications of digital technologies
- Jointly procure technology, particularly software and training for local governments and non-profit agencies
- Create Wi-Fi clouds and “walled garden” websites for central business districts, cultural and recreation assets, and other designations
- Build “plug and play” high performance networks for industrial sites
- Conduct “open source” demonstration projects, particularly with local governments, non-profit agencies, and small businesses
- Develop remote/rural broadband service
- Develop GE type Innovation Labs

PROPOSALS

Proposals shall address each strategy of the Digital Economy Work plan as well as describe the provision of technical services.

Proposals shall include a description of the services to be provided to the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission to implement the Digital Economy Plan. Proposals shall also address the provision of developing and tracking metrics for program evaluation and success in each of the 3 strategies of the DR1 work program plan show impact of the work plan both within the initial 24 month period as well as within 3 years. These

strategies include 1) Developing resources to promote and support digital development 2) Exploring and learning about digital technology 3) Targeting investments via Public-Private Partnerships.

The draft Digital Economy Plan is available on request from the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission (www.nwgrc.org).

The proposals should include the following information only:

1. Introduction: A brief introduction of the individual(s) or firm(s) involved and details of relevant experience with similar projects.
2. Work Plan: Proposed work plan for project tasks, project deliverables, timeline and scope of services. The work plan must demonstrate how tasks will be accomplished as well as format/media for deliverables. The work plan may suggest additional tasks or deliverables that would fulfill stated objectives.
3. Personnel and Project Team: Expertise and qualifications of key personnel should be included. A project manager should also be identified.
4. An estimated total number of hours required for the project.
5. Cost Analysis: Provide a detailed breakdown of proposal costs to accomplish each of the stated objectives broken down by task.
6. References: Provide a list of four to seven clients for whom the firm has performed work of a similar nature. Each reference should include a contact name, phone number, address, and email address. Portfolios or images of past work may be included as reference; however, submission of printed materials should be kept to a minimum. Digital or online documentation is preferred.
7. Capacity of respondent: Provide assurance that the respondent's current workload and future obligations will allow for project completion within the stated timeframe.

PROPOSAL DEADLINES

Request for Proposal Due:

March 30th, 2015

Completion:

June 30th, 2016

SUBMITTALS

Completed proposals must be received at the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission, P.O. Box 1798, 1 Jackson Hill Drive, Rome, Georgia 30162-1798 by 4:30 pm, March 30th, 2015. Proposals must be received by the date and time specified. Late proposals will be disqualified. In order to be considered for selection, bidders must submit a complete response to the RFP.

Interested firms shall submit one (1) reproducible electronic copy of the requested materials by 4:30 p.m., March 30th, 2015 to Deana Perry, Northwest Georgia Regional Commission, P.O. Box 1798, 1 Jackson Hill Drive, Rome, Georgia 30162-1798, e-mail: dperry@nwgrc.org.

NWGRC reserves the right to reject any and all proposals submitted and to request additional information from all proposers. Any contract awarded will be awarded to the bidder who, based upon evaluation of all proposals, is determined to have submitted the best proposal, considering both technical factors and cost.

Upon completion and submittal, all materials produced pursuant to this RFP and any subsequent contract will become the sole property of the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission. No copyright or proprietary interest in such products will be retained by the submitting party.

CONTACT INFORMATION

All inquiries and questions for clarification concerning this RFP should be directed to the following person: Deana Perry, Northwest Georgia Regional Commission, P.O. Box 1798, Rome, Georgia 30162-1798, Tel: 706-295-6485, Fax: 706-295-6665, e-mail: dperry@nwgrc.org.

All questions must be in writing and mailed, faxed, or e-mailed to the contact person. Responses to questions will be in writing and will be available to anyone who inquires to ensure uniformity.

The deadline for questions or clarifications is noon, March 30th, 2015.

DISCLAIMER

The Northwest Georgia Regional Commission shall not be liable for any costs incurred by a consultant responding to this request for proposal or for any costs associated with discussions required for clarification of items related to this proposal.

APPLICABLE LAW AND COURTS

This solicitation and any resulting agreement shall be governed in all respects by the laws of the State of Georgia. The bidder shall comply with applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations.

ETHICS IN PUBLIC CONTRACTING

By submitting their proposals, all bidders certify that their proposals are made without collusion or fraud and that they have not offered or received any kickbacks or inducements from any other bidder, supplier, manufacturer or sub bidder in connection with their proposals, and that they have not conferred on any Regional Commission employee having official responsibility for this procurement transaction any payment, loan, subscription, advance, deposit of money, services or anything of more than nominal value, present or promised, unless consideration of substantially equal or greater value was exchanged. Bidders specifically certify by submitting their proposal that they are not in violation of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, Sections 16-10-2 and 16-10-22, for acts of bribery and/or conspiracy in restraint of free and open competition in transactions with state or political subdivisions.

DEBARMENT STATUS

By submitting their proposals, all bidders certify that they are not currently debarred from submitting bids or proposals on contracts by any agency of the State of Georgia and the federal government, nor are they an agent of any person or entity that is currently debarred from submitting bids on contracts by any agency of the State of Georgia or the federal government.

INVOICES

All interim and final invoices for services ordered, delivered, and accepted shall be submitted by the bidder to: Julie Meadows, Northwest Georgia Regional Commission, P. O. Box 1798, Rome, GA 30162-1798, for approval prior to payment by the Regional Commission.

PAYMENT TERMS

The Northwest Georgia Regional Commission will make payment the later of 30 days after receipt of a proper invoice for interim and final billings provided that the billing has been approved according to Regional Commission policy.

ASSIGNMENT OF CONTRACT

A contract shall not be assignable by the bidder in whole or in part without the written consent of the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission.

CHANGES TO THE CONTRACT

The Northwest Georgia Regional Commission may order changes within the general scope of the contract at any time by written notice to the bidder. Changes within the scope of the contract include, but are not limited to, things such as the place of delivery. The bidder shall comply with the notice upon receipt. The bidder shall be compensated for any additional costs incurred as the result of such order and shall

give the REGIONAL COMMISSION a credit for any savings. Said compensation shall be determined by mutual agreement between the REGIONAL COMMISSION and the bidder in writing.

DEFAULT

In case of failure to deliver goods or services in accordance with the contract terms and conditions, the Regional Commission, after due notice, may procure them from other sources and hold the bidder responsible for any resulting additional purchase and administrative costs. This remedy shall be in addition to any other remedies which the REGIONAL COMMISSION may have.

QUALIFICATIONS OF BIDDERS

The REGIONAL COMMISSION may make such reasonable investigations as deemed proper and necessary to determine the ability of the bidder to perform the work and the bidder shall furnish to the REGIONAL COMMISSION all such information and data for this purpose as may be requested. The REGIONAL COMMISSION further reserves the right to reject any bid if the evidence submitted by, or investigations of, such bidder fails to satisfy the REGIONAL COMMISSION that such bidder is properly qualified to carry out the obligations of the contract and to complete the work/furnish the item(s) contemplated therein.

CANCELLATION OF CONTRACT

The REGIONAL COMMISSION reserves the right to cancel and terminate any resulting contract, in part or in whole, without penalty, upon 60 days written notice to the bidder. Any contract cancellation notice shall not relieve the bidder of the obligation to deliver and/or perform on all outstanding orders issued prior to the effective date of cancellation. In the event of termination by mutual agreement, the bidder shall be compensated for all work performed at the specified contractual rate.

If through any cause other than acts of God, floods, fires, storms, strikes, lockouts, riot, insurrection, acts of the public enemy, war, or other like restrictions beyond the control of the parties rendering performance under the contract impossible, the bidder fails to fulfill in a timely and proper manner obligations under the contract, the REGIONAL COMMISSION shall have the right to immediately terminate the contract on written notice to the bidder specifying the effective date of termination.

The bidder shall not be relieved of liability to the governmental entity for damages sustained by virtue of any breach of the contract by the bidder. The REGIONAL COMMISSION may withhold or require to be withheld any payment to the bidder for the purpose of setoff until such time as the exact amount of damages is agreed upon or is otherwise determined. In the event of termination for whatever reason all property and finished or unfinished documents, data, studies, and reports prepared

by the bidder shall become the property of the REGIONAL COMMISSION or its designee.

RECORDS

The bidder hereby agrees to retain all books, records, working papers, and other documents relative to this agreement for three (3) years after final payment. The REGIONAL COMMISSION, its authorized agents, and federal and state regulatory and grantor agencies, including the Georgia Environmental Protection Division, shall have full access to and the right to examine any of said materials during said period at no cost to either the REGIONAL COMMISSION or any other entity authorized to examine said materials.

REVIEW AND MONITORING

The REGIONAL COMMISSION reserves the right to conduct any review it may deem advisable to assure services conform to the specifications. An employee of the REGIONAL COMMISSION will be designated as project monitor to discuss issues that need to be resolved and may require periodic progress reports. The monitor will also be available for technical assistance concerning the interpretation of state laws, regulations and policies.

ADDITION TO OR REDUCTION IN CONTRACT WORK

In the event during the course of the contract period it is determined by any party a change in the scope of the contract work is necessary, the discovering party shall promptly notify the other parties in writing. The parties shall then determine whether the contract shall be amended to provide for an adjustment in the contract work to be performed by the bidder. In no event shall any payment be made for contract work beyond the scope of the original contract until the contract has been amended.

SUBCONTRACTS

No portion of the work shall be subcontracted without prior written consent of the REGIONAL COMMISSION. In the event that the bidder desires to subcontract some part of the work specified herein, the bidder shall furnish the REGIONAL COMMISSION the names, qualifications and experience of the proposed sub bidders. The bidder shall, however, remain fully liable and responsible for the work/service to be performed by his/her sub bidder(s) and shall assure compliance with all requirements of the contract.

INTEGRATED AGREEMENT

Any resulting contract represents the entire and integrated agreement between the bidder and REGIONAL COMMISSION and supersedes all prior negotiations, representation, or agreements, whether written or oral. The contract may only be amended by written agreement of the bidder and the REGIONAL COMMISSION.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION AND VOLUNTEER LIABILITY INSURANCE

The bidder shall be required at all times during the term of this agreement to subscribe and comply with the Workers' Compensation laws of the State of Georgia and to save harmless the REGIONAL COMMISSION from any and all liability from or under said act. If the bidder utilizes volunteers to perform services and/or is not required to be covered under the Workers' Compensation laws of the State of Georgia, the bidder will secure sufficient liability insurance coverage to provide protection to the REGIONAL COMMISSION which is equivalent to that provided by the Workers' Compensation laws of the State of Georgia. Said insurance coverage shall be with a reputable insurance company acceptable to the REGIONAL COMMISSION. In addition, the bidder will save harmless the REGIONAL COMMISSION from any and all liability from or under the actions of the bidder's employees and volunteers.

SOCIAL SECURITY/EMPLOYMENT TAXES

The bidder shall be and remain an independent bidder with respect to all services performed hereunder and shall accept full exclusive liability for the payments of any and all contributions or taxes for Social Security, Unemployment Benefits, pensions, and annuities now or hereafter imposed under any State or Federal laws which are measured by the wages, salaries, or other remuneration paid to persons employed by the bidder on work performed under the terms of this agreement.

The bidder further shall obey or satisfy all lawful rules, regulations, and requirements issued or promulgated under said respective laws by any duly authorized State or Federal officials. The bidder shall indemnify and save harmless the REGIONAL COMMISSION from any contributions, taxes, or liability referred to in this article.

CHANGES IN STATE REQUIREMENTS

If state regulations governing the preparation of a nutrient trading framework change, the bidder shall adjust their activities and reporting formats and criteria so that the new regulations are satisfied. Any additional time used by the bidder as a result of such changes that would cause the bidder to exceed the proposed scope of work as submitted in the Cost Proposal shall be treated as provided for in the following section entitled: "Rates for Additional Professional Services".

RATES FOR ADDITIONAL PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

If it should become necessary for the REGIONAL COMMISSION to request the bidder to render any additional services to either supplement the services requested in this request for proposals or to perform additional work as a result of the specific recommendations included in any report issued on this engagement, then such additional work shall be performed only if set forth in an addendum to the contract between the REGIONAL COMMISSION and the firm. Any such additional work agreed to between the REGIONAL COMMISSION and the bidder shall be performed at the

same rates as set forth in the schedule of fees and expenses included in the sealed dollar cost bid.

DRUG-FREE WORK WORKPLACE

Bidders contracting with the State of Georgia (or entities thereof as defined in the Act) further certify that they will comply with the Drug-Free Workplace Act, Official Code of Georgia Annotated, Section 50-24-1 et Seq. in carrying out any contract resulting from this proposal