

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

PROJECT MANAGER

Appalachian Community Grant Program (ACGP)

Mayors' Partnership for Progress (MPP) Regional Transformation Initiative

Summary and Background

The Appalachian Community Grant Program was created to fund sustainable, transformative projects in the 32 counties of the Appalachian region of Ohio. Included in [Ohio House Bill 377](#), signed by Governor DeWine on June 28, 2022, the Appalachian Community Grant Program is being administered by the Ohio Department of Development ("ODOD"). Projects should be designed to bring about transformational change and be a catalyst for future development by providing generational investments in the Appalachian region. Each planning and development grant application must address one or more of the following components: infrastructure, workforce, and healthcare.

Established in 1995, the MPP is a 501.c.3 nonprofit, nonpartisan group of Mayors and City Managers from cities and villages throughout Appalachian Ohio with a goal of encouraging members to share information, coordinate messaging, and tackle common issues. The MPP Regional Transformation initiative will engage community leaders, organizations, and residents in 44 communities in a planning process designed to produce eligible, impactful, regionally transformative development grants for funding consideration during the next phase of the program.

Project Description

The Mayors' Partnership for Progress (MPP) is seeking up to three (3) Project Managers who are highly organized and adaptable, enjoy working in a role that requires attention to detail, are relationship builders, and have public sector experience. The positions are initially externally grant funded for an expected 9 month period pending MOU with the state of Ohio. There is a potential for an extension should the grant extend into CY 2024 or another funding source becomes available to support the scope of work.

Project Managers play an important role in planning to attract and/or secure and administer state and federal funds to assist with the implementation of transformational community development, infrastructure, healthcare, and workforce development projects; including but not limited to main street development, downtown redevelopment, outdoor recreation, trails and tourism, public health services, and job training projects. Individuals or firms that thrive on serving people, who are self-motivated, detail-oriented, flexible, and can quickly learn governmental processes will make a lasting impact in the region.

The successful contractor(s) will specialize in community planning and grant management, enjoy working with teams (both internal and external to the MPP), have a strong degree of intellectual curiosity and communication skills, and be a self-starter with the ability to learn new topics and

concepts quickly. The ability to establish and maintain strong working relationships with others, across multiple socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds is critical, as is experience working with diverse groups and varied industries throughout a community. The Project Managers will lead a team including Ohio University student research scholars and will work collaboratively with state procured planner teams which will also include facilitators and grant writers. This cohesive network will be expected to identify and put forth projects across the MPP region that are eligible and competitive for Appalachian Community Grant Program implementation funding in late 2023.

Project Managers will lead, support, and help coordinate various projects in communities located throughout SE Ohio. Experience in planning, finance, engineering, business, data analytics, and/or communications is desired. Demonstrated experience working in southeastern Ohio is preferred. Demonstrated experience working with all sizes of municipalities preferred, particularly villages with population of 5,000 or less. Familiarity with Adobe and Microsoft products is a plus.

Scope of Work

The successful consultant will be required to:

- Serve as team Project Manager consultant to assist MPP and impacted member communities in a 19-county region to develop a cadre of projects eligible for submission for ACGP development program investment that, upon completion, will prove transformative for the community and the region as a whole.
- Through public focus groups with local residents and/or conducting regional surveys of absentee property and business owners, as well as civic organizations, gain a deep understanding of local priorities and identify shared community revitalization goals.
- Actively seek opportunities to establish and encourage regional connectivity and shared learning among those with a common focus, such as tourism, downtown revitalization, medical capacity, workforce, farmers' market development, etc.
- Work with the identified planning firms to establish a timeline and benchmarks to ensure completion of realistic implementation plans for locally driven, regional and community-specific projects by late 2023, for completion by 2026.
- Assist the MPP to develop a plan for the integrated marketing of these initiatives via the Mayors' Partnership for Progress website, regional tourism maps and visitors' guides.
- Identify and coordinate with additional legal and technical assistance consulting partners as necessary to carry out project activities, including but not limited to:
 - Create presentation content, agendas, and official meeting minutes
 - Conduct and oversee extensive research to verify the appropriate use and documentation of public funds
 - Write and present technical reports, working papers, and formal correspondence
 - Evaluate and verify eligible project expenses related to the ARPA guidelines
 - Assist in preparing financial reports and remittance packages
 - Coordinate and facilitate meetings
 - Identify, write, and administer grants

- Perform fieldwork to collect and record necessary project documentation
- Attend evening meetings as communities deem necessary
- Perform other duties as necessary or assigned
- Attend and/or conduct regular status meetings with MPP

Essential Abilities:

- Create presentation content, agendas, and official meeting minutes
- Conduct and oversee extensive research to verify the appropriate use and documentation of public funds
- Write and present technical reports, working papers, and formal correspondence
- Evaluate and verify eligible project expenses within the ARPA guidelines
- Assist in preparing financial reports and remittance packages
- Coordinate and facilitate meetings
- Identify, write, and administer grants
- Perform fieldwork to collect and record necessary project documentation
- Attend evening meetings as communities deem necessary
- Travel to rural communities
- Perform other duties as assigned

Period of Performance:

The period of performance for the Appalachian Community Grant Program Regional Transformation Initiative is approximately April 17th to Late 2023. The individual or firm selected would be expected to serve as an advisor for the project team for an expected period of nine (9) months through the end of 2023, with the option to extend the contract should funds become available.

Requirements to be Responsive to RFP:

The Proposal shall be submitted with the following listed sections completed as part of one singular document, in a digital format with print capabilities. MPP may solicit additional information at a later time.

Part 1 – Firm/Individual Response Information Summary

The respondent must provide information as follows:

1. Firm/Individual Name and Address to which to send contract/service agreement (if awarded)
2. Website Address
3. Phone Number
4. Proposal Price and Payment Terms (60 days is preferred)
5. Name, Address, Phone, Mobile, Email Address of Key Representative(s) Responsible for carrying out project activities, inclusive of billing for services

Part 2 – References

Provide a minimum of 3 and a maximum of 6 references. They should ideally be similar to MPP – i.e., nonprofit, regional organizations or public entities who have contracted with the respondent for the same services and/or products. If such references are not available, list references which match as closely as possible.

Part 3 – Project Manager Qualifications and Experience (50%)

1. Provide a description of the qualifications and experience of key personnel and entities relative to planning to attract public investment for community-driven projects, utilizing federal and state grant dollars. Please include details on:
 - a. Demonstrated experience working in and understanding of the unique challenges to revitalizing rural communities
 - b. Demonstrated experience working in and understanding of the unique challenges to spurring economic development in rural communities
 - c. Successful track record in providing technical assistance resulting in increased state, federal, and/or private investment to a community
 - d. Successful track record in managing and supporting individual community-driven planning efforts, identifying commonalities among varied stakeholders, and leading, aligning with, or contributing to a successful regional planning effort
 - e. Demonstrated understanding of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) eligibility, Appalachian Community Grant Program (ACGP), and other federal and state grant programs that support improvements to infrastructure in rural areas
 - f. Proven ability to work with communities of all sizes, particularly populations of 5,000 or less, and the public sector in delivering projects and meeting development goals
 - g. Sufficient staff and/or consultant resources to deliver the Planning effort and develop meaningful, impactful projects
 - h. Demonstrated ability to collaborate with community stakeholders and local organizations
2. Provide descriptions of previous projects that the Respondent has undertaken that are similar to this Project. Please include References as detailed in Part 2 of this RFP.

Part 4 – Approach (30%)

1. Please provide an overview of the approach to delivering the Scope of Work identified above, inclusive of advisement of MPP leadership throughout the project period, and assistance to identify and procure specialized technical assistance necessary to enable investment that leads to transformational positive economic change in the MPP region.

Part 5 – Schedule (10%)

Provide a plan to develop a Project Schedule in coordination with MPP staff and ACGP team(s) to reach key milestones

Part 6 – Cost (10%)

MPP anticipates entering into an agreement for professional services. The successful respondent should expect to provide monthly invoices to the MPP for reimbursement. Contract range is \$75K-\$95K per project manager, depending on qualifications. Time period for this contract is anticipated to be approximately nine (9) months. The Mayors’ Partnership for Progress actively seeks to engage a diverse team to serve the region and is committed to engaging all communities in our 19-county membership.

The maximum budget available for this project is \$100,000 per project manager.

Respondents should address the following in response to this RFP:

1. Overall total Lump Sum cost for services
2. Detailed breakdown of activities/tasks to be completed and cost associated with each
3. Rationale for tracking and billing MPP monthly based upon actual percentage of work completed

Timeline and Deliverables:

Interested firms should respond by email to mayorspartnership@gmail.com. The subject line should read ‘MPP-ACGP Project Manager RFP’.

RFP Issued	March 20, 2023
Questions Concerning the RFP to mayorspartnership@gmail.com	March 29, 2023
RFP DUE – 3:00pm	April 5, 2023
Virtual Proposal Presentations	April 10, 2023
Notification of Award	April 14, 2023
Work Commences	April 17, 2023

Any proposal received after the time and date specified, prepared or submitted, may not be eligible for consideration. ALL PROPOSALS MUST BE SIGNED.

Failure to provide this information may result in rejection of the proposal.

MPP reserves the right to reject any proposal not prepared and submitted according to the provisions herein outlined, and may reject any or all proposals.

IMPORTANT NOTE: The respondent is cautioned against last minute attempts to meet the due date & time and MPP will not be responsible for network outages, and other related internet malfunctions on the part of the respondent in submitting their proposal.

Evaluation and Selection

All qualified proposals submitted in accordance with the terms of the RFP will be evaluated to determine the most responsive entity. Proposals will be evaluated and ranked based on the selection criteria below.

Staff from Ohio University and MPP will review and evaluate all proposals received in response to this Request for Proposal. The top 4 will be invited to present their proposal virtually to the review committee on April 10th.

After the conclusion of the evaluation process, the firms, groups, or persons will be ranked in priority order with the highest-ranking firm, group, or person being recommended to the full MPP membership for Contract Award approval. Upon approval, the review committee will finalize a contract inclusive of a scope of services on behalf of the MPP. If a contract satisfactory to both parties cannot be negotiated, MPP will then enter into negotiations with the next highest ranked firm, group, or person, and so on until an agreement is reached.

In the event MPP elects to negotiate a contract with a selected firm, group, or person, MPP reserves the right to negotiate such terms and conditions of the contract, including, but not limited to scope, role, price, and staffing which may be in the best interests of MPP.

Proposal evaluation will be based upon the following criteria:

- Project Approach, Scope, and Cost
- Experience and ability to successfully complete the scope of services
- Experience with planning and visioning efforts at the community level
- Experience with planning and visioning efforts at the regional level
- Demonstrated experience with economic and community development activities
- Work experience within this 19-county Appalachian Ohio region with specific experience in municipalities 5,000 or less.

Discrimination

No person in the United States must, on the ground of race, color, national origin, handicap, age, religion, or sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under, any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.

To effectuate compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. Section 2000d et seq.); as amended, MPP includes the following in a solicitation or contract and these provisions will be incorporated into the contract between MPP and the selected consultant (CONSULTANT). The CONSULTANT will need to abide by these provisions:

1. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. §§ 2000d *et seq.*) and DOC implementing regulations published at 15 C.F.R. Part 8 prohibiting discrimination on the grounds of race, color, or national origin under programs or activities receiving Federal financial assistance.
2. Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (20 U.S.C. §§ 1681 *et seq.*) prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sex under Federally assisted education programs or activities.
3. The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. §§ 12101 *et seq.*) prohibiting discrimination on the basis of disability under programs, activities, and services provided or made available by State and local governments or instrumentalities or agencies thereto, as well as public or private entities that provide public transportation.
4. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (29 U.S.C. § 794), and DOC implementing regulations published at 15 C.F.R. Part 8b prohibiting discrimination on the basis of handicap under any program or activity receiving or benefiting from Federal assistance. For purposes of complying with the accessibility standards set forth in 15 C.F.R. § 8b.18(c), non-federal entities must adhere to the regulations, published by the U.S. Department of Justice, implementing Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) (28 C.F.R. part 35; 75 FR 56164, as amended by 76 FR 13285) and Title III of the ADA (28 C.F.R. part 36; 75 FR 56164, as amended by 76 FR 13286). The revised regulations adopted new enforceable accessibility standards called the “2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design” (2010 Standards), which replace and supersede the former Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards for new construction and alteration projects.
5. The Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended (42 U.S.C. §§ 6101 *et seq.*), and DOC implementing regulations published at 15 C.F.R. Part 20 prohibiting discrimination on the basis of age in programs or activities receiving Federal financial assistance.
6. Any other applicable non-discrimination law(s).

Disclaimers

Mayors’ Partnership for Progress reserves the right to accept or reject any and all responses received to this posted RFP and to re-advertise for new submissions.

Mayors’ Partnership for Progress will not be responsible for any costs incurred by respondents in the preparation of a response to this RFP.

Mayors’ Partnership for Progress reserves the right to delay or discontinue the selection process at any time.

Mayors’ Partnership for Progress reserves the right to award all, part, or none of the project in the best interest of the overall project and will not be held responsible for any impacts on respondents resulting from this decision.

Mayors' Partnership for Progress reserves the right to request modifications to any documentation submitted if it is in the best interest of the project prior to the time of selection.

Mayors' Partnership for Progress reserves the right to request clarification or additional information from a respondent prior to selection.

Mayors' Partnership for Progress reserves the right to negotiate with the selected respondent to provide additional services not outlined in this RFP if necessary and in the best interest of the project.

The evaluation and selection of the Consultant/Firm will be based on the information submitted in the entity's proposal including estimated cost, the scope of work, and creativity. Failure to respond to each of the requirements in the RFP may be the basis for rejecting a response. Firms or individuals should respond clearly and completely to all requirements. Firms or individuals must be as concise as possible with respect to presenting a clear and complete proposal.

Deviations and exceptions from terms, conditions, or specifications from this RFP shall be described fully on the entity's letterhead, signed, and attached to the response. In the absence of such statement, the proposal shall be accepted as in strict compliance with all terms, conditions, and specifications and the entity shall be held liable.

This RFP is the official media governing proposal procedures. No other documents, letters, or oral instructions shall have any influence whatsoever, unless incorporated by reference herein, or unless an official AMENDMENT is made to this document by the issuing office

Evaluation criteria contained herein shall be used in evaluating interested firms, groups, or persons for selection. MPP may contact any RFP respondent after receiving its submittal to seek clarification on any portion thereof.

Proposals will not be returned to the RFP respondents.