



REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

Professional Consulting Services

Issue Date: April 14, 2023

Northern Rural Training and Employment Consortium (NoRTEC)
A Proud Partner of America's Job Center of California Network
11 Ilahee Lane, Chico, CA 95973
(530) 892-9600

NoRTEC is an Equal Opportunity Employer and provider of employment and training programs.
Auxiliary Aids and Services are Available upon Request to Individuals with Disabilities

Michael Cross, Executive Director
[mccross@ncen.org](mailto:mcross@ncen.org)

SECTION 1: PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

PURPOSE

The Northern Rural Employment Consortium (NoRTEC) is looking to establish a list of qualified consultants from which it will draw upon on an as needed basis to provide support for the three technical areas listed. From the submissions to this Request for Qualifications and Quote, NoRTEC will select providers for a list of procured experts to contact for specific opportunities, as relevant. The list of qualified experts will be good for two (2) years from the date of notice (April 14, 2023). Inclusion on the list of approved providers does not constitute a promise that the provider will be selected by NoRTEC to perform work.

Selected entities will work closely with NoRTEC staff, Board members, the community at large and other consultants who may be supporting related work activities associated with the specific task(s). Ideally, respondents will be familiar with both the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and how workforce boards help support networks, programs, and services that help grow economy and strengthen ties between local businesses and job seekers.

All contracts will adhere to the local, state, and federal rules and regulations, unless otherwise noted based on funding guidelines, including the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). A copy of the WIOA regulations is available for review at the US Department of Labor Employment and Training and Administration website at <http://www.doleta.gov/WIOA>.

ELIGIBILITY

Entities, organizations or individuals possessing the appropriate capacity and demonstrated ability to provide the services outlined in this RFQ are eligible to apply. Responses will be deemed eligible based on their completeness and responsiveness to this RFQ. NoRTEC encourages submission from small businesses, minority-owned firms, and women's business enterprises.

Please note: NoRTEC is prohibited from awarding funds to any entity debarred or suspended, or otherwise excluded from or ineligible for participation in Federal assistance programs in accordance with DOL regulations at 29 CFR Part 98.

PROPOSAL DUE DATE

Proposals will not be accepted after June 1, 2023 at 5:00 p.m. Proposals must be e-mailed to:

Andrea Campos, Director of Program Administration
E-mail: acampos@ncen.org

E-mailed proposals must be formatted as PDF. Proposals in other file formats will not be reviewed. Faxed proposals will not be accepted.

RFQ CONTACT

RFQ Contact Person and mailing address for questions about the proposal process or technical issues:

*Andrea Campos, Director of Program Administration
NoRTEC
11 Ilahee Lane, Chico CA 95973
acampos@ncen.org
(530) 892-9600 x205*

BACKGROUND

The Northern Rural Training & Employment Consortium (NoRTEC) headquartered in Chico, California, administers Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act programs in eleven Northern California counties. Established in 1983, NoRTEC is led by a Workforce Development Board (WDB) that oversee a broad range of programs and initiatives. The WDB includes representatives from small, medium and large businesses, labor organizations, education, economic development, community-based organizations and one-stop partners.

NoRTEC is a special district formed through a Joint Powers Agreement and has established contracts with nonprofit agencies in eleven counties to ensure job seekers and businesses have access to a comprehensive array of job training and employment services. Additional information about NoRTEC can be obtained at www.ncen.org.

NoRTEC administers workforce development funds through a network of America's Job Centers of California (AJCCs) and serves as a connector between employers and those seeking employment in the geographical regions they serve. NoRTEC's mission is to build a strong workforce development system by planning, coordinating, collaborating and monitoring workforce initiatives with businesses, partners and community stakeholders at the local, regional and state level to ensure a skilled and productive workforce for the 21st Century.

SECTION 2: SERVICES SOLICITED

NoRTEC has specific interest in the following services under this RFQ. Respondent may address one or more of the following service categories.

A. Workforce Development and Industry Sector Specialist

Provide specialized workforce system services for the development and implementation of industry sector initiatives and special projects which may include, but are not limited to the following:

- Organize stakeholders connected with a specific local or regional industry, including multiple firms, labor groups, education and training providers, and workforce and education systems to develop workforce development strategies within the industry;

- Work in collaboration with stakeholders to design and develop local and regional training programs (e.g. career and technical education, apprenticeships, on-the-job training, internships, and other work-based learning) and workforce solutions to address both short- and long-term workforce needs of the sectors, including analyzing current labor markets and identifying barriers to employment within the industry; and developing occupational career ladders to ensure workers of all skill levels can advance within the industry;
- Write reports, program materials and other documents to inform and engage stakeholders around the sector initiatives;
- Assist in the development of grant applications to support sector initiatives including facilitation, research, writing, and data collection;
- Production of technical reports, presentations, and external communication;
- Assistance in strategic planning and partnerships; and
- Experience and expertise related to industry sectors and special populations are required.

B. Grant Development and Administration

Provide grant implementation services with expertise, knowledge and experience in federal proposal writing. Specific expertise and knowledge of industry sectors, labor market information, and employment and training best practices required. Provide fund development services with an emphasis on best practices including, but not limited to:

- Conduct research on potential funding sources, not limited to federal and state;
- Prepare components of grant applications authorized NoRTEC. This includes narrative, financial and any other component required by the grantor, for submission of an application;
- Facilitate and document program design meetings with partners, communicate terms and conditions of grant opportunities, develop parameters of grant applications, assist in partner roles, timelines, and review of proposal drafts;
- Expertise in federal workforce development procurement; and
- Provide all necessary materials needed with the completion of services.

C. Strategic Planning and Organizational Assessment

Evaluate the current organizational structure and capacity of NoRTEC and make recommendations regarding how to improve efficiencies and deliver quality programs and services including, but not limited to the following:

- Conduct organizational assessments to identify strengths and weaknesses, as well as gaps and duplication in service delivery;
- Develop criteria for evaluating systems and measurements of performance and effectiveness of existing operations;
- Assist in implementation of operating systems to support the goals of WIOA and NoRTEC Regional and Local Plans.
- Provide recommendations for improving planning based on WIOA compliance; and
- Preparation of planning and/or organizational development materials for the Board.

SECTION 3: PROPOSAL FORMAT

RFQ RESPONSE FORMAT AND INSTRUCTIONS

All proposals must indicate services the Respondent is prepared to offer and should clearly demonstrate the Respondent's interest and ability to provide such service. The proposals should include the following components.

- 1) Cover letter providing a description of respondent's qualifications and proven track record including the name, address, telephone and email of the individual submitting the proposal and type of organization.
- 2) Scope of Services narrative description of the services respondent wishes to provide (A, B, C) including a description of the respondent's familiarity with workforce development, employment programs, or prior professional experience in these fields.
- 3) Resumes for all key relevant individuals and clearly identify how they will contribute to the provision of services.
- 4) Two (2) professional references.
- 5) Standard rate sheet including cost per/hour and per/day or per/project. All fees, charges, billing rates, overhead costs must be explained. Respondents will be evaluated on their ability to offer high quality services while keeping costs reasonable for the services provided.
- 6) Samples of work. (please limit to 4 examples or provide a link to website or social media profile)

SECTION 4: RATING CRITERIA

PROCESS

All proposals will be evaluated by an RFQ Evaluation Committee. The Evaluation Committee will review and score each proposal based upon evaluation criteria published in this RFQ. NoRTEC may, at its discretion, request presentations by or meetings with any Proposers to clarify or negotiate modifications to the proposals.

Based on the scores, the Committee will make funding recommendations to the NoRTEC WIB. After the NoRTEC WIB approves contract amounts, a contract can be negotiated. A contract award is not final until NoRTEC and the applicant have executed a mutually satisfactory agreement.

PROPOSAL CRITERIA

Selection of any or all of the services contained in the section: Services Solicited will be made from the list of prequalified entities resulting from the RFQ. The following criteria will be considered in evaluating responses:

- Experience and reputation in the field (0-20 points);
- Ability to provide needed services (0-20 points);
- Knowledge of NoRTEC's service delivery area (0-20 points);
- Cost effectiveness (0-20 points);

- Professional references (0-20 points).

The arrangement of criteria is not meant to imply order of importance in the evaluation process. Any award is subject to funding availability. Respondents must have a total average score of 75 points or higher to be recommended for funding. NoRTEC reserves the right to recommend multiple proposals for funding approval. In the event that the primary Respondent recommended fails to provide services outlined in the agreement and proposal, NoRTEC may use an alternate Respondent to perform services based on a score of 75 points or higher.

SECTION 5: GENERAL PROVISIONS AND DISCLAIMERS

MINORITY BUSINESS PARTICIPATION

NoRTEC, as a recipient of State and Federal funds, subscribes to the practices below and will fully comply with Federal, State, and Local laws and directives governing non-discrimination, equal opportunity, and affirmative action in all activities.

- No person shall be discriminated against whatsoever on the grounds of race, religion, color, age, sex, physical handicap, or national origin.
- No person shall because of race, religion, color, age, sex, physical handicap, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity funded entirely or in part by the City, the State, or the Federal Government.
- Affirmative Action shall be taken by all levels of governments, where necessary, to support the underlying objectives of said anti-discrimination policies.

To further support policies relative to affirmative action, equal opportunity, and non-discrimination, NoRTEC will make every effort to ensure that Minority Business Enterprises have the maximum practicable opportunity to participate in construction contracts and in the procurement of goods, professional services, and supplies. Contractors are encouraged to indicate in their RFQ response if they are a certified minority business as certified through the State of California. A listing of certified minority businesses, as well as the services and commodities they provide is available from the [California Unified Certification Program](#).

ADDENDA TO THIS REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

At the discretion of NoRTEC, if it becomes necessary to revise any part of this RFQ, an addendum will be posted on NoRTEC's website. Any clarification will become an addendum to this RFQ. Respondents are responsible for checking the website frequently to remain informed about the procurement process and other information that may affect this RFQ.

THE APPEALS PROCESS

NoRTEC must receive written notice of the Proposer's intent to appeal the decision within five (5) working days of receipt of notice of award. Proposer will have a total of 15 days in which to submit a written appeal of NoRTEC's decisions. All grievances arising out of Workforce Innovation

and Opportunity Act or this RFQ must be filed according to NoRTEC's established grievance procedures.

ANTI-ASSIGNMENT/SUBCONTRACTING

The Contractor acknowledges that if selected by NoRTEC to perform the services required hereunder, it will be based, in part, upon the Contractor's special skills and expertise. The Contractor shall not assign, subcontract or otherwise transfer this agreement in whole or in part without the prior written consent of NoRTEC, which NoRTEC may, in its sole discretion, approve or deny without reason. Any attempted assignment or transfer of its obligations without such consent shall be null and void. No such approval by NoRTEC of any subcontract shall be deemed in any way to provide for the incurrence of any obligation of the State in addition to the total fixed price agreed upon in this agreement. Subcontracts shall be subject to the terms and conditions of this agreement and to any conditions of approval that NoRTEC may deem necessary. Subject to the foregoing, this agreement shall be binding upon the respective successors and assigns of the parties.

INDEPENDENT CONTRACTOR STATUS

Consulting services will be in compliance with [EDD Directive WSD21-05](#) for Consultant Services and Pay.

The Contractor shall be regarded as an independent contractor and shall at no time act as an agent for NoRTEC.

GENERAL DISCLAIMERS

1. All responses to this RFQ become the property of NoRTEC. At such time a final award is made, all proposals submitted in response to this RFQ become a matter of public record and shall be regarded as public records, with the exception of those elements in each proposal which are defined by the bidder as business or trade secrets, and marked "Trade Secret", "Confidential" or "Proprietary", or if disclosure is required under the Public Record Act.
2. NoRTEC reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, to accept or reject any or all items in the proposal and to award contracts in whole or in part as deemed to be in the best interest of NoRTEC. NoRTEC reserves the right to negotiate with any Respondent after proposals are reviewed, if such action is deemed to be in the best interest of NoRTEC. NoRTEC reserves the right to award multiple contracts for specific services as deemed in the best interest of NoRTEC.
3. No costs will be paid to cover the expense of preparing a proposal or procuring a contract for services or supplies under Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

4. Proposers submitted for funding consideration must be consistent with, and if funded, operated according to, the federal Workforce Investment Act legislation, all applicable federal regulations, State of California policies, and NoRTEC policies and procedures.
5. Proposers selected for funding must also ensure compliance with the following, as applicable: U.S. DOL regulations 20 CFR Part 652; 29 CFR Parts 96, 93, 37, 2 and 98; and 48 CFR Part 31; Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circulars A-21, A-87, A-110, A-122, and A-133 as applicable.
6. NoRTEC is required to abide by all Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act legislation and regulations. Therefore, NoRTEC reserves the right to modify or alter the requirements and standards set forth in this RFQ based on program requirements mandated by state or federal agencies.
7. NoRTEC reserves the right to cancel all or any part of this RFQ at any time without prior notice and reserves the right to modify the RFQ process and time line as is deemed necessary.