Request for Proposals

COVID-19 Business Impact Assessment and Report

March 3, 2022
ABOUT: The San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce (“Chamber”) is administrating the “COVID-19 Business Capacity Building Initiative” program, created in partnership with the County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA). The Chamber is initiating an assessment via subcontractor to identify the role that COVID-19 has played to impact the small business community, with a specialized focus on small, under-resourced, and rural businesses, and those with a large proportion of minority employees and/or customers in the San Diego region. This assessment, as feasible, will consider the impact of different “surges” of the virus, and the variety of ways in which the business community was or was not able to successfully adapt.

Given the disproportionate impact of the virus on already vulnerable populations, the consultant selected to perform this work must have existing understandings of best practices for outreach and engagement and have familiarity with San Diego’s dynamic and diverse population.

At the conclusion of the assessment, building off of lessons learned via the Back in Business initiative from the Chamber that concluded in 2021, the assessment will provide a clear narrative of emerging and reoccurring challenges for the business community, worksites, and employees disproportionately impacted by COVID-19, as well as areas for increased support and programmatic recommendations.

From this assessment, the scope of the work of the Chamber via the Capacity Building Initiative will be clearly mapped to have the highest impact to businesses in need, and be an informative resource for the business community, and elected officials.

COVID-19 BUSINESS CAPACITY BUILDING INITIATIVE: Activities in this program are funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) COVID-19 Health Disparities Project through the County of San Diego Contract #565936 with the San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce (Exhibit A). The standard terms and conditions in the County Contract #565936 that apply to the Chamber as contracted by the County of San Diego will apply to the subcontract.

The goal of the funding is to address COVID-19 health disparities among populations at high-risk and underserved, including racial and ethnic minority populations and rural communities to determine any changes in the community’s attitudes and perceptions. The Chamber provide services and assist HHSA with supporting the goal of advancing COVID-19 policies and resources among culturally or ethnically focused chambers, business improvement districts, business associations, non-profits, and businesses that employ or serve populations disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 in San Diego County.

SCOPE OF SERVICE:

1) A survey developed in conjunction with Chamber and County staff to field feedback from businesses that reflects the sentiments of decision makers within small business about:
   a. Their resilience
   b. Impact of COVID
   c. Health and safety of workforce and customer base
2) A report that:
   a. Creates an economic baseline from which recommendations and points of growth or recession can be determined in the future (15 days)
b. Relies direct feedback from the small business community within all five Supervisorial Districts and where possible a focus on businesses located throughout the County’s designated forty-seven opportunity zones. (45 days)
   i. Identifies challenges within the business community attributable to COVID
   ii. Identifies opportunities/policies/programs to increase business resiliency in the County

3) Data/feedback from report and outreach that will be the property of the Chamber, County, and CDC

PROJECT TIMELINE:

A successful response will be able to meet the following targets:

- Survey developed for businesses in the region by 4/20/2022
- Preliminary findings back to Chamber staff by 5/20/2022
- Draft report back to Chamber staff by 6/13/2022

TARGET AUDIENCE:

Preparation: The target audience for outreach will be minority owned businesses, and those businesses that operate with a large portion of their workforce and/or customer base that include racial and ethnic minority populations representing Asian/Pacific Islander, Hispanic/Latinx, African/Black/African-America, Middle Eastern, Tribal, and rural community members. More specifically businesses that are located within the designated forty-seven opportunity zones in the County of San Diego should be a high priority for outreach.

Upon Publication: The target audience once the report is finalized is the broader public in San Diego but specifically, business leaders and policy makers at the County and City levels. This report is intended to be a tool for those decision makers to consider the impacts that certain policies would have on the stability of small businesses to continue operation, for the well-being of their workforce, and their growth/hiring prospects in the future. This report will be foundational to other programmatic pieces of the Chamber’s contract with the County.

FUNDS AVAILABLE:

This contract for the work outlined in the scope of work is not to exceed the amount of $35,000. The CDC Funding Source Terms and Conditions in the County Contract #565936 (Exhibit A) that apply to the Chamber as contracted by the County of San Diego will apply to the subcontract.

EVALUATION PROCESS: Proposals will be reviewed by the Selection Committee for completeness and responsiveness, and only those proposals that appear to be complete and responsive will be evaluated.

Proposals will be evaluated based on the overall best value to the Chamber and County based on the criteria listed below and other information reasonably considered to be relevant submitted by applicants.

The Chamber and the Selection Committee will verify the qualifications of the applicants and determine the ability of applicants to meet the needs of the project outlined above. The Chamber and Selection
Committee reserve the right to interview any or all responding applicants and/or to award a contract without conducting interviews.

While total cost will be considered the applicant’s overall capabilities, competence and history doing similar work will be heavily considered. The Chamber reserves the right to choose the overall best firm according to the criteria established and shall be the sole judge of its own best interest, the proposal, and the resulting negotiated agreement. The Chamber’s decision shall be final.

**TIMELINE FOR SELECTION:**

RFP out to public: 3/3/2022

Responses due: 3/24/2022

Evaluation and follow up discussions: 3/28- 3/31

Selection finalized: 4/4/2022

**Proposal Format & Content:**

A. **Cover letter**
   a. Company name/address
   b. Summary describing the applicant’s ability to perform work requested, a history of background and experience providing similar services.
   c. Letter signed by an authorized individual stating that the applicant has read and will comply with all terms and conditions of the RFP.
   d. General information regarding the primary contact who will address questions regarding the proposal (name/title/phone number/email)

B. **Qualifications & Experience**
   a. A description of the firm/organization’s history and experience. Should include familiarity with the business community in San Diego and experience working with a diverse set of respondents. Should include the background of key staff assigned to the project.
   b. Highlight any aspects/experiences that may make the applicant stand apart from other competitors
   c. List three (3) professional references, including contact information, for similar work undertaken by applicant.

C. **Scope of Service & Work Plan**
   a. Describe the methodology for completing the scope of work, with the understanding that some aspects will require collaboration with Chamber and County team. The Chamber is open to recommendations of additional areas of focus to enhance the report and analysis and should be included in the response to the RFP.

D. **Project Timing**
   a. Implementation timeline

**Proposal Submittal Requirements:** Proposals must fully address all information specified in this RFP and any failure to provide required information may result in a proposal being found non-responsive.
Proposals should be submitted via email to Stefanie Benvenuto, Vice President of Public Affairs, at sbenvenuto@sdcchamber.org.