



RAIL CDC 2021 Request for Qualifications

Business Consultants to Deliver Technical Assistance to Locally-Owned Micro and Small Businesses in Tempe, AZ and Mesa, AZ.

1. Introduction:

Retail, Arts, Innovation, and Livability Community Development Corporation (RAILCDC) is issuing this Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to seek qualified firms or individuals who are able to provide business technical assistance to micro and small businesses to help these locally-owned businesses recover from the coronavirus pandemic and thrive into future.

Please reply to one or more of the services requested as outlined below, as appropriate.

2. About RAIL CDC:

RAIL CDC's mission is to positively impact policies and systems that build wealth, pathways out of poverty, and help our community thrive.

Retail, Arts, Innovation, and Livability Community Development Corporation (RAIL CDC) was founded in 2012 as a coalition of residents along the east valley extension of the light rail corridor. Our mission is to positively impact policies and systems that build wealth, pathways out of poverty, and help our community thrive. We exist to strengthen and preserve our: Diverse Local Economy; Safe & Attractive Neighborhoods; Healthy & Resilient Community.

In 2019, we expanded from an all-volunteer coalition and hired our first-time employee, our Executive Director. Since that time we have focused much of our work on engaging with the small and micro businesses in Mesa's West Main Street Light Rail Corridor, Latino and Asian Districts, and Tempe's Apache Boulevard Light Rail Corridor. All of the areas in which we work are predominantly low-to-moderate income (LMI) census tracts and are home to a large number of BIPOC & women business owners.

3. Purpose:

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on businesses in our area was felt immediately. RAIL CDC and partners such as LISC, MetLife, State Farm, Cities of Tempe and Mesa have created a small business technical assistance program. The program is intended to help small and micro businesses recover from the coronavirus pandemic, evaluate and react to necessary changes in the business environment, implement new policies, procedures and processes, stimulate new

business, and strategize and plan for the future of their companies. The program is designed to focus on stabilization, recovery, and to boost resiliency of small businesses.

To facilitate this assistance, consultants are needed who will be responsible in developing a personalized plan for targeted businesses for the small businesses in the Mesa's West Main Street Mesa Light Rail Corridor, Latino and Asian Districts, and Tempe's Apache Boulevard Light Rail Corridor.

RAIL CDC is looking for consultants who can provide direct assistance to small businesses in any of the following areas:

- General Business
- Social Media Marketing & Content Creation
- Marketing and Branding
- Google MyBusiness and GoogleAds
- Restaurant / Food Services - Physical and Digital models
- Language Interpretation
- Human Resource Planning/Organizational Development
- Information Technology Systems / Point of Sale Systems / Online Integration
- Financial Counseling/Coaching

By providing assistance in these important areas, we intend to give small businesses, which are the backbone of our local economy, the necessary tools for success.

4. Scope of Work

Consultants will perform an analysis of the identified small business using an established assessment process to identify needs and to create a plan for the small business. Consultants will work with the assigned businesses to create a work plan for assistance in the areas identified as most needed. Consultants must develop a work plan that outlines goals that can be accomplished in partnership with the business in the approved amount of time, as well as illustrate how success will be measured and documented.

Consultants will work with RAIL CDC to make sure that the plans are being implemented accordingly and work through any questions that might arise as the help is being given.

Monthly consultants will provide an invoice and report to RAIL CDC outlining the work completed, hours spent, as well as any supporting documentation to demonstrate support provided to each business. RAIL CDC will provide technical support to our consultants.

RAIL CDC is looking for consultants who can provide direct assistance to small businesses in any of the following areas:

A. General Business:

Consultants will assess the current state and critical needs of the core business plan and general operating strategy. In coordination with a consultant, businesses will have an opportunity to assess which areas will meet their most critical needs.

These services include:

- Business Plan Coaching
- Sales (Sales Systems & Analysis)
- Interior Update and Redesign for Social Distancing
- Signage - New and Required
- Disaster Preparedness/Emergency Planning
- Translation & Interpretation

B. Marketing:

Consultants will introduce businesses to innovative tools which support innovation and reconfiguring how they engage customers during the pandemic and recovery. Consultant will introduce solutions via a virtual session, in which attendees can self-select for additional 1:1 assistance afterwards.

These services may include:

- Digital Media
- Google MyBusiness
- Google Ads and SEO
- Branding
- Social Media Management & Content Creation
- Advertising
- Design
- Database Marketing
- Public Relations, Storytelling
- New Media & Marketing
- Translation & Interpretation

C. Human Resource Planning / Organizational Development:

A critical response to COVID-19 impacts is ensuring the safety and health of the workplace, including their employees. Consultants will provide guidance to address what conditions will need to be considered to sustain the workforce and help retain jobs while keeping up-to-date on CDC requirements.

Human Resource Planning services include:

- Safety Services
- Personnel Communications
- Cleaning/Personal Protective Equipment
- Workplace Design
- Employee Relations

- Training Staff
- Workplace after COVID-19
- Translation & Interpretation

Organizational Development services include:

- Legal
- Strategic Planning
- Leadership Planning
- COVID - The Next Normal

D. Information Technology Systems

As businesses transition to new methods of doing business, assessing their day-to-day workflow and systems that support their operations will have a pressing need to shift and adapt to the new times. An IT Project Management consultant will provide solutions to businesses on how to address these shifts, and what technology tools can be used.

These services may include:

- E-Commerce
- Working Remotely
- Web Development/App Development
- Team Tools
- Point of Sales
- Cyber Security
- Web Hosting
- Translation & Interpretation

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These services may include:

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- Working Remotely
- Web Development/App Development
- Team Tools
- Point of Sales
- Cyber Security
- Web Hosting

F. Financial Counseling/Coaching

Financial coaching will help the small business address where they can redesign their current financial standing to be more effective in leading the way through the pandemic. The consultant will provide businesses a platform to receive guidance in the following areas.

The core services include:

- Accounting
- Recovery Budgeting
- Financial Statements
- Debt Restructuring
- Translation & Interpretation

5. Minimum Requirements

- Consultant may not be excluded from Federal Procurement and must document that they are neither debarred or suspended from doing business with the federal government nor delinquent in a debt to the United States.
- Consultant must provide their current DUNS number and SAM CAGE code. There is no registration fee for DUNS or SAM for any organization that is a (or is applying for) financial assistance recipient of the US government, including contracts, grants, and cooperative agreements.
- All consultants shall act as independent contractors to RAIL CDC and maintain general liability insurance for the entirety of their .

6. Submittal Requirements

Statement of Qualifications:

- Submit qualifications including:
- cover letter
- profile
- qualifications
- proposed process
- statement of capacity to perform the work
- resumes of key personnel
- relevant project history
- references

Statement of Qualifications is limited to a maximum of three pages per area of need, but no more than 10 pages total.

7. Fee Proposal

RAIL CDC will pay \$90.00 per hour for approved hours of service.

Submit as a separate document a summary of the proposed services and hourly breakdown.

The hourly rate shall be inclusive of all overhead and other costs incurred by the consultant, including, but not limited to, mileage, printing, copies, taxes, telephone calls. Consultants will not be authorized to be reimbursed for any additional costs.

Fee proposal is limited to a maximum of one page per area of need, as appropriate.

8. Evaluation Criteria

Based on documents provided by the applicant, RAIL CDC will review and evaluate applications within an executive committee meeting and choose those most appropriate to fulfill the needs of the businesses within our area of work.

If you have any questions about the RFQ, please address them in writing to: Ryan Winkle, ryan@railcdc.org

9. Submission:

Complete proposals should be submitted by email to: ryan@railcdc.org. All submissions must be in PDF format.

Proposals will be accepted on an ongoing basis until no longer needed. Consultant(s) selected will be notified when they are selected. Work may start immediately.