



**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**  
FROM  
**STRATEGIC PLANNING CONSULTANTS**

**1. PURPOSE**

The Southwestern Wisconsin Community Action Program (SWCAP) is soliciting written proposals from qualified consultants to provide services to SWCAP for the development of a 3-5 year strategic plan. All proposals should clearly define how they will work with SWCAP in a comprehensive and highly participatory strategic planning process.

**2. WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO RESPOND?**

SWCAP seeks a consultant who demonstrates a strong overall understanding of the structure and purpose of a community action program/agency, has strong facilitation skills and has proven experience with nonprofit strategic planning.

**3. ABOUT SWCAP**

Southwest Wisconsin Community Action Program (SWCAP) is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization with a mission to eliminate the causes and conditions of poverty in Southwestern Wisconsin. We provide services in a 5-county region of southwestern Wisconsin, in the critical areas of housing, energy, food, early childhood and adult education, health (behavioral, physical, mental) services and transportation. In addition to providing direct services to residents of our communities, we serve as a primary convener of community stakeholders in an effort to maximize positive impact in our rural counties.

Our board, comprised of business, government and low-income representatives, provides strategic guidance to our planning and operations. We strive to ENGAGE the poor in crafting solutions, MOBILIZE public and private resources in service planning and delivery, ADVOCATE for meaningful programs to address the issues associated with poverty, and SERVE families and individuals through effective and impactful anti-poverty programs. Our dedicated employees carry out our mission with the help of hundreds of volunteers, partner agencies and compassionate donors.

Each year, our programs help approximately 11,000 low-income individuals, which equates to nearly 5,000 families. Our volunteers contribute more than 100,000 hours annually.

For more than 50 years of carrying out our anti-poverty mission, we have used an approach that relies on productive and supportive community-led activities. From food pantries and thrift stores, to Head Start to elderly programs, from stable weatherized housing to behavioral health services, we rely on a variety of coalitions, teams and partnerships to achieve quality outcomes with those we serve. We have a steadfast focus on the causes and impacts of poverty and strive to create pathways out. Our context is broad and non-linear, involving real-life issues such as food insecurity, stable affordable housing, individual and family well-being, child and adult education, competitive work skills, income and savings, and support networks at the community level.

#### **4. PROJECT OVERVIEW**

SWCAP is currently operating under a Strategic Plan that was developed for the period of 2014-2017. We have made modest updates and changes to our Strategic Plan in the ensuing period, but have not undertaken a full-blown strategic planning process since that time. SWCAP has experienced considerable growth over the past decade and has entered into new areas of service provision. In addition, we have recently created and filled a new, executive-level Deputy Director at the agency. Given these changes and the importance of strategic planning, SWCAP's management staff and board members have determined that SWCAP needs to engage in a new planning process to set strategic direction for the agency and establish priorities to guide operational planning and decision making, going forward.

We are seeking a skilled consultant to guide and facilitate our strategic planning process which will occur during the six month period of July 1, 2020 through January 31, 2021.

#### **5. ACCOMODATING COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS**

SWCAP recognizes that the distancing requirements and other unusual circumstances related to the COVID-19 virus outbreak has a high potential to impact the logistics of how we approach Strategic Planning. Proposals must specifically include options for conducting the various strategic planning activities within an environment that requires social distancing on the part of the consultant, strategic planning participants and stakeholders, and key SWCAP planning staff.

#### **6. INCORPORATING COVID-19 REALITIES**

SWCAP recognizes that the impacts of COVID-19 are particularly detrimental to those who live in poverty situations. Proposals should identify how strategic planning activities will include a focus on SWCAP's role in addressing new or changed socio-economic community needs that exist or emerge due to COVID-19, including in the areas of community and economic development.

#### **7. SCOPE OF SERVICES**

To ensure that SWCAP meets its goal of producing a concise and useful strategic plan by January 31, 2021, we seek a consultant to guide and facilitate SWCAP's strategic planning through three phases:

##### **Phase 1 – Pre-planning**

Phase 1 requires the consultant to research and gather information in preparation for the strategic planning session. Items to be considered:

- Conduct a key stakeholder analysis (staff, board members, grantee-partners, institutional and individual donors, service customers, peer organizations, etc.) and identify their needs (operational vs.

informational). In some cases, this may be accomplished through use of SWCAP's Community Needs Assessment, completed in September, 2019 and housed online at <http://swcap.org/pdf/2019-Community-Needs-Assessment.pdf>

- Assist in the evaluation of opportunities and concerns through review of SWCAP's history, interviews with current managers and staff, and review of secondary resources and analyses to frame the issues and operating environment.
- Plan how to engage stakeholders appropriately so that they can participate meaningfully in the various planning phases. Facilitate the involvement and contributions of key stakeholders throughout the process.
- Develop methods and tools to gather data from key stakeholders to meet key information needs. Analyze and share findings to inform strategic choices.
- Conduct meetings with staff and key stakeholders in order to effectively launch the planning process. Help stakeholders to effectively identify and prioritize issues, review findings, analyze data, make strategic choices, and review draft documents for purposes of feedback and refinement.
- Initiate (and maintain throughout all phases) complete documentation of the entire strategic planning process, including key discussions and decisions at each stage, for development of strategy documents and communication.

## **Phase 2 – Strategic Plan Document Creation**

During Phase 2, the consultant will help SWCAP identify strategic goals and create an actionable strategic plan. The plan will consist of an executive summary and a comprehensive plan that identifies:

- Mission and Vision
- Goals (SMART - specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-limited)
- Objectives
- Tactics, including responsible parties & roles
- Outcomes & Measurables

The consultant will coordinate the writing and editing of drafts and the final strategic plan document, including a separate, summary document for external dissemination.

The consultant will ensure the final product aligns with strategic planning guidance found within the CSBG Reauthorization Act of 1998, CSBG Organizational Standards, and ROMA (Results Oriented Management and Accountability) framework.

The consultant will ensure the plan allows for logical integration of budgeting and work plans.

## **Phase 3 – Implementation & Follow-up**

This phase requires the consultant to help SWCAP best manage the implementation and evaluation process after plan delivery.

- Assist SWCAP in the creation of effective methods and tools for monitoring, reviewing and adjusting the strategic plan as needed, including timeline and best practices for data collection and dissemination for evaluating successful achievement of outcomes & measurables.
- Assist SWCAP in establishing a long-term plan for ongoing update and review of the strategic plan.

## 8. AFFORDABILITY AND SWCAP INVOLVEMENT

SWCAP is a nonprofit agency and is interested performing as much of the planning, documenting and “leg-work” associated with strategic planning as is feasible. While we are not experts in strategic planning, we are quite familiar with the process and have highly capable and professional staff in our employ. Wherever possible, we request that the consultant identify actions and/or work items that can be assigned to a SWCAP staffperson in order to help SWCAP save money on this process. For example, a consultant may be better suited to formulating a plan and related documents for stakeholder telephone interviews, but may identify the actual interview as a work item that could easily be performed by a SWCAP staff person, using tools crafted by the consultant. As shown on page 5, under “Criteria for Selection”, affordability is an important factor in our selection criteria.

## 9. OWNERSHIP AND CONFIDENTIALITY

All intellectual property will become the property of SWCAP. All data remains the sole property of the SWCAP. The consultant shall agree to keep information related to this process in strict confidence, including, but not limited to, the terms of the contract and any confidential business information or proprietary information that has been gathered on this project.

## 10. PROPOSAL FORMAT

Please include the following information in your proposal:

- Your approach to strategic planning
- A summary of your strategic planning experience
- List nonprofit entities, particularly Community Action Agency/Programs, for which you have conducted strategic planning
- Three client references
- Sample project timeline with major tasks and milestones, including identification of options where SWCAP may choose to perform a work item or task, directly
- Detailed project budget
  - Proposer should itemize costs to the degree possible, to allow SWCAP the option of choosing work items or tasks that can be performed by SWCAP in order to reduce consultant costs.
- Sample project plan
- Identification of those on your team who will be involved with the project which should include their role and experience

The proposal must also include the following specific information:

**General information-** The proposal should provide the name of the consultant, title, address, phone number, email address, and website, if one exists. The name and email address for any team members assisting in the project should also be included.

**Consultant Qualifications & Roles-** The proposal must describe the consultant’s qualifications such as work activities, expertise, knowledge, and experience, including examples of similar related nonprofit work.

**Work Plan-** The proposal should include a detailed description of the activities to be conducted by the consultant to complete the work.

- Specific activities to be conducted at each stage
- Sample timeline for the activity at each stage
- List of milestones & deliverables tied to the activities
- Proposed payment schedule tied to project milestones & deliverables

**References-** Information regarding each reference should include the individual’s name, address, phone number and email address.

**Previous Work Product-** The proposal should include at least 1 sample of a previously completed strategic plan. Portions may be redacted to protect private information as needed.

## **11.PROCESS FOR PROPOSAL SUBMISSION AND EVALUATION**

**A. Closing Submission Date:** Proposals are due by 5:00pm on June 5, 2020

**B. Inquiries:** Should be directed to Kathy Wellington at [k.wellington@swcap.org](mailto:k.wellington@swcap.org)  
All inquiries and responses will be posted online at [www.swcap.org/StratPlanRFP.html](http://www.swcap.org/StratPlanRFP.html)

**C. Conditions of Proposal:** All costs incurred in the preparation of a response to this RFP are the responsibility of the bidder and will not be reimbursed by SWCAP.

### **D. Submission Instructions**

Proposals should be submitted in PDF format via email to [k.wellington@swcap.org](mailto:k.wellington@swcap.org) before the closing submission date.

Late or incomplete submissions will not be accepted. It is the responsibility of the bidder to ensure that the response is received by SWCAP by the closing date and time. A response may be judged and excluded from further consideration if it is not received by the deadline or does not follow the format outlined above.

### **E. Right to Reject**

SWCAP has the right to reject any and all responses received in response to this RFP.

### **F. Confidentiality**

If the bidder deems any material submitted to be proprietary or confidential, the bidder must indicate this in the relevant sections of the response.

### **G. Notification of Selection and Timeline**

It is expected that a bidder will be selected within 2 to 3 weeks of the closing submission date, although this timeline is subject to change. SWCAP reserves the right to cancel this RFP at any time.

RFP Released: May 15, 2020

Proposals Due: June 5, 2020, 5:00 pm

Selections Made (estimated): June 12, 2020

Project Begins (estimated): July 1, 2020

### **H. Criteria for Selection**

SWCAP will select the proposal based upon which one it feels will deliver the highest quality deliverable at the best value. Proposals will be initially reviewed by SWCAP’s Planning and Review Committee.

Recommendation will be made by the committee to SWCAP’s executive board for final approval. Proposers

should be sure to read and understand **item 8. AFFORDABILITY AND SWCAP INVOLVEMENT, on page 4** prior to developing the proposal.

Proposals will be reviewed and evaluated on the following criteria:

1. Qualifications (20%)
2. Proposal/Work Plan (45%)
3. Affordability and SWCAP Involvement (35%)

Pricing will be a significant consideration but not the only criteria in evaluating the proposal. The proposal will be awarded to the qualified bidder whose proposal is most advantageous to SWCAP with price and other factors considered.

**I. Conflict of Interest**

The bidder must disclose any possible conflicts of interest that may result from the award of this contract or services provided under this contract. Except as otherwise disclosed in the proposal, the bidder affirms that to the best of their knowledge there is no actual or potential conflict between the bidder, a bidder's team member working on the project or its family's business or financial interests and the services provided under this contract. In the event there is a change in either interest or the services provided under the contract, the bidder will inform SWCAP regarding the possible conflicts of interest, which may arise as a result of such change and agrees that all conflicts shall be resolved to SWCAP's satisfaction or the bidder may be disqualified from consideration of this RFP.