

Request for Proposals
Development of an Economic Development Strategic Plan
for Rutherford County

Rutherford County is seeking proposals from qualified firms with extensive experience in developing economic development strategic plans.

All submittals shall be addressed as specified below, and received no later than the submittal due date, at which time all submittals will be opened and read aloud as a matter of public record. The front of the envelope shall be marked "Request for Proposals – Development of an Economic Development Strategic Plan for Rutherford County." All submittals received after the closing date and time will be returned unopened. Rutherford County reserves the right to reject any and all submittals.

Submittal Due Date: November 27, 2012

Submittals shall be delivered to:

Rutherford County Economic Development
Attn: Matt Blackwell
142 E. Main Street, Suite 100
Forest City, NC 28043

The RFP documents will be made available on November 5, 2012. This RFP will be posted on Rutherford County's website at www.rutherfordcountync.gov.

Any questions concerning the RFP shall be directed by email to:

Mr. Matt Blackwell
Director - Rutherford County Economic Development
142 E. Main Street, Suite 100
Forest City, NC 28043
Phone: 828-248-1716
Email: matt.blackwell@rutherfordcountync.gov

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1. Introduction

Rutherford County is located in the foothills of North Carolina half way between Atlanta, GA and Washington, DC. Rutherford County's population was estimated at 67,810 in the 2010 Census. More than 50 percent of the U.S. population is within 600 miles of Rutherford County and nearly 60 percent of the country's manufacturing base is less than a two-day drive. One of Rutherford County's major attractions is its sense of small town community. Yet, some of the most dynamic business centers in the Southeast, such as Charlotte and Greenville-Spartanburg, are close by.

Rutherford County's workforce is estimated at 27,694. Most of the residents work in the county while 13,838 workers (US Census Bureau) commute out of the county and/or state to work.

Rutherford County is a member of AdvantageWest.

Given recent economic challenges, Rutherford County recognizes the need to improve its economic base by existing industry expansions, recruitment of new industries, and the creation of job centers within the county to reduce the out-migration of its citizens. The county has acquired and/or optioned property for industrial development while also identifying other prospective locations for future development.

Rutherford County needs a strategy for addressing the economic development needs of the entire county to assure continued and enhanced economic health, tax base expansion, quality job creation, and support for county services. The economic challenges and opportunities facing the county and region necessitate the need to develop a strategy to ensure the prosperity of Rutherford County and its residents.

Rutherford County needs a strategy that will include the following components:

- a. County Economic Snapshot
- b. County Asset Map (strengths and challenges of the county's available product)
- c. Target Market Identification and Recommendation
- d. Product Improvement Recommendations
- e. Implementation Recommendations (includes organizational structure, timing and metrics)
- f. Existing Industry (must remain competitive and expand)

2. Scope of Work

2.1 County Economic Snapshot

During this phase the consultant will study the current economic trends in Rutherford County to determine the current state of the economy, as well as any strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to the county's economy.

2.2 County Asset Map

The consultant will study the county's current industrial product and identify strengths and challenges of the related available sites and buildings. The county will provide information on available sites and buildings it has in its database and will also arrange meetings with local industrial park and building owners/developers, if required.

The deliverable will be a map or matrix of the county's current economic development product and the strengths and weaknesses of the product.

2.3 Target Market Identification and Recommendations

The consultant will identify industry targets for the county's economic development efforts. Five target industries should be identified with assets that make the industry cluster a target for Rutherford County. The consultant should also review the existing target industries and provide recommendations on how to improve the efforts in recruitment those industries or why they should no longer be a target market. The consultant should also provide information on the targets identified and recommendations on how to market to the target industries.

2.4 Product Improvement Recommendations

The consultant will provide recommendations on how the county can improve its economic development product. This will include recommendations on how to improve existing industrial parks and improvements to planned parks. The consultant will also review existing marketing materials and provide recommendations on improvement and future investment.

2.5 Implementation Recommendations

The consultant will produce a report outlining their recommendations as well as an implementation strategy. The implementation strategy should include recommended funding models, organization models, and measureable metrics for goals that have been set.

2.6 Existing Industry

Consultant will produce a report outlining their recommendations, as it relates to the needs of existing industry, and what they required of the county and its allies to remain competitive and expand.

3. Proposal Requirements

The consultant interested in responding to this RFP must provide the information on the firm's qualifications and experience, qualifications of the project team, project manager's experience, previous similar projects, and references to services. Submittals that do not respond completely to all requirements specified herein may be considered non-responsive and eliminated from the process.

3.1 Letters of Interest and Executive Summary

Attach a letter of interest that explains your firm's interest in working on this project. Include an "Executive Summary" which explains your firm's qualifications and experience as they pertain to the Scope of Work/Deliverables described herein. Also include the names and titles of the persons who will be authorized to make representations for the firm.

3.2 Fees for Services

Provide a fee "not-to-exceed" for services described herein and a copy of the firm's current billing rate schedule.

3.3 Project Budget

The work will be performed on a fixed, not-to-exceed basis for a defined number of consultant site visits. Details of the deliverables, project timetable and specific payment schedules will be determined during final contract negotiations and will be based upon the consultant proposal, the completion of identified tasks, including staff review and consultant review.

3.4 References

Provide the name, address, telephone, and email address for three (3) references that would be capable of explaining and confirming your firm's capacity to successfully complete the scope of work outlined herein. References should be from the last five years.

4. Submission Information

4.1 Number of Copies and Proposal Delivery Information

One signed original (bound) and two (2) copies (unbound) of the proposal shall be delivered on or by 4:00 pm EST on Tuesday, November 27, 2012 to:

Physical Address: Rutherford County Economic Development
142 E. Main Street, Suite 100
Forest City, NC 28043

All submittals shall be address as specified above. The front of the envelope shall be marked "Request for Proposals – Development of an Economic Development Strategic Plan for Rutherford County." All submittals received after the closing date and time will be returned unopened.

4.2 Question and Answer Period

All questions regarding this RFP must be submitted by email, and directed to the Director of Economic Development, no later than 4:00 pm on November 20, 2012. Questions must be submitted via email to matt.blackwell@rutherfordcountync.gov.

5. RFP Estimated Timetable

RFP Release	November 5, 2012
Proposals Due	November 27, 2012
Review/Selection	December 19, 2012
Project Start	January 2, 2013
Project Completion	February 27, 2013
Final Report	March 13, 2013