

Redevelopment Authority of Allegheny County



REQUEST FOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROVIDER

Allegheny Together Program

Submission of Proposals

Redevelopment Authority of Allegheny County (RAAC) has invited qualified consultants to present professional credentials and submit proposals for the Allegheny Together program. This invitation will be advertised in the local newspapers on November 10, 2006.

This Request for Qualifications (RFQ) contains the most definitive statement of the program's purpose, scope of work and conditions that RAAC is able to provide. It includes all the information necessary for consultants to submit a proposal. While RAAC prefers a proposal patterned after the scope of work presented in this RFQ, consultants may rethink this approach and suggest alternative methodology or refinements that would improve prospects for accomplishing the objectives.

Consultants may collaborate with other consulting firms to perform portions of the scope of work provided that the role and expertise of such firms are fully defined in the proposal, and responsibility for their performance is assured by the lead consultant.

All submitting consulting firms are required to submit an original and two copies of their proposal(s) to:

Redevelopment Authority of Allegheny County
Attn: Lance Chimka
425 Sixth Avenue, Suite 800
Pittsburgh, PA 15219

These submissions must be received no later than 4:00 P.M. on December 15, 2006.

Proposal Costs

The cost of work elements of the plan must be presented in a format which identifies labor by type, rate and personnel. Additional expenditures such as publication, travel and other costs must also be documented. If more than one consulting firm is to participate in the project, this information must be furnished for each. All participating consulting firms are encouraged to engage MWDBE. The costs should be listed in sufficient detail to permit analysis of the proposed budget. A cost breakdown will be considered in evaluating consultant proposals because it provides insight as to the relative importance and, therefore, emphasis to be placed on various phases of the program. The submitting consulting firm must agree to enter into “a lump sum not to exceed” contract. RFQs consider cost but do not guarantee the contract to the lowest bidder.

Contracts for Study

The selected consultant shall enter into a contract for services with the Redevelopment Authority of Allegheny County according to prevailing contract requirements and conditions. The contract will contain contractor provisions required by the federal government. The selected consultant will be required to comply with all contractor provisions.

The contract will be based on a negotiable price.

Background

RAAC currently administers an active commercial revitalization and business development program to its 130 municipalities. There are over 40 traditional business districts located within those 130 municipalities. Historically, RAAC’s involvement in the traditional business districts has originated from the districts’ neighborhood leaders. Through the CDBG program RAAC has funded at least 49 of these districts in locally organized projects. RAAC’s involvement with these districts and the neighborhoods that surround them, has historically ended after the completion of the projects.

RAAC has acknowledged the fact that we need to create a sustainable system of revitalization and economic activity in our older business districts and surrounding communities. The County of Allegheny’s top officials have endorsed the well-known Brookings Institute’s report where it states that: “the state’s economic development needs to be tuned to the specific needs of older neighborhoods and commercial districts. The Main Street Program and the Elm Street Program are laudable examples of initiatives aimed at injecting needed resources into fading communities.” In this context, RAAC, with the support of the county’s top officials, seeks to develop and implement a comprehensive Main Street Program to aid its older neighborhoods in sustainable commercial revitalization and development.

The Allegheny Together Program is modeled after the Main Street Program and serves to prepare communities for eventual Main Street designation. It is a three-tiered approach that classifies communities based on size and level of organization.

- **Main Streets (Tier 1)** – A traditional DCED Main Street program based on the National Trust for Historic Preservation model.
- **ALL Together (Tier 2)** – A county-led economic revitalization program that utilizes many of Main Streets core principles; however, rather than having a dedicated manager in each community, a team of outsourced technical assistance providers will be contracted to provide targeted assistance.
- **Allegheny Preps (Tier 3)** – Strategic assistance to communities who do not qualify for Main Street or ALL Together designation; however, still need some commercial revitalization/economic development assistance.

Please see attachment for additional information regarding Allegheny Together program guidelines. Refer to the National Trust for Historic Preservation’s Main Street website www.mainstreet.org for further information.

1. ROLE OF THE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROVIDER

The Redevelopment Authority of Allegheny County will require an extensive range of basic services, related to the Allegheny Together project. It is anticipated that the technical assistance services required for the completion of the entire project will include, but are not necessarily limited to, the following;

1. Conduct workshops for representatives from each of the participating communities to educate participants in the Main Street Approach and downtown revitalization concepts;
2. Assist each of the participating downtown organizations develop action plans to achieve their goals;
3. Develop and implement communication, recognition, and program evaluation systems for downtown organizations;
4. Create practical “Main Street Approach” programs for Design, Promotion, and Business Development initiatives.

2. INFORMATION TO INCLUDE IN RFQ RESPONSE

A. Description of the Consulting firm (one page) and all subcontracted entities

1. Name, address and telephone number of consulting firm
2. Number and location of offices
3. Executive Director and/or Chief Operating Officer and email address
4. Person to contact regarding this submission (phone and email)
5. Number of employees
 - a) Professional staff
 - b) Administrative staff
 - c) Total staff

6. Year established
7. Type of Organization (corporation, partnership, P.C., etc.)

- B. Legal actions, if any, currently pending against the consulting firm
- C. List three development projects located in central business districts completed by your organization in the past five years. Please use the following format to identify these projects:
 1. Name and location of project
 2. Geographic area/ size of project
 3. Cost of the project
 4. Date started and completed
 5. Name, address and telephone number of the client/owner if different than your consulting firm
- D. Three project related references from clients/partners involved in similar projects
- E. Provide resumes or briefly describe the experience and roles of your team:
 1. Executive Director and/or Chief Operating Officer
 2. Key staff
 3. Sub-consultant or joint venture partner staff (if applicable)
 4. Minority/women/disadvantaged business owner participants
- F. Proposal for the Allegheny Together Program should include, but not be limited to:
 1. Narrative description
 2. Estimated project budget (including labor by hour, rate, personnel, and task)
 3. Community participation plan
 4. M/W/DBE participation plan

3. SCHEDULE FOR RESPONDING TO THIS SOLICITATION

Release of the Allegheny Together Program RFQ – November 1, 2006

Qualification packages due – December 15, 2006

Interviews/ Presentations - *January 8 – 12, 2007

Selection of Firm(s) - *January 19, 2007

* Dates Subject to Change

4. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROVIDER SELECTION CRITERIA

Technical Assistance Provider qualifications will be evaluated on the basis of the criteria below:

- Proposal and interviews
- Review of projects completed by the organization
- Performance on comparable projects
- Capacity to meet time and budget requirements
- Experience in assisting Main Street and Elm Street Programs
- Knowledge of local or regional conditions
- Experience with business development initiatives and financial planning
- Ability to assess and design infrastructure and streetscapes
- Recent and current project workload
- Knowledge neighborhood-specific tax credits, grants, and loans
- Demonstrated capacity for community education
- Ability to assist in community planning
- Knowledge of historical preservation as well as façade restoration
- Experience in marketing, planning and promotion

RAAC shall be the sole judge as to which Statement of Qualifications best meets the selection criteria most responsive to their respective objectives. RAAC reserves, at its sole discretion, the right to reject any or all submissions received, to waive any submission requirements contained within this RFQ, or to waive any irregularities in any submitted proposal.

5. RAAC CONTACT INFORMATION

The Redevelopment Authority of Allegheny County, a Pennsylvania redevelopment authority empowered by the Urban Redevelopment Law, is administered by the Allegheny County Department of Economic Development. The Department contacts are:

Bob Hurley, Deputy Director of Development & Business Development	(412) 350-1020
Darnell Moses, Authorities Division	(412) 350-1067
Lance Chimka, Project Manager	(412) 350-1018
Jessica Mooney, Project Assistant	(412) 350-5594

To submit RFQ or for further information please contact:

Redevelopment Authority of Allegheny County
Attn: Lance Chimka
425 Sixth Avenue, Suite 800
Pittsburgh, PA 15219
(412) 350-4318

The County of Allegheny does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, disability, or sexual orientation. Furthermore, minority, women, and disadvantaged business owners are encouraged to pursue business opportunities with the County. For information on the M/W/DBE Program, M/W/DBE Certification, and How to Obtain Business within Allegheny County, contact the Allegheny County Department of Minority, Women and Disadvantaged Business Enterprise at (412) 350-4309 and on the County of Allegheny web site at: <http://www.county.allegheny.pa.us/mwdbe/>



ALLEGHENY COUNTY
Economic Development

Coordinating Success

Program Description

I. Introduction

Allegheny County has a renewed approach to assisting our traditional central business districts with a comprehensive and strategic initiative called Allegheny Together (ALL Together). The principle objective of this program is to attract and retain new businesses to our county's traditional "Main Street" communities through community organizing, strategic technical assistance, and focused commercial revitalization projects. The establishment of this program will empower selected communities and prepare our traditional central business districts to apply for DCED Main Street designation.

II. Source of funds

Allegheny Together is funded through a variety of sources, both private and public. Funds will be administered by the Redevelopment Authority of Allegheny County (RAAC).

III. Community Eligibility

District Composition/Building Use

More than 60 percent of buildings in the ALL Together district must be zoned as commercial or mixed-use buildings, and

District Sponsorship

1. Any municipality may sponsor only one district for Allegheny Together during an application cycle.
2. Existing nonprofit organizations applying to the ALL Together program must have IRS 501(c)(3) status as a charitable corporation and show documentation (including financial statements) that it has been in existence for a minimum of two years.
3. Only one application per municipality will be accepted for consideration. If multiple organizations in the same community are interested, those organizations should collaborate to submit a single application. If, unexpectedly, more than one application is received from a single community, those applications will be returned to the applicants with recommendations for resubmission.

District geography guidelines

Any traditional business district within Allegheny County is eligible to apply for ALL Together designation. When selecting district boundaries, the applicants should take the following into consideration:

- Walkable;
- Pedestrian-friendly/pedestrian-scale;

- Mixed-use buildings, even if not currently occupied with a range of uses;
- Concentrated commercial-type buildings, with a majority of the buildings contiguous and forming a common “street wall”;
- A predominance/concentration of retail/commercial uses on ground floors (vs. institutional, industrial, or residential uses);
- Few “set back” buildings;
- Few “front-loaded” parking lots

IV. Proposed Timeline

In a typical cycle, the application and selection process fills approximately six months prior to the initiation of district ALL Together programs. Thus, when this program is adopted, the timeline, counting back from the start of district programs is as follows:

- Six months prior: Allegheny County staff conducts at least three Application Workshops. Application Workshops will be held on a variety of days (including at least one weekend session) and times (including at least one evening) and they will be held at a variety of locations throughout the county. ***Applications will only be distributed at the Application Workshops***, which will be conducted by RAAC. If a community is interested in applying, it must have representatives present at one application workshop so applicants will have a minimum level of information. This will also help to give the communities equal opportunity to ask questions and to ensure that they get similar, consistent information. The additional benefit of this application and information distribution process is that it is more efficient for Allegheny Together staff, rather than having to explain the application process to each community individually.
- Five months prior: Applicants submit a non-binding letter of intent to apply. (This will help staff plan the selection process accordingly)
- Three months prior: Applications submitted to the Allegheny Together office
- Two months prior: Applicants must be available for interviews, via phone or in person, by members of the review panel.
- One month prior: Review Panel presents recommendations regarding district selection to the Allegheny Together Board for approval and adoption of the appropriate number of districts into the Allegheny Together program.
- County Chief Executive announces the newly designated Allegheny Together communities.

Program Resources and Services

Training

From the basics of the Main Street Approach to advanced development topics, Allegheny Together will provide regular training opportunities to certified communities to keep them up-to-date on the latest in central business district development.

Trainings will include:

- Quarterly training with local and state experts on critical topics to further develop and refine the skills of Allegheny Together boards and volunteers.
- On-site training by Allegheny Together technical assistance providers on relevant topics.
- Comprehensive training and orientation workshops for new volunteers.

On-Site Technical Assistance

On-site assistance tailored to communities will be provided to help launch revitalization efforts as well as to help highly-organized communities tackle more complicated issues.

On-Site Technical Assistance will include:

- Diagnostic visits to communities to critically assess the needs and issues facing the downtown district.
- Resource Team visits to newly designated communities to help local programs develop effective strategies to begin revitalization.
- On-site visits from specialists to offer intensive assistance on a particular aspect of revitalization. This service is periodically provided to programs as they mature.
- Year-end assessments to help both new and mature programs assess progress and address specific issues.

Community Support

In addition to technical support, Allegheny Together will offer local programs unlimited phone consultations, an Allegheny Together e-letter, access to local, state, and national resources, scholarships to relevant conferences. Promotional support is provided through press coverage, and an annual Allegheny Together Awards ceremony celebrating accomplishments throughout the county.

Design

Enhancing the unique visual quality of downtown by addressing all design elements to create an appealing environment.

First impressions count. Creative merchandising displays and renovated facades, appropriate landscaping and public improvements are all part of downtown's long-lasting visual appeal and a well functioning physical environment.

Design Services include:

Planning:

- Community-input "Charette" Planning Assistance
- Vehicular and Pedestrian Traffic Design
- Streetscape Planning and Design

- Downtown Design Guidelines
- Façade Improvement Program

Building Design:

- Façade Improvement Design
- Floor Plan Design
- Parking Design
- Signage and Logo Design
- Landscape Design
- Merchandising and Window Display
- Interior Design

Historic Preservation:

- Technical Assistance for Building Preservation
- Preservation Zoning Ordinance Development
- Preservation/Conservation Design Guidelines
- Historic Building Survey Planning
- Historic District Development

Group Orientation and Training:

- Merchant Design Training Workshops
- Physical Improvement Committee Orientation Workshop
- Committee Work Plan Development

Promotion

Creating and marketing a positive image based on the unique attributes of the downtown district. After decades of neglect, visitors and investors may perceive downtown as dead with no chance of recovery. Using a comprehensive promotions calendar with special events, retail promotions and on-going public relations, downtown can reverse old perceptions.

Promotional Services include:

- Image Development
- Tourism Development
- Organizing a Special Event
- Advertising
- Media Marketing and relationships

Economic Restructuring

Strengthening downtown's existing economic assets and fulfilling its broadest market potential.

The retail environment has changed profoundly. With a thorough understanding of today's market, downtown can develop strategies to enhance the competitiveness of existing merchants, recruit new businesses, create new anchors and convert unused space into new uses.

Economic Restructuring Services include:

- Introduction to Economic Restructuring

- Economic Restructuring Committee Training
- Market Analysis
- Business Mix and Cluster Analysis
- Business Retention
- Business Recruitment
- Strengthening Business Skills
- Introduction to Real Estate
- Real Estate Project Review
- Maximizing Upper Floors
- Setting Up and Incubator

Organization

Establishing consensus and cooperation by building effective partnerships among all downtown stakeholders. The downtown constituency is unique. An on-going management and advocacy organization dedicated to downtown fosters revitalization progress and sustainability.

Organizational Services include:

- Introduction to Organization
- Board Training
- New Program Start Up
- Volunteer Development
- Fund Raising
- Building Effective Partnerships
- Goals Setting Session
- Work Plan Development
- Strategic Planning
- Board Retreat
- Program Evaluation
- Conflict Resolution
- Grant Writing