Request for Qualifications (RFQ)

For Management of Special Projects under the American Rescue Plan Act.

# Announcement

The Western Connecticut Council of Governments (“WestCOG”) has initiated a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) process to identify a qualified consultant (person or firm) to assist the region’s members with matters related to the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding.

# Purpose

The purpose of this RFQ is to provide a shared resource that enables municipalities in the region to develop, fund, and implement projects under ARPA that:

* Meet federal requirements,
* Respond to local and/or regional needs,
* Provide a maximum return on investment,
* In an efficient and locally supported process.

# Scope of Work

Expected functions are listed below. Omission of specific functions does not exclude them from the scope of work if the tasks are similar, related, or a logical assignment to the engagement.

* Coordination with COG Executive Committee and Director, Chief Elected Officials (Mayors and First Selectmen), municipal government finance officers, municipal department directors, and other senior and technical staff to provide a variety of assistance on matters related to administration of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) of 2021.
* Management of regional ARPA group comprising interested CEOs, finance officials, and other relevant local officials, for the purposes of education, peer exchange, and, as desired, coordinated interlocal/regional project development and delivery.
* Collection of and response to questions on ARPA and Treasury regulations and guidelines, including eligible use of funds, project development and financial process, and reporting. Elevation of concerns to responsible federal parties for action.
* Assistance in the development of projects that are federally eligible, logistically feasible, are locally supported, respond to local/regional priorities, and provide significant benefits.
* Coordination in the creation and review of project scopes of work and budgets, including interlocal or regional facilitation as needed/desired for projects and programs that involve two or more member municipalities.
* Provision of information to facilitate local approvals of ARPA fund use.
* Communication with elected officials, the community, and other stakeholders. Development of data, narrative, graphics, visualizations, and other content for use in communications, project proposals, presentations, public outreach materials, website, and other applications.
* Oversight of use of funds and periodic reporting to the U.S. Department of Treasury and compliance with federal law and related accounting and reporting requirements.
* Similar or related work as required, directed, or as situation dictates.

# Expertise Sought

To satisfy the scope of work, it is expected that experience including the following will be needed:

* Local, regional, or state level or state government
* Federal grants management, including eligibility determinations, oversight, and reporting
* Project lifecycle from concept to completion, including the coordination of local approvals, including the identification of priorities and project development and delivery
* Economic development, environmental science, and public policy
* Federal and state law, regulations, and guidance as relates to public investments in infrastructure, telecommunications, and other relevant areas
* State and local government in Connecticut, including structure, operations, relationships, and needs/priorities

It is expected that the scope of work will require skills and abilities including the following:

* Project and financial management.
* Manage multiple assignments, meet deadlines, and prioritize.
* Provide a high level of service and responsiveness to regional and local partners.
* Recognize regional and local priorities and work to advance projects toward completion effectively and efficiently.
* Understand and accommodate regional and local political environment and sensitivities.
* Maintain productive and congenial working relationships with regional and local officials, department staff, and members of the public.
* Prepare reports, formulate recommendations, and make presentations.
* Ability to plan, organize, and analyze problems, with accuracy and attention to detail.
* Analytical, organizational, interpersonal/collaborative communication, resourcefulness, professionalism, discretion; computer skills including effective use of word processing, spreadsheet, project management, presentation, email, and internet browser software.

# About WestCOG

Founded in 2014, the Western Connecticut Council of Governments is one of nine regional Councils of Governments (COGs) established pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes §4-124i et seq. WestCOG serves the Western Connecticut Planning Region, the second most populous and fastest growing region in Connecticut, with an estimated population of 610,000. With its location connecting New England to New York, Western Connecticut is an economically dynamic region, with strong cultural, educational, and natural amenities.

WestCOG is governed by a board of the Chief Elected Officials (Mayors and First Selectmen) of its members, who include three principal cities (Stamford, Norwalk, and Danbury) and 15 surrounding towns (Bridgewater, Brookfield, Danbury, Darien, Greenwich, New Canaan, New Fairfield, New Milford, Newtown, Redding, Ridgefield, Sherman, Weston, Westport, and Wilton). WestCOG’s board, which meets monthly, generally operates by consensus, and is characterized by a high degree of human capital, professionalism, and mutual respect.

WestCOG provide a regional framework for coordination/cooperation among local governments and between the latter and state and federal agencies. More information on WestCOG is available at <http://westcog.org>.

# American Rescue Plan Act funds and WestCOG

ARPA infuses local governments with substantial new revenues via several channels: directly to municipalities that qualify as “entitlement” communities under the Community Development Block Grant program, indirectly as a state pass-through to non-entitlement communities, and, in areas without county government, as a state pass-through of county allocations proportionally to all communities within a county. In Western Connecticut, these allocations sum as follows.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Direct funding (Entitlement units) | Indirect funding (Non-entitlement units) | County allocation | Total |
| $80.7 million | $24.6m | $118.1 million | $223.4 million |

Because county government do not exist in Connecticut, and county equivalence for the COGs will not go into effect until 2023, the region’s county allocation under ARPA is passed through to the region’s municipalities on a per-capita basis.

# Application process

## Format

Each application should include the following components:

1. Cover letter with a signature of a person having legal authority to contract.
2. Resume or work history. Examples of similar work conducted by proposer in the past, with information on project outcomes and client references. Name, title, employer, relationship to the project, telephone number, and e-mail address should be given for each reference. Successful proposers should have demonstrated expertise in relevant areas.
3. If applicable:
   1. Identification of key personnel assigned to the project, with the percentage of time assigned to the project.
   2. Corporate background. Include the history, location(s), length of time in existence, and structure of the firm; documentation of relevant insurance coverage; and demonstration of the capacity of the firm to carry out the project.
4. Compensation requirements. The project may be funded through an administrative charge to ARPA funds, billed to participating municipalities on a fee-for-service basis; however, WestCOG may consider other models.

Material submitted in response to this RFQ and received by WestCOG may be subject to the provisions of the Connecticut Freedom of Information law (CGS §1-200 et seq.)

## How to apply

Proposals are due by the end of the application period, July 30, 2020 at 11:59 PM ET. Submissions should be directed to: Mr. Francis R. Pickering, Executive Director at [westcog@outlook.com](mailto:westcog@outlook.com).

Recipients may enable delivery and read receipts in their e-mail client. No other confirmation will be given.

## Review and contracting

WestCOG will evaluate proposals after receipt. WestCOG may invite additional information from selected proposers, including but not necessarily limited to, work samples or a personal interview.

Should WestCOG proceed with a proposal, negotiations will begin with the respective proposer. Should WestCOG and the selected proposer be unable to come to an agreement, WestCOG may terminate those negotiations and revisit other proposal submitted.

It is expected that proposers will be notified of decisions on their submission by September 2021. WestCOG may award the project in part or in full to one or more proposers or cancel or reissue this RFQ. Any award will not be final until a contract has been negotiated and executed.

# Communications

## Location of posting

This RFQ may be found online at [https://westcog.org/about/RFQs-grant-opportunities/](https://westcog.org/about/rfps-grant-opportunities/) until September 30, 2021. It is the responsibility of interested parties to retrieve and store a copy of the RFQ beyond this date.

## Inquiries

Proposers may submit questions on this RFQ by July 18, 2021 at 11:59 PM ET. Questions should be directed to Mr. Francis R. Pickering, Executive Director at [westcog@outlook.com](mailto:westcog@outlook.com). Answers will be posted online where WestCOG posted this RFQ on a rolling basis.

No questions will be accepted by other forms of communication.

Information about WestCOG can be found at <http://westcog.org>.

## Addenda and supplements

Should WestCOG amend or adjust this RFQ, such changes will be posted online where WestCOG posted this RFQ. It is the responsibility of proposers to check for changes to the RFQ.

# Conditions

## Legal requirements

Contracts awarded as a result of this RFQ are subject to all applicable federal and state laws, including those concerning civil rights, nondiscrimination, and equal opportunity. Any responses to this RFQ, as well as any work resulting from it, are subject to freedom of information.

## Insurance requirements

The following insurance coverages and limits must be maintained, at a minimum, with a certificate of insurance naming the Western Connecticut Council of Governments as additional insured on the policy during the project period.

* Commercial general liability: $1,000,000
* Automobile liability: $1,000,000
* Professional liability: $1,000,000
* Excess/umbrella liability (with all liability coverages and underliers): $5,000,000
* Workers’ compensation: Statutory
* Employers’ liability (as applicable): $1,000,000

## Consortia, joint ventures, and teams

Proposals from consortia, joint ventures, and teams (“groups”) will not be accepted.

## Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE)

DBE firms are encouraged to respond to this RFQ.

If a DBE firm is proposed, the proposal must clearly identify the DBE firm, the role the DBE will play in the project, and the tasks assigned to the DBE. Proof of Connecticut DBE certification must be submitted with the proposal. Responses that fail to give proof of DBE certification and description of project involvement will not be identified as including DBE participation.

## Nonreimbursement of proposal costs

Costs associated with responses to this RFQ, including proposal development and participation in a selection process, are the sole responsibility of the respondent. WestCOG will not reimburse such costs.

## Conflicts of interest

All relationships that may pose a conflict of interest, and actions that shall be taken to avoid or mitigate these conflicts, shall be disclosed as part of the response to this RFQ.