

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

“Venture Hub” Business Plan

Released: March 11, 2019

Purpose

The purpose of this Request For Proposals (“RFP”) is to solicit sealed proposals to establish a contract through competitive negotiation with a qualified source or sources to provide professional services as described herein for a business plan to build out the GO Virginia Region 9 entrepreneurial ecosystem through the implementation of a “Venture Hub”. “Venture Hub” is a working title for the project.

“Venture Hub” is a community initiative intended to generate sustained economic growth by supporting high-potential, innovation-driven business ventures. The “Venture Hub” includes establishing a physical space or connected spaces with programming and resources for entrepreneurs.

The business plan will be a guiding document that will establish “Venture Hub” as:

1. A **gateway** to help connect people with existing entrepreneurship resources and encourage the creation of resources as the need arises.
2. An **accelerator** for high-growth, traded sector startups to include programming such as entrepreneurs-in-residence, mentoring, networking, venture accelerator, startup incubator, speaker series, etc.
3. A **narrative** that promotes Central Virginia as a center for entrepreneurship.

Proposal Inquiries/Point of Contact

All inquiries concerning this RFP should be submitted by email citing the RFP title of “Venture Hub Business Plan” to Shannon Holland, GO Virginia Director – Region 9, Central Virginia Partnership for Economic Development at sholland@centralvirginia.org.

Potential Offerors must limit all contact, whether verbal or written, pertaining to this RFP, to the designated point of contact for the duration of the RFP process. Failure to do so may jeopardize further consideration of an Offeror’s proposal.

Written questions and responses will be provided to all known potential Offerors.

Glossary of Terms

The following terms and definitions apply to this RFP and any resulting contract:

- **Contractor** – The term “Contractor” refers to the person/firm awarded a contract to provide the services required in this solicitation.
- **Offeror** – The term “Offeror” refers to a person/firm who makes an offer by submitting a proposal in response to this solicitation.

Deadline

Written proposals must be submitted no later than 1:00 PM (EST), April 1, 2019, by e-mail to Shannon Holland, GO Virginia Director, Region 9 at the Central Virginia Partnership for Economic Development at sholland@centralvirginia.org .

Proposals

Proposals must contain:

- A description of the approach and methodologies to be used.
- The total cost as well as the cost breakdown of each study component. (See Requirements Section).
- Confirmation of key dates and project timeline.
- The name of the project lead and members of the team along with their resume(s) and respective experience in developing similar entrepreneurship ecosystem business plans.
- Demonstration of qualifications to successfully complete this project
- Please describe any additional value-added services that your team might offer as part of this process.

Background

GO Virginia is a statewide economic development initiative to grow higher paying jobs and diversify regional economies through incentivized collaboration between higher education, business and local governments. There are nine GO Virginia regions in the Commonwealth of Virginia and each has developed a regional Growth & Opportunity Plan. (www.GOVirginia.org)

This RFP is being issued by the GO Virginia Region 9 Council. The Region 9 Council footprint includes eleven localities including the City of Charlottesville and the Counties of Albemarle, Culpeper, Fauquier, Fluvanna, Greene, Louisa, Madison, Nelson, Orange, and Rappahannock. The Council, led by business leaders and including leaders from all sectors, provides grant funding to projects that advance the regional growth plan objectives where higher education, business and local government collaborate. (www.GOVirginia9.org)

During the past two years several assessments have been published to guide regional and statewide entrepreneurial ecosystem development, including (download at www.GOVirginia9.org):

- [GO VA Region 9 Economic Growth and Diversification Plan](#), Camoin Associates, August 2017
- [Assessment of Virginia's Research Assets: Strategic Directions to Advance Innovation-Led Growth and High Quality Job Creation across the Commonwealth](#), TEconomy Partners, LLC, January 2018
- [Regional Entrepreneurial Assessment TEconomy Partners, Region 9, LLC, December 2018](#)

Specific relevant recommendations from these reports are:

- Provide a “front door” for entrepreneurs to receive coordinated services among service providers
- Support advancement of integrated accelerators-incubators-coworking entrepreneurial hubs across the region
- Develop narrative / vision for entrepreneurship and innovation
- Develop stronger ideation programming and opportunities

The “Venture Hub” Business Plan will guide stakeholders and the GO Virginia Region 9 Council in building a foundation for a robust entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Requirements

The “Venture Hub” Business Plan should be developed based on the following requirements for the plan of work:

Review

- Conduct a summary review of existing documents, plans, and strategies in Region 9, referenced in the Background section above.
- Conduct a review of 8-10 comparable entrepreneurship ecosystem sites. These examples should approximate the size and scope of the Central Virginia entrepreneurial environment with a special emphasis on university-community partnerships.

Engage

- Obtain stakeholder input through two in-person meetings. The first will occur as a project kick-off meeting and the second will occur mid-way through the data collection phase during the interim check point. The stakeholder list will be provided by Shannon Holland.

Recommend

Model

- Summarize 8-10 examples of best practices for similar initiatives where university/economic development, local government, state programs, and community organizations collaborate and their role in each. Include lessons learned from each initiative and relevant application to the “Venture Hub” geographic area. Each summary should be no more than two pages.
- Recommend 2-3 viable business models that will lead to the implementation and sustainable funding for “Venture Hub”. Business models will address key areas such as a 5 year financial model, governance model, site considerations, operational costs, staffing requirements, and suggested programming elements, etc. For each element within the model, the recommendation should include a prioritized timeline in which proposed activities should occur.

Programming

- Develop a plan for programming that addresses gaps in the current entrepreneurship/innovation ecosystem. The plan should include high impact programming such as entrepreneurs-in-residence, networking initiatives and speaker series, etc. The plan should also include associated costs, timelines and projected resource needs.

Metrics

- Identify short and long term metrics for measuring successful entrepreneurship outcomes for the region.

Timeframe and Proposed Key Dates

RFP issued by GO Virginia Region 9 Council	March 11, 2019
Proposals due to Shannon Holland via email	April 1, 2019 by 1:00 PM (EST)
Shortlist interviews, if necessary	April 15-18, 2019
Contract negotiation, as necessary, and contract award	On or before April 23, 2019
Stakeholder engagement visits	April – June, 2019
Interim report due – anticipated findings, best practices and recommendations summary	June 2019
First draft due	July 2019
Second draft due for final feedback	August 15, 2019
In-person presentation of final business plan	September or October 2019, as deemed by the GO Virginia Region 9 Council

Reporting Procedures

The Contractor shall identify a single point of contact to manage communications during the contract period. For the purposes of this contract, Shannon Holland, GO Virginia Director, Region 9, at the Central Virginia Partnership for Economic Development, sholland@centralvirginia.org, will serve as the Region 9 Council point of contact.

At a minimum, the Contractor is expected to provide bi-weekly status reports to Shannon Holland, the Region 9 Council point of contact.

Deliverables

The Contractor must complete assignments and provide deliverables within the required timeline and approved cost including:

1. 30 bound copies of the final “Venture Hub” Business Plan
2. 2 in-person briefings/meetings with “Venture Hub” stakeholders after plan approval. The first meeting will include a project kick off and stakeholder interviews. The second meeting will include additional stakeholder interviews and a project briefing that includes a preview of the interim report.
3. 1 final in-person presentation of the “Venture Hub” Business Plan to Region 9 Council/stakeholders.

Evaluation Criteria

Proposals shall be evaluated using the attached Evaluations Criteria.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Submitted proposals shall be evaluated by the GO Virginia Region 9 Council (Council) review team using the following criteria that shall also apply to, and be used to evaluate, the applicant’s subcontractors (if applicable):

Criteria	Point Value
Qualifications and experience of applicant in developing similar entrepreneurship ecosystem business plans	40
Qualification and experience of personnel to be assigned to the project	30
Approach and methodologies to be used	20
Other value-added services they can provide	5
Confirms or addresses appropriately the key dates and project timeline	3
Total cost shows breakdown of each study component (Review, Engage, Recommend)	2
TOTAL	100
BONUS	Point Value
Small Business, Women or Minority Owned Business Participation	2

The Council shall engage in individual discussions with qualified Offerors deemed fully qualified, responsible and suitable on the basis of initial responses and with emphasis on professional competence, to provide the required services. Repetitive informal interviews shall be permissible and non-binding cost estimates may be discussed. The Offerors shall be encouraged to elaborate on their qualifications and performance data or staff expertise pertinent to the proposed project, as well as alternative concepts.

The Council shall select in the order of preference two or more Offerors whose professional qualifications and proposed services are deemed most meritorious; negotiations shall then be conducted, beginning with the Offeror ranked first. If a contract satisfactory and advantageous to the Council can be negotiated at a price considered fair and reasonable, the award shall be made to that Offeror. Otherwise, negotiations with the Offeror ranked first shall be formally terminated and negotiations conducted with the Offeror ranked second, and so on until such a contract can be negotiated at a fair and reasonable price. Should the Partnership determine in writing and in its sole discretion that only one Offeror is fully qualified or that one Offeror is clearly more highly qualified and suitable than the others under consideration, a contract may be negotiated and awarded to that Offeror.

General Terms and Conditions

CONTRACTUAL CLAIMS: The procedure for filing contractual claims is set forth in Section 2.2-4363 of the *Code of Virginia*.

APPLICABLE LAWS AND COURTS: This solicitation and any resulting contract shall be governed in all respects by the laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia and any litigation with respect thereto shall be brought in the Circuit Court for the County of Albemarle, Virginia. The Contractor shall comply with all applicable federal, state and local laws, rules, and regulations.

ANTI-DISCRIMINATION: By submitting their proposal, Offerors certify to the Commonwealth that they will conform to the provisions of the Federal Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, as well as the Virginia Fair Employment Contracting Act of 1975, as amended, where applicable, the Virginians With Disabilities Act, the Americans With Disabilities Act, and Section 2.2-4311 of the *Virginia Public Procurement Act (VPPA)*. If the award is made to a faith-based organization, the organization shall not discriminate against any recipient of goods, services, or disbursements made pursuant to the contract on the basis of the recipient's religion, religious belief, refusal to participate in a religious practice, or on the basis of race, age, color, gender or national origin and shall be subject to the same rules as other organizations that contract with public bodies to account for the use of the funds provided; however, if the faith-based organization segregates public funds into separate accounts, only the accounts and programs funded with public funds shall be subject to audit by the public body. (*Code of Virginia*, Section 2.2-4343.1E).

In every contract over \$10,000 the provisions below apply:

During the performance of this contract, the Contractor agrees as follows:

The Contractor will not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, religion, color, sex, national origin, age, disability, or any other basis prohibited by state law relating to discrimination in employment, except where there is a bona fide occupational qualification reasonably necessary to the normal operation of the Contractor. The Contractor agrees to post in conspicuous places, available to employees and applicants for employment, notices setting forth the provisions of this nondiscrimination clause.

The Contractor, in all solicitations or advertisements for employees placed by or on behalf of the contractor, will state that such Contractor is an equal opportunity employer. Notices, advertisements and solicitations placed in accordance with federal law, rule or regulation shall be deemed sufficient for the purpose of meeting these requirements.

The Contractor will include the provisions of the above in every subcontract or purchase order over \$10,000, so that the provisions will be binding upon each subcontractor or vendor.

ETHICS IN PUBLIC CONTRACTING: By submitting their proposals, Offerors certify that their proposals are made without collusion or fraud and that they have not offered or received any kickbacks or inducements from any other Offeror, supplier, manufacturer or subcontractor in connection with their proposal, and that they have not conferred on any public employee having

official responsibility for this procurement transaction any payment, loan, subscription, advance, deposit of money, services or anything of more than nominal value, present or promised, unless consideration of substantially equal or greater value was exchanged.

IMMIGRATION REFORM AND CONTROL ACT OF 1986: By entering into a written contract, the Contractor certifies that the Contractor does not, and shall not, during the performance of the contract for services in the Commonwealth, knowingly employ an unauthorized alien as defined in the federal Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986.

DEBARMENT STATUS: By submitting their proposal, Offerors certify that they are not currently debarred by the Commonwealth of Virginia from submitting proposals on contracts for the type of services covered by this solicitation, nor are they an agent of any person or entity that is currently so debarred.

ANTITRUST: By entering into a contract, the Contractor conveys, sells, assigns, and transfers to the Commonwealth of Virginia all rights, title and interest in and to all causes of action it may now have or hereafter acquire under the antitrust laws of the United States and the Commonwealth of Virginia, relating to the particular services purchased or acquired by the Regional Council under said contract.

PAYMENT:

Contractor will be expected to invoice for the project upon its successful completion and understands payment will be made when reimbursement is provided by the Department of Housing & Community Development (typically 30 days after invoice receipt).

Invoices for services and accepted deliverables shall be submitted by the Contractor directly to the payment address shown on the contract. All invoices shall show the contract number, Social Security number (for individual contractors) or the federal employer identification number (for proprietorships, partnerships, and corporations).

All services provided under this contract that are to be paid for with public funds shall be billed by the contractor at the contract price, regardless of which public agency is being billed.

The following shall be deemed to be the date of payment: the date of postmark in all cases where payment is made by mail; the date of submission where payment is made electronically; or the date of offset when offset proceedings have been instituted as authorized under the Virginia Debt Collection Act.

Unreasonable Charges. Under certain emergency procurements and for most time and material purchases, final job costs cannot be accurately determined at the time orders are placed. In such cases, Contractors are on notice that final payment in full is contingent on a determination of reasonableness with respect to all invoiced charges. Charges which appear to be unreasonable will be researched and challenged, and that portion of the invoice held in abeyance until a settlement can be reached. Upon determining that invoiced charges are not reasonable, the Regional Council shall promptly notify the Contractor, in writing, as to those charges which it considers unreasonable and the basis for the determination. A Contractor may not institute legal action unless a settlement cannot be reached within thirty (30) days of notification.

CHANGES TO THE CONTRACT: Changes can be made to the contract in any of the following ways:

The parties may agree in writing to modify the scope of the contract. An increase or decrease in the price of the contract resulting from such modification shall be agreed to by the parties as a part of their written agreement to modify the scope of the contract.

The Regional Council may order changes within the general scope of the contract at any time by written notice to the contractor. Changes within the scope of the contract include, but are not limited to, items such as services to be performed, the method of packing or shipment, and the place of delivery. The Contractor shall comply with the notice upon receipt. The Contractor shall be compensated for any additional costs incurred as the result of such order and shall give the Regional Council a credit for any savings. Said compensation shall be determined by one of the following methods:

By mutual agreement between the parties in writing; or

By agreeing upon a unit price or using a unit price set forth in the contract, if the work to be done can be expressed in units, and the Contractor accounts for the number of units of work performed, subject to the Regional Council's right to audit the Contractor's records and/or to determine the correct number of units independently; or

By ordering the Contractor to proceed with the work and keep a record of all costs incurred and savings realized. A markup for overhead and profit may be allowed if provided by the contract. The same markup shall be used for determining a decrease in price as the result of savings realized. The Contractor shall present the Regional Council with all vouchers and records of expenses incurred and savings realized. The Regional Council shall have the right to audit the records of the Contractor as it deems necessary to determine costs or savings. Any claim for an adjustment in price under this provision must be asserted by written notice within thirty (30) days from the date of receipt of the written order from the Regional Council. If the parties fail to agree on an amount of adjustment, the question of an increase or decrease in the contract price or time for performance shall be resolved in accordance with the procedures for resolving disputes provided by the Disputes Clause of this contract or, if there is none, in accordance with the disputes provided 2.2-4363 of the Code of Virginia. Neither the existence of a claim nor a dispute resolution process, litigation or any other provision of this contract shall excuse the contractor from promptly complying with the changes ordered by the Regional Council or with the performance of the contract generally.

DEFAULT: In case of failure to deliver services in accordance with the contract terms and conditions, the Regional Council, after due oral or written notice, may procure them from other sources and hold the Contractor responsible for any resulting additional purchase and administrative costs. This remedy shall be in addition to any other remedies which the Regional Council may have.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF AWARD: Upon the award or the announcement of the decision to award a contract as a result of this solicitation, the Regional Council will publicly post such notice for a minimum of 10 days.

DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE: During the performance of this contract, the Contractor agrees to

(i) provide a drug-free workplace for the Contractor's employees; (ii) post in conspicuous places, available to employees and applicants for employment, a statement notifying employees that the unlawful manufacture, sale, distribution, dispensation, possession, or use of a controlled substance or marijuana is prohibited in the Contractor's workplace and specifying the actions that will be taken against employees for violations of such prohibition; (iii) state in all solicitations or advertisements for employees placed by or on behalf of the contractor that the Contractor maintains a drug-free workplace; and (iv) include the provisions of the foregoing clauses in every subcontract or purchase order of over \$10,000, so that the provisions will be binding upon each subcontractor or vendor.

For the purposes of this section, "drug-free workplace" means a site for the performance of work done in connection with a specific contract awarded to a Contractor, the employees of whom are prohibited from engaging in the unlawful manufacture, sale, distribution, dispensation, possession or use of any controlled substance or marijuana during the performance of the contract.

AUTHORIZATION TO CONDUCT BUSINESS IN THE COMMONWEALTH: A Contractor organized as a stock or nonstock corporation, limited liability company, business trust, or limited partnership or registered as a registered limited liability partnership shall be authorized to transact business in the Commonwealth as a domestic or foreign business entity if so required by Title 13.1 or Title 50 of the Code of Virginia or as otherwise required by law. Any business entity described above that enters into a contract with the Regional Council pursuant to the Virginia Public Procurement Act shall not allow its existence to lapse or its certificate of authority or registration to transact business in the Commonwealth, if so required under Title 13.1 or Title 50, to be revoked or cancelled at any time during the term of the contract. The Regional Council may void any contract with a business entity if the business entity fails to remain in compliance with the provisions of this section.

SPECIAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS

AUDIT: The contractor shall retain all books, records, and other documents relative to this contract for five (5) years after final payment, or until audited by the Commonwealth of Virginia, whichever is sooner. The Regional Council, its authorized agents, and/or state auditors shall have full access to and the right to examine any of said materials during said period.

CANCELLATION OF CONTRACT: The Regional Council reserves the right to cancel and terminate any resulting contract, in part or in whole, without penalty, upon 30 days written notice to the contractor. In the event the initial contract period is for more than 12 months, the resulting contract may be terminated by either party, without penalty, after the initial 12 months of the contract period upon 60 days written notice to the other party. Any contract cancellation notice shall not relieve the contractor of the obligation to deliver and/or perform on all outstanding orders issued prior to the effective date of cancellation.

CONFIDENTIALITY OF INFORMATION: Contractor agrees to observe complete confidentiality with respect to all aspects of any confidential information, proprietary data and/or trade secrets and any parts thereof, whether such material is the Regional Council's or other manufacturer, vendor or distributor to which contractor or contractor's personnel may gain access while engaged by the Regional Council. Revealing, copying or using in any manner

whatsoever any such contents which have not been authorized by the Regional Council is strictly prohibited. The restrictions herein shall survive the termination of this agreement for any reason and shall continue in force and effect and shall be binding upon the contractor, its agents, employees, successors, assigns, subcontractors or any party claiming an interest in this agreement on behalf of or under the rights of the contractor following any termination.

Contractor shall advise all Contractors' agents, employees, successors, assigns, or subcontractors that are engaged by the Regional Council of the restrictions, present and continuing, set forth herein. Contractor must receive written permission from Regional Council to advertise the work being done for the Council. Contractor shall defend and incur all costs, if any, for actions which arise as a result of non-compliance by Contractor, its agents, employees, successors, assigns, or subcontractors regarding the restrictions herein.

INDEPENDENT CONTRACTOR: The Contractor shall be considered an independent contractor and neither the Contractor, nor personnel employed by the contractor, are in any sense to be considered employees or agents of the Regional Council, or of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

OWNERSHIP OF MATERIAL: All materials generated under this contract shall be considered work made for hire. The Regional Council shall have all rights, title and interest in or to all products, work plans, project reports, designs, programs, databases and documentation developed or generated under this contract including without limitation unlimited rights to use, duplicate, modify or disclose any part thereof, in any manner and for any purpose and the right to permit or prohibit any other person including the contractor from doing so. To the extent the Contractor may be deemed at any time to have any of the foregoing rights the Contractor agrees to assign and does hereby assign such rights to the Regional Council.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST: The Regional Council reserves the right to determine if a conflict of interest exists between the Contractor or their affiliates and the work of the Regional Council. The Contractor shall continue to disclose during the term of the contract to the Regional Council any situations in which potential conflict of interest could arise, present the facts of the situation and offer an opinion as to whether the situation involves a conflict. The Contractor shall agree to accept the decision of the Regional Council as to whether or not a conflict exists.