

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
Seeking Consultant to Support Development of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan for
Mid-Columbia Economic Development District

Mid-Columbia Economic Development District (MCEDD) is seeking a consultant to assist the organization in developing a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Plan that would assess internal and external improvements for MCEDD's work in the region. A contract will be contingent upon MCEDD receiving grant funding for the project.

Background

MCEDD was established in 1969 by Klickitat, Skamania, Hood River, Wasco, and Sherman Counties to benefit from better access to economic development loans and grants, pooled technical assistance, marketing, and administrative resources, and a regional approach to economic development efforts. Over the years MCEDD's membership has grown to include counties, cities, ports and chambers of commerce within the five-county region. It is governed by a 21-member Board representing its members and the key economic interests in the region. MCEDD promotes the creation of family-wage jobs, the diversification of the economic base, and the growth, development and retention of business and industry. More information may be found at: <http://www.mcedd.org>.

MCEDD's staff of 27 serves its five counties with business assistance, technical assistance, regional coordination services, as well as operation of The Link Public Transit in Wasco County. Since June 2020, staff has met monthly to discuss DEI topics and explore how MCEDD does its work internally and externally with a DEI lens. The MCEDD Board adopted a DEI statement in March 2022 that can be seen at <https://www.mcedd.org/about-mid-columbia-economic-development-district/policies/>.

A consultant would help expand and formalize DEI activities to date. The outcome would be a plan identifying goals for both MCEDD's internal organizational practices and regional work to support equitable outcomes for businesses and residents in the region.

Suggested Scope of Work

The consultant would perform the following functions:

1. Task Force:
 - A. Developing a DEI Task Force under suggested criteria by the consultant.
 - B. On-boarding Task Force members.
 - C. Facilitating monthly (or as needed) meetings of the task force.

2. DEI Plan:

MCEDD desires a living DEI Plan that provides action steps to create a more welcoming and inclusive work environment and region. For external work, the DEI Plan may suggest tasks where MCEDD is a convener or partner but not in control. MCEDD will provide an initial demographic profile of the region. Possible consultant tasks include:

 - A. Assess demographic profile of MCEDD staff and boards/ committees.
 - B. Assess demographic profile of clients engaged with different activities of MCEDD.
 - C. Inventory events, programs, communications, and actions MCEDD is already taking to further DEI efforts.
 - D. Assess internal practices and recommend improvements for greater inclusivity.
 - E. Review transportation partnerships, programs, and Title VI documents for ways to expand DEI efforts.

- F. Brainstorm ideas of new external programs and activities with MCEDD staff and the task force.
- G. Identify steps for MCEDD to build trust with historically marginalized groups.
- H. Establish a framework for ongoing conversations regarding DEI efforts.
- I. Seek additional community input via social media, websites, and directly from various organizations.
- J. Prioritize action steps with the task force.
- K. Work with MCEDD staff to develop implementation steps.
- L. Develop draft DEI Strategic Plan for review by MCEDD staff and task force.
- M. Present DEI Strategic Plan to MCEDD Board for adoption.

Project Management and Review

The project will be managed by MCEDD's Executive Director and a Board representative. Work will be done in coordination with MCEDD staff to provide consultation and support for this plan. Formal review of all projects and tasks will be done on a frequency agreed upon at the time of assignment.

Anticipated Timeline

This work is contingent upon MCEDD receiving grant funding for the project. It is anticipated that the work will take place over six months starting in late Summer 2022.

Requirements

Must have past experience in DEI plan development, preferably with experience supporting governmental organizations in this work.

To Respond

If you are interested, please submit the following:

1. A proposal describing your qualifications and approach to this project;
2. Proposed total cost, with hourly rates and any other costs noted;
3. Names, phone numbers and contacts for three references;
4. Location of principal place of work; and
5. Any other information you consider to be of value in evaluating your qualifications.

Proposals should be emailed no later than July 11, 2022 by 5:00 p.m. to Jessica Metta, MCEDD Executive Director, at jessica@mcedd.org. For any questions, contact Jessica Metta at 541-296-2266 x1001 or jessica@mcedd.org.