



CITY OF EAST PROVIDENCE
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
SMALL BUSINESS INCUBATOR FEASIBILITY STUDY
RFP EP23/24-03
BID OPENING WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 20, 2023

I. INTRODUCTION

The City of East Providence is seeking a qualified consultant (or consultant team) to conduct a feasibility study on the conversion of a former municipal elementary school building into a small business incubator.

II. BACKGROUND

The City of East Providence is seeking to develop a feasibility study on the conversion of the former Oldham Elementary School building into a multiuse small business, blue economy, and arts incubator that will be centered on the creation of jobs through business startups and providing a network and important business resources that will ensure a greater level of long-term success for these small businesses. The study will examine the overall feasibility of the incubator model and, based on the results of the feasibility analysis, will develop a plan of action that will lead to the development of a facility that supports the business needs identified within the feasibility analysis. The initial position of the City, based on independent research conducted to date, identifies the need for specialized food production needs that are not currently being captured by the existing food incubation spaces in the state, including baking, gluten-free designated production spaces, and food packaging spaces, an arts –based business incubation space, and blue economy industries (renewable energy, aquaculture, seabed extractive activities and marine biotechnology and bioprospecting.) The feasibility study will also determine if and how these proposed industries can/will support each other and via proximity, cross-pollinate these separate parts and create a greater whole.

The feasibility study will also develop a set of priorities that will lead to the re-use and conversion of a former elementary school into a small business incubator facility promoting and encouraging the establishment of small business start-ups with an emphasis on supporting the most disadvantaged citizens in our community. In addition, it is anticipated that the incubator will develop a cooperative partnership with groups like the East Bay community Action Program (EBCAP) and the East Providence Area Chamber of Commerce, and look for ways these agencies can contribute to the long-term success of these entrepreneurs.

III. FUNDING

Funding for this project is provided by a \$200,000 grant from the US Economic Development Administration (EDA) and City of East Providence matching funds. Consulting fees may not exceed \$273,800 for all aspects of the project including reimbursable items.

IV. SCOPE OF SERVICES

The scope of services associated with this project will be as follows:

1. Feasibility and Marketing Analysis

The selected consultant will develop a feasibility and marketing analysis that analyzes the regional market demand for specialized food services that further build upon and enhance the existing food production ecosystem in Rhode Island, arts-based business incubation and blue economy industries in East Providence and the surrounding region. These industries have been identified as growing areas in the regional economy. The feasibility analysis will include identifying resources that could support the necessary steps to successfully establish the determination of need for the incubator concept in the City. The analysis will also require an analysis and determination that the incubator will not unduly compete with other business incubators operating within the region but instead fill the voids that existing within the Rhode Island food production ecosystem and work with the existing food production spaces collaboratively and that the intended emphasis for job creation is focused on emerging niche industries (i.e. baking, gluten-free production, food services manufacturing, arts-based business incubation, and blue economy industries). The completed analysis will assess key issues including raising sufficient capital to design and build the incubator, the recruitment of incubator support services that would

support entrepreneurs establishing themselves within their chosen sector and determining the viability of other potential services that would support new business startups.

The analysis will also include the following:

- a. Market Research on potential users of an incubator including an analysis of existing small businesses willing to pay for services and/or space, organizations that could serve as potential anchor tenants of the incubator, and other organizations that might benefit or utilize the incubator in the provision of support services to the incubator businesses.
- b. Information gathering regarding the resources required (e.g. ... space, financing, services, and more) for an incubator to be successful in this market, what needs are present in the market the incubator could resolve, and opportunities that an incubator presents.
- c. Information gathering on the potential competitors in the area and how the City's incubator could be developed in a manner that would mitigate the competition, determine the needed differentiators, and/or develop a niche that other competitors are not providing.

2. Startup and Development Costs

The selected consultant will provide a detailed Startup and Development Cost Analysis for constructing and establishing a business incubator that is reflective of the outcomes and recommendations established under the Feasibility and Marketing Analysis portion of the analysis.

V. WORK PRODUCTS

1. Feasibility and marketing analysis
2. Startup and development costs analysis

VI. TIMETABLE FOR COMPLETION

A timetable shall be included for each of the above-referenced items in the scope of work and submission of work products. Per EDA grant, all work must be completed within 2 years of the official EDA grant award date.

VII. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

A. Insurance

The Consultant shall hold comprehensive general liability and property damage coverage of at least \$1,000,000 for itself and any of its employees. Proof of such insurance shall be provided by the consultant prior to entering a contract with the City. See Standard Instructions to Bidders (attachment) for more information on insurance requirements.

B. Proposals

Qualification proposals must be submitted in a sealed envelope clearly marked “Small Business Incubator Feasibility Study” – RFQ#EP23/24-03 and addressed to East Providence City Hall, Controllers Office, Room 103, Attn: Jessica Lamprey, Procurement Specialist, 145 Taunton Ave., East Providence, RI 02914, no later than 11:00am on _____.

Please submit three (3) hard copies, along with an electronic version saved as a PDF on one (1) USB drive, in one (1) sealed envelope.

VIII. RFQ SCHEDULE

RFQ Issued: Monday, December 4, 2023

Last Day for Questions: Thursday, December 14, 2023

Proposals Due: Wednesday, December 20, 2023

Interviews: To Be Determined

Award: To Be Determined

IX. GENERAL CONDITIONS

1. The City reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, to waive any informality, and to select and negotiate management services in the best interest of the City.
2. The Consultant will abide by all Federal, State and City regulations in the performance of the scope of work specified in this Request for Proposal.

3. The City reserves the right to accept all or part of any proposal, and to negotiate a contract for services and cost with the selected Firm.
4. The Consultant shall provide all necessary personnel, materials, equipment and facilities to perform and complete all work under this proposal.
5. The City intends to make a decision on a contract for the requested services within thirty (30) days of the bid deadline. The Consultant shall be prepared to begin work immediately upon the execution of a contract with the City.

X. CITY CONTACTS

Any questions regarding this RFQ should be directed to Jessica Lamprey, Procurement Specialist at jlamprey@eastprovidenceri.gov and to Keith Brynes, Director of Planning at kbrynes@eastprovidenceri.gov no later than Thursday, December 14, 2023 AT 4:00PM.

Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer

Jessica Lamprey, Procurement Specialist

jlamprey@eastprovidenceri.gov