



TOWN OF ARLINGTON

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING and
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

TOWN HALL, 730 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE
ARLINGTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02476
TELEPHONE 781-316-3090

Request for Quotes

Arlington COVID-19 Business Resiliency Program Technical Assistance

I. Key Information for Respondents

Overview and Background

The Town of Arlington (Town) Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD) is requesting quotes from providers to assist small business owners in Arlington with the goal of helping businesses sustain themselves throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and recovery. In March 2020, Congress passed the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act). The CARES Act provided additional federal funds to support low- to moderate-income residents impacted by the coronavirus pandemic. As part of the Act, Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) entitlement communities, including Arlington, were awarded two additional allocations of funding, CDBG-CV and CDBG-CV3 in March and September, respectively.

Utilizing the first tranche of funding (CDBG-CV), the Town developed the Arlington Small Business COVID-19 Relief Program for microenterprises, or small businesses of five or fewer employees including the owner whose household earns a low- to moderate-income. This program was very successful, and the Town awarded \$10,000 working capital grants to 25 eligible businesses.

Building upon this successful initial program, the Town determined that support to the small business community needed to be expanded to support larger small businesses (twenty or fewer employees). Extended shut-downs have hurt small, independent business owners, and continued public health requirements have challenged Arlington's business community to serve their clientele. Meetings with the Arlington CDBG Subcommittee, the Arlington Select Board, and the Arlington Economic Development Recovery Task Force identified the need to support small business resiliency through technical assistance. As such, with the second tranche of funding (CDBG-CV3) awarded to the Town, the Arlington COVID-19 Business Resiliency Program was developed and funded with \$200,000 of CDBG-CV3 funds. The Arlington COVID-19 Business Resiliency Program is a dual track program: working capital grants funded with \$180,000 and technical assistance support funded with \$20,000. Eligible businesses may be awarded a working capital grant, technical assistance, or both.

This document is provided for the convenience of prospective consultants to assist with the application process.

Purpose

The purpose of the Request for Quotes (RFQ) for Technical Assistance is to assist small businesses in Arlington with enhancing their accounting and bookkeeping practices, their capacity for e-commerce, live commerce, social media marketing, or to otherwise help them create an online presence. DPCD seeks a consultant or multiple consultants (up to 3 consultants) to provide the technical assistance support while we manage the working capital grants.

High-quality, experienced business consultants are sought to assist established small business owners in stabilizing and growing their business. Assistance and training should include, but is not limited to: accounting and bookkeeping, e-commerce, live commerce, marketing, and search engine optimization (SEO). The technical assistance offered should be a mix of one-one-one sessions and group workshops.

Schedule

Responses to this RFQ are due Friday, January 15, 2020 at 4 PM. The Town will review responses, conduct interviews as necessary, award a contract, and the Arlington COVID-19 Business Resiliency Program will launch in February 2021. The following are key dates:

Date	Action Item
December 15, 2020	RFQ released and posted on Town’s website
January 7, 2021 by 12 PM	Any clarifying RFQ questions due via email
January 11, 2021	Responses to questions posted on Town’s website
January 15, 2021 by 12 PM	RFQ submissions due
Week of January 18, 2021	Interviews and evaluations
Week of January 25, 2021	Notifications to vendors

Questions on the RFQ should be submitted to Erin Zwirko, Assistant Director, Planning and Community Development at ezwirko@town.arlington.ma.us.

II. Respondent Qualifications

At a minimum, the Respondent must meet the following requirements:

1. The firm/team must have previous experience in similar programs providing technical assistance to small businesses on a variety of topics.
2. Successful completion of a minimum of three (3) such projects within the last two (2) years is required, and completion of ten (10) overall is desired.
3. The principal and project manager to be assigned to this project must be available for meetings with the Town or Arlington businesses on weekdays or week nights, as may be required.

The Non-Price Response should also include responses to the following:

1. Specifically address in the narrative what experience you have in providing customized, comprehensive needs assessments and technical assistance directly to businesses based on individual strengths, weaknesses and opportunities to stabilize or grow the business. What were the specific outcomes of this assistance? Please be specific, provide dates and list most recent experience first. Please provide specific outcomes and impact of the work completed.
2. What experience do you have in providing technical assistance to small businesses in low- to moderate-income areas or neighborhood commercial districts? Please be specific, provide dates and list most recent experience first. Please provide specific outcomes and impact of the work completed.
3. What experience have you had in providing technical assistance to immigrant entrepreneurs? Please be specific, provide dates and list most recent experience first. Please provide specific outcomes and impact of the work completed.
4. Resumes for each instructor.
5. Three (3) references for similar programs.
6. Core Services Summary Sheet (attached to this packet).
7. Price Summary Sheet (attached to this packet).

III. Comparative Evaluation Criteria

The Town will award the contract to the Respondent offering the most advantageous response to this RFQ, taking into consideration all evaluation criteria. The selection process will include an evaluation procedure based on the criteria identified below completed by a Review Committee including the DPCD Director, Assistant Director, CDBG Administrator, and Economic Development Coordinator. Finalists may be required to appear for a virtual interview.

The following are the Non-Price criteria used in evaluating responses to this RFQ. For each evaluation criterion, the Awarding Authority shall assign a rating as Highly Advantageous (HA), Advantageous (A), Not Advantageous (NA), or Unacceptable (U) to each proposal. The Review Committee shall then assign a composite rating for each proposal.

Review Criteria

The Review Committee shall evaluate, in deciding which proposal to select, the Applicant's overall experience in providing customized, comprehensive needs assessment and technical assistance directly to individual businesses in order to stabilize, strengthen and grow the businesses assisted. The evaluation will be based on the number and type or stage of businesses served and the results of the assistance provided.

- A. Professional experience in providing customized, comprehensive needs assessment, and technical assistance directly to businesses based on strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities to stabilize or grow the business.
 1. Number of Businesses Assisted:
 - The Review Committee shall find it "Highly Advantageous" if the Applicant has provided similar services to five (5) or more businesses in the past two years.
 - The Review Committee shall find it "Advantageous" if the Applicant has provided similar services to three (3) to four (4) businesses in the past two years.
 - The Review Committee shall find it "Not Advantageous" if the Applicant has provided similar services to fewer than three (3) businesses in the past two years.
 - The Review Committee shall find it "Unacceptable" if the Applicant has no experience in providing similar services to businesses in the past two years.
 2. Type of Businesses Assisted:
 - The Review Committee shall find it "Highly Advantageous" if the Applicant has provided similar services to four (4) or more business types or stages in the past two years.
 - The Review Committee shall find it "Advantageous" if the Applicant has provided similar services to three (3) business types or stages in the past two years.
 - The Review Committee shall find it "Not Advantageous" if the Applicant has provided similar services to two (2) business types or stages in the past two years.
 - The Review Committee shall find it "Unacceptable" if the Applicant has provided similar services to only one (1) business type or stage in the past two years.
 3. Results of the Business Assistance Provided
 - The Review Committee shall find it "Highly Advantageous" if the Applicant can demonstrate that the assistance provided within the last two years has significantly improved the stability and growth of the business (revenue, employment).
 - The Review Committee shall find it "Advantageous" if the Applicant can demonstrate that the assistance provided within the last two years has improved the stability and growth of the business (revenue, employment).

- The Review Committee shall find it “Not Advantageous” if the Applicant cannot demonstrate that the assistance provided within the last two years has improved the stability and growth of the business (revenue, employment).
 - The Review Committee shall find it “Unacceptable” if the Applicant cannot demonstrate that the assistance provided within the last two years has impacted the stability and growth of the business (revenue, employment).
- B. This program is designed to provide technical assistance to small businesses in Arlington. In deciding which proposal to select, the Review Committee shall evaluate the Applicant's overall experience in providing technical assistance to small businesses, particularly those in low- to moderate-income areas or neighborhood commercial districts.
- The Review Committee shall find it “Highly Advantageous” if the Applicant has provided technical assistance in low- to moderate-income areas or neighborhood commercial districts.
 - The Review Committee shall find it “Advantageous” if the Applicant has provided technical assistance neighborhood commercial districts that were not low- to moderate income.
 - The Review Committee shall find it “Not Advantageous” if the Applicant has provided technical assistance in areas that are not neighborhood commercial districts and not low- to moderate income.
 - The Review Committee shall find it “Unacceptable” if the Applicant never provided technical assistance in areas or neighborhood commercial districts that were low- to moderate income.
- C. Experience providing services to minority, immigrant, and women-owned entrepreneurs or enterprises. The Town shall evaluate, in deciding which proposal to select, the Applicant’s experience in providing technical assistance to immigrant entrepreneurs in a variety of cultural contexts. Such experience will include abilities such as language proficiency and cultural competency.
- The Review Committee shall find it “Highly Advantageous” if the Applicant has provided technical assistance to immigrant entrepreneurs in at least two (2) languages, other than English.
 - The Review Committee shall find it “Advantageous” if the Applicant has provided technical assistance to immigrant entrepreneurs in a language other than English.
 - The Review Committee shall find it “Not Advantageous” if the Applicant has only provided technical assistance to immigrant entrepreneurs in English.
 - The Review Committee shall find it “Unacceptable” if the Applicant has never provided technical assistance to immigrant entrepreneurs.
- D. Staff qualifications. The Review Committee shall evaluate, in deciding which proposal to select, the relevant subject knowledge, fieldwork experience, and training expertise of the Applicant’s staff in the area of small business strengthening and growth efforts.
- The resumes will be evaluated based on evidence of the Comparative Evaluation Criteria established above.
- E. References. The Review Committee shall evaluate, in deciding which proposal to select, the Applicant's confirmed references from organizations familiar with the Applicant's experience providing customized, comprehensive needs assessment and technical assistance directly to individual businesses in order to strengthen and grow the businesses assisted.
- The Review Committee will evaluate a minimum of two (2) references and a maximum of three (3) references submitted.

IV. Price Submission

The following is the price criteria portion of the proposal. The maximum contract price for this contract will not exceed \$20,000. This will be a 11-month (from February 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021) contract subject to the conditions that performance is satisfactory as determined by DPCD and subject to the availability and appropriation of funds. This amount is to cover all costs included in the provision of technical assistance to small businesses in Arlington through the Arlington COVID-19 Business Resiliency Program.

Please complete the Price Submission form at the end of this packet and include in your submission.

V. Submittal Requirements

Responses to the RFQ are due by Friday, January 15, 2021 at 12 PM.

Please submit one complete copy of your response to Erin Zwirko, Assistant Director, Planning and Community Development via email:

Erin Zwirko
Assistant Director, Planning and Community Development
730 Massachusetts Avenue
Arlington, MA 02476

ezwirko@town.arlington.ma.us

781-316-3091

Core Services Summary Sheet
Arlington COVID-19 Business Resiliency Program Technical Assistance

Name of Applicant: _____

Summary of Services Offered: Please check the service(s) you expect to offer.

One-on-one technical assistance to businesses: Provide businesses with comprehensive, high-quality assistance based on individual strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities to stabilize or grow the business. Examples of this customized assistance include, but would not be limited to:

- Website Development:** establishing an online presence
- E-Commerce:** creating an online store for a business
- Live Commerce:** generating sales by streaming on a variety of online and social media platforms
- Marketing:** creating digital and/or traditional marketing pieces to attract new customers to the business
- SEO:** driving customers to a business by creating and/or optimizing their website
- Bookkeeping/Accounting:** basic accounting skills to streamline the business's finances
- Other (be specific):** _____

Workshops and Group Sessions: Provide workshops to a group of business owners and/or potential business owners on topics of expertise as the needs and opportunities for such assistance are determined included but not limited to those listed above. Please be specific.

Signature

Date

Price Proposal Sheet
Arlington COVID-19 Business Resiliency Program Technical Assistance

Name of Applicant: _____

Please submit: 1. hourly rate per hour for the service(s) you expect to offer, 2. stand-alone workshop rate, 3. workshop series rate, and 4. workshop content rate, as follows:

Service(s)

Business Technical Assistance Price Per Hour

Hourly rate for consulting services \$ _____

Single Workshop Presentation Rate Price Per Workshop

2 -hour workshop that you present

(Please provide a total price, considering all of the hours required to prepare and conduct a two-hour workshop including all printed materials, handouts etc.)

\$ _____

Workshop Series Rate Price Per Workshop

Rate to do a 3-5 part series workshop. Each workshop would be 2 hours; different content each time, guaranteed at least 3 unique workshops.

(Please provide a total price PER WORKSHOP, considering all of the hours required to prepare and conduct a two-hour workshop including all printed materials, handouts etc.)

\$ _____

Workshop Content Rate Price Per Workshop

2-hour workshop where you create the content but are not giving the presentation yourself.

\$ _____

Signature and Title

Date