Addendum 1
Merrimack Valley Small Business Technical Assistance Program
April 2, 2021

The Merrimack Valley Planning Commission has released Addendum 1 to Merrimack Valley Small Business Technical Assistance Program. Addendum 1 clarifies the process for handling late bid submissions and changes one of the Comparative Criteria.

V. Comparative Evaluation Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Localization</th>
<th>Replace</th>
<th>With</th>
<th>Submission of a proposal that meets minimum requirements.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proposer has staff currently employed that are locally based.</td>
<td>Proposer could bring on staff which are close to or in the Merrimack Valley</td>
<td>Demonstrates more than five (5) years experience.</td>
<td>Demonstrates three (3) to five (5) years experience.</td>
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Please note that the MVPC will require acknowledgement of all addenda issued to be included on the bid form.

Response To Questions

1. What industries does MVPC intend to prioritize? MVPC will prioritize industries that have been most heavily impacted by the COVID-19 Pandemic, primarily public-facing, locally-owned, small businesses located in downtowns and commercial centers.
2. What size business does MVPC intend to prioritize? MVPC will prioritize small businesses with fewer than 50 full-time employees.
3. Are organizations like the SBDC and MVBBC eligible to bid on this procurement? This RFP is open to all.
4. Can you please reconsider the need for an online application? All proposals will be considered. If you propose and explain an intake system that does not include an online application we will consider it.
5. Are there any reference materials including the grant application to EDA that can be made available? The grant application to EDA will not be included.
6. Are there any industries that are not of interest, such as construction, health care, transportation, agriculture, utilities, wholesale? MVPC will prioritize industries that have been most heavily impacted by the COVID-19 Pandemic, primarily public-facing, locally-owned, small businesses (fewer than 50 full-time employees). MVPC will also prioritize businesses located in downtowns and commercial centers.
7. What other LEP populations beyond Spanish need to be considered? **None**
8. Is there a page limitation for the entire proposal? **No**
9. Can we send the proposal via email due to COVID and poor overnight delivery performance? **To ensure the integrity of the RFP process, (keeping the Technical and Price Proposals separate), the MVPC will require that Bidders submit a hard copy proposal in separate sealed envelopes. See Addendum 1 for late bid submissions.**
10. Does the Commission consider the Localization requirement a geographic preference as defined by 2 CFR 200? Localization is a Comparative Criteria. **See Addendum 1**
11. For technical assistance delivery, are we able to recommend additional areas? **Yes**
12. Will the Commission provide the criteria for the selection of businesses to be enrolled in the program? Will there be formal participation agreements with the businesses? What preferences will be given to organizations owned and operated by people of color? **The Commission will work with the Consultant to develop specific criteria for business selection. We will prioritize industries that have been most heavily impacted by the COVID-19 Pandemic, namely public-facing, locally-owned, small businesses (fewer than 50 full-time employees). MVPC will also prioritize businesses located in downtowns and commercial centers.**
13. What resources are available from the Commission for this project? **The Commission maintains a regional business inventory which may be useful as well as relationships with municipalities and business support organizations.**
14. How will pricing be evaluated? It is not listed in the evaluation criteria. **Once the Technical Proposal are rated using the Comparative Evaluation Criteria, the Price Proposals will be opened. According to Chap 30B, the MVPC will identify the most advantageous proposal, taking into consideration the proposal evaluations and the proposal prices**
15. Should each of the three technical proposal envelopes submitted have a flash drive containing the technical and price proposal? **No only one flash drive is requested.**
16. If subcontractors and/or professional references do not have fax numbers is it acceptable to put “n/a”? **Yes**
17. Appendix A Scope of Services states “The Merrimack Valley Small Business Technical Assistance Program must be completed by November 30th, 2021” while in section III. Contract Term states A. “The term of the contract will be from May 1, 2021, through May 1, 2022.” Can you explain the discrepancy between these two dates? **The term of the contract will be from May 1, 2021, to May 1, 2022. Disregard any reference to November 30th.**
18. A maximum number of businesses to be helped? **MVPC expects this program to serve between 40 and 200 businesses.**
19. How many hours has the Commission set aside for the Nominations Process? **The Commission has not set aside a specific number of hours. We estimate that Task 2: Business Nominations will take about a month.**
20. One of the evaluation factors indicated that the “Proposer has staff currently employed that are locally based.” Since this is a 1-year contract during COVID can the work be performed remotely with staff that is not local? **Yes, work can be performed remotely. See Addendum 1**
21. Will the social media content used to advertise the program be shared on MVC’s Facebook and LinkedIn or will the consultant establish Facebook and LinkedIn accounts specifically for this program? **Social Media will be advertised using MVPC existing platforms. New platforms and profiles are not expected.**
22. Based on the Timeline on page 12 of Appendix A Scope of Services, does MVC anticipate that applicants will only be able to apply for 1 month and then no additional
applications will be accepted? The estimated times identified are just estimates, if the program does not fill up in a month the timeframe can be extended.

23. Will MVPC provide the business application and needs assessment forms or will the Consultant need to develop the forms? The Consultant is expected to develop the forms and systems.

24. With a $257,000 budget, that includes the payment to the Consultant, does MVPC have an estimate for the number of businesses that can receive technical assistance? MVPC anticipates serving between 40-200 businesses.

25. Is there a goal for how many businesses we are trying to help? MVPC expects this program to serve between 40 and 200 businesses.

26. Must you experience navigating the COVID-19 relief program? That would be advantageous given the number of different relief programs out there and the business need for navigating them.

27. Are you expecting that all price proposals equal the budget amount? No, we are looking to estimate the cost of services. We do not have to spend all of it.

28. Are you planning on hiring one proposer or several? If there is one firm that can handle everything and do it well, then we will go with one. If one firm cannot handle it all then we will choose additional ones.

29. Is there allocation preference for minority-owned firms? There is nothing in the RFP that states that specifically, but there is a cultural competency part of the RFP where we will review cultural competency advantageously.

30. Can we put just a prosal for just the consultant technical assistance in both areas of TA provider? Can we put an allocation for consultant hours rather than by allocation type?

31. Can you spend a moment explaining the web-based application task? We want the application to be web-based, because of the value of having it be easily sharable and universally accessible. If you want to propose that just a .pdf is sufficient for this we will let you articulate the reasoning for this.

32. With respect to the comment about 3 posts for social media, is that the primary method of communication for marketing the program? No, we expect there to be a myriad of marketing/communication strategies but call out social media as one strategy that we want the consultant to lead with.

33. Would you have a list of businesses that you would share that identifies the targeted businesses? Deciding which business will get served will be decided on a later date. Given our CED Strategy, the industries that are called out specifically are businesses that are important for downtowns which we know we have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19.

34. Do we also need to consider other assistance that may be available to these businesses from SBDC’s, SBA’s etc? Do we need to know that they are getting other assistance like PPP? Having a working knowledge of these programs is important, doing match-making to those programs when appropriate is something that we imagine will happen, but if a business receives resources from another program it doesn’t necessarily exclude them.

35. Have any businesses been nominated? If not when? No businesses have been nominated yet. We plan on nominating and choosing businesses after outreach has occurred. As it stands right now, no businesses have been nominated.

36. It would be helpful to have guidance on how many businesses you expect us to target in order for us to structure our price proposal? MVPC expects this program to serve between 40 and 200 businesses.
37. Expanding the dollar of the program makes it more attractive, is that the case? **Yes, the more businesses that you can serve the more advantageously we will see the application.**

38. Would you prefer us to partner with other vendors with project partners that we are not experts in? Or would you create those partners yourself? **We would like to see those partnerships articulated in the application. I.e. if you are subbing out TA expertise to other consultants that’s something we would expect. I would expect the Consultants to build those teams, MVPC does not anticipate building those teams on their behalf.**