



# Request for Proposals

For Professional Service Consultants to

## *Develop & Implement an Online Data Dashboard Platform*

Issuing Organizations:

SEDA – Council of Governments  
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&

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## **Introduction**

**About the SEDA-Council of Governments:** SEDA-Council of Governments (SEDA-COG) is one of seven Local Development Districts (LDDs) designated by the Appalachian Regional Commission and one of 9 Economic Development Districts designated by the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration, located in Central Pennsylvania. SEDA-COG serves 11 counties including: Centre, Clinton, Columbia, Juniata, Lycoming, Mifflin, Montour, Northumberland, Perry, Snyder and Union. As an EDD, SEDA-COG is responsible for helping lead the locally-based, regionally driven economic development planning process that leverages the involvement of the public, private and non-profit sectors to establish a strategic blueprint (i.e., an economic development roadmap) for regional collaboration.

The genesis of SEDA-COG dates back to 1957, as community leaders from Columbia, Montour, Northumberland, Snyder, and Union counties began meeting as a community forum to address central Pennsylvania's common concerns. These concerns evolved around inadequate transportation to markets; a deficiency in the availability of health care services; low wages; under-employment and unemployment conditions; and out-migration of residents to areas having better employment potential. Although it was just a forum for discussion purposes, the original five counties formally organized and established the Susquehanna Economic Development Association (SEDA), a 501(c)(3) agency. Ten years later, as a result of becoming a designated Local Development District (LDD) through the auspices of the federal Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC), a small professional staff was hired and, in 1968, Centre, Clinton, Juniata, Lycoming, Mifflin, and Perry counties joined the other five, thus bringing the total complement of counties to its current configuration of 11 in central Pennsylvania. By 1970, SEDA-COG was designated as an Economic Development District (EDD) by EDA.

Policies are established by a 22-member Board and carried out by a professional staff with expertise in a wide range of fields; everything from rail freight service and international sales to home weatherization and financial packaging. SEDA-COG has played an important role in the evolution of Central Pennsylvania, helping maintain the very qualities that make this region special.

**About the Northeastern Pennsylvania Alliance:** The Northeastern Pennsylvania Alliance (NEPA) is one of seven regional agencies designated as a Local Development District (LDD) by the state and federal governments for the purpose of enhancing economic and community development activities in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. NEPA Alliance is also designated as the Economic Development District (EDD) for the region by the Economic Development Administration. In this capacity, NEPA is responsible for leading the creation and implementation of the regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS).

NEPA Alliance was organized in 1964 by the private sector that saw the need for a regional approach to economic and community development issues within the region. NEPA Alliance serves a seven-county region that is composed of Carbon, Lackawanna, Luzerne, Monroe, Pike, Schuylkill, and Wayne counties. The region has an estimated total population of 1,031,317 and covers 4,476 square miles.

The NEPA Alliance is a 501(c)(4) public / private sector partnership with representation from government and non-governmental private sector organizations. NEPA Alliance’s goal is to provide a quality menu of programs and services that best match the needs of our partners, while providing tangible services to businesses, communities and governments throughout the seven counties.

The NEPA Alliance is a regional multi-county economic development agency providing leadership, planning, expertise and services to regional and local governments, businesses, institutions and individuals through innovative and beneficial collaborations and partnerships to enhance the economic development and quality of life of the area.

The NEPA Alliance programming services include: Community & Economic Development, Business Financing, Government Contracting Assistance, International Trade Assistance, Nonprofit Assistance, Transportation Planning & Geographic Information Services (GIS), Research & Information and Local Government Services.

**About the Economic Development Administration (EDA):** As the only federal government agency focused exclusively on economic development, the U.S. Department of Commerce’s Economic Development Administration (EDA) plays a critical role in facilitating regional economic development efforts in communities across the nation. Guided by the basic principle that sustainable economic development should be locally driven, EDA works directly with communities and regions to help them build the capacity for economic development based on local business conditions and needs. EDA’s grant investments in planning, technical assistance, and infrastructure construction are designed to leverage existing regional assets to support the implementation of economic development strategies that make it easier for businesses to start and grow. EDA’s flexible programs and structure enable nimble operations and allow for innovation and responsiveness to changing economic needs and conditions faced by its local and state government partners. This project is made possible by funding from the EDA.

### **Initiative Goals**

The partners are committed to reimagining the CEDS and exploring new approaches to serving EDA, our region and our Board of Directors. The primary goal is to create an online data dashboard for the eleven-county SEDA-COG region and the seven-county NEPA region. This dashboard will be available to the general public and offer real time data to users. This data will be available for grant applications, planning purposes, economic projections, and other uses.

### **About the Partners**

Pennsylvania is home to eight Economic Development Districts as well as many other organizations that serve a similar purpose. See the attached map listing the Pennsylvania Economic Development Districts. SEDA-COG and NEPA Alliance have partnered to lead this endeavor. The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, Southern Alleghenies Planning & Development Commission, and Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission have also indicated their intention to develop a regional data dashboard as part of this project. The other regions may opt to join this process in the future as well.

## ***Scope of Work***

SEDA-COG and NEPA Alliance (hereafter referred to as “The Issuer”) have received funds from EDA to identify and implement an online platform for our CEDS. This online platform will display regional economic indicators and other relevant datapoints on a data dashboard to increase utilization, effectiveness, and reach of the CEDS. Moving the CEDS to an online platform will also make the regional strategies more accessible to the public, provide data that is engaging and easy to understand, assist in identifying strategic opportunities in the region, and combine multiple data sources and geography levels over various periods of time. As a result, the CEDS will become more of a living resource with real time updates, rather than a static plan. This project could serve as a replicable model for other EDDs and states across the nation.

The data dashboard will display the datapoints over time and across geographies. Geographies will include nation, state, region, county, municipality, and Census tract. Ideally, geographies such as ARC region will be included as well.

The Issuers have secured an EDA grant to pay for the initial creation of the data dashboard and two years of operation. Following that time, each organization budgeted approximately \$5,000 per region for annual operational costs.

The Issuer has identified 3 models to complete this project as outlined below.

- Propose and implement a prebuilt solution capable of serving data from various sources, or
- Design and develop a new product that includes data pipelines to ingest required data into a centralized storage platform, which will support visualization for various regions.
- Hybrid approach that includes elements from both options above.

Note that SEDA-COG and NEPA Alliance each have dedicated GIS staff and access to ESRI data, software, and licenses.

Interested vendors are encouraged to submit a solution utilizing one or multiple of the models identified above.

Examples of data points the Issuer expects included on the data dashboard minimally include:

### DEMOGRAPHICS

- Population Density
- Population-Decennial and ACS Data
- Population Projections to 2040
- Population Projection Change 2010-2040
- Age 65+ Population Projection
- Population Projection for Age 65+ By County
- Pennsylvania Race Alone and Hispanic Origin

### EMPLOYMENT/INCOME

- Unemployment Rate

- Median Household Income
- Personal Income and Per Capita Income by County
- Jobs Dislocations – WARN Notices
- Annual Average Unemployment Rate

#### AGRICULTURE/PUBLIC LANDS/FORESTRY

- Number and Size of Farms – Agriculture Census
- Market Value of Production of Farms – Agriculture Census
- State Game Lands, Parks and Forests: Acreage by County
- Economic Contribution of Forestry to Region
- Forestry and Wood Product Establishments and Employees

#### GAS PRODUCTION

- PA Conventional and Unconventional Natural Gas Well Permits Issued in Region by County
- Conventional and Unconventional Natural Gas Wells Drilled in Region by County
- Shale Production and Consumption

#### BUSINESS/JOBS

- Jobs by NAICS for Region and PA – County Business Patterns
- Manufacturing Jobs by Major Industry in Region – County Business Patterns
- Industry Clusters
- Building Permits

#### HOUSING

- Housing Units
- Housing Units by age
- Low Income Housing Units
- Building Permits

#### HEALTHCARE

- Hospital Beds
- Hospital Beds/Population

#### TOURISM

- Number of visitors to the region
- Average length of stay
- Origination of tourists

#### EDUCATION

- Education of Individuals 25 Years and Older with Less Than a High School Education in the Region and PA
- Individuals 25 Years and Older with a bachelor's degree in the Region
- Number of students attending colleges or universities in the region
- Percentage of students who leave the region after completing college

## TRANSPORTATION

- Average daily traffic for Interstate & State Roads
- Commuter Patterns for Major Metropolitan Areas

### **General / Required Information**

1. **Rejection of Qualifications Packages:** This Request for Proposal (RFP) does not commit the Issuing Organizations, SEDA-COG and NEPA Alliance (herein, the “Issuers”), to award a contract, to pay any costs incurred in the preparation of a RFP submission or to procure or contract for services. The Issuers reserve the right to accept or reject any or all RFPs received pursuant to this Request, to negotiate with all qualified Consultants or to cancel, in whole or in part, this RFP, if it is in the best interest of the Issuer to do so.
2. **Incurring Costs:** The Issuer shall not be liable for any costs incurred by the Consultant prior to, or in the development of a contract.
3. **Amendment to the Request for Qualifications:** If it becomes necessary to revise any part of the RFQ, an amendment will be issued to all Consultants who received the original RFP and have expressed an interest.
4. **Response Date:** Issuer will receive RFP responses from qualified Consultants electronically by **4:00 PM EST on Friday, March 7, 2025**. RFP responses shall be received at [elockwood@seda-cog.org](mailto:elockwood@seda-cog.org) with the Subject Line being ***“RFP – Develop & Implement an Online CEDS Data Dashboard.”***
5. **Project Start Date:** The tentative start date for the project is March 31, 2025.
6. **Project Timeline:** The selected vendor will create the regional data dashboard and provide live data to the dashboard for two years. The Issuers may negotiate with the selected vendor to perform the work for an additional five years.
7. **Questions regarding this RFP:** If you have questions regarding this RFP, please contact Betsy Lockwood at [elockwood@seda-cog.org](mailto:elockwood@seda-cog.org).
8. **Qualifications Statement:** Consultants must submit a complete response to the RFP by using the format (see format below).
9. **Economy of Preparation:** Qualifications Packages should be prepared simply and economically, providing a concise description of the Vendor’s ability to meet these requirements.
10. **Modifications:** The Issuer reserves the right to issue addenda or amendments to this RFP.
11. **Improper Consideration:** The Vendor shall not offer (either directly or through an intermediary) any improper consideration such as, but not limited to, cash, discounts, services, the provision of travel or entertainment, or any items of value to either the Issuer’s staff or any individual affiliated with the Issuer in an attempt to secure favorable treatment

or consideration in connection with this RFP.

12. **Inaccuracies or Misrepresentations:** If, in the course of the RFP process, the Issuer determines that the Vendor has made a material misstatement or misrepresentation or has provided a materially inaccurate qualification, the Vendor may be disqualified from the RFQ process.
13. **Oral Presentation:** Respondents submitting a Qualifications Package may be required to deliver an Oral Presentation before the Steering Committee after submission and prior to the final selection. It shall be required that the individual present at the Oral Presentation be the firm’s project leader assigned to this initiative.
14. **Vendor Responsibilities:** The selected Vendor will be required to assume responsibility for all services offered in the proposal. This shall include all approved sub-contractors. Furthermore, the Issuer will consider the selected vendor as the sole point of contact with regard to all contractual matters.
15. **Standard Contract:** The selected Vendor will be expected to enter into a contract that shall be provided by the Issuers.
16. **Respondent Rejection:** The Issuers shall notify in writing all respondents not selected.
17. **Confidentiality:** Firms must consider all project data and participant information as confidential.
18. **Ownership of Responses:** All materials submitted in response to this RFP shall become the property of the Issuers and shall not be returned to the responding firm.
19. **Intellectual Property and Source Code Ownership**
  - a. **Ownership of Developed Code:** Any data pipelines, scripts, or other software components developed specifically for this project and not part of the vendor's pre-existing tools or intellectual property must be provided to the Issuers with full source code, including clear documentation.
  - b. **Access to Source Code:** The source code for all newly developed data pipelines or other components must:
    - Be delivered at the completion of the project.
    - Include sufficient documentation to allow the Issuers or its designees to maintain, modify, or extend the codebase.
    - Be formatted in accordance with industry best practices and accompanied by a README or equivalent documentation that provides clear usage and installation instructions.
  - c. **Licensing:** The source code developed specifically for the project must be made available under a licensing agreement that ensures the Issuers have:
    - Perpetual rights to use, modify, and distribute the code internally.
    - The ability to reassign maintenance or development to other vendors or internal teams without restrictions.
  - d. **Pre-existing Tools and IP:** For any prebuilt solutions or pre-existing tools proposed,

the vendor must:

- Identify components that are proprietary and not subject to open licensing.
- Provide API-level access to integrate with other systems.

- e. **Code Repository**: All code developed as part of the project must be submitted via a version-controlled code repository (e.g., GitHub, GitLab, Bitbucket) shared with the Issuers. Access to the repository should remain active for at least 12 months post-project completion.
  - f. **Updates and Maintenance**: During the contract period, the vendor must maintain and update any developed components as needed to ensure compatibility and functionality with existing data systems.
20. **Qualifications Packages Format**: All interested and qualified Vendors are invited to submit a response for consideration. Submission of a response indicates the Vendor has read and understands this entire RFP and that all concerns regarding this RFP have been satisfied. The submittal should be concise, accurate and complete, with sufficient detail to enable the evaluation of the services and methods proposed.
- a. **Understanding the Scope of Work**: The Vendor shall demonstrate an understanding of the overall Scope of Work, including the need, goals and objectives.
  - b. **Consultant Qualifications & Past Performance**: The Vendor shall outline the ability to meet the terms of the RFQ considering time constraint, quality, relevancy etc. Please outline similar projects that your consulting firm completed including the organization, contact person, email address and telephone numbers for reference purposes. A minimum of three references shall be included.
  - c. **Firm Organization**: Provide an organizational chart of the firm illustrating the functionality and roles of all key project personnel (including sub-consultants).
  - d. **Personnel Qualifications**: Refers to the competency of the professional personnel (inclusive of sub-consultants) assigned to the project. Provide one-page resumes for key personnel, including relevant licenses, certifications and training. Qualifications will be measured by experience, certification and education.
  - e. **Conflict of Interest Disclosure**: Disclose any direct or indirect, actual or potential conflicts of interest relative to the project's scope and partners.
  - f. **Location**: Identify the location of the firm, and primary office of the key staff.
  - g. **Primary Contact Person**: Firm shall designate a primary contact person for communications related to this RFP and subsequent work products, and provide the person's full contact information, including an email address.
  - h. **Certification**: A copy of the signed RFP certification signature block on Page 8 of the RFP shall be included by a company official with the authority to legally bind the vendor.

21. **Subcontractor Approval:** Any / all subcontractors proposed to be used as part of this project must be disclosed to the Issuers for approval. If subcontractors are to be used, a complete description of the subcontractor qualifications and personnel shall be provided.

### **Criteria for Selection**

**Evaluation:** All Proposal Packages received from Vendors will be reviewed and evaluated by a Selection Committee and may include other individuals / entities selected by the Committee. The Selection Committee will select the Vendor based a combination of total **cost** and **qualifications**.

**Areas of Consideration:** To determine a vendor’s qualification and experience, the following criteria will be used:

- a. **Understanding the Scope of Work:** The Vendor should understand the overall need of the initiative. The Consultant should also provide their approach to the Scope of Work.
- b. **Consultant Qualifications & Past Performance:** The Vendor’s qualifications and past performance on similar initiatives.
- c. **Personnel Qualifications:** Refers to the competency of the professional personnel assigned to the project. Qualifications will be measured by experience, certification and education (curriculum vitae), especially the qualifications of the Project Manager.
- d. **Special Characteristics:** Special designations of the firm recognized with state or federal certifications or other noteworthy characteristics relevant to the project.

The Selection Committee will review and rank in order (based on a total of 100 points) all responses to the RFP based primarily, but not exclusively, on the following factors:

- a. **Understanding the Scope of Work:** Responsiveness to the RFP, and compliance with RFQ requirements (*45 points*).
- b. **Vendor Qualifications & Past Performance:** Experience and performance based on the Selection Committee’s review of past performance on projects of similar scope and complexity. Evaluation of references (*25 points*).
- c. **Personnel Qualifications:** Evaluation of the list of personnel specifically assigned to the proposed project, including their qualifications, overall experience and recent experience on projects of similar scope and complexity to the proposed project (*25 points*).
- d. **Special Characteristics:** Noteworthy traits, designations or qualities that may increase the value of the services provided (*5 points*).

## **Indemnification**

Vendor shall indemnify and hold harmless the Issuer against any and all claims, demands, suits and judgments of sums of money, including costs of defense (including, but not limited to attorney’s fees) to any party for loss arising from any negligent act, error, omission or breach on the part of the Consultant, its agents, servants, employees or sub-consultants, in connection with services resulting from this RFP, or from any breach of any obligations under this RFP.

## **Certification**

By my signature below, I certify that all statements are accurate and I / my firm can meet all terms and conditions of the RFP, and can perform the services as specified, if chosen by the Selection Committee.

Firm: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_