

LEGAL NOTICE

“REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS”

SEDA-Council of Governments (SEDA-COG) is soliciting Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Planning and Organizational Strategic Planning Services. The selected Consultant will provide a combined Organizational Strategic Plan and 5-year Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Plan for SEDA-COG’s eleven-county region. Proposals will be accepted through **Monday, December 16, 2024**. Contract award and project start date are contingent on award of grant funds and no sooner than January 1, 2025.

An electronic copy of the RFP is available at <https://seda-cog.org/request-for-proposals/> . Hard copies are also available by sending a written request to:

ATTN: Betsy Lockwood
Director, Project Development/Grants
SEDA-Council of Governments (SEDA-COG)
201 Furnace Road
Lewisburg, Pennsylvania 17837
Email: elockwood@seda-cog.org

Quotations that are faxed to SEDA-COG cannot be accepted.

Proposals must be submitted in electronic format to the following e-mail address: elockwood@seda-cog.org.

SEDA-COG must receive proposals by 4:00PM on Monday, December 16, 2024. The email should clearly state “Organizational Strategic Plan and Update to the 5-Year Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy.”

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PART I

GENERAL INFORMATION FOR THE PROPOSER

1-1 Purpose: This Request for Proposals (RFP) provides prospective bidders with sufficient information to enable them to prepare and submit proposals to satisfy a need for a combined organizational strategic plan and 5-Year Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for the SEDA-COG Region. Merging the CEDS with the organizational strategic plan allows SEDA-COG to align the needs and opportunities of the region with the human and financial resources to implement the plans in a coordinated way. The hope is that it will create a more effective, efficient, and sustainable roadmap for the region's development, ensuring that all efforts are aligned towards common goals.

It is expected that combining the processes for these two planning efforts will achieve the following:

- Create alignment between the future state of the regional organization and the goals of the region.
- An integrated Communications Plan that aligns messaging to ensure that both strategies are presented as complimentary components of a unified vision for regional advancement.
- Educational outreach that will inform stakeholders about the purpose, benefits, and interconnections of both the organizational strategy and CEDS.
- Resource optimization by coordinating efforts as opposed to duplicating them.
- Enhanced collaboration and resource leveraging by maximizing stakeholder time and effort and further developing relationships in a meaningful way for the region.
- Setting a sustainable long-term vision and roadmap for the organization that focuses on what is most important and relevant to the region and its stakeholders.
- A transformational plan for the region and for the advancement of the next generation of the SEDA-COG organization.

The next CEDS document should introduce a new generation of approaches, leveraging a web-based platform, incorporating comprehensive demographic data, addressing resilience, and tackling critical issues such as workforce shortages and insufficient housing. Additionally, it should be aligned with and complement Pennsylvania's 10-Year State Strategy, as well as the region's county comprehensive plans.

The SEDA-COG Organizational Strategic Plan will address issues and opportunities expected to arise within the next 3, 5, and 10 years, as well as current issues. The plan will re-evaluate SEDA-COG's mission, capabilities, and scope of involvement, and identify new opportunities and roles for the organization. This plan will lay out the communications of SEDA-COG's strategic plan effectively to all players and partners to engage them in the collaborative pursuit of a mission and goals.

SEDA-COG is designated as an Economic Development District (EDD) by the United States Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration and also as Local Development District (LDD) under the auspices of the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC). SEDA-COG serves as an umbrella for several dependent and independent entities such as the SEDA-COG Joint Rail

Authority (JRA), the SEDA-COG Local Development Corporation (LDC), the SEDA-COG Housing Development Corporation (HDC), and the SEDA-COG Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). Departments at SEDA-COG are organized into four divisions: Business Services, Community Services, Residential Services, and Transportation Services. There are approximately eighty-five (85) staff employed across the four divisions. Most staff utilize the Lewisburg, PA main office as their home base, however there is also a field office in Lewistown, PA. SEDA-COG's core service area includes the counties of Centre, Clinton, Columbia, Juniata, Lycoming, Mifflin, Montour, Northumberland, Perry, Snyder, and Union.

The SEDA-COG organization has decades of experience working with the counties and local governments in the region; and on a regular basis, helps to identify economic and community needs and opportunities. SEDA-COG's mission is to enhance the quality of life and economic advantage for residents and businesses in the 11 Central Pennsylvania counties through its vital partnerships and initiatives. Based on existing regional resources, partnerships, collaborations, and shared services will be identified and discussed throughout the planning process.

The CEDS contributes to effective economic and community development in America's communities and regions through a locally based, regionally-driven planning process. The development of a CEDS requires engaging community leaders, leveraging the involvement of the private sector, and establishing a strategic blueprint for regional collaboration. A regional CEDS provides the capacity-building foundation by which the public sector, working in conjunction with other economic stakeholders (individuals, firms, industries), creates the environment for regional economic prosperity.

SEDA-COG is requesting that consultants responding to this RFP develop and analyze a strategy-driven plan for regional economic and community development in Central Pennsylvania. Our "Scope of Work" will provide a detailed description of the types of information we are requesting.

1-2 Issuing Office: This RFP is issued by SEDA-Council of Governments, 201 Furnace Road, Lewisburg, PA, 17837. This office is the sole point of contact for this RFP.

1-3 Scope: This RFP contains instructions governing the proposals to be submitted and the materials to be included therein; a description of the service to be provided; requirements that must be met to be eligible for consideration; general evaluation criteria; and other requirements to be met by each proposal.

1-4 Problem Statement: The purpose of this project is to conduct an organizational strategic plan and update the SEDA-COG 5-Year Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) based on an analysis of economic, community, housing, and workforce development for the central region of Pennsylvania inclusive of Centre, Clinton, Columbia, Juniata, Lycoming, Mifflin, Montour, Northumberland, Perry, Snyder, and Union Counties.

1-5 Period of Performance: Contract award and project start date are contingent on award of grant funds, no sooner than January 1, 2025.

1-6 Project Funding: Anticipated project funding sources may include, but are not limited to, the Economic Development Administration (EDA) and the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC), the

Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED), and regional foundations.

1-7 Rejection of Proposals: SEDA-COG reserves the right to reject any or all proposals received as a result of this request, to negotiate separately with competing contractors, or to award the contract for the purchase of the services on such basis as SEDA-COG deems to be in their best interests. SEDA-COG reserves the right to waive informalities and irregularities in proposals received, and to accept any portion of any proposal or all items proposed if deemed in the best interest of the conduct of the study. Nonwinners will be notified via email/letter.

1-8 Incurring Cost: Neither EDA, ARC, or SEDA-COG is liable for any cost incurred by proposers prior to issuance of a fully executed contract.

1-9 Amendment to the RFP: If it becomes necessary to revise any part of this RFP, an amendment will be issued to all proposers who received the basic RFP and placed on the SEDA-COG website.

1-10 Response Due Date: Proposals must be submitted in electronic format to the following: e-mail address: elockwood@seda-cog.org.

It is the responsibility of the proposer to ensure that the proposal is received by SEDA-COG by **4:00PM on Monday, December 16, 2024**. The email should clearly state "Organizational Strategic Plan and Update to the 5-Year Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy."

1-11 Proposals: To be considered, proposers must submit a complete response to this RFP, using the format provided in Part II. One electronic copy of each proposal must be submitted to the issuing office via email. The proposer will make no other distribution of proposals. An official authorized to bind the proposer to its provisions must sign proposals. For this RFP, the proposal must remain valid for at least 120 days. Moreover, the contents of the proposal of the successful bidder will become contractual obligations if a contract is entered into. Failure of the successful bidder to accept these obligations in a contract may result in cancellation of the award.

1-12 Economy of Preparation: Proposals should be prepared simply and economically, providing a straightforward, concise description of the proposer's ability to meet the requirements of the RFP.

1-13 Oral Discussions: Respondents who submit a proposal in response to this RFP may be required to give an interview regarding their proposal. This provides an opportunity for the respondent to clarify or elaborate on the proposal. These are fact-finding and explanation sessions only and do not include negotiations. SEDA-COG will schedule the time and location of these presentations and/or interviews. SEDA-COG may or may not choose to conduct these presentations/interviews.

1-14 Prime Proposer Responsibilities: The selected proposer will be required to assume responsibility for all services offered in their proposal whether or not they produce them. Further, SEDA-COG will consider the selected proposer to be the sole point of contact with regards to contractual matters.

1-15 Disclosure of Proposal Contents: Cost and price information provided in proposals will be held in confidence and will not be revealed or discussed with competitors. All other material submitted becomes the property of SEDA-COG and may be returned only at SEDA-COG's option. Proposals submitted may be reviewed and evaluated by any person other than competing bidders at the

discretion of SEDA-COG. SEDA-COG has the right to use any or all ideas presented in any reply to the RFP. Selection or rejection of the proposal does not affect this right.

The selected proposer will be expected to enter into an agreement containing the Standard Contract Requirements attached as Appendix A and B to this RFP. The contract will be awarded to that bidder whose proposal conforms to the RFP and will be most advantageous to the project partners, price, and all other factors considered.

1-16 **Contact Person:** SEDA-COG Project Officer is:

- Betsy Lockwood, SEDA-COG, Director, Project Development/Grants
Phone: 570-524-4491 ext. 7265; e-mail: elockwood@seda-cog.org

PART II

INFORMATION REQUIRED FROM THE CONTRACTOR

Contractor proposals must be submitted in the format outlined below. To be considered, the proposal must respond to all requirements in this part of the RFP. Any other information thought to be relevant, but not applicable to the enumerated categories, should be provided as an appendix to the proposal.

A. Cover Letter

B. Technical Proposal

- 1) **Statement of Problem** - State in succinct terms your understanding of the problem presented, and the service required by this RFP.
- 2) **Work Program** - Prepare a detailed, yet concise, work program that specifically addresses the needs of this project. The work activities outlined in the "Scope of Work" section of the RFP should not be considered final or all-inclusive, but rather a basic guide upon which to build your proposal. SEDA-COG will look at what and how the bidder proposes to accomplish the activities set forth in the RFP. Completion dates must be included for each work element proposed. A detailed listing of deliverables and a project timeline must be included.
- 3) **Prior Experience** - In narrative form, not to exceed five (5) typewritten pages, discuss the proposer's experience working with multi-faceted organizations such as SEDA-COG, for the purposes of regional community and economic development planning and organizational strategic planning. Specify prior project references that personnel assigned to this project have prepared and implemented, similar in nature to this RFP.
- 4) **Personnel** - For this section, summarize the qualifications of the key personnel that will undertake the project. Include recent experience that is directly applicable to the project, a project personnel organization responsibility chart, and the Curriculum Vitae (CV) of all personnel assigned to the project. NOTE: Please do not include a description of the entire history of past experience, but only that which directly pertains to this project.

C. Cost Proposal

The proposer is required to submit a budget with its proposal detailing how money will be spent on the tasks listed in Part IV, "Work Statement & Background Information", and Part V, the "Scope of Work".

- 1) A budget by task and total budget for the entire project.
- 2) Itemized direct, indirect, and subcontract expenses where applicable.
- 3) Identification of any additional costs for additional services or materials.
- 4) An explanation of how cost estimates were obtained.

PART III

CRITERIA FOR SELECTION

All proposals received from proposers will be reviewed and evaluated by a committee of qualified personnel representing SEDA-COG. The committee will recommend for selection the proposal that most closely meets the requirements of the RFP and satisfies the needs of SEDA-COG.

The committee will evaluate each written proposal and assign points for each segment of the proposal in accordance with the criteria herein set forth. The proposer with the highest total points for each service will be selected for the purpose of negotiating a contract. The points to be awarded are set forth for each major segment and sub-segment below.

- A. Proposer's method for providing the requested service (60 points):
 - 1) Understanding of the program in general and subject project areas in particular (10 points).
 - 2) Adequacy of Scope of Services (20 points).
 - 3) Adequacy of the product (30 points):
 - Demonstration of concrete methods of implementation (15 points).
 - Demonstration of ability to provide innovation (15 points).
- B. Proposer's qualifications (30 points):
 - 1) Demonstrated ability of the project director to carry out the project consulting and coordination responsibilities (10 points).
 - 2) Demonstrated ability of other specifically named key personnel to carry out proposed assignments (10 points).
 - 3) Adequacy of the proposed level of effort, stability, and continuity, in terms of time commitment of project director and key personnel (10 points).
- C. Compensation (10 points):
 - 1) The proposer must include a statement of intent to negotiate a cost not to exceed the contract with SEDA-COG.
 - 2) The proposer must provide a cost estimate of sufficient level of detail to document expense in the following categories:
 - Direct labor (for each individual assigned, include hourly rate multiplied by the number of hours proposed);

- Overhead (operating costs such as travel, equipment, and supplies);
- Fees
- Expenses
- Subcontractor (if used)
- Meetings (in-person, virtual)
- Total

PART IV

WORK STATEMENT & BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Organizational Strategic Plan and Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) 5-Year Update

Background:

SEDA-Council of Governments (SEDA-COG) was organized pursuant to the Intergovernmental Cooperation Act of July 12, 1972. SEDA-COG is not a nonprofit corporation but an extension of the 11 counties we serve in the heart of Pennsylvania and includes the counties of Centre, Clinton, Columbia, Juniata, Lycoming, Mifflin, Montour, Northumberland, Perry, Snyder, and Union. A 22-member Board, consisting of 11 County Commissioners and 11 at-large officials and individuals representing the private sector, governs SEDA-COG.

Our services fall into four broad division areas: Business Services, Community Services, Residential Services, and Transportation Services. We help the region's counties and communities meet needs in areas such as community development, housing, and transportation planning. We provide supplemental financing, procurement, and export services for businesses. We have established programs for housing rehabilitation, elderly housing development, and housing weatherization. Through several affiliate organizations, we operate 220 miles of rail line to over 100 customers and 10 elderly apartment housing buildings.

SEDA-COG is designated as an Economic Development District (EDD) by the United States Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration and a Local Development District (LDD) by the Appalachian Regional Commission. Additionally, SEDA-COG serves as PA Data Center Affiliate with the Pennsylvania State Data Center and the U.S. Census Bureau, and we are designated by the U.S. Department of Transportation as a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO).

The current intent is to utilize Social Pinpoint (<https://www.socialpinpoint.com/>) as a virtual public involvement tool.

The last SEDA-COG 5-Year CEDS was developed in 2020 and can be found here: https://seda-cog.org/wp-content/uploads/2020_5-Year_CEDS_FINAL_WITH_ATTACHMENTS.pdf

Information analysis and a robust community engagement process are necessary to develop an organizational strategic plan and a comprehensive economic development strategy for the SEDA-COG Region.

A Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy is designed to bring together the public and private sectors in the creation of an economic roadmap to diversify and strengthen regional economies. The CEDS analyzes the regional economy and serves as a guide for establishing regional goals and objectives, developing and implementing a regional plan of action, and identifying investment priorities and funding sources. The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) process will articulate a vision and direction for the region and develop action plans in the areas of image, business climate, economic base, infrastructure, labor market, economic development effort, location, and quality of life. The CEDS must meet the regulations and requirements set forth in 13 C.F.R. § 303.7.

PART V

Scope of Work

The following Scope of Work articulates what is expected for the Organizational Strategic Plan and the CEDS process. The hope is that these processes can overlap and have some congruency to optimize resources and maximize the effort and output desired. The proposer should provide recommendations on where and how this can occur.

Proposed Organizational Strategic Plan Outline:

- 1) **Alignment with Mission and Vision**
- 2) **Setting Priorities**
- 3) **Adaptation to Change**
- 4) **Resource Allocation**
- 5) **Stakeholder Engagement**
- 6) **Performance Measurement**
- 7) **Long-Term Sustainability**

Conducting an organizational strategic plan is essential for SEDA-COG (or any organization) for several key reasons:

- 1) **Alignment with Mission and Vision:** A strategic plan helps ensure that all activities and decisions align with the organization's mission and vision. It provides a clear direction for the organization's future and ensures that resources are used effectively to achieve long-term goals.
- 2) **Setting Priorities:** The planning process allows SEDA-COG to identify and prioritize the most important initiatives. This is crucial for focusing efforts on projects, programs, and initiatives that have the greatest impact, especially when resources are limited.
- 3) **Adaptation to Change:** A strategic plan helps the organization adapt to changes in the external environment, such as shifts in economic conditions, policy changes, or emerging opportunities and threats. It will allow SEDA-COG to remain relevant and proactive in addressing the needs of the communities it serves.
- 4) **Resource Allocation:** By setting clear objectives, a strategic plan provides a framework for allocating resources—financial, human, and technical—more efficiently. It ensures that resources are directed towards activities that support the organization's goals.
- 5) **Stakeholder Engagement:** Creating a strategic plan requires input from diverse stakeholders, partners, and related organizations, promoting collaboration and ensuring the plan aligns with the needs and viewpoints of those SEDA-COG serves and works alongside. This approach can strengthen buy-in and bolster support for the organization's initiatives.
- 6) **Performance Measurement:** A strategic plan includes specific goals and metrics for measuring progress. This allows SEDA-COG to track its performance over time, make necessary adjustments, and demonstrate accountability to stakeholders.

- 7) **Long-Term Sustainability:** Strategic planning helps secure the long-term sustainability of the organization by anticipating future challenges and opportunities. It prepares SEDA-COG to navigate uncertainties and continue delivering value to its communities.

In summary, conducting an organizational strategic plan is crucial for SEDA-COG to effectively guide its actions, respond to changing conditions, and ensure it continues to fulfill its mission in the most impactful way.

CEDS Scope of Work Outline:

- 1) **Summary Background/SWOT Analysis**
- 2) **Strategic Direction/Action Plan**
- 3) **Evaluation Framework**
- 4) **Economic Resilience/Climate Resilience**
- 5) **Workforce Development**
- 6) **Equity**
- 7) **Final Product/Deliverables**

Detailed Scope of Work:

Public involvement is key to developing a CEDS.

- A minimum of one virtual/in-person meeting per county/subregion with stakeholders at the beginning of the information-gathering stage of the process (Counties could be combined into subregions.)
- Key person interviews
- Follow-up stakeholder virtual/in-person meetings and presentation of a CEDS draft/executive summary to gain feedback from SEDA-COG's CEDS Committee and Board of Directors

- 1) **Summary Background/SWOT Analysis.** A background summary of the region should answer the question, "What have we done?", and present a clear understanding of the local economic situation, supported by current, *relevant* data. The information should be presented in the CEDS in a clear and concise way and be easily understood by the general public.

SWOT analysis elements are commonly understood in the following terms:

- **Strengths** are a region's relative competitive advantages (e.g., industry supply chains and clusters, extensive port, rail, and broadband assets, specialized workforce skills, higher education levels, collaboration among stakeholders) and often are internal in nature
- **Weaknesses** are a region's relative competitive disadvantages (e.g., a risk-averse or change-resistant regional culture), also often internal in nature
- **Opportunities** are chances or occasions for regional improvement or progress (e.g., expansion of a biosciences research lab in the region), often external in nature

- **Threats** are chances or occasions for negative impacts on the region or regional decline (e.g., several companies in the region considering moving to lower-cost areas of the state), also often are external in nature.

A SWOT analysis of the regional economy should answer the question, “Where are we now?” by using the *relevant* data and background information to help identify the critical internal and external factors that speak to the region’s unique assets and competitive positioning. The SWOT is a strategic planning tool used by organizations to ensure that there is a clear objective informed by a comprehensive understanding of a region’s capabilities and capacity. A SWOT analysis identifies the region’s competitive advantages—those indigenous assets that make the region special or competitive in the national and global economies— juxtaposed against those internal or external factors that can keep a region from realizing its potential. Determining and analyzing what the region already possesses that could be leveraged better to build the capacity for growth, including competitive cultural, economic, technological, intellectual and physical assets, is critical to developing the strategic direction and implementation plan to promote regional economic vitality. Leveraging assets refers to using the activities and engagement of business, government leaders and other stakeholders to maximize the economic potential of a region.

- 2) **Strategic Direction/Action Plan:** Flowing from the SWOT Analysis, the Strategic Direction and Action Plan should be consistent with other relevant state/regional/local plans.

The Strategic Direction and associated Action Plan should logically flow from the critical internal and external factors that speak to the region’s assets and limitations and its role in capacity building.

- **Strategic Direction:** Vision Statement and Goals/Objectives
The vision statement should answer the question “Where do we want to be in the next ten to twenty years? “Goals and objectives provide the basis for formulating the action plan and serve as milestones to evaluate regional progress. The goal and objectives should be consistent with community aspirations for economic prosperity.
- **Action Plan:** Implementation
The action plan should include a wide-range of activity types (housing, transportation, community resiliency, environmental, sector-specific or cluster asset-leveraging efforts, etc.) and must be clearly linked to the goals and objectives from the strategic framework. A limited number of activities with the highest priority and potential for regional impact should be identified and described. Descriptions of these high-priority activities of regional significance should include:
 - An outline of the steps required to take each selected high-priority activity from inception to successful completion

- A roster of the key individuals and institutions that will be responsible for implementing and supporting these steps
- A list of the integrated funding sources (public, private and nonprofit) to support the costs
- A realistic time frame for execution (i.e., implementation schedule), with relevant benchmarks and performance measures that speak to overall impact.

3) **Evaluation Framework:** Develop performance measures and a framework to evaluate progress toward the fulfillment of the Action Plan/Implementation. The evaluation framework, with its associated measures and timelines, should cascade from the strategic direction and action plan, which, in turn, flow from the SWOT analysis. A strategic plan includes specific goals and metrics for measuring progress. This allows SEDA-COG to track its performance over time, make necessary adjustments, and demonstrate accountability to stakeholders. Performance measures should be identified to evaluate the progress of activities in achieving the vision, goals, and objectives. Include both traditional (e.g., jobs created and/or retained, private investment) and non-traditional (e.g., wealth creation such as GDP per capita, household income, per capita income, wages, net worth, among others identified through the process) performance measures.

4) **Economic Resilience /Climate Resilience: Develop steady state and responsive economic resiliency initiatives**

Develop a Framework:

- Identify persistent economic challenges, deficiencies, and vulnerabilities in the region.
- Prepare for disruptions by identifying “early warning” tools.
- Build mechanisms that create flexibility: What assets currently exist to adequately respond to disasters (i.e. recovery plans, business access to capital/credit resources, workforce training post-disruption, etc.).
- Provide ideas to promote a positive vision for the region: How do we make sure the messaging about the region’s assets and opportunities is positive; to encourage investments in both times of tranquility and disruption.

From the framework, develop steady state and responsive economic resiliency initiatives:

- Planning for and implementing resilience through specific goals or actions to bolster the long-term economic durability of the region (steady state).
- Establishing information networks among the various stakeholders in the region to encourage active and regular communications between the public, private, education, and non-profit sectors to collaborate on existing and potential future challenges (responsive).

- Integrating economic and community development strategies, sustainability principles, and hazard mitigation planning to develop and implement a strategy for disaster recovery.
- Addressing climate resilience by assessing risks and vulnerabilities, prioritizing identified actions, and investigating options to implement.
- Measuring the economic resiliency of the region by the degree of regional income equality, regional economic diversification, etc.

5) Workforce Development

Incorporate workforce development into the CEDS by:

- Including specific measurable goals, objectives, and/or action items focused on workforce development, both from the perspective of companies and of workers, and, in particular, from underserved communities.
- Determine how best to measure the impact (e.g., employment and earnings outcomes) of any workforce development efforts.

6) Equity

Infuse diversity, equity, and inclusive economic and community development throughout the goal areas of the CEDS, to address systemic barriers to economic opportunities, wealth creation, and quality of life in the region.

7) Final Product/Deliverables:

- Minimum of four progress report virtual/in-person meetings with the CEDS Committee
- Executive Summary of findings and recommendations for the CEDS.
- Prepare one draft copy of the CEDS.
- Incorporate comments received from review of the draft.
- Present the preliminary CEDS to the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategic Planning Committee (CEDS) at a public virtual/in-person meeting.
- Prepare the final CEDS.

Provide five (5) printed copies of the final CEDS in its entirety, including attachments and appendices, as well as one electronic copy.

PART VI

Consultant Project Management

A. Designate a Project Manager

The consultant will designate a Project Manager to be responsible for the overall implementation of the project, direct interaction with all project partners, resolution of all issues and concerns, and attendance at required virtual/in-person meetings.

B. Attend Bimonthly Project Update virtual/in-person meetings with the CEDS Planning Committee.

C. Submit Written Monthly Progress Reports

The consultant will submit monthly written progress reports to SEDA-COG that detail the work performed during the past quarter, work planned for the next quarter, and all issues or concerns that are pertinent to the project. These reports will be produced in Microsoft Word and submitted electronically via e-mail to the Director, Project Development/Grants, the second Wednesday of each month.

PART VII

Timetable

- Issue RFP for Strategic Planning/CEDS Consultant, November 25, 2024
- Proposals due December 16, 2024
- Timeline for selection of consultant contingent on award of grant funds

APPENDIX A.

STANDARD CONTRACT REQUIREMENTS

Issuing Office: The RFP is issued by SEDA-Council of Governments (SEDA-COG).

Equal Employment Opportunities: A non-discrimination form must be part of the proposal.

Ineligible Proposer: The proposer certifies that they are not included in the U.S. Comptroller General's list of ineligible proposers.

Funding Out Clause: Where SEDA-COG obligations under the contract depend upon the receipt of funds from another governmental body, such as the Federal/State Government, and if such funds are not distributed by said governmental body to SEDA-COG, then this contract shall terminate and the grantee under this agreement assumes any risk of loss.

Prohibited Interests: No member, officer, or employee of the public body, SEDA-COG, or locality during his/her tenure for one year thereafter shall have any interests direct or indirect, in this

contract or the proceeds thereof. No member of or delegate to the Congress of the United States shall be admitted to any share or part of this contract or to any benefit arising, therefore.

Covenant Against Gratuities: If awarded the contract, the proposer shall warrant that they have not offered or given gratuities (in the form of entertainment, gifts, or otherwise) to any official or employee of SEDA-COG, with a view toward securing favorable treatment in awarding, amending, or evaluating the performance of the contract.

Proposal Acceptance: Each proposal will be submitted with the understanding that the acceptance in writing of SEDA-COG to offer to furnish the services described herein, shall constitute a contract between the proposers and SEDA-COG, which shall bind the proposer in his/her part to furnish and deliver at his/her bid price, and in accordance with conditions of said accepted proposal and specifications. A formal contract between SEDA-COG and the consultant shall be executed.

Proposal Ownership: All proposals, including attachments, supplemental, material, addendum, etc., shall become the property of SEDA-COG and will not be returned to the sender.

Proposal Award: SEDA-COG reserves the right to accept any proposal, or to reject any or all proposals, or to award the contract for the purchase of the services on such basis as SEDA-COG deems to be in their best interests.

Contract Changes: Any proposed change in the contract shall be submitted to SEDA-COG for its prior approval and SEDA-COG may, at any time, by written order, and without advance notice to the sureties, make changes within the general scope of the contract, to the study specifications. If any such changes cause an increase or decrease in the cost of or the time required for the performance of any part of the work under the contract, whether changes or not changed by any such order, an equitable adjustment shall be made in the contract price or delivery schedule, or both, and the contract shall be modified in writing accordingly. Any claim by the proposer for adjustment under this clause must be asserted within thirty (30) days from the date of receipt by the proposer of the modification of change. However, SEDA-COG can act upon any such claim asserted at any time prior to final payment under the contract.

Termination of Contract: SEDA-COG reserves the right to terminate the contract for or without cause and settlement payment will be based on successful delivery prior to termination. SEDA-COG shall pay the aggregate price of the delivered service, completed in accordance with the prices specified in the contract. In the event of termination, all furnished or unfurnished documents, data, studies, surveys, models, and reports prepared by the consultant shall, at the option of SEDA-COG, become the property of SEDA-COG.

Maintenance of Records: The consultant will maintain records to show the actual time involved in the accomplishment of the costs incurred.

Subcontracting: It is expected that the assigned project team shall be responsible for completing the work tasks. Other subcontracting must be detailed in the consultant's original work program and shall be done only upon approval by SEDA-COG in accordance with the provisions of the contract. Contracts with said outside experts and contractors must be made in conformity with the bidding requirements of the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania pertaining to such contracts unless

the consultant exhibits proof acceptable to SEDA-COG that they are not required to advertise for proposals and award such contract to the lowest bidding expert/contractor. In the event that the consultant publicly advertises a request for proposal, the consultant shall submit to SEDA-COG a list of all subcontractors submitting proposals. In the event that the low bidder is not awarded the contract, the consultant shall submit to SEDA-COG an explanation of the reasons why the contract was not awarded to the lowest bidder. Compliance with the provisions of this paragraph shall be a conditional precedent to the disbursement of any of the funds to SEDA-COG.

Compensation, Payment Schedule, Reporting Allowable Costs, Progress Reports: As a condition to disbursement, the consultant will be required to submit to SEDA-COG a copy of all contracts with outside experts/subcontractors engaged by the consultant to participate in the project. If the consultant complies with the conditions for disbursement as herein above set forth, and as otherwise provided in this contract, each quarter, funds shall be disbursed. The reports and products must be satisfactory in form and content to SEDA-COG and must be accompanied by all required supporting data. Payment will be made monthly by SEDA-COG to the consultant upon receipt of acceptable invoices within fifteen (15) business days following receipt of funds to SEDA-COG. In addition to the invoice, the consultant shall also submit to SEDA-COG, written quarterly progress reports summarizing the work accomplished for that month, by task, in accordance with the requirements outlined in the Scope of Work.

Small and/or Minority-Owned Businesses: Efforts will be made by SEDA-COG to utilize small businesses and minority-owned businesses. A consultant qualifies as a small business firm, if it meets the definition of “small business” as established by the Small Business Administration (13 CFR 121.201), by having average annual receipts for the last three fiscal years of less than six million dollars.

Contract Preparation/Notice to Proceed: SEDA-COG will prepare a written contract for execution between the consultant and SEDA-COG. The general provisions of this contract, the Final Work Program, and requirements placed on the project, shall be made a part of this contract. The consultant shall have authorization to proceed upon a written notice from SEDA-COG.

Meetings: Virtual/in-person meetings will be scheduled between the consultant and the project partners as specified in the Scope of Work. Other meetings may be held upon recommendation of SEDA-COG or the consultant.

Findings: The consultant will incorporate written and oral comments in a draft before preparing the final draft. The number of draft and final reports will be produced in conjunction with requirements set forth in the Scopes of Work for each plan (detailed earlier in this RFP). The associated mapping generated through this project should be submitted in digital format as shapefiles, geodatabases, or KML files.

Availability of Completed Reports: SEDA-COG will make available prior reports and studies to the consultant, in whole or in part, which pertains to the completion of the project. A confidentiality statement will be prepared by SEDA-COG and signed by the consultant prior to the issuance and release of any reports.

APPENDIX B

NONDISCRIMINATION/SEXUAL HARASSMENT CLAUSE

During the term of the contract, Consultant agrees as follows:

1. In the hiring of any employee(s) for the manufacture of supplies, performance of work, or any other activity required under the contract or any subcontract, the Consultant, subconsultant, or any person acting on behalf of the Consultant or subconsultant shall not, by reason of gender, race, creed, or color, discriminate against any citizen of this Commonwealth who is qualified and available to perform the work to which the employment relates.
2. Neither the Consultant nor any subconsultant nor any person on their behalf shall in any manner discriminate against or intimidate any employee involved in the manufacture of supplies, the performance of work, or any other activity required under the contract on account of gender, race, creed, or color.
3. Consultants and subconsultants shall establish and maintain a written sexual harassment policy and shall inform their employees of the policy. The policy must contain a notice that sexual harassment will not be tolerated and employees who practice it will be disciplined.
4. Consultants shall not discriminate by reason of gender, race, creed, or color against any subconsultant or supplier who is qualified to perform the work to which the contracts relates.
5. The Consultant and each subconsultant shall furnish all necessary employment documents and records to and permit access to their books, records, and accounts by the contracting agency and the [Bureau of Contract Administration and Business Development], for purposes of investigation, to ascertain compliance with provisions of this Nondiscrimination/Sexual Harassment Clause. If the Consultant or any subconsultant does not possess documents or records reflecting the necessary information requested, the Consultant or subconsultant shall furnish such information on reporting forms supplied by the contracting agency or the [Bureau of Contract Administration and Business Development].
6. The Consultant shall include the provisions of this Nondiscrimination/Sexual Harassment Clause in every subcontract so that such provisions will be binding upon each subconsultant.
7. SEDA-COG may cancel or terminate the contract and all money due or to become due under the contract may be forfeited for a violation of the terms and conditions of this Nondiscrimination/Sexual Harassment Clause. In addition, the agency may proceed with debarment or suspension and may place the Consultant in the Consultant Responsibility File.