



**STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

**REQUEST FOR INFORMATION
FOR
Appalachian Regional Commission Grant Management Consulting Services**

**RFI # 33004-41624
February 8, 2024**

1. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE:

The State of Tennessee, Department of Economic and Community Development (TNECD) issues this Request for Information (“RFI”) for the purpose of identifying a consultant firm with expertise and experience in the oversight of Appalachian Regional Commission grants and construction projects. We appreciate your input and participation in this process.

2. BACKGROUND:

TNECD includes the Community and Rural Development (CRD) division. The CRD division is focused on using established funding programs and new initiatives to connect communities to funding and technical assistance, to help communities identify and build off their assets, and to advance economic development across the state.

The Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) is one of the established funding programs used within CRD. There are several different programs that fall under the ARC umbrella including: ARISE, INSPIRE, POWER, and Area Development. ARC Area Development funding has historically been the focus of TNECD. The ARISE initiative aims to drive large-scale, regional economic transformation through multi-state collaborative projects across Appalachia. INSPIRE is an initiative that focuses on addressing the substance use disorder (SUD) crisis by creating or expanding a recovery ecosystem that will lead to workforce entry or re-entry. The POWER initiative focuses on helping communities and regions that have been affected by job losses in coal mining, coal power plant operations, and coal-related supply chain industries due to the changing economics of America’s energy production. Each program can fund construction or non-construction projects. Typical projects include workforce development, building construction or rehabilitation, capacity building or leadership training, tourism development projects, and basic public infrastructure projects. This funding relies on a flexible “bottom up” approach to economic development, empowering Appalachian communities to work with their state governments to design impactful investment opportunities to support our mission and investment priorities.

Construction projects cannot be managed by ARC and must be managed by a Basic Agency. TNECD serves as a Basic Agency and needs assistance with managing/administering construction projects throughout the region. The CRD division evaluates, scores, and awards all construction project applications. The CRD division also oversees the administration of these projects which includes the following components: reviewing environmental review records,

preparation of basic agency letters, reviewing plans and specifications, issuance of the notice to bid, review and recommend for approval of requests for payment, monitoring of project files and process, assistance with project files and close-out, assistance with application review, ensuring project compliance with federal rules and regulations, and offering technical assistance through the life of the project. Specific ideas regarding how a contractor could assist with the grant administration are requested. Please note that construction projects can be open 3-5 years, and on average 25-30 projects are added every year.

3. COMMUNICATIONS:

3.1. Please submit your response to this RFI via email to:

Brice Rochelle
Assistant General Counsel (Director of Contracts)
State of Tennessee, Department of Economic and Community Development
brice.j.rochelle@tn.gov

3.2. Please feel free to contact the Department of Economic and Community Development with any questions regarding this RFI. The main point of contact will be:

Brice Rochelle
Assistant General Counsel (Director of Contracts)
State of Tennessee, Department of Economic and Community Development
312 Rosa L. Parks Ave.
Nashville, TN 37243
(615) 946-0642
brice.j.rochelle@tn.gov

3.3. Please reference RFI # 33004-41624 with all communications to this RFI.

4. RFI SCHEDULE OF EVENTS:

EVENT		TIME (Central Time Zone)	DATE (all dates are State business days)
1.	RFI Issued	N/A	February 8, 2024
2.	RFI Response Deadline	5:00PM	March 11, 2024

5. GENERAL INFORMATION:

5.1. Responding to this RFI is a prerequisite for responding to any future solicitations related to this project. Responses to this RFI will not create any contract rights and responses to this RFI will become property of the State.

5.2. The information gathered during this RFI is part of an ongoing procurement. In order to prevent an unfair advantage among potential respondents, the RFI responses will not be available until after the completion of evaluation of any responses, proposals, or bids resulting from a Request for Qualifications, Request for Proposals, Invitation to Bid, or other procurement method. In the event the state chooses not to go further in the procurement

process and responses are never evaluated, the responses to the procurement, including the responses to the RFI, will be considered confidential by the State.

5.3. The State will not pay for any costs associated with responding to this RFI.

6. INFORMATIONAL FORMS:

The State is requesting the following information from all interested parties. Please fill out the following forms:

- 6.1. The Technical Information Form shown below indicates the specific information to be included in your response. All components should be addressed according to the instructions within this section and any item-specific instructions (e.g., page limitations), as noted below.
- 6.2. Respondents are not expected to insert responses directly into the RFI template. Please provide your response under separate cover in accordance with the details noted in the sections of the Technical Information Form below.
- 6.3. Please clearly label each question/item in your response according to the exact numbering system used in the Technical Information Form below.
- 6.4. To better enable an efficient and effective review process, please respond as succinctly as reasonably possible to satisfy the questions/requirements.

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TECHNICAL INFORMATIONAL FORM

1. RESPONDENT LEGAL ENTITY NAME:**2. RESPONDENT CONTACT PERSON:**Name, Title:Address:Phone Number:Email:**3. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF EXPERIENCE PROVIDING SIMILAR SCOPE OF SERVICES/PRODUCTS:****4. GENERAL BUSINESS EXPERIENCE:** Provide a narrative (in a separate document, if necessary) detailing the Respondent's experience, including any processes, best practices, and lessons learned in the following areas. Limit total response to 7 pages:

- a. Explain your experience in federal grant management and how that will assist you in managing ARC construction projects.
- b. Provide an outline of the staff structure within your firm noting who would be working on this project.
- c. Explain the capacity of your firm to manage this work.
- d. Share your experience in managing grants from start to completion. This should include the following components: reviewing or completing environmental record reviews, reviewing or developing plans and specifications in compliance with federal and state guidelines, review of requests for payment for construction projects, monitoring project files and construction projects, assistance with close-out, assistance with application review, ensuring project compliance with federal rules and regulations, and offering technical assistance and/or training to grantees, applicants, and subcontractors.
- e. Provide your experience using a grants management system and how that can assist you with managing these projects.
- f. Provide your experience with the Appalachian Regional Commission.

COST INFORMATIONAL FORM

1. Describe what pricing units you typically utilize for similar services or goods (e.g., per hour, each project, etc.):

2. Describe the typical price range for similar services or goods:

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

1. Please provide input on alternative approaches or additional things to consider that might benefit the State: