



## Solicitation/Request for Proposal

### **Economic Development Consulting Service**

**CED0000000407**

Responses must be received no later than: October 29, 2026, at 2:00 p.m. Central Time

Late responses will not be considered.

### **Solicitation Summary**

Ramsey County seeks proposal responses to (1) complete and update the County's Economic Competitiveness and Inclusion Plan (ECI Plan) resulting in an award to one firm and 2) provide a range of specialized Economic Development consulting services to multiple firms, to be provided on an as needed basis, for any County department, in the categories described in this document.

#### **SPECIAL NOTICE:**

This is a request for proposals. It does not obligate the County to award a contract or complete the proposed program and the County reserves the right to cancel this Solicitation if it is considered in its best interest.

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### Solicitation Documents

- **Solicitation Attachments Packet**
  - **Responder Declarations**
  - **Contractor Information Form**
  - **Contractor Certification Regarding Lobbying for Contracts, Grants, Loans, and Cooperative Agreements**
  - **Contractor Reference Form**
  - **Exceptions to Terms and Conditions Form**
  - **Attachment A: Rate Card (separate attachment)**
  - **General Contract/Agreement Terms and Conditions, inclusive of Contracting for Equity**
  - **Exhibit A: SOW Template**

## 1. Contact Information and Solicitation Schedule

### A. Contact information

Purchasing and Contracting Contact:

Name: Karen Bollinger

Email: [karen.bollinger@ramseycountymn.gov](mailto:karen.bollinger@ramseycountymn.gov)

### B. Solicitation schedule

| Items                                         | Date                          | Location/Link                                                                              |
|-----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Solicitation Posted                           | October 02, 2026              | DemandStar/Euna Open Bids                                                                  |
| Questions due via email                       | October 12, 2026 by 2:30 p.m. | <a href="mailto:karen.bollinger@ramseycountymn.gov">Karen.bollinger@ramseycountymn.gov</a> |
| Anticipated date answers posted by the County | October 15, 2026              | DemandStar/Euna Open Bids                                                                  |

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| Items                           | Date                      | Location/Link             |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Responses due                   | October 29, 2026          | DemandStar/Euna Open Bids |
| Anticipated interviews          | Week of November 16, 2026 | Virtual                   |
| Anticipated NOIA date           | Week of November 23, 2026 |                           |
| Anticipated contract start date | December 21, 2026         |                           |

\*Individuals needing an interpreter or individuals with a disability needing accommodation should contact the Purchasing and Contracting Specialist identified above prior to the date set for the responder information session so that a reasonable accommodation can be made.

## 2. Scope of Services

### A. Contract overview

Ramsey County (the "County"), through the Finance Department, seeks proposals to (I) Complete an update to the County's Economic Competitiveness and Inclusion Plan (ECI Plan) and (II) provide a range of specialized Economic Development consulting services, to be provided on an as needed basis, in the categories described below. Successful responders for (I) will be awarded a contract specific to the ECI Plan update. Successful responders to (II) will be awarded Cooperative Agreement(s) which may be utilized by authorized County departments.

Successful responders to (I) will be awarded a contract specific to the update of the County's Economic Competitiveness and Inclusion Plan (ECI Plan). In 2019, the County released a solicitation for Professional consulting services in the development of a countywide Economic Competitiveness & Inclusion Vision Plan to define and establish the County's most effective role in local economic development efforts. This plan resulting from the prior solicitation is available on the Ramsey County website at this link: [Economic Competitiveness & Inclusion Plan | Ramsey County, Minnesota](#).

Successful responders to (II) will be awarded Ramsey County Cooperative Agreements ("Cooperative Agreements").

Services under the resulting Cooperative Agreements do not include options for providing any legal services, with no attorney-client relationship existing or being created while doing work for the County pursuant to this RFP.

The purpose of Cooperative Agreements is to provide a streamlined, efficient, and cost-effective approach which expedites onboarding of professional consulting services. All services provided under Cooperative Agreements must be pre-authorized by the County. No services may be provided until a Statement of Work (SOW) is approved and signed by the County and contractor. The SOW template to be used for all engagements is attached to this RFP as **Exhibit 1**. SOWs may include additional terms and

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conditions if required for a specific project or request. SOWs will also be assessed to determine if additional insurance is required.

Any resulting Cooperative Agreement will not obligate the County to solicit or order any services from the awarded contractors and does not guarantee a specific volume of business.

### **B. Background**

With a population of over 500,000 residents in over 200,000 households, Ramsey County is the most fully developed and densely populated county in Minnesota. The County provides a wide range of services to residents with a work force of approximately 4,300 employees, 1,000-2,000 volunteers, and numerous consultants working in 26 departments in 12 major buildings and over 30 smaller locations.

The County is structured in a Service Team format. Additional information about the Service Team structure, including a list of departments, offices, and divisions, can be found at:

<https://www.ramseycountymn.gov/your-government/departments/organizational-structure>.

### **C. Business problem/opportunity**

The County seeks proposals to (I) provide an update to the County's ECI Plan and (II) provide a range of specialized Economic Development consulting services, to be provided on an as-needed basis. Specifics regarding the ECI Plan update and preferred categories of services and potential task examples for Economic Development consulting services are shown below:

#### **(I) Economic Competitiveness & Inclusion Plan Update:**

Qualified consultant teams should provide proposals to update the County's Economic Competitiveness & Inclusion (ECI) Plan. The current plan serves as the County's comprehensive economic development strategy and guides investments, policies, partnerships, and programs intended to advance equitable economic growth, strengthen regional competitiveness, and expand access to opportunity for residents and businesses. Since adoption of the current plan in 2021, Ramsey County has advanced numerous initiatives aligned with the plan's eight strategies. The County now seeks to evaluate progress, assess changing economic conditions, identify emerging opportunities and challenges, and develop an updated strategic framework to guide economic development activities over the next five to ten years. The updated plan should build upon the County's commitment to racial and economic inclusion, align with current County strategic priorities, and position Ramsey County to respond to evolving economic, demographic, technological, housing, workforce, and climate-related trends.

#### **The purpose of this plan update is to:**

- Assess progress made toward implementation of the existing ECI Plan.
- Evaluate current and emerging economic conditions affecting Ramsey County and the broader region.
- Identify opportunities to strengthen economic competitiveness and inclusive growth.
- Engage residents, businesses, community organizations, municipalities, educational institutions, and other interested parties in shaping future priorities.
- Develop measurable goals, strategies, actions, and performance measures for County implementation.
- Provide a practical implementation framework that identifies roles, responsibilities, partnerships, funding opportunities, and accountability mechanisms.
- Support place-based economic development and commercial corridor revitalization.

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- Promote fiscal sustainability and effective public investment.
- Establish measurable outcomes and performance metrics.

#### **The updated plan shall:**

- Advance equitable economic growth and wealth-building opportunities.
- Address racial and geographic disparities in economic outcomes.
- Support housing stability and affordability.
- Strengthen workforce development and talent pipelines.
- Expand entrepreneurship and small business ownership opportunities.
- Foster innovation, business retention, business expansion, and targeted industry growth.
- Support place-based economic development and commercial corridor revitalization.
- Promote fiscal sustainability and effective public investment.
- Establish measurable outcomes and performance metrics.
- Align with County strategic priorities, local economic development efforts, regional initiatives, and state and federal funding opportunities.

### **(II) Economic Development consulting services:**

#### **1. Strategy & Economic Development**

- Strategic Planning
- Market & Economic Analysis (e.g. Housing, Industry Clusters, etc.)
- Business Development & Recruitment
- Economic Development Incentives & Finance
- Community Engagement
- Housing Needs Assessment
- Community Development Programs
- Place Branding & Promotion
- Creative Placemaking and Marketing

#### **2. Real Estate, Planning & Redevelopment**

- Site Selection & Acquisition
- Development Feasibility
- Real Estate Advisory Services
- Public-Private Partnerships (P3)
- District & Catalyst Projects
- Land Use or Small Area Planning
- Zoning & Entitlements
- Environmental & Sustainability
- Urban Design & Landscape Architecture
- Campus and Facility Planning

#### **3. Infrastructure & Project Delivery**

- Infrastructure Planning
- Engineering Coordination
- Program Management

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- Transaction & Implementation Support

### **4. Analytics, Technology & Compliance**

- GIS & Mapping
- Data & Analytics
- Real Estate & Regulatory

### **D. Primary tasks/services/deliverables/milestones**

A deliverable for Category 1 to update to the County's Economic Competitiveness and Inclusion Plan (ECI Plan) it is anticipated a final draft will be provided at the end of first quarter 2028. Additional milestones will be determined based on the awarded contractor's proposed approach.

Category 2 deliverables/milestones will be determined and noted in the resulting SOW approved by both parties.

### **E. Responder qualifications**

Responders must be capable of providing resources as evidenced by years of experience of comparable and completed projects for the category 1 and category 2 as described above and as shown on **Attachment A - Rate Card**.

Responders demonstrating significant experience in providing services to other similarly sized and situated organizations are preferred

### **F. Mandatory legal requirements**

See the Solicitations Exhibit Packet for the General Contract/Agreement Terms and Conditions that will be made part of the resulting contract

## **3. Instructions to Responders**

### **A. Anticipated contract term**

The term of this agreement is anticipated to be from December 2026 through December 2031, with the option to extend up to an additional [insert number of years contract may be extended] years in increments determined by the County.

### **B. Questions and communications**

Questions concerning this Solicitation are to be submitted by the deadline included above in the Solicitation schedule and submitted via e-mail to the named purchasing and contracting specialist contact listed above. Please include the Solicitation name and number in the subject line of the email.

The County is not obligated to answer questions submitted after the question due date and time. To ensure open and fair competition, all questions are received by a certain date and answers are shared as an addenda to the Solicitation.

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Only personnel listed above are authorized to discuss this Solicitation with responders. Contact regarding this Solicitation with any personnel not listed above could result in disqualification. This provision is not intended to prevent responders from seeking guidance from the County regarding general purchasing and contracting questions.

#### C. Response submission

Please submit your response in the DemandStar/Euna Open Bids portal. NOTE: DemandStar is re-branding as Euna Open Bids. Any reference to “DemandStar” in this RFP shall include reference to “Euna Open Bids” and vice versa.

To submit a response, you must first register with the portal. For more information on how to register, go to the [How to Contract With Ramsey County](#) page for written and video instructions.]

**Responders are strongly encouraged to make their submissions well in advance of the response due date as the submission process may take some time to complete.**

## 4. Response Format and Content

Responses **must** adhere to the following format.

The response shall contain the following information:

The County wishes to establish Cooperative Agreements with various contractors for the categories referenced in II and may award a contract to several responders. **Responders must submit separate proposal response(s) for either category I or II noted above. Responders may provide separate responses to both categories. Clearly state on the first page of the proposal which category it is for.**

#### a. Required forms:

- Responder Declarations
- Lobbying Certification Form
- References Form

Three (3) references (not a Ramsey County employee or an elected official) for whom the Responder has provided services, including at least one for key staff included in the response, like those described in the scope of services. If Responder will be using a subcontractor, the County may request references for the subcontractor as well. The County reserves the right to check other references not provided by the Responder.

**Emphasis should be given to providing references that are governmental organizations of similar size to the County. The County may request additional references from Responder.**

- Exceptions to County's Terms and Conditions (optional)  
Any exceptions to the County's Contract Terms and Conditions must appear in the optional form. The County has no obligation to accept or agree to any such exceptions requested by a Responder.

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**Note:** Responders requesting no exceptions will be awarded the full points in this category. Exceptions will be scored based on the significance of the exceptions to the County; minor exceptions will be scored higher.

- b. Workplan. A workplan in response to the scope of services, including but not limited to the following:
- the specific strategies and methods for performing services needed and described in Section 1 (both categories);
  - identify all subcontractors (both categories);
  - tasks with estimated duration (category 1 only);
  - an implementation schedule including estimated start and finish dates (category 1 only);
  - capacity to perform the services (both categories);
  - availability of staff and resources (both categories);
  - a proposed team organization and management plan (both categories);
  - list of deliverables (category 1 only); and
  - expectations of the county in this work (category 1 only).
- c. Qualifications and experience. Information for key staff must include:
- A profile of the Responder, including the size, organizational structure, and history.
  - A narrative of the experience of the firm in performing similar services.
  - Provide brief descriptions of at least three projects dealing with economic development or similar services completed by or under the direction of your firm. Include your description, the techniques and approaches utilized. Where applicable, provide examples of entities that have specific measurable outcomes tied to your project experience.
  - Resumes or brief description of work experience for key staff performing services in the response. For example:
    1. professional credentials;
    2. education or certifications;
    3. expertise and capability; and experience
- d. Rate Cards and unit costs.
- Responders are to provide a Not-to-Exceed amount if responding to Category 1 – Update **County's Economic Competitiveness and Inclusion Plan (ECI Plan)** as part of their proposal.
  - Responders for Category 2 need to specify the categories they are responding to in their proposal and on Attachment A: Rate Card.
- e. Advancing Racial and Health Equity and Shared Community Power  
Ramsey County is committed to reducing disparities for Ramsey County residents and employees. Include at least two examples of how your organization promotes racial equity, diversity, and inclusion within your workplace and/or community. If applicable, provide specific recommendations of how this approach will be foundational to the services provided as part of this contract.
- f. Community Engagement approach.  
Ramsey County is committed to shared community power, equity strategy management, and culturally specific enhancement. Include at least two examples of how your organization engages with the communities you are in. If applicable, provide specific recommendations of how this approach will be foundational to the services provided as part of this contract.

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## 5. Evaluation and Selection Process

### A. Response evaluation and criteria

1. The County will first review each proposal for responsiveness to determine if the Responder satisfies all mandatory requirements. The County will evaluate the mandatory requirements on a pass/fail basis.

Mandatory Requirements. The following will be considered on a pass/fail basis:

- Responses must be received by the due date and time specified in this solicitation.
- Attachment A must be present if responding to Category 2.
- Provide a separate response for Category 1 and a separate response for Category. State at the top of the proposal response which category it applies to.

2. Responses meeting the mandatory requirements will then be evaluated based on:

#### Category 1 – Updated Strategic Plan

| Item                                                          | Scoring (Points)  |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Workplan/Approach                                             | 30 points         |
| Qualifications and Experience                                 | 30 points         |
| Cost – Not to Exceed                                          | 20 points         |
| Advancing Racial and Health Equity and Shared Community Power | 10 points         |
| Community Engagement Approach                                 | 10 points         |
| <b>Total</b>                                                  | <b>100 points</b> |

#### Category 2 – Consultants

| Item                                                          | Scoring (Points)  |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Workplan/Approach                                             | 25 points         |
| Qualifications and Experience                                 | 25 points         |
| Rate Card – Attachment A                                      | 20 points         |
| Advancing Racial and Health Equity and Shared Community Power | 10 points         |
| Community Engagement Approach                                 | 10 points         |
| Exceptions to County's Terms and Conditions                   | 10 points         |
| <b>Total</b>                                                  | <b>100 points</b> |

After review of each responsive response, the County may immediately award a contract to a successful Responder based on the evaluation criteria, or it may establish a short list of Responders for further consideration. The short list of Responders may be to an interview, presentation, or system demonstration, or asked to provide additional information.

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### **B. Interviews/presentations [Optional]**

The County reserves the right to request additional information from Responders during any phase of the response evaluation process. During the evaluation process, the County may require the presence of a Responder to make a presentation and/or answer specific questions regarding their response.

Responders to Category 1 should reserve the week of November 16, 2026 for a possible presentation. Any request for a presentation will be made no later than Week of November 02, 2026. The County does not intend to perform interview for responders to Category 2.

If the County chooses to hold interviews/demonstrations, invitations will be extended to the Responders with the highest evaluation scores.

Additional points are allocated to interviews and/or demonstrations, as determined by Ramsey County.

### **C. Award of contract**

The County will make its selection as determined by this evaluation process. The County reserves the right to pursue negotiations on any exception taken to the County's standard terms and conditions. In the event that negotiated terms cannot be reached, the County reserves the right to terminate negotiations and begin negotiating with the next highest scoring responder or take other actions as the County deems appropriate. If the County anticipates multiple awards, the County reserves the right to negotiate with more than one Responder.

### **D. Execution of contract**

Before a contract becomes effective between the County and any Responder, the contract must be signed by the County Board or its designee. If for any reason the County Board or its designee does not sign the contract, then there are no binding obligations whatsoever between the County and the Responder relative to the proposed contract.

## **6. Solicitation Terms**

### **A. Competition in Responding**

The County desires open and fair competition. Questions from responders regarding any of the requirements of the Solicitation must be submitted in writing to the Purchasing and Contracting Contact listed in the Solicitation before the due date and time. If changes are made, the County will issue an addendum.

Any evidence of collusion among responders in any form designed to defeat competitive responses will be reported to the necessary authorities for investigation and appropriate action.

### **B. Addenda to the Solicitation**

Changes to the Solicitation will be made by addendum and posted in the same manner as the original Solicitation. Any addenda issued will become part of the Solicitation.

**CED0000000407: Economic Development Consulting Service****C. Responder's right to edit, submit, resubmit and/or cancel or withdraw its response**

A responder may edit, submit, resubmit and/or cancel or withdraw its response at any time before the response due date. Requests should be submitted in writing via e-mail to the Purchasing and Contracting contact listed in section 1A.

**D. Responses will not be returned**

Upon submission, responses will not be returned.

**E. Rights Reserved**

The County reserves the right to:

- Reject any and all responses received;
- Waive or modify any informalities, irregularities, or inconsistencies in the responses received;
- Negotiate with the highest scoring Responder(s);
- Terminate negotiations and select the next response providing the best value for the County;
- Short list the highest scoring Responders;
- Require Responders to conduct presentations, demonstrations, or submit samples;
- Interview key personnel or references;
- Request a best and final offer from one or more Responders; and
- The County reserves the right to request additional information.

**F. Public disclosure of response documents**

All materials submitted in response to this Solicitation will become property of the County. During the evaluation process, all information concerning the responses submitted will remain private or nonpublic and will not be disclosed to anyone whose official duties do not require such knowledge. Responses are private or nonpublic data until the completion of the evaluation process as defined by Minn. Stat. § 13.591. The completion of the evaluation process is defined as the County having completed negotiating a contract with the selected contractor(s). The County will notify all responders in writing of the evaluation results.

**G. Trade secret information**

Responders must not submit trade secret material as part of their response, as defined by Minn. Stat. § 13.37. The County does not consider cost or prices to be trade secret material, as defined by Minn. Stat. § 13.37. A Responder may present and discuss trade secret information during an interview or demonstration with the County, if applicable.

In the event trade secret data are submitted, Responders must defend any action seeking release of data it believes to be trade secret, and indemnify and hold harmless the County, its agents, and employees, from any judgments awarded against the County in favor of the party requesting the data, and any and all costs connected with that defense.

**H. Conditions of Offer**

Unless otherwise approved in writing by the County, Responder's cost proposal and all terms offered in its response that pertain to the completion of professional services will remain firm for 180 days, until

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they are accepted or rejected by the County, or they are changed by further negotiations with the County prior to contract execution.

**I. Award**

Any award that may result from this Solicitation will be based upon the total accumulated points as established in the Solicitation. The County reserves the right to award this Solicitation to a single Responder, or to multiple Responders, whichever is in the best interest of the County, providing each Responder is in compliance with all terms and conditions of the Solicitation. The County reserves the right to accept all or part of an offer, to reject all offers, to cancel the Solicitation, or to re-issue the Solicitation, whichever is in the best interest of the County.

**J. Responder's costs**

The County shall not be responsible for any costs incurred by Responder in connection with this Solicitation. Responder shall bear all costs associated with response preparation, submission, and attendance at interviews, or any other activity associated with this Solicitation or otherwise.

**K. Responder's ideas**

The County reserves the right to use any or all ideas, concepts, or other information provided in any responses. Selection or rejection of the response does not affect this right.

**L. Requirements Prior to Contract Execution**

Prior to contract execution, a responder receiving a contract award must comply with any submittal requests. A submittal request may include, but is not limited to, a Certificate of Insurance.