



Request for Proposals

Targeted Industry Analysis

Greater Peoria Region
Illinois

Greater Peoria Economic Development Council
401 NE Jefferson Street
Peoria, IL 61603
Chris Setti, CEO
csetti@greaterpeoriaedc.org

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Due Date: January 12, 2024 by 5 p.m. Central

Summary

The Greater Peoria Economic Development Council (GPEDC) is a public private partnership that works to improve the economic conditions of a five county region in Central Illinois: Peoria, Tazewell, Woodford, Mason and Logan. GPEDC provides economic planning services to the region via its partnership with the US Economic Development Administration (EDA) and offers a robust set of economic development programs in the areas of business attraction, business assistance, startup support, workforce development and rural economic development.

With the help of a grant from the Economic Development Administration, GPEDC is seeking proposals from interested, highly qualified firms to conduct a target industry analysis and peer comparison that will assist GPEDC and the region develop, refine and execute its business attraction strategies.

Background and Rationale

GPEDC has received a \$20,000 grant from the EDA, matched with \$20,000 in local funds, to engage a consulting firm to conduct a Targeted Industry Analysis. The study will utilize information about key strengths and assets of Greater Peoria to study the viability of targeted industries that represent growth opportunities for the region. Regional capacity, interest and ability will be tested against trends and needs within the targeted industries to validate the possibility of successful outcomes in those areas.

The Greater Peoria economy is anchored by three fundamental industries: manufacturing, agriculture and health care. Though those underlying elements are still strong, Greater Peoria is an economy in transition. Automation and changing business practices has shrunk the numbers of family-owned farms. The manufacturing sector certainly retains its importance, but its footprint has shifted. Offshoring and other economic changes moved production of Caterpillar equipment out of the region over the past three decades. In 2016, Caterpillar announced it was moving its headquarters to the Chicago suburbs (and subsequently to Texas), robbing the region of its identity of being home to a Fortune 50 company. Though manufacturing has declined in prominence, recent surges in the global and national economy have helped manufacturing jobs rebound significantly. Health care is now the largest employer by industry in the region. Besides the traditional hospitals and other medical services found in nearly all communities, Greater Peoria is the home to an entire 16-facility hospital system (OSF Healthcare), a college of medicine and numerous research entities.

Greater Peoria strives to diversify its economy to soften any downturns in any of its industries or problems at major employers. The region has considerable assets including a robust and increasingly well-coordinated workforce development system, a low cost of doing business with a high quality of life, and excellent logistical advantages such as rail and river transportation options. The region is working to leverage innovation assets like the USDA's National Center for Agricultural Utilization and Research, Caterpillar's Tech Center, Bradley University, the University of Illinois College of Medicine and OSF Innovation to create more scalable and innovative companies. Distillery Labs, a center of innovation funded in part by EDA, is a regional priority to harness these assets and the ingenuity and drive of entrepreneurs.

The project will result in a completed study that will provide GPEDC and its stakeholders with critical information that will allow them to advance strategies identified in the region's [Big Table CEDS 2021-2025](#). GPEDC leads the region's efforts around business attraction, with activities that include responding to "Requests for Information" from site selection consultants, compiling and presenting information regarding available sites and buildings, organizing data around regional capabilities, and developing relationships with corporations, site selectors and foreign economic consulates. The study

will provide evidence-based direction that will inform GPEDC's work, but more importantly be used to educate local stakeholders and advocate for interventions such as infrastructure, workforce programming, policy changes, incentive packages, etc. GPEDC also coordinates the region's business outreach and retention efforts and meets with over 100 businesses each year. Armed with the information and recommendations of the study, GPEDC and its partners will be able to advise existing businesses on growth opportunities in new and/or complementary industries.

More information on Greater Peoria and GPEDC can be found at www.greaterpeoriaedc.org.

Scope of Work

The scope of work includes two related deliverables:

- **Refined Targets:** Identify a preliminary set of target industries, analyze critical location factors that are important to industry leaders as they make location decisions, align industries to the strengths of Greater Peoria, and provide a recommended set of areas to pursue. Consideration factors should include, but are not limited to, labor, costs, infrastructure, market access, and proximity to inputs. This analysis should include industry trends which might affect local real estate needs and location decisions.
- **Peer Analysis:** Identify up to three peer communities who are competitive within the selected targeted industries that have analogous community, labor, and industry profiles. Identify strengths and weaknesses of Greater Peoria relative to these peer geographies.

The final report should contain recommendations regarding how target industries can best be pursued and a set of actions to be taken by GPEDC and other local stakeholders to optimize chances for success.

Engagement Deliverables:

The respondent's base price is expected to include the following items:

- Comprehensive Final report including:
 - Outline of steps used in the process
 - Presentation of data gathered and discovered, with observations on their value and usefulness
 - Recommendations on how data and observations can be used to adjust and/or develop strategies and programs
- Public presentation (virtual or in person) of findings and recommendations, with a slide deck that can be used by GPEDC and its partners for further publication
- Complete data sets on key topic areas delivered in manipulatable format (i.e., Excel spreadsheets) that can be utilized for internal and external activities

Proposal Response/Submittal Requirements

- *Project Approach:* Describe how your firm/team will accomplish the tasks outlined in this RFP. Provide a statement describing the scope of work as you understand it. Provide a detailed data-driven plan to achieve the necessary requirements and plan for accomplishing the work.

This plan should describe the approach, methodology, and procedures to be employed to gather the data, analyze findings, and develop recommendations.

- *Firm Information:* Provide a detailed description of the firm's/individual's experience in providing investigative and analytical services for similar projects. Include the type and number of clients served, as well as the size, scope, and nature of the projects involved. Include as attachments or via links at least two (2) samples of similar work conducted for other clients.
- *Assigned Staff:* For firms other than sole proprietors, provide information on each staff member that will be assigned to the project. Information should be summarized and include the staff member's name, credentials, years of experience, and number of years spent with the firm. Clearly identify the team leader. Please attach or include as appendices the resumes of the proposed team members.
- *Schedule:* Provide a timeline indicating tasks required and the anticipated completion date based on a February 1, 2024 start date for the project. The timeline should include specific milestones. GPEDC requires this work to be completed by July 31, 2024.
- *Cost:* Outline the cost to accomplish the project deliverables. GPEDC strongly prefers to enter into a lump sum contract with the selected firm vs. a contract based on time and materials. Please note that this project is being funded by a \$20,000 grant awarded by the US EDA. If the proposer's price exceeds \$40,000 (the sum of the grant plus the local match), please provide an alternative proposal that limits the scope to match the maximum amount and then further identifies the price(s) for additional work. If there are areas that proposers believe should have been included in the scope of work but were not or additional services that could be offered, please identify those opportunities and the associated costs. GPEDC will only consider such options if (1) the base scope is covered and (2) financial resources are available.
- *References:* Submit three (3) references of agencies for whom your firm has performed similar studies. Include the name of the agency, contact person, and summary of work performed (please include hyperlinks to any publicly available examples of work.)

Selection Criteria

Proposals submitted will be reviewed by GPEDC for completeness and qualifications. Although quoted price will be the primary selection criteria, additional criteria will be considered as follows:

1. Understanding of the project goals and objectives and the described approach to accomplish them (35%).
2. Demonstrated expertise and experience of the firm and proposed team members (30%).
3. Prior experience in performing similar projects (25%).
4. Project schedule (10%).

As noted, the maximum available funds are \$40,000. GPEDC will evaluate how much value it would receive from the maximum price. The cost of alternatives that exceed the maximum price is appreciated and will be reviewed, but will not impact the consultant evaluations.

Submission Timeline and Process

Firms interested in being considered for this work should submit all materials to Christopher Setti, CEO, via email at csetti@greaterpeoriaedc.org no later than **5 pm (Central) on January 12, 2024**. Proposals should include a narrative response to the items listed in the RFP; a cover letter signed by an officer or employee having the authority to bind the company; and any attachments, including sample projects and staff resumes, that support the proposal. GPEDC plans to expedite the review of submissions and may arrange for follow-up interviews with any or all of the qualified firms. Questions regarding this RFP or the work should be directed to Chris Setti **in writing** at the same email address. GPEDC reserves the right to publish any questions, answers or clarifications for other proposers to see.

GPEDC encourages the submission of proposals from disadvantaged business enterprises and companies owned by minorities, women, immigrants, and veterans. GPEDC does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, ancestry, national origin, disability, or veteran status in consideration of this award.

Other Items

- GPEDC reserves the right to reject any and all proposals submitted, to void this Request and the review process and/or terminate negotiations at any time, and to select a final party/parties from among the proposals received in response to this Request.
- Any and all Request elements, requirements, and schedules are subject to change and modification.
- GPEDC reserves the unqualified right to modify, suspend, or terminate at its sole discretion any and all aspects of this Request process, to obtain further information from any and all respondents, and to waive any defects as to the form or content of the Request or any proposal.
- This Request is not and shall not be construed to be an offer and does not commit the GPEDC to award a contract or to defray any costs incurred in the preparation of a proposal. All submitted proposals become the property of the GPEDC.
- As noted above, this work is funded by a grant provided by the US Economic Development Administration. As such, GPEDC is beholden to grant provisions around compliance with federal laws and regulations that will flow to the eventually contracted party. These are routine and ordinary provisions that include, but are not limited to, ensuring that parties are not barred from receiving government funds; will not use funds to conduct lobbying activities; are in compliance with nondiscrimination laws; etc. A full list of these items is available upon request.