

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Update

Lake County Partners (LCP), the non-profit economic development organization for Lake County, Illinois, is seeking proposals for the development of a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) and an infrastructure priority list based on the economic development impacts of a variety of developable parcels and the infrastructure they lack.

Background

LCP transforms economic opportunities into business realities by facilitating public and private collaboration to drive the local economy. Our focus is on attracting, retaining and expanding businesses, assembling business resources, and building a workforce pipeline to ensure that Lake County companies have what they need to succeed.

Lake County is located on the shore of Lake Michigan, is immediately north of Cook County and Chicago, and is bordered by the State of Wisconsin on the north. The county has a population of more than 700,000 people, and roughly 30,000 businesses of all sizes. Our strategic industry clusters are Pharmaceuticals/Life Science, Advanced Manufacturing, Healthcare, and Professional/Technology Services. We work closely with our Workforce Development Board, community college and others to create a groundbreaking partnership called the Lake County Workforce Ecosystem to help find, develop and grow our strong talent base.

Lake County has everything that people need to flourish—both personally and professionally, including:

- **A highly educated workforce.** In Lake County, 43% of residents over the age of 25 have a Bachelor's Degree or higher, nearly 11% higher than the national average.
- **Global industry leaders.** Lake County is home to 30,000 businesses, including many FORTUNE 500 and other headquarters.
- **Top-ranking schools nationwide.** Lake County offers a large selection of high-performing public, private, special education and charter schools. Nearly 60% of local public high school students attend a nationally-recognized school.
- **The right work/life balance.** Local companies are consistently ranked among the best to work for by publications such as Forbes, Chicago Tribune and Working Mother. Our blend of great businesses and thriving communities means that our residents enjoy the shortest commutes in Chicagoland—thus, more time for what matters.
- **World-class healthcare in your backyard.** Lake County's healthcare infrastructure, anchored by its six award-winning hospitals, is at the forefront of modern medicine due to significant investments in talent, expanded services, cutting-edge technologies and state-of-the-art facilities.
- **Beautiful and diverse recreation areas.** Lake County boasts over 50,000 acres of forest preserves and open space, 550 miles of trail and bikeway connections, 40 miles of Lake Michigan lakefront and more than 200 lakes and rivers which provide unlimited boating, fishing and swimming opportunities.

- **A gateway to global markets.** Lake County has easy access to O’Hare International Airport—the second busiest airport in the U.S.—as well as Midway International, Waukegan National and General Mitchell International Airports.
- **A first-rate quality of life.** The Lake County Promise guarantees that business is better in Lake County and life is fulfilling both in and out of the office.

Current Situation

The last CEDS for Lake County was certified by the EDA in 2013. That work drove several initiatives including a focus on sector-based strategies for our critical industries (Biopharma, Advanced Manufacturing, Professional/Technology Services, Healthcare and Arts/Culture/Entertainment), coordinated and increased activity to market and brand Lake County as an idea place to live and work, and through the creation of the Lake County Workforce Ecosystem. Our Workforce Ecosystem aligns partners across industry, education and workforce development to create talent pipelines in critical sectors, as well as to increase opportunity for those who come from underrepresented backgrounds or have other significant barriers to employment. We have integrated strategies, systems and partners to ensure that our world-class talent will continue to help businesses thrive here.

It is now time to develop a new roadmap that will help Lake County continue to grow through the COVID-19 pandemic, and enhance our resiliency as we face the economic challenges of the next five years.

Scope

LCP is looking for a fundraising consultant to help in the development and adoption of a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for Lake County, Illinois, including:

1. Review and research of EDA CEDS requirements, and previous County CEDS and other applicable County/regional strategic plans for Lake County. To be completed primarily by consultant, with some LCP involvement.
2. Form and convene a CEDS Strategy Committee including key stakeholders, representatives from the public and private sectors, higher education, workforce development, non-profits, and private individuals, and seek input through other existing channels such as County’s Municipal Economic Development Advisory Group and presentations at other partner organizations. Facilitate committee meetings and focus groups. Activity shared by consultant and LCP.
3. Prepare and complete a CEDS Document: Prepare and complete a CEDS document with all required elements including, but not limited to: Background, SWOT Analysis, Strategic Direction/Action Plan, Evaluation Framework/Performance Measures and Economic Resilience. The Consultant will lead this activity with some involvement by LCP.
4. The Strategic Direction/Action Plan section of the CEDS will include an “Infrastructure Priority List for Economic Development”; an inventory of developable sites in the County

and the necessary infrastructure to develop each; and steps to better use the Lake Workforce Ecosystem Partnership to identify job skill needs and gaps, and the types of training to address the same.

5. The Resiliency section of the CEDS will include consideration of potential impacts of and mitigation for natural disasters, and public health disaster events such as the current pandemic situation.

The final project deliverable will be the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for Lake County, Illinois, adopted by the Lake County Board.

RFP Response

1. **Qualifications.** To assess each firm's overall expertise, a complete list of qualifications, experience and at least 3 references (where comparable work has been successfully completed) will be required as part of the response to this RFP. Please include credentials for each firm member who may play a role in this engagement.
2. **Expectation of LCP Support.** Please outline for us what support Lake County Partners Board and staff would need to provide in order for this engagement to be successful.
Timeline for Completion. Please outline the timeframe for completion of the scope of work, including important milestones and deliverables.
3. **Estimated Project Costs.** Please include a detailed outline of estimated project costs, including hours per project/task/deliverable, a breakdown of professional fees. Please also outline the projected payment schedule.
4. **Sample Contract.** Please provide a sample professional services agreement for this type of project.

All responses should be submitted via email and by the due date to Bethany Williams at bwilliams@lakecountypartners.com

Timeline

RFP distributed by February 22, 2021

RFP responses due Wednesday, March 17, 2021

Contact

Please submit any questions to:

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