

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF:
**Feasibility Study for Incubation/Co-
work space in Cumberland, MD**

By:
City of Cumberland Office of Economic Development
57 N. Liberty Street
Cumberland, MD 21502
(301) 722-4156

I. Scope of Services

The City of Cumberland Economic Development Office in cooperation with Allegany College of Maryland proposes the development of a business incubator/co-work space and services to support business and contribute to economic development within the city. The Mayor and City Council of Cumberland, Maryland support this effort and have allocated funding to explore the feasibility, to define the stages and process for development, identify all funding sources, and to determine the suitability and cost of renovations for the city-owned property at 19 Frederick Street. The effort to create an incubator in this space is done in conjunction with the Allegany College of Maryland's efforts to establish a Western Maryland Center for Excellence.

Scope of Work

Phase 1 – Feasibility Study

The consultant shall assess market demand for business incubator space and services. This assessment should include surveys, interviews, and evaluation of regional economic, entrepreneurial and intellectual property activity and potential job creation. This assessment of market demand should at a minimum address the following:

1. Determine if the focus on Information Technology in conjunction with Allegany College of Maryland's efforts to establish the Western Maryland IT Center for Excellence is an appropriate business model and there is sufficient demand within the region for an incubator focused on this business sector.
2. Assess the level of community and business support for this business incubator model.
3. Assess the suitability of the building at 19 Frederick St. for use as a site for an incubator/co-work space in conjunction with instructional space for the Western Maryland IT Center for Excellence.
4. Development of a financial analysis of the ability for the facility to be self-sustaining.
5. Determine long term sustainability of the proposed facility and potential funding sources for creation of the facility as well as operations.
6. Identify institutions and organizations that could be partners in the incubator effort.
7. Recommend a general operational and management plan for the incubator.

Economic Development Purpose: The consultant shall determine the role of the business incubator in supporting the community's economic development objectives by strengthening the post-secondary presence within the city, nurturing an atmosphere of entrepreneurialism, and increasing the viability of downtown Cumberland as a business center.

Community and Stakeholder Support: The consultant should detail the level of community and stakeholder support for the incubator and its expected impact on the overall success of the project. This will include face to face interviews with local community, business and government leaders to gauge the potential level of interest in the facility. The consultant should also determine the services and equipment needed within the facility to generate willingness and desire for entrepreneurs within the region to see this as a viable location and local business leaders to support the project.

Market Analysis Report: Market research and community outreach should culminate in a market analysis, which clearly and fully demonstrates why the incubator/co-work space is or is not feasible and should address the identification of critical "go/no-go" criteria.

Building Suitability and Renovation Estimate: The selected consultant will provide a thorough analysis of the building (19 Frederick Street) in terms of its suitability to house the subject project. In addition, the consultant will provide an analysis of the upgrades and improvements necessary to house the subject project and other uses similar in scope. The analysis should include an estimated total renovation cost and also provide a per square foot renovation cost that the owner can utilize in evaluating other potential uses.

Phase 2 – Business Plan Development

If the outcome of the Phase 1 Feasibility Study is favorable and acceptable by the City, the consultant shall prepare a business plan and financial pro forma for the project. The Business Plan should include a structure and implementation plan to address appropriate vision, objectives, and goals for the facility and the methodology for measurement.

1. Identify management, staffing and operational model for the facility
2. Outline plan for fundraising including potential grants and other resources for start-up, operational, and capital investment

3. Determine all appropriate partners as well as how Allegany College should most effectively be incorporated into the facility
4. Define services, support functions, as well as business related equipment to be included
5. Client entrance and exit criteria, pricing guidelines, etc.
6. Revise and expand financial analysis and models
7. Prepare a cohesive and complete business plan that is ready for fundraising and anticipates an organization that will achieve sustainability

Final Report

The results of the study and a description of the individual tasks and activities conducted by the consultant will be included in the final report to be provided to the City of Cumberland Economic Development Office in electronic format. The final report will identify the next critical steps for how staff and stakeholders should proceed. Included in the final report will be a projection of new job creation benefit identified through the study. Copies of any survey results, interview transcripts, and other work materials generated by the consultants shall be provided with the final report.

Proposal To Include:

- Contact Information
- Cover Letter/Summary of Proposal
- Description of qualifications of the organization
- References to include a list of clients for whom the organization has completed similar projects
- Complete cost of services including all professional fees, travel, lodging, meals, reports, and all other costs associated with the project presented with a total not to exceed cost
- Estimate of the amount of time the organization would spend in the community performing the research
- List and description of project deliverables with a timeline for completion

Submission Requirements:

Required Information – Please submit the following information in the order requested:

1. Name, address, phone number, and email address of the person or firm submitting the proposal. Provide the name of the contact person and person authorized to contract for the firm if the proposal is being submitted by a firm.
2. The proposer’s qualifications to meet the City’s objectives and perform tasks listed in the proposal.
3. The proposed scope of work based on the City’s objectives outlined in this RFP. Include performance standards appropriate to the proposed work.

Pricing:

Bid must include the complete cost of the services and anticipated expenses referencing key areas of delivery with separation of Phase 1 and Phase 2 activities of the project with specific budgets and work plans for each phase, with logical flow between the phases.

Vendor Qualifications and Evaluation:

The preferred vendor should be able to demonstrate:

1. Capacity to assume this assignment and deliver within agreed timelines in addition to other commitments
2. Relevant experience and verifiable references of successful business incubation feasibility assessment and business planning or projects similar in nature
3. Ability to project costs based on recommended strategies
4. Superior written and oral communication skills, including ability to summarize, analyze and synthesize, compare and contrast information in a clear and logical format
5. Ability to work with multiple stakeholders to develop recommendations customized to meet the existing needs of the community

II. Administered By:

City of Cumberland Office of Economic Development

III. Submission Schedule:

July 10, 2014	Request for Proposal Advertised
August 13, 2014	Submission Deadline
August 19, 2014	Recommendation to City Council

IV. Solicitation:

To be considered, submit one (1) copy of the proposal in electronic format (CD or USB drive) to:

Shawn P. Hershberger
57 N. Liberty St
Cumberland, MD 21502

RFP proposals shall be received in a sealed envelope, prior to the deadline.

V. Communication:

All communications regarding this project, including questions related to this Request for Proposals, shall be submitted in writing or email prior to 5:00 p.m. (EST) on July 21, 2014

Shawn P. Hershberger
57 N. Liberty St
Cumberland, MD 21502

Email: shershberger@allconet.org

VI. Limitations:

- This request does not commit the City to the award of a contract, or to pay any costs incurred in the preparation for a response to this request.
- The City of Cumberland may or may not require the prospective proposer to participate in negotiations and to submit additional technical information or other revisions to their proposal as may result from the negotiations.

- The City of Cumberland reserves the right to reject and or all proposals, to waive the informalities, to requests additional information, and to award a contract deemed most advantageous for the City.

Minimum Requirements of Proposer:

- Previous experience in the performance of projects of a similar nature.
- The individuals/firm warrants that he/she is fully qualified, with adequate personnel and experience to undertake the services required within a reasonable time.