

Small Business Plan & Roadmap RFP | 4/14/2021

1 | Background

Washington, DC is a resilient city that pivots and grows in the face of challenges. We will continue to be the best city in the world to do business, bring big ideas to life, and set the standard for inclusive prosperity. Washington, DC is a city that welcomes all, cherishing the contributions of its diverse residents and global community. This is why Washington, DC is one of the most livable cities in the country and recognized as a cultural epicenter and historic center of Black culture.

Mayor Muriel Bowser's vision is for Washington, DC to become the global model for inclusive prosperity and resilience, showcasing how diversity and innovation can drive equitable economic growth. This vision was shaped by conversations that took place during the creation of the City's [Economic Strategy](#) in Fall 2016 with over 450 stakeholders, including business executives, local entrepreneurs, nonprofit leaders, neighborhood residents and many others. Across all of these conversations, near consensus emerged on several topics:

- Washington, DC must grow inclusively and not become a city accessible only to those with wealth and privilege.
- Washington, DC's diversity is a strength that positions us to innovate but must also be actively preserved and cultivated.
- Washington, DC is in a strong economic position, but we must continue to be proactive and forward-looking to continue our momentum and remain economically vibrant.

In addition to the economic strategy, we are also guided by the [ReOpen DC recommendations](#) presented to Mayor Bowser by the ReOpen DC Committee on May 2020. The recommendations were anchored on DC's core values of "HOPE" – Health, Opportunity, Prosperity, and Equity and it will serve as a guiding document in creating the small business plan and roadmap (the "Roadmap").

The onset of COVID-19 was swift and unpredictable. We now have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to thoughtfully build toward a more equitable, resilient, and vibrant city, but we will need to be measured, data-driven, and deliberate to ensure that we are able to provide relief and recover and grow as a City.

The Roadmap is considered a dynamic, equity-focused, and real-time implementation plan that reflects the voice of small businesses and reflects the Mayoral, District Economic Recovery Team, and ReOpen DC Plan's commitment to societal issues, intangibles and non-physical elements needed to make Washington, DC a "national model for small business inclusion, preservation, and diversity." Additionally, the Roadmap will aid in the District's effort for relief, recovery, and growth over the next few months and years.



2 | Purpose of the RFP

The Washington DC Economic Partnership (WDCEP), in partnership with Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning & Economic Development (DMPED), is requesting the development of a small business plan & roadmap (the “Roadmap”) for the City of Washington DC. The Roadmap will include (i) a 3-year strategic plan and (ii) 1–3year(s) implementation plan that articulates a clear and compelling vision with established goals, objectives and measurable action/implementation plan for how the City and its partners can help small businesses equitably start, grow and expand in the City. This Roadmap will be developed collaboratively by engaging public, civic and private stakeholders focused on creating increased equitable opportunities for existing and new entrepreneurs throughout Washington, DC.

The Washington DC Economic Partnership (WDCEP) will provide funds to the Contractor to develop the Roadmap, with collaboration from the relevant stakeholders (to be defined by the Project Team), with the following objectives:

1. Creatively blend the assessments of existing conditions, urban context, socio-economic needs, existing small business capital, development, and catalytic investments programs, and the diverse and inclusive public input from recent engagement efforts to inform both the short- and long- range plans;
2. Identify needs of Washington DC’s small businesses based on desk research, interviews, and surveys;
3. Catalog current programs offered by the City of Washington, DC, NGOs and the private sector and determine the gaps in available services;
4. Recommend solutions and short-term and long-term action items that will help bridge the gaps, align with other City recovery initiatives, and meet the needs of the small business community within the City;
5. Determine the highest impact role and strategic action the City and others servicing small business can take to implement the Roadmap; and,
6. Establish success measures and timelines.

Contract Length:

WDCEP will award one contract. The anticipated contract term will be from May through July 2021.

Contract Budget:

The maximum budget for this project is \$200,000.

Deliverables:

The Contractor will deliver the Roadmap as a fully designed press-quality report, complementary presentation, and an executive summary document that will serve as a standalone document.¹ The executive summary should include key findings and outline major goals, objectives, and recommendations, including, but not limited to, an initial outline of the Roadmap as described in the "Purpose of the RFP" section above. All deliverables should be created for public release and will require the Project Team's approval before final acceptance. In addition, the Contractor will also present the findings to the Project Team and City leadership using a PowerPoint presentation² that the Project Team can use to present the Roadmap to its stakeholders.³

Contractor Qualification:

The Contractor should have the necessary subject matter expertise, research and writing capacity, and project management skills to execute the development of the Roadmap from start to finish in the most cost-effective, timely and highest-quality manner possible. The Contractor should also be able to demonstrate their knowledge of Washington, DC's ecosystem either through their current/previous work or by partnering with a sub-contractor.⁴

Scope of Services:

WDCEP seeks to engage a Contractor to develop the Roadmap to help businesses start, grow and expand in the City of Washington DC. The focus of the Roadmap will be on small businesses which the Contractor will help define for the City. It is anticipated that the Contractor will need to address the topics and tasks outline below for the Deliverables. However, the final scope and content will be determined through conversations between the Contractor and Project Team, and the Project Team reserves the right to modify the scope and content as it sees fit. The Contractor is also encouraged to provide their own assessment of potential topics to include in the Roadmap.

1) Project Work Plan: Present a detailed workplan with proposed timelines for the development of the Roadmap. Development activities include but are not limited to:

¹ The Contractor will not be responsible for the cost of printing the report, but will need to provide high-quality, press-ready files and artwork. The report will need to be designed with a page count divisible by four.

² The contractor should share the PPT prior to drafting the final report.

³ The contractor should provide initial findings to the Project Team as part of the Roadmap. In addition, drafts for each deliverable will be expected.

⁴ The contractor's proposal should include all costs, including work performed by any sub-contractor(s).

- a) Provide a concise project workplan of the services to be delivered, including a proposed time schedule;
- b) Conduct kick-off meetings with the Project Team to discuss goals, objectives, and process;
- c) Coordinate on-going project activities with the Project Team; and
- d) Manage budgets and ensure that deliverables are produced on a timely manner.

2) Synthesis of Research:

- a) Existing Conditions Analysis: Existing Conditions Analysis should include:
 - i) Quantitative Analysis:
 - (a) Defining DC's small businesses (e.g., what constitutes small businesses in DC?)
 - (b) Number of existing small businesses
 - (c) Economic Impact of small businesses, including employment provided by existing small businesses differentiated by DC residents and non-DC residents
 - (d) Gross annual revenue generated by small businesses
 - (e) Industry trends to compare and contrast Washington, DC's ecosystem to other comparable cities
 - (f) Analyze failure rate of small businesses in Washington, DC
 - (g) COVID-19's impact on small businesses, including, but not limited to, comparative analysis of trends in small businesses in DC (pre-COVID-19 versus post-COVID-19).

Data should be presented as totals and as percentages of all business in Washington, DC. Data should be segmented by industry, geography (neighborhood or Wards), stage of business, ownership structure, and also key demographics (minority-, women- and immigrant-owned) and business designations (CBEs).

- ii) Qualitative Analysis:
 - (1) Business and Stakeholder Outreach
 - (a) Conduct innovative and creative outreach to businesses and organizations serving small businesses to gather input, maximize participation, and ensure an inclusive process that accurately reflects the small business profile of Washington, DC.
 - (2) Document review of policies, program, existing plans, and initiatives offered by the public, non-profit and the private sector.
 - (3) Identify reasons why small businesses fail and/or are unable to expand in Washington, DC
 - (4) Identify elements of the small business ecosystem and/or activities that support small business growth

- (5) Document and analyze best practices from comparable cities nationally and globally
- b) Identification of small business needs including needs of each sector (industry) and relevant cross-sections, and currently available resources to meet those needs.
- c) Create a stakeholder map that includes public, private and non-profits resources available to small businesses in Washington, DC
- d) Identify significant gaps in meeting small business needs based on the resource mapping (What works? What has not worked? What needs to be met?)

Proposals should include how existing research will be leveraged, what key data gaps exist and what proposed additional research will be needed to address key data gaps. An analysis of the information needed to achieve the goals of the Roadmap should be presented, along with a detailed description of the research to be conducted to obtain such information. Such research should include, but should not be limited to, use of existing business data as well as additional research such as voice of the consumer (VOC) data, research of best practices in other comparable municipalities, etc.

- 3) Recommendations:** Based on the research, and with input from small business experts, work with the Project Team, to develop:
- a) Recommended innovative solutions to address significant gaps based on analysis of best practices in comparable cities;
 - b) Prioritize recommendations based on potential impact and ease of implementation; and
 - c) Implementation plan(s) that outline action steps based on established goals, objectives, funding, and timelines.

- 4) Completion of Updated Roadmap:** Based on feedback provided by the Project Team, the Contractor will write the final roadmap with findings from "Synthesis of Research" and "Recommendations". The updated roadmap should include:
- 1. An Executive Summary that includes key findings and outlines major goals and objectives;
 - 2. An Introduction describing the purpose of the roadmap, vision, goals, and contents; and
 - 3. A section that includes a discussion of both public and stakeholder involvement in plan development as well as background summaries of existing conditions, demographic profiles, physical/environmental characteristics, etc.

Timeline:

The Contractor shall follow the established timeline below, completing the work in 3 months (90 days). The contractor is also encouraged to provide their own timeline based on their processes.

- a. Research and Draft Phase: Expected Timeframe: Weeks 1-6
 - (i) Orientation and initial meetings with Project Team
 - (ii) Presentation of Roadmap workplan and timelines.
 - (iii) Engagement with small business experts for research and vetting
 - (iv) Synthesis of existing conditions, priority needs, currently available resources and significant gaps data research
 - (v) Completion of draft findings and recommendations and preparation for presentation of draft findings and recommendations.

- (b) Convene and Vet Phase: Expected Timeframe: Weeks 7-10
 - (i) Presentation of initial findings and recommendations to Project Team and small business experts
 - (ii) Vetting of initial findings and recommendations with small business experts and stakeholders.
 - (iii) Development of the roadmap and preparation of final presentation based on feedback from the Project Team

- (c) Finalize and launch phase: Expected Timeframe: Weeks 11-12
 - (i) Presentation of findings to Project Team and the City Leadership
 - (ii) Finalization of plan content based on presentation feedback.

Collaboration:

Throughout the engagement, the Contractor shall work in partnership with the Project Team and shall have a dedicated project liaison to assist with each phase of the Roadmap (as described above) and to assist with collaboration with the other relevant agencies.

Tracking and Reporting:

The Contractor shall submit weekly email updates to the Project Liaison on the status of the work, including any anticipated adjustments to the established timeline. Any material changes should be disclosed to the Project Team as soon as possible.

Proposal Evaluation Criteria:

This RFP response will be evaluated along several dimensions:

- 1) Vendor Capabilities and Capacity

- 2) Experience - Experience of specific team members, quality and relevance of past work, history of meeting timelines/deadlines
- 3) Workplan and Methodology
- 4) Budget/Pricing Proposal – Effective and Efficient delivery of quality services within reasonable budget allocation
- 5) References

WDCEP will prioritize proposals that maximize participation of entities designated as [Certified Business Enterprises \(CBE\)](#). Additional preference will be given to proposals that maximize participation of Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) and/or Resident-owned Business Enterprises (ROB).

If the firm doesn't hold any designations, the firm shall make a good-faith effort to include CBE firms as sub-consultants. If no CBE firm will be utilized, the consultant's proposal shall describe the good-faith efforts that were taken in an attempt to include a CBE for completion of one or more tasks associated with the scope of work.

3 | Submission Guidelines & Timeline

Interested bidders must submit proposals by **5:00 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time (EDT) on April 28, 2021** to rfp@wdcep.com.

Proposals must cover the following topics in the order listed:

1. The bidder's qualifications, team members contributing to the Roadmap (including any sub-contractors and/or joint venture partners), any CBE certifications/categories (if applicable), capabilities to produce the required deliverables, and relevant work experience, including project examples and past clients;
2. Proposed workplan and task schedule.
Proposals should address the feasibility of completing the Roadmap for public release by the end of July 2021. If this timeline is not feasible, please provide an alternative timeline that incorporates the tasks above;
3. Staffing plan, rate schedule, and estimated project budget breakdown; and
4. Any assumptions underlying the workplan, staffing plan, or budget.

Proposals shall be submitted in a PDF file not to exceed 15 pages or 25 MB. Examples of past work submitted as attachments will not count toward the page limit, but each individual file may not exceed 25 MB. Proposals submitted by other means aside from email will not be accepted. Please include the primary point of contact, including email address and phone number. Please also include 3 references.



Questions about the proposal will not be taken by phone. **A conference call to address questions will be held on April 21 at 4pm.** Questions may be submitted in advance of the call to rfp@wdcep.com by no later than **Tuesday, April 20, 2021.** Prospective bidders interested in participating in the conference call should email rfp@wdcep.com to receive call-in details and notice of any scheduling changes.

If necessary, competitive bidders will be provided an opportunity to submit written best and final offers at a designated date and time.

WDCEP reserves the right to cancel or reissue all or part of this RFP at any time, without incurring any liability from prospective providers.

Proposed Timeline

- RFP Released: 04/14/2021
- Conference Call: 04/21/2021
- **RFP Responses Due: 04/28/2021**
- RFP Winner Selected: 05/14/2021

Please note, the timeframes listed above are subject to change at the Project Team's sole discretion at any time.