



TO: Prospective Suppliers

FROM: Kip Smalligan, Sr. Strategic Sourcing Specialist, Procurement Services
Ph: 616/331-3211 Fax: 616/331-3287 smalligk@gvsu.edu |

DATE: February 22, 2023

RE: Request for Proposal #223-16
SBDC Northwest Michigan Regional Host

Grand Valley State University is accepting competitive proposals for a regional host organization for its Small Business Development Center Northwest Region. See the attached instructions and requirements.

There will be a mandatory Pre-Bid Meeting via Zoom on Tuesday March 14, 2023 from 3:00 pm - 4:00 pm EST. Proposals will be accepted only from suppliers that attend the Pre-Bid Meeting.

Proposals must be submitted no later than Friday March 31, 2023 at 5:00 pm EDT by email to smalligk@gvsu.edu. State RFP #223-16 in your email subject line. Your proposal must be received by this date and time. No telephone, fax, or verbal quotations will be accepted. GVSU is not responsible for late, lost, misdirected, incomplete, or illegible proposals.

Questions regarding this RFP should be directed to Kip Smalligan at the above contact information.

I. Instructions:

1. Grand Valley State University is accepting competitive proposals for a regional host organization for its Small Business Development Center Northwest Region.

There will be a **mandatory Pre-Bid Meeting** via Zoom on Tuesday March 14, 2023 from 3:00 pm - 4:00 pm EST. Proposals will only be accepted from suppliers that attend the Pre-Bid Meeting.

Zoom link

<https://gvsu-edu.zoom.us/j/98879318958?pwd=Mlgrckx1SUJtNW96UXFyUHZ3WHlrZz09>

Meeting ID: 988 7931 8958

Passcode: 434781

Phone In: 312/626-6799 or 301/715-8592

2. Proposals must be submitted no later than Friday March 31, 2023 at 5:00 pm ET by e-mail to smalligk@gvsu.edu. State **RFP #223-16** in your email subject line. Your proposal must be received by this date and time. No telephone, fax, or verbal quotations will be accepted. GVSU is not responsible for late, lost, misdirected, incomplete, or illegible proposals.

See **mandatory Proposal and Content Format** on pages 7-10.

Complete and include the Attachments 1-3 with your proposal

3. Project Schedule:

February 22, 2023	RFP released
March 14, 2023 3:00 pm	Mandatory Pre-Bid Meeting via Zoom
March 31, 2023 5:00 pm	Proposal submission deadline
April -May 2023	First Interviews
May-June, 2023	Second Interviews
June 30, 2023	Award decision
Late July / Early August	Contract signed
August 2023	Regional Director hired
January 2024	Transfer to Host

4. Should it become necessary to revise any part of the RFP or provide additional information, notice of the revision will be given in the form of an addendum to all prospective suppliers on record as having received the RFP. Any addendum notices will also be posted on the [Bid Opportunities page](#) of the GVSU Procurement Services website www.gvsu.edu/purchasing. Each supplier should acknowledge receipt of any addenda in their proposal on the Proposal form, but the failure of a supplier to receive or acknowledge receipt of any addendum, shall not relieve the supplier of the responsibility for complying with the terms thereof.
5. Grand Valley State University is Michigan sales and use tax exempt. An exemption certificate will be provided to the awarded supplier if applicable

6. Grand Valley State University reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals.
7. Direct all questions regarding this RFP to Kip Smalligan at smalligk@gvsu.edu or 616/331-3121.

II. Introduction and Requirements:

A. Purpose

The Michigan Small Business Development Center hosted by Grand Valley State University Sponsored Programs Foundation (GVSUSPF) requests proposals be submitted from eligible organizations to host the Northwest Regional site, providing high quality small business assistance services in accordance with the requirements and terms and conditions in this Request for Proposals (RFP).

Small Business Development Center (SBDC) services include: one-on-one business consulting, capital access assistance, training seminars, and other specialty programs. MI-SBDC funding made available for these services comes from the Small Business Administration (SBA). SBA mandates the measurement and reporting of economic impact produced from its funding; this is a goal-based program focused on achieving a high return on investment of federal funds.

B. Reasons for Considering this Solicitation

Becoming part of the MI SBDC Network leads to new partnership opportunities within small business and academic ecosystem, infusion of federal funds for business service activities, sponsorship opportunities, access to SBDC-specific resources including a proprietary client and economic impact tracking system, proprietary and complimentary industry research tools and experts, and increased visibility for host organizations.

Small Business Development Centers provide direct and measurable economic benefits to the communities they serve. Established during the Carter administration, the SBDC program is the largest federally-designated technical assistance program focused on supporting startup and growing small businesses in all fifty states and U.S. territories. SBDC host organizations join a “family” of experts who are willing to share advice, resources and help local business assistance providers focus on what they do best—growing great local companies!

C. Service Territory

This RFP is issued for small business assistance delivered in Antrim, Benzie, Charlevoix, Emmet, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska, Leelanau, Manistee, Missaukee, and Wexford counties and for services to be available to all startup and existing small business in the county.

D. Applicant Eligibility

Eligible host organizations include:

- Fully accredited institutions of higher education such as community colleges, public and private universities, and state colleges;

- Private nonprofit corporations engaged in economic development activities; · Local counties or municipalities that have pre-existing community/economic development departments and/or programs; and
- Public economic development institutions such as workforce investment boards and economic development corporations.

Proposals will only be accepted from organizations that:

- Are qualified to conduct business in the State of Michigan
- Are in good standing with the Secretary of State
- Have not been debarred or had contracts terminated by the federal government, State of Michigan or local government
- Have accounting processes and prior experience necessary to manage and report on federally funded programs/activities in accordance with federal OMB circular requirements; and are NOT for profit businesses.

It is NOT a requirement that a host organization's headquarters be physically located in the SBDC service territory but they must regularly conduct business in the region or have a satellite office located within the region.

A special note for institutions of higher education:

There are many different ways to structure an SBDC within a university or college. SBDC services can fall under business, economics, engineering, or other academic units. Other SBDCs are hosted within the President's Office, extended/community education, service learning/career centers, or the office on a campus focused on community relations; special institutes and centers focused on entrepreneurship, technology commercialization, economic research, corporate internships, international trade, etc. are also potential places where SBDC services can be located and compliment pre-existing activities.

A special note for counties and municipalities:

When a county or municipality is the host organization for a local SBDC, services are usually managed within the unit of the county or municipality that is responsible for economic development, community development, and business permitting and/or workforce development. If a city or municipality is applying to host an SBDC that delivers services beyond its geographic borders, the bidder must have the authority to work outside these boundaries. If a portion of the required match funding is restricted for use within the host's boundaries, there must be assurances made that other non-restricted match funding is also available and plentiful enough to serve the entire geographic area within the proposal.

E. Funding Available

The awarded contract from GVSU to the successful bidder requires 1:1 matching funds to the SBA funds (\$220,000 for 2024). Each bidder must ensure that no less than fifty percent (50%) of the required contribution will be in cash (\$110,000). The remainder may be in in-kind match. Minimum cash match (50%) up to 60% cash match. Proposals with more than 60% cash match (more than \$132,000) will receive extra points in scoring. Minimum cash match (50%) up to 60% cash match: No extra points:

- 61% cash match up to 75% cash match: 5 extra points
- 76% cash match up to 90% cash match: 10 extra points
- 91% cash match up to 105% cash match: 15 extra points
- 106% cash match up to 120% cash match: 20 extra points
- 121% cash match and above: 30 extra points

Cash outlay must not include other Federal funds (except for CDBG funding), indirect costs, in-kind contributions, or program income derived from activities supported in whole or in part with Federal or match funds. Remaining match required to meet the 100% match requirement may be documented as in-kind match as defined by federal OMB circulars. All in-kind match will be valued at market value and require support documentation. Waived indirect may be applied towards a host's in-kind match.

The SBDC is a reimbursement program; the host organization pays for expenses incurred by the SBDC and then submits quarterly invoices for reimbursement. Applicants must have cash on hand to account for quarterly invoicing with net 60 days for payment (from the point of invoice and support paperwork approval).

Further information about budget requirements, cash match, in-kind match, program income, and indirect cost rates are located below.

III. Background Information:

A. SBDC Services

The SBDC Network offers a full range of business development assistance services made available to small businesses located in the 83 county region. Each county received in-depth, high-quality assistance to small business in complex areas that require specialized expertise. These areas may include, but are not limited to: management, marketing, financing, accounting, strategic planning, regulation and taxation, capital formation, venture capital, procurement, human resource management, production, operations, economic and business data analysis, engineering, technology transfer, innovation and research, new product development or commercialization, product analysis, plant layout and design, agriculture, business law and referral, exporting, office automation, site selection, or any other areas of assistance required to promote small business growth, expansion and productivity.

In addition to consulting, the SBDC Network provides training, conducts special projects and provides business-specific research and referral services.

B. Small Business Administration's SBDC Authorization

The Small Business Development Center (SBDC) Program is authorized through Congress and partially funded by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA). The SBDC Program is the SBA's largest technical service delivery program providing business support and training to the small business community. Federal SBDC funding from SBA is apportioned for each state based upon population. The SBA maintains cooperative agreements with 62 SBDC Lead Centers — including the one at Grand Valley State University -- and annually distributes SBDC funding through these contractual relationships. The MI- SBDC Network maintains a strong working relationship with the SBA District Office located in Detroit, Michigan.

C. Structure of a Local SBDC Service Location

There are a variety of ways in which local SBDCs are structured. This RFP is intentionally nonprescriptive in regards to structure in order to allow for creativity from the applicant and to encourage a wide variety of host organizations to consider the possibilities of hosting an SBDC.

In designing an SBDC structure, the bidder is encouraged to leverage existing office and training space, share use of equipment, leverage administrative and financial expertise and other assets of the host organization. Additionally, alignment with pre-existing business assistance programs at the host organization and access to and support from upper management should be considered.

A summary of elements that an applicant will want to consider in constructing a proposed structure include the following:

- Lines of reporting and where the SBDC fits within the host's organization.
- Host organization's ability to provide support functions;
- Pre-existence of related business technical assistance program(s);
- Pre-existing management and staff focused on business/economic development programs;

Use of internal personnel and/or contractors to perform business consulting;

- Physical location(s) of host organization in relation to SBDC service location(s); and
- Size of total SBDC budget (SBA funds, cash match, in-kind match and program income).

IV. Scope of Work

A. MI-SBDC Service Guidelines

1. Consulting

The core service provided through SBDC is consulting. Service and performance goals for the SBDC will be based upon consulting activities.

The SBDC shall design and provide quality consulting services to improve the skills and knowledge of existing and prospective entrepreneurs and small businesses. Consulting is a process of in-depth, two-way communication between client and counselor. This process includes identifying and analyzing the client's needs and problems.

The SBDC shall assist small businesses in solving problems concerning operations, manufacturing, engineering, evaluation and adoption of new technology solutions, personnel administration, marketing, sales, merchandising, accounting, loan readiness, technology commercialization, equity

financing, securing loans, business strategy development and other disciplines required for small business growth, expansion, innovation, productivity and management improvement.

Fees may not be charged for SBDC consulting. If an applicant to this RFP serves fee-based clients, methods must be identified for how referrals will be made to the SBDC and how the bidder will ensure conflicts will not arise between fee-based and free consulting.

2. Capital Access Assistance

The SBDC shall assist small businesses obtain growth capital through lending and equity investments. Services in this area shall include business plan development, financial statement preparation and analysis, cash flow preparation and analysis, understanding lending terms, loan application assistance, coaching on presentations for equity investors, etc.

The SBDC shall develop and keep current a wide range of close partnerships with traditional banks, community lenders, angel capital networks/groups, and other equity investment organizations. Regular networking that links lenders and equity investors with business owners is mandatory.

3. Training

The SBDC can offer trainings/workshops that are relevant to groups of business owners and/or entrepreneurs in the region. The Bidder is encouraged to arrange for co-sponsored training with the private sector and other organizations, to extend outreach and productivity. Training attendees may be charged a small fee to attend training workshops. Fees collected from training attendees are considered “program income.”

While trainings are a cost-effective way to provide education on topics that many small businesses have in common, trainings should be viewed as a secondary service of the SBDC, behind consulting and capital access assistance. Trainings can and should also be a good way to generate new consulting leads. Costs of training should primarily be covered from program income, sponsorships, or other co-hosting partners. Trainings may not be a primary cost for which SBA funding is used.

4. Client Activity and Performance Tracking

The SBDC shall participate in measurement of services delivered and client successes through use of Salesforce, our CRM online tracking system. Training on use of this system will be provided by the SBDC Lead Center to the SBDC personnel.

5. Staffing

The projected staffing must include a minimum of:

- 1 FTE Intake/Administrative Professional
- 2 FTE Consultants
- 1 FTE Regional Director

V. Proposal Format and Content

These instructions detail the mandatory proposal format and content to be used in each proposal.

A. Required Content and Format

1. Cover Sheet
2. Host Organization Contact Information

3. Narrative: The narrative portion of the proposal will address all the following items and not be longer than 8 pages in length excluding all attachments. Applicants are encouraged to focus on providing complete content in a streamlined manner. Please keep it simple!
 - a. Description/Qualifications of Host Organization
 - Provide a brief history of the organization, when it was established, when existing business assistance services were initiated by the organization and in which community(s), and location the applicant currently operates. What are the primary markets and target clients/customers of the organization?
 - Describe the organization's capacity to establish, maintain and operate the SBDC. Discuss how the SBDC "fits" within the organization and the purpose/mission of the SBDC aligns with the purpose/mission of the organization. Why does the applicant want to host an SBDC?
 - Provide a description of the host organization's primary services and activities. Describe how business and/or economic development activities fit within the larger mission of the organization if the primary focus is not business and/or economic development.
 - b. SBDC Structure and Management
 - Provide a description of the proposed SBDC location(s) and facilities, demonstrating accessibility to the small business community to be served. The facilities must be disabled-accessible, allow for posting of SBDC signage, include private office space for individual consulting, and provide accessible, free or low-cost parking. For each planned facility please describe if the location is currently under the control of the applicant or if space would need to be identified, negotiated and/or leased.
 - c. Fiscal Compliance
 - Explain how financial management will be handled by the host organization. Indicate the individual that will have oversight of the budget and the position responsible for tracking expenditures and submitting invoices.
 - Describe the organization's ability to maintain separate ledgers and transaction journals for SBDC financial activity to ensure a clear audit trail of the financial resources used under this agreement. SBDC expenditures of federal, matching, and program income must be accounted for separately from each other, from other host resources and must be identifiable by contract year (i.e. calendar year) in which they were provided.
 - Discuss the host organization's background in fund accounting and prior experience with fiscal management of federal contracts.
 - d. Financial Stability
 - Describe the organization's core funding. What are the primary ways the organization is funded and what have been the funding trends in recent years? If funding for the organization has significantly increased/decreased (+/- 20% or more) over the last three (3) years, please describe these circumstances.

- Discuss the organization's ability to manage a reimbursement program. What safeguards does the applicant have to ensure proper cash-flow over the year?

e. SBDC Service Delivery

- Address how consulting services will be implemented and managed. Include information about how consulting will be accessible throughout the geographic territory. Discuss any specialty/emphasis topics to be provided and how resources will be managed for maximizing economic impact of services.
- Address how capital access assistance will be implemented and managed. Describe any significant relationships with lenders or equity capital-related partners.
- Address how training services will be implemented and managed. Include information about how training will be distributed throughout the geographic territory. Discuss any specialty/emphasis topics to be provided or if web-based training will be provided. If trainings will be co-sponsored, indicate partner organizations that will collaborate on trainings.
- Describe any special projects that would be initiated/take place within the contract year. Please include any special expertise or targeted programs not listed elsewhere. Special projects are not required; however, if any resources will be spent on special projects they should be detailed.

5. Budget Form

- Format should not be altered. Both sheets must be completed (Budget Proposal and Budget Justification).
- ALL costs associated with the implementation of this proposal shall be included. Proposals with incomplete budgets will not be reviewed.
- The budget must specify which costs will be paid by award dollars (federal), cash match dollars or in-kind/indirect match dollars.
- Include waived indirect based upon applicant organizations federally recognized indirect rate if applicable. Waived indirect may be applied towards in-kind match.
- Estimate any fees or charges to clients for attending training workshops/seminars, special events, and non-business advising activities; all program income collected must be used in the direct support of the program and the use of these funds must be separately and clearly tracked and identified. By SBA mandate, program income cannot be used towards cash match or in-kind match requirements.

6. Selection Process

Each proposal shall be evaluated to determine responsiveness to MI-SBDC's needs as described in this proposal package.

- a. After the period has closed for receipt of proposals, each proposal will be evaluated to determine compliance with general RFP guidelines and specific requirements.

- b. The evaluation committee will then review all responsive proposals against the evaluation criteria listed Attachment 4. Proposals will be ranked based upon score.
- c. The evaluation committee reserves the right to designate one or more members of the committee to perform oral interviews with one or more finalist. The oral interviews will confirm information presented in the proposal. Further, the oral interview will allow finalists to demonstrate their understanding of the project objectives, and to articulate their capability to meet or exceed the requirements of this RFP.
- d. The evaluation committee reserves the right to designate one or more members of the committee to perform in-person site visits with one or more finalist. The site visits will confirm information presented in the proposal and oral interviews.
- e. A contract will be awarded to the applicant with a highly scored proposal, a high level of cost-effectiveness of proposed services to be offered, a demonstrated ability to provide sufficient fiscal and programmatic oversight of a federally-funded program, and any additional information gathered from oral interviews and/or site visits, if deemed necessary.
- f. GVSU reserves the right not to award any contracts.
- g. The chosen bidder shall be notified verbally or in writing as to their selection as the proposed contract awardee at the time GVSU posts the Notice of Intent to Award.
- h. Unsuccessful applicants will be notified in writing on the date GVSU posts the Notice of Awards.
- i. Preliminary contract negotiations shall begin on the sixth workday after the date the Notice of Intent to Award is posted.
- j. The successful applicant will participate in the MI SBDC “onboarding” process. Onboarding includes orientation of the new host, mandatory training of key programmatic and fiscal personnel, host participation in the annual all-region/all-staff meeting, and a series of startup checkpoints which must be accomplished by the new SBDC during its first six months of operation. Dates of onboarding activities will be negotiated with the successful applicant after the Notice of Intent to Award is posted. Onboarding activities will be included in the contract.