

Great Falls, Montana Energy Production Market Assessment and Economic Development Strategy

Request for Proposals

Great Falls Development Authority, Inc.

March 20, 2024

I. INTRODUCTION

The Great Falls Development Authority, Inc. (GFDA) seeks proposals to conduct a market assessment of energy production, energy support services, and energy retrofit demand in the Great Falls Montana trade area and to use the market demand assessment to develop an Energy Economic Development Strategy for GFDA and partners to pursue the identified opportunities. The purpose of the project is to determine market demand for increased renewable energy production, increased energy service businesses including energy efficiency retrofits and wind and solar installations, and to develop a strategy that we can implement over the next 3-5 years to attract investment in our trade area.

Interested firms are encouraged to discuss this RFP with us, as detailed below.

II. BACKGROUND

Great Falls Development Authority
<https://growgreatfallsmontana.org>

GFDA is a regional public/private economic development organization (EDO) and certified Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) that focuses its efforts on the 13-county Great Falls Montana trade area, also known as Montana's Golden Triangle. Great Falls Montana is an MSA with a population of 86,000. Our trade area extends to the Canadian border, for a total population of about 209,000. Our target industries are food/agriculture/bioscience, business services, energy, tourism, advanced manufacturing, defense, logistics, healthcare, and regional retail/services. Our EDO works on business attraction, business retention/expansion, business start-ups, downtown revitalization, workforce, and housing, amongst other things.

In June we adopted a new [2023-2025 Economic Development Strategy](#). One of the strategic actions in the strategy is to commission this market assessment.

The Great Falls region has attracted significant energy industry investment, including wind farms and a solar farm, electric transmission, hydropower,

renewable fuels (see [Montana Renewables](#)), petroleum refining (see [Calumet Specialty Products](#)), and energy support companies such as [Loenbro](#). We are interested in attracting additional energy industry investment to grow and diversify our industrial base and create higher-wage career opportunities.

Berkshire Hathaway Energy has recently purchased [the MATL Tie Line](#), an underutilized electric transmission line connecting Great Falls and Lethbridge, AB. Fifteen years ago there was considerable interest in constructing additional wind farms in our trade area and over the years there has been interest in additional solar farms. Some of the proposed projects were constrained by electric transmission capacity issues.

Great Falls is the proud home of [Malmstrom AFB](#) and the [Montana Air National Guard](#). Energy development needs to consider location restrictions to avoid conflict with USAF missile fields.

GFDA is interested in new opportunities created by the EPA Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund and other recent federal legislation that encourages increased renewable energy production and energy retrofits.

III. OBJECTIVES

We seek a Consultant firm or team to conduct an in-depth “all-energy” market demand assessment and assist the GFDA in developing an Energy Production Economic Development Strategy for the Great Falls trade region. This will be a two-step process beginning with an energy production demand assessment that will provide the foundation for the energy production strategy that will guide us over the next 3-5 years. This project would include existing renewable energy investment and energy businesses in the Great Falls trade area as well as demand for renewable energy production and increased energy service businesses including energy efficiency retrofits and wind and solar installations.

The objectives of this RFP are:

- 1) Summarize recent and existing renewable energy investment and energy businesses in the Great Falls trade area, essentially determining our baseline.
- 2) Assess the demand for increased traditional and renewable energy production in the Great Falls trade area and detail such demand by type of energy production.
- 3) Assess the demand for increased energy service businesses in the trade area, including energy efficiency retrofits and wind and solar installations.
- 4) Assess the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in the region to pursue increased energy production and energy service businesses.

- 5) Based on the market demand assessment, provide guidance to GFDA who will develop an economic development strategy for GFDA and partners to pursue the identified opportunities.

IV. SCOPE OF WORK

Consultants should detail their proposed scope work in their proposals. At a minimum, there are two required deliverables: 1) the market demand assessment; and 2) guidance for GFDA to use to create an energy economic development strategy.

The market demand assessment work should include extensive discussions with existing energy-related businesses in our 13-county region, as well as with the USAF, utilities, land use, and other regulatory agencies affecting energy production in our region. We expect the Consultant to spend time in person in the region. GFDA will provide staff support to identify businesses and arrange meetings. We expect 75-80% of the Consultant's work will be devoted to the market demand assessment.

The economic development strategy work should be conducted as a team with GFDA project staff. We desire a strategy that we can put into action to produce results. The economic development strategy should consider business expansion, start-up, and attraction opportunities, as well as financing, investment, and other tools and services GFDA could offer to attract and support private investment.

The market demand assessment and economic development strategy guidance products should be produced in PDF format; printed copies are not required. Consultants should include ongoing meetings with our project team throughout the project, some of which can be held virtually if desired. The Consultant should include a public PowerPoint presentation upon completion of the market demand assessment and a final PowerPoint presentation upon completion of the economic development strategy either virtually or in person.

V. CONSULTANT QUALIFICATIONS

We are actively seeking a consultant or consultant team with extensive experience in the field of energy production and energy-related market demand assessments, as well as in realistic energy-related economic development strategies. Our ideal consultant or team should possess a deep understanding of energy markets, particularly those similar to the Great Falls trade area. We value experience that transcends traditional knowledge, emphasizing familiarity with the unique aspects of energy production and consumption within our specific geographic context. We look to partner with a consultant who has a proven track record of successfully delivering projects in similar markets, and who can leverage this expertise to provide valuable insights and recommendations tailored to our distinctive needs.

VI. PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

An electronic copy of the proposal should be submitted in PDF format by email, Dropbox, or other electronic file-sharing method by 5:00 PM MST on Friday, April 5, 2024, to:

Tyler Menzales
TMenzales@GrowGreatFalls.org

We plan to distribute the proposals to our selection task group and, therefore, will not accept the submittal of printed materials. We welcome the inclusion of online URLs that would allow us to assess experience in more depth.

The submittal should follow the order below and include, at a minimum the following information:

- A cover letter signed and dated by the person or an authorized representative of the organization making the submittal.
- A brief statement of your firm's understanding of the goals of this effort and of the services requested in this RFP.
- A brief statement of the history of your team, including relevant projects.
- A proposed work plan indicating how your firm proposes to perform the project as defined in your scope of work. This work plan should be detailed enough to demonstrate your familiarity with this type of project. It should include information on your firm's methodology and schedule for completing the scope of work requirements. It should include the firms or sub-consultants and individuals that will prepare each major task or work product.
- Qualifications of key individuals to be assigned to this project, their availability during the relevant time periods, and their recent experience on similar projects.
- Preference will be given to consultants who provide references from at least three clients the consultant has recently provided services to.

VII. PRICE

The consultant will present a lump sum budget for the work, not including estimated travel expenses. Note, we will provide pro bono hotel accommodations. The lump sum should not exceed \$80,000.

VIII. CONSULTANT SELECTION

Consultants that respond to this RFP will be evaluated and ranked. This evaluation will be based on the submitted proposals and, at the discretion of the Committee,

on interviews with those consultants who appear to be particularly well qualified, as determined from their written proposals.

The consultants will be evaluated and ranked in accordance with the following factors, which are weighted as shown:

- The consultant's experience with similar projects (25%)
- The breadth of the consultant's experience, including the qualifications and availability of the key personnel who would be assigned (20%)
- The methodology and scope of services to be provided (50%)
- Cost (5%)

Negotiations will commence with the highest-ranked consultant. Upon reaching an agreement on a final work plan and price, the Great Falls Development Authority will award the contract. If an agreement cannot be reached with the highest-ranked consultant, negotiations may proceed with lower-ranked consultant(s).

IX. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION & CONDITIONS

A. STATEMENT OF NONCOMMITMENT

Issuance of this RFP does not commit the Great Falls Development Authority, Inc. to award a contract or to pay any costs incurred in preparation of proposals responding to the RFP. The GFDA reserves the right to reject any or all proposals and re-advertise. All proposals become the property of the GFDA.

B. EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

Successful contract bidders must comply with provisions of all applicable federal law, Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Any subcontracting by the successful bidder subjects subcontracting firm(s) to the same provisions of federal law.

In accordance with state and federal requirements, the consultant (hereinafter referred to as "contractor") must agree as follows:

1.) COMPLIANCE WITH TITLE VI OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964 FOR FEDERAL AID CONTRACTS

(a) Compliance with Regulations. The Contractor shall comply with all Regulations relative to nondiscrimination in Federally-assisted programs of the Department of Housing and Urban Development, 24 CFR Part 1, as they may be amended (hereafter referred to as the Regulations), which are incorporated by reference and made part of this Agreement.

(b) Nondiscrimination. The Contractor, with regard to the work performed by it during the Agreement, shall not discriminate on the grounds of sex, race, color or national origin in the selection and retention of subcontractors, including procurement of materials and leases of equipment. The Contractor

shall not participate either directly or indirectly in the discrimination prohibited in 24CFR Part 21.

(c) Solicitations for Subcontractors, Including Procurements of Materials and Equipment. In all solicitations, whether by competitive bidding or negotiation by the Contractor for work to be performed under a subcontract, including procurements of materials or leases of equipment, any potential subcontractor or supplier shall be notified by the Contractor of the Contractor's obligations under this Agreement and the Regulations relative to nondiscrimination.

(d) Sanctions for Noncompliance. In the event of the contractor's noncompliance with the nondiscrimination provisions of this Agreement, GFDA may impose sanctions as it determines appropriate, including, but not limited to withholding payments to the Contractor under the Agreement until the Contractor complies, and/or cancellation, termination or suspension of the agreement in whole or in part.

2) COMPLIANCE WITH THE MONTANA GOVERNMENTAL CODE OF FAIR PRACTICES, 49-3-207. MCA

In accordance with 49-3-207, MCA, the Contractor agrees that for this agreement all hiring will be made on the basis of merit and qualifications and that there will be no discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, creed, political ideas, sex, age, marital status, physical or mental disability, or national origin by persons performing the Agreement.

3) COMPLIANCE WITH MINORITY & WOMEN BUSINESS ENTERPRISES

Contractor will make efforts to encourage the use of minority and women's business enterprises in connection with Agreement activities in accordance with 24 CFR Part 85.36(e) which describes the actions to ensure that minority and women's business enterprises are used when possible in the procurement of property and services.

C. VENUE

The laws of the State of Montana govern this contract. The parties agree that any litigation concerning bid, proposal, or subsequent contract must be brought in the Eighth Judicial District of Cascade County, State of Montana and each party shall pay its own costs and attorney fees. (Reference 18-1-401 MCA)

D. INSURANCE

Certificates of Insurance, indicating compliance with the required overage, must be filed with the Great Falls Development Authority within ten (10) working days of the Notice of Award. The proof of insurance/exemption must be valid for the entire contract period.

E. RFP AUTHORITY

This RFP has been issued in accordance with Title 18, Montana Code Annotated and the Administrative Rules of Montana, Title 2, Chapter 5. The RFP process is a procurement option, allowing award to be based on stated criteria or evaluation factors. The evaluation factors to be used in this procurement have been specified in this RFP.

F. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

We encourage potential respondents to discuss the project with us. For more information regarding this RFP, please contact:

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