**Great Falls, Montana**

**Opportunities in Pulse Processing for the State of Montana for**

***Request for Proposals***

**Great Falls Development Authority, Inc.**

 DBA Great Falls Development Alliance (GFDA)

*October 29 th, 2024*

1. **INTRODUCTION**

The Great Falls Development Authority, Inc. (GFDA) seeks proposals to conduct a market assessment of opportunities in pulse processing for the State of Montana. The purpose of the project is to determine opportunities to attract investment in four areas of pulse processing: pet food, snack food, custom pulse processing, and ingredient making.

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

1. **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. Our trade area extends to the Canadian border, for a total population of about 209,000. Our target industries are food, agriculture, and bio processing, 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.

This is our updated and current [2024-2026 Economic Development Strategy.](https://growgreatfallsmontana.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/GFDA-EconDevStrategy-2024-2026.pdf)

One of the growth sectors identified in the strategy is our regions Food/Ag/Bio Processing where we hope to expand and diversify processing operations that create new local markets for agricultural producers, create manufacturing jobs, and increase access to local foods.

Pulse crops represent an increasingly large sector of Montana Agriculture, especially in the trade region of Great Falls. In 2011, the Montana Department of Agriculture published a study on [Montana’s Pulse Industry: How It Has Developed, Economic Impact & Potential for Growth.](https://agr.mt.gov/_docs/pulse-docs/Montana_Pulse_Potential.pdf) The study found that ‘clearly, Montana’s economy, farmers, and communities have a lot to gain from expanded pulse production; there may be no single opportunity available to Montana’s agricultural industry that offers as much potential benefit’ (pg. 3).

In the past thirteen years, pulse production in Montana has more than doubled, however there has not been a similar increase in pulse processing facilities, especially in more advanced sectors such as pet food, snack food, custom pulse processing, or ingredient making. A new study is needed to promote the continued development of pulse processing in our state.

The [Montana Pulse Crop Committee](https://agr.mt.gov/Topics/N-P/Pulse-Crop-Pages/Pulse-Crop-Committee), funded by pulse checkoff dollars, is invested in promoting research and market development for pulse crops. In June of 2024, the Great Falls Development Alliance was awarded a grant to commission a market assessment on opportunities in pulse processing for the State of Montana.

1. **OBJECTIVES**

We seek a consultant to conduct an in-depth market assessment for opportunities in pulse processing for the state of Montana in four key areas: pet food, snack food, custom pulse processing, and ingredient making.

GFDA’s objective is to use this market assessment as a tool to attract investment in pulse processing to the state of Montana. We will use the document and PowerPoint as marketing tools to companies that are expanding pulse processing and that should consider our market. We are asking the consultant to identify these companies.

The objectives of this RFP are to create a document and a supporting power point that:

1. Summarizes existing pulse processing services, facilities, and costs of manufacturing pulse pet food, pulse snack food, custom pulse processing, and pulse ingredient making in the state of Montana and the surrounding areas of North and South Dakota, Washington, Idaho, Wyoming and Southern Alberta. Include a map of existing pulse processors with labels.
2. Provides a SWOT analysis for each of the four identified key areas pulse pet food, pulse snack food, custom pulse processing, and pulse ingredient making.
3. Provides a location SWOT analysis for geographic regions of Montana: North Central Montana, Eastern Montana, South Central Montana, and Western Montana.
4. Identify where pulse processing is currently occurring outside of Montana and assess key similarities and differences to Montana locations.
5. Identify strategies to grow pulse processing Montana.
6. Create a projection of the economic impact of a successful business creation or relocation in each region identified above, with particular focus on benefit to pulse farmers.
7. Create a list of at least 10 companies in each of the four key areas (pet food, snack food, custom pulse processing, and ingredient making) based on the assessment that we should be targeting to build in Montana. Companies can overlap.
	1. **IV. SCOPE OF WORK**
	2. Consultants should detail their proposed scope work in their proposals. At a minimum, there are two key deliverables: a market assessment in both PDF and Word of pulse processing for the four key areas (pet food, snack food, custom pulse processing and ingredient making) that shall include items 1 – 7 detailed in the objectives above and a PowerPoint targeted to potential companies. This assessment and PowerPoint are due no later than June 30th, 2025.
	3. We expect recommendations and deliverables to come from the market assessment. The market assessment work should include discussions with existing pulse process both in the four key areas and in the more established areas of cleaning, drying and bagging. We expect the Consultant to spend time in-person in the region. GFDA will provide staff support to identify businesses and arrange meetings.
	4. The market assessment should be produced in word and PDF formats; 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.
	5. The presentation should be a public facing PowerPoint presentation that is focused on reasons companies should located in our region.

**Deliverables**

* Word and PDF copies of a comprehensive market assessment that covers objectives one through seven stated above.
* A power point presentation targeted to potential companies that both summarizes the market assessment findings and can be used to attract pet food, snack food, custom pulse processing, and ingredient making companies to Montana.
1. **CONSULTANT QUALIFICATIONS**

We are actively seeking a consultant or consultant team with extensive experience creating market assessments, a deep understanding of pulse processing industries, and familiarity with the markets of the four key areas. The ideal consultant or team will also be experienced working within the unique geographic context of Montana. 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.

1. **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, November 15st, 2024, to:

Anna Flies

Anna@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 and examples of previous assessments from at least three clients the consultant has recently provided services to.
1. **PRICE**

The consultant will present a lump sum budget for the work - including travel. We will provide hotel accommodations in Great Falls, Montana. The lump sum should not exceed $65,000.

1. **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).

1. **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION & CONDITIONS**
2. 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.

1. 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*
	1. 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.

* 1. 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.
	2. 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.
	3. 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.

1. *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.

1. 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)

1. 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.

1. 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.

1. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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

Anna Flies

Food and Ag Development Center Director

1 (406) 590-1301

Anna@GrowGreatFalls.org