

City of Ithaca Request for Proposals

Downtown Revitalization Initiative Grant Application Consultant

The City of Ithaca requests proposals for professional services to support the development of the City's 2024 Downtown Revitalization Initiative grant application.

Proposals from interested firms are due by May 20, 2024. Your proposal will be reviewed, and you may be asked to interview with a committee of staff before a final selection is made. It is expected that a consulting firm will be selected, and a Professional Service Agreement awarded, in early June 2024.

Contact: Email questions to Tom Knipe, Deputy Director for Economic Development, tknipe@cityofithaca.org

Background/ Project Objectives:

The City and Downtown Ithaca Alliance (DIA) have applied unsuccessfully six times over the past eight years to New York State to receive a competitive \$10 million Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) grant. The DRI continues to be a key element of the State's economic development program. Its goals are to transform downtown neighborhoods into vibrant centers that offer a high quality of life and are magnets for redevelopment, business, job creation, and economic and housing diversity. More information about the goals of the DRI program and past awardees can be found on New York State's website:

<https://www.ny.gov/programs/downtown-revitalization-initiative>

In 2023, the City of Ithaca decided not to apply because of the changes in City and DIA leadership, and the ongoing work on both the Downtown Plan and Retail Study/Strategy Plan. Both of those will be completed this year, new leadership is in place, and we have gathered extensive feedback from Empire State Development, Southern Tier Regional Economic Development Council members, and others involved with successful DRI grant applications in Upstate NY communities. Based on the information gathered, we believe that the City of Ithaca is in a strong position to apply for and receive a DRI grant in 2024.

Preliminary discussions suggest there is support for focusing our 2024 DRI application on the West State Street Corridor and West End. These areas, with the downtown core, were the subject of our most recent DRI application in 2022, which by many accounts was our strongest application to date. These areas are also the focus of the City and DIA's Downtown Plan, which is expected to be finalized and adopted soon. These are also areas of the city where we can demonstrate a clear need for revitalization and transformative impact of a DRI award.

We are requesting proposals from consultants to support the City of Ithaca with our 2024 DRI application. The consultant scope of work assumes that the City and DIA will work to convene a

DRI steering committee and will do some preliminary work to compile projects and a draft narrative, and that the consultant will coordinate public outreach, help articulate DRI projects that align with a compelling DRI vision and lead the development of the full DRI application. A more detailed proposed scope-of-work is outlined below.

Scope of Work

- 1. Conduct public outreach,** to possibly include:
 - Support DRI steering committee meetings in coordination with City and DIA staff
 - Distribute call for project ideas
 - Community survey – draft, distribute, compile and analyze results
 - Targeted outreach to underrepresented communities – 2 focus groups or similar method
 - Conduct public meetings – one or two, including designing informational materials for meetings
 - Public walking tour - can be on the same day as public meeting (optional)
 - Establish basic DRI website (optional)
- 2. Articulate DRI projects:**
 - Assistance in developing or choosing the key projects, including a methodology for doing so, to be included in the DRI application
 - Interviews with 6-10 potential DRI project partners
 - Produce renderings for up to 3 projects for which renderings are not otherwise available (we will not need new renderings for all proposed projects)
- 3. Develop full DRI application document and presentation materials:**
 - Document compilation/development
 - Draft narrative
 - Coordinate edits
 - Graphic design – document layout, design
 - A presentation template matching the design of the application document for presentation to the Southern Tier Regional Economic Development Council.

Schedule:

RFP Responses Due: Monday, May 20th, 2024, by 3:30pm

Selection process: May 20, 2024 – May 30, 2024

Award Contract: Early June 2024

Public Outreach: June, July 2024

Articulate DRI Projects: August, 2024

Application: August, 2024 (based on the previous years' deadlines, we anticipate an application deadline in September, 2024. If the deadline occurs earlier, the schedule will need to be adjusted accordingly to meet ESD's application deadline.

Submission Requirements

1. Lead Consultant Information
 - a. Firm name
 - b. Mailing address
 - c. Telephone
 - d. Website (if applicable)
 - e. Contact name, email, phone number
 - f. Form of Organization (partnership, corporation, sole proprietorship, etc.)
 - g. Where Organized
 - h. Names of principals, officers, and directors
2. Additional Consultants (if applicable). For each member of the consultant team, provide the following:
 - a. Firm name
 - b. Mailing address
 - c. Telephone
 - d. Website (if applicable)
3. Key Personnel. For key personnel to be involved in the project, please provide names, titles, period of service with the firm, and a resume or description of experience. Please limit responses to no more than one page per person.
4. Detailed Project Proposal. Description of how the project team will approach each of the major tasks described above. Include a description of how the team will be organized, who will perform each of the tasks, amount of time the team expects to expend on each task and what the finished product will be.
5. Budget and Timeline. Please provide a detailed timeline for all phases and tasks and a proposed budget for each.
6. Statement of Availability. Provide a brief statement on the availability of key personnel to undertake the proposed project, within the required schedule.
7. List of Relevant Projects. Provide a brief description of no more than eight projects equivalent in size or nature to the proposed project that have been successfully completed within the last seven years by the consulting firm, consulting team or key personnel. Please include the project budget.
8. Three References. Provide names, telephone numbers, and emails of persons to be contacted for references regarding past performance of the consulting firm, consulting team, or key personnel on similar projects.

Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

1. Experience and expertise in developing competitive planning and economic development related grant applications (30%)
2. Proven track record of securing DRI funding for other communities in Upstate NY (20%)
3. Experience in designing and implementing effective public engagement processes (20%)
4. Experience completing projects on tight deadlines, within budget, and in a professional and thorough manner (20%)
5. Clarity of proposal (10%)

Project Budget

A contract for the proposed scope of work will not exceed \$40,000.

Attachments

- Downtown Plan - <https://www.cityofithaca.org/771/Downtown-Plan> (recommendations and link to survey)
- Downtown Plan - <https://www.cityofithaca.org/DocumentCenter/View/16794/DRAFT-2024-Ithaca-Downtown-Plan> (full draft)
- 2022 City of Ithaca DRI application – available upon request

Submission Schedule

Please submit one electronic copy of your response to this Request for Proposals no later than 3:30 PM Monday May 20, 2024. Email electronic copy to Tom Knipe, Deputy Director for Economic Development, tknipe@cityofithaca.org