

Request for Proposal (RFP): Event Planning Services for Economic Developers Council of Ontario (EDCO) Annual Conference

Introduction:

The Economic Developers Council of Ontario (EDCO) is seeking proposals from experienced event planning firms to coordinate the annual conference and showcase. The conference serves as a platform for economic development professionals across Ontario to connect, learn, and share best practices. The annual conference and showcase is attended by over 500 economic development professionals from both the public and private sector.

The conference program allows members to learn and share information on current issues and programs that affect the profession. The showcase component is also part of the event that allows participants to learn of services and tools available to assist in their operation. In addition to the formal program there are two receptions and the President's Gala Dinner where the EDCO Awards of Excellence are presented.

We are looking for a competent and creative event planner(s) to ensure the success of our flagship event. The successful proponent will report to the EDCO Executive Director and work with the Annual Conference Chairperson and Committee to develop a full program showcasing economic development leading edge best practices, coordinate a dynamic showcase, work with the venue, and sponsor recruitment and fulfillment. The 2025, 2026, and 2027 conferences will be held at the Westin Harbour Castle located at 1 Harbour Square, Toronto.

About EDCO:

Established in 1957, EDCO is a not-for-profit membership-based organization dedicated to promoting economic development in Ontario. EDCO is Canada's largest provincial economic development organization providing networking opportunities, professional development resources and advocacy for economic developers across the province. For over 65 years EDCO has increased the capacity of those who practise economic, industrial, and community development through professional development initiatives, information exchanges among members and the promotion of the economic development profession.

The Council consists of:

- Municipal, Business and Economic Development Professionals
- Municipal, Regional, Provincial, Federal Government Officials
- Land Developers
- Educators and Technology Assistance Developers and Facilitators
- Tourism Industry Representatives
- Industrial/Commercial/Tourism Development Specialists from Banks, Public Utilities and Transportation Companies

EDCO enjoys a close working relationship with the Provincial and Federal Governments as well as links with other professional associations. For further information, visit www.edco.on.ca.

Scope of Services:

The 2025, 2026, and 2027 conference and showcases will be held at the Westin Harbour Castle located at 1 Harbour Square, Toronto. The selected event planning firm will be responsible for:

1. 2025 Event
 - a. Attend majority of 2025 Conference Committee meetings to gain an understanding of how the conference is planned.
 - b. Attend the 2025 EDCO Conference and Showcase February 3-7, 2025 in Toronto at the Westin Harbour Castle Conference Centre and assist in all onsite functions in collaboration with current event planner to gain an understanding of the event and coordination.
2. 2026/2027 Program Development
 - a. Develop conference budget and monitor throughout the process with the Executive Director.
 - b. Collaborate with EDCO's conference committee and staff to develop an engaging and informative program agenda.
 - c. Coordinate monthly conference planning committee meetings (virtual and one in-person), produce agenda, minutes, and track action items for each meeting.
 - d. Secure keynote speakers, panelists, and workshop facilitators in collaboration with the conference planning committee.
 - e. Manage the scheduling of sessions and activities including but not limited to development of session themes, descriptions, creative, and execution.
 - f. Coordinate speaker logistics.
 - g. In collaboration with the Executive Director coordinate dignitary invitation letters and on-site coordination.
 - h. Produce the order of proceedings run sheet document for event.
3. 2026/2027 Sponsorship and Exhibitor Management:
 - a. Solicit sponsorships from corporations, government agencies, and other organizations.
 - b. Coordinate with sponsors and exhibitors to fulfill their commitments.
 - c. Managing exhibition space and logistics for sponsors and exhibitors.
4. 2026/2027 Marketing and Promotion
 - a. Collaborating with the EDCO Marketing & Project Coordinator to develop a comprehensive marketing strategy to promote the conference.
 - b. Collaborating with the EDCO Marketing & Project Coordinator to develop promotional materials, including print collateral, digital assets, and social media content.

- c. Collaborate with the EDCO Marketing & Project Coordinator to implement email campaigns and other promotional initiatives to drive attendance.
 - d. Collaborate with the EDCO Marketing & Project Coordinator to produce post event evaluations for delegates, sponsors, and exhibitors.
 - e. Collect all conference presentations and provide to the EDCO Marketing & Project Coordinator for distribution.
 - f. Ensure all proper permits, insurance etc. are in place.
 - g. Produce post-event report.
5. 2026/2027 Registration and Attendee Management:
- a. Collaborate with staff to set up conference registration attendees, sponsors, speakers, and exhibitors.
 - b. Provide onsite registration and attendee assistance during the conference.
 - c. Produce delegate lists and name tags
 - d. Monitor and coordinate delegate dietary restrictions, allergies, and accessibility needs.
6. 2026/2027 Onsite Event Management
- a. Oversee all onsite logistics during the conference, including registration, food and beverage, audio visual, signage, supplier management, and staffing.
 - b. Manage event staff, volunteers, and suppliers to ensure smooth operations.
 - c. Handle any unforeseen issues or emergencies that may arise.
7. 2028-2029 Venue Selection and Management:
- a. Research and recommend suitable venues within Downtown Toronto, Ontario
 - b. Negotiate contracts with venues, suppliers, including accommodations and event spaces.
 - c. Oversee all logistical aspects related to the venue and conference, including but not limited to guest room blocks, room set-up, catering, audio-visual requirements, décor, transportation, speaker presentations etc.

Proposal Submission:

Interested firms are invited to submit their proposals by July 12, 2024. Proposals should include the following:

1. Company Background: A brief overview of your event planning firm, including relevant experience and qualifications.
2. Proposed Approach: A detailed description of your approach to planning and executing the EDCO annual conference, including how you will address the scope of services outlined above.
3. Budget: A proposed budget for the event planning services, including any fees, expenses, and anticipated costs.

4. References: Contact information for at least three references from previous clients for whom you have provided similar event planning services.

Selection Criteria:

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Experience and qualifications of the event planning firm.
- Creativity and effectiveness of the proposed approach.
- Cost-effectiveness and value for money.
- Demonstrated ability to meet deadlines and deliver high-quality events.
- References and client feedback.
- The lowest quote will not necessarily be the successful candidate.

Timeline:

- RFP Issuance: June 10, 2024
- Proposal Submission Deadline: July 12, 2024
- Evaluation and Selection of Proposals: July 15 – 30, 2024
- Contract Negotiation and Award: August 1-15, 2024

Contact Information:

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