

MAYOR
Joe Purcell

POLICE CHIEF
Paul M. George Jr.



PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR
Michael Hurff Jr.

FINANCE OFFICER/CITY CLERK
Andrew Lehr

Request for Qualifications

The City of Hardin has been awarded a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) in the amount of \$25,000 by the Montana Department of Commerce for an Economic Development Strategy.

Contingent upon this award, the City Council is requesting qualifications for consultant services to design an Economic Development Strategy for the City of Hardin.

Copies of the detailed request for qualifications (RFQ), including a description of the services to be provided by respondents, the minimum content of responses, and the factors to be used to evaluate the responses can be obtained by contacting Andrew Lehr, Finance Officer/ City Clerk, 406 North Cheyenne Avenue, Hardin, Montana 59034, phone 406-665-9260 Ext. #9, or by email cityfinance@hardinmt.com, reference in the subject line: Economic Development Strategy. The RFQ can also be found on the City of Hardin website, hardinmt.com, under the public notices page.

All responses to the detailed RFQ must be sealed, include five copies of the proposal, include Attachment A, and be clearly marked on the outside of the envelope "Hardin Economic Development Strategy", and must be submitted by Thursday October 3, 2024 by 3:00 p.m. to Andrew Lehr, Finance Officer/ City Clerk, 406 North Cheyenne Avenue, Hardin, MT 59034.

All Proposals will be evaluated Monday, October 7 through Wednesday, October 9, 2024.

Dated this 28th Day of August, 2024

Andrew Lehr, Finance Officer/City Clerk

Publish: August 28, 2024 and September 4, 2024

**REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS
(RFQ)**

**For Professional Services
Economic Development Strategy**

RFQ Submittal Deadline:

October 3, 2024 3 p.m.

RFQ Contacts:

Andrew Lehr or Tina Toyne

Email Address:

cityfinance@hardinmt.com

ttoyne@hardinmt.com

**City of Hardin
406 N Cheyenne Ave
Hardin, MT 59034
hardinmt.com**

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The City of Hardin is the grantee of a Community Development Block Grant award under the Montana Department of Commerce for development of an Economic Development Strategy and will provide grant administration. The City of Hardin will provide oversight of the project activities identified in this Request for Qualifications (RFQ). Grant funds totaling \$25,000 will be used to fund a contract executed under this RFQ.

Correspondence concerning this RFQ is to be sent to the following individuals:

Andrew Lehr
Finance Officer/ City Clerk
City of Hardin
406 N. Cheyenne Ave.
Hardin, MT 59034
406-665-9260 Ext. 9
cityfinance@hardinmt.com

Tina Toyne
Economic Development Director
City of Hardin
406 N. Cheyenne Ave.
Hardin, MT 59034
406-665-9260 Ext. 7
ttoyne@hardinmt.com

1. INTRODUCTION

The City of Hardin is seeking RFQ responses from qualified firms with specific experience in developing comprehensive plans for Economic Development Strategies. The selected consultant will work in conjunction with the City Finance Officer and Economic Development Director, as well as any other stakeholders, to develop a Master Plan for Economic Development Strategies. Qualifications should include information demonstrating experience in the fields of Economic Development Strategies requested in this RFQ.

Qualified responding firms must be able to help improve a community's standard of living by creating a plan that will assist in retaining businesses that provide jobs, both entry level and living-wage. The city wishes to establish a detailed plan for the community to assist in the creation of new businesses and jobs. This would be considered down Center Avenue, 3rd Street, Mitchell and part of Crawford Avenue within the City. This plan would help address this issue through incentives or programs that can help start-ups, as well as existing businesses. The plan would also address workforce, entrepreneur development, infrastructure and resiliency that Hardin will implement and maintain into the future. The end goal of this project would be to create 50 new jobs in the community. The selected responding firm will develop a master plan, and develop a bid package including specifications using City documents and standards where applicable.

In December 2021, the City approved an updated Downtown Revitalization and Growth Policy that recommended promoting economic development activities through a positive shift in discussing Hardin and envisioning the future as a means to expanding the downtown economy. The Growth Policy also identified developing a strategy for growth to retain and attract residents to the community as a goal to focus on improving local amenities to serve existing residents and attract future residents to the community. The growth policy can be located here: <http://www.hardinmt.com/2021 - Hardin Growth Policy and Revit Plan.pdf>.

The responding firm must be able to meet the Completion Schedule included in this RFQ.

2. BACKGROUND

The City of Hardin is one of the great gateways to the history of the west and wild country adventure. Incorporated in 1911 Hardin currently has a population of approximately 3,808 residents (2020 census) and is nestled at the intersection of Interstate 90 and Montana Highway 47. The local economy is driven by agriculture, tourism, health care services, a historic business district, restaurants and hotels. The region offers many treasures for residents and visitors to explore.

2. BACKGROUND

There has been support provided by multiple businesses and organizations involved in the region, including the Hardin Area Chamber of Commerce, Hardin School District, Beartooth RC&D, One Health and Treasure Market.

The City of Hardin would like to establish a detailed plan for our community that would encourage the creation of new businesses. This would ultimately then bring more jobs to our area and encourage the community to grow. Being a positive and exciting place to not only live in, but to visit. It has been suggested, that as the rest of the State of Montana grows, Hardin will continue to decline. The City would like to develop a strategy that brings resiliency to the community. It is desired to find ways to encourage new businesses to come to Hardin, through programs, grants and incentives for startups. We are encouraged by the work we see taking place in Big Horn County and the housing needs assessment that they are conducting. There is also positive progress being completed with the infill and redevelopment project for housing that the City is conducting. Housing is taking precedence and will help us achieve the goal of at least 50+ new jobs for this area, but economic development is equally important to sustain additional workforce and to fill these homes.

The City recently updated its downtown revitalization and growth policy in 2021 that supplements the growth policy created in 2009. Each goal that was provided in the Growth Policy had three action items, short-term, mid-term, or long-term. This growth policy listed developing a strategy for growth to retain and attract residents to the community as an important opportunity to capitalize. The 2021 growth policy listed developing a strategy for growth to retain and attract residents to the community as a medium-term goal, but the City would like this to be a short-term goal instead. The medium-term goal listed in the Growth Policy listed John Day, Oregon as the example community. The City of Hardin would like to develop a similar strategy that is catered to the community, in addition to attracting new workforces that would assist with economic growth. The 2021 Growth Policy also listed promoting economic development activities through a positive shift in discussing Hardin and envisioning the future. This was listed under Downtown Revitalization as a short-term goal. The example provided for this goal was the book by Doug Griffiths, *13 Ways to Kill Your Community*. The City would like to work these community building concepts into the economic development strategy as well.

It is the intent to select a qualified consultant through an open and competitive process to determine if the response from qualified firms will achieve the objectives and meet the goals of the Hardin Economic Development Strategy.

3. HARDIN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC GOALS

The economic development strategic goals in this section are to be used by the consultant in the preparation of a detailed proposed scope of work that results in a Hardin Economic Development Strategic Plan

The primary goals of the Hardin Economic Development Strategic Plan are to:

- Establish a detailed plan for the community to assist in the creation of new businesses and jobs. The end goal would be the creation of 50 new jobs, both living-wage and entry-level type jobs.
- Create a program to consider and capitalize on incentives for businesses, both new and existing.
- Assist in growing the economic resiliency of the community to respond to projected population fluctuations and economic factors. Decrease the gap between income and wealth.
- Develop a strategy to promote the use of existing buildings in the downtown corridor through revitalization, while capitalizing on the projected growth in other areas of the city, such as the land currently owned by One Health.
- Work in concert with the housing needs assessment project that Big Horn County is conducting and the infill and redevelopment project the City of Hardin has applied for through the HB819 Community Reinvestment program.
- Leverage the growth and marketing of the TIF by simultaneously assisting the business corridors within the community.
- Provide any updates to public infrastructure that will support development, as well as a detailed plan to promote entrepreneurship.
- The plan should analyze and outline short-term through long-term strategies and actionable items. In addition the plan should outline what other funding opportunities are available to help support and implement the actionable items.

4. QUALIFICATIONS CONTENTS

Consultants are expected to prepare qualification responses that address the following elements:

1. Name, physical and mailing address, e-mail contact and telephone number(s) of the lead firm and any other firms listed as subconsultants.
2. Past experience of the consulting team with developing an economic development strategy, especially if the experience involved funding from CDBG.
3. References from at least three projects where the consultant has provided similar economic development strategy services. The references must include complete contact information as well as a brief description of the project completed.
4. The names and qualifications of the principal team members who will perform the proposed work, their individual responsibilities and expected time commitment.
5. Capacity to assume new business.
6. Proposed scope of work that addresses the goals of the economic development strategies documented in Section 3.
7. Description of the public outreach process.
8. Deliverables, budget and preliminary timeline for completion of the project. Include in the budget the personnel by name including level of effort, the direct costs not attributable to personnel to include travel, printing and other (specify), and subcontractor cost.

5. QUALIFICATIONS SUBMISSION

Five copies of the qualification's response must be submitted no later than 3:00 pm, Mountain Time, Friday, October 3, 2024 to the following:

Hardin Economic Development Strategy
Attention: Andrew Lehr
c/o: City of Hardin
406 N Cheyenne Ave
Hardin, MT 59034

6. PROPOSED TIMELINE

The tentative RFQ timeline is as follows:

RFQ Issued	August 28, 2024
Deadline for questions/ clarifications	September 26, 2024 – 3:00 p.m.
Qualifications Response Due	October 3, 2024 – 3:00 p.m.
Evaluation Completed by City	October 7 - 9, 2024
Interviews, if necessary	October 10 - 11, 2024
Contract Awards by City Council	October 15, 2024
Proposed Start Date	October 30, 2024
Final Plan Due	April 30, 2025

7. EVALUATION AND CONSULTANT SELECTION PROCESS

Initial Evaluation

Qualifications received will undergo an initial review to determine:

- Compliance with RFQ submittal date and time.
- Compliance with RFQ contents.

Evaluation Criteria

The qualifications will be scored based upon the following criteria:

Qualifications and ability to perform requested services (15 points subtotal):

- Past experience with developing a Economic Development Strategy & References 5 points
- Firm and personnel qualifications 5 points
- Location as it relates to provision of services 5 points

7. EVALUATION AND CONSULTANT SELECTION PROCESS (Continued)

Evaluation Criteria

Quality of Qualifications Response (35 points subtotal):

- Description of proposed scope of work 5 points
- Description of public outreach process 5 points
- Present and Projected Projects 5 points
- Deliverables, budget and completion schedule 5 points
- Adherence to strategic goals (#3) 15 points

TOTAL 50 points

Selection of Consultant

The City of Hardin reserves the right to award the contract solely upon the consultant's submitted materials. The City also reserves the right to request oral interviews with the highest ranked firms to allow expansion upon the written responses. If interviews are conducted, a maximum of three firms will be selected, with the final determination to be made through a qualification-based selection.

8. INFORMATION FOR CONSULTANTS

Disclaimer

This RFQ does not form or constitute a contractual document. The City of Hardin shall not be liable for any loss, expense, damage or claim arising out of advice given or not given or statements made or omitted to be made in connection with this RFQ. The City will not be responsible for any expenses that may be incurred in the preparation of this RFQ.

A professional services contract will be required of the selected firm and if the contract fails to be negotiated in a timely manner, the City reserves the right to contract with another qualified firm.

Questions

Questions regarding the Request for Qualifications contents may be sent to the contacts listed in Section 1 via email no later than 3:00 pm Thursday, September 26, 2024. The City will provide a written response within five business days. Whenever responses to inquiries would constitute a modification or addition to the original RFQ, the reply will be made in the form of an addendum to the Request for Qualifications, a copy of which will be posted on the City's website, under the Public Notices page at <https://www.hardinmt.com>

8. INFORMATION FOR CONSULTANTS

Section 3 of the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1968

Consistent with Section 3 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1968, CDBG regulations governing the grant require that to the greatest extent feasible, opportunities for training and employment arising in connection with this CDBG-assisted project will be extended to local lower-income residents. Further, to the greatest extent feasible, business concerns located in or substantially owned by residents of the project area will be utilized. Disadvantaged business enterprises (DBE's) are encouraged to apply.

Non-Responsive Qualifications

Qualifications that offer not response on a response "to be determined" to any item will be deemed "non-responsive" and returned to the submitted without being scored.

Examination of Documents

Before submitting the qualifications, the responding firm shall carefully review the terms of this request, be informed of the existing conditions and limitations, and include with the qualifications sufficient information to cover all items required in the specifications and evaluation. Upon the submission of the RFQ, the consultant acknowledges that all information is accurate and complete.

Qualification Modifications

Modifications, additions or changes to the terms and conditions of this request for qualifications may be cause for rejection of the qualification. No oral, telephone, email, fax or telegraphic qualifications responses or modifications will be considered.

Certification of Alteration or Erasure

A qualification response shall be rejected should it contain any material alteration or erasure, unless, before the qualifications response is submitted each such alteration or erasure has been initialed in ink by the authorized agent signing the qualifications response.

8. INFORMATION FOR CONSULTANTS

Signature

All qualifications shall be typewritten or prepared in ink and must be signed in longhand by the responding firm or firm's agent or designee, with his/her usual signature. Qualifications submitted by a partnership must be signed with the partnership name to be followed by the signature and designation of two partners. Qualifications by corporations must be signed with the legal name of the corporation, followed by the name and signature of an authorized agent or officer of the corporation. Qualifications submitted by the proprietorship must be signed by the owner and the name of each person signing shall be typed or printed legibly below the signature. Signature for qualifications shall be required on Attachment A – Proposer Information form, as well as any other formal letter or documents the consultant(s) deem necessary.

Withdrawal of Qualifications

Consultants may withdraw their qualifications response either personally or by written request at any time prior to the due date set for receiving responses. No qualifications may be withdrawn or modified after the due date and time, unless and until the award of the contract is delayed for a period exceeding 90 days.

Quote Valid

The responding firm must honor their budget/cost proposal for a period of 90 days after the RFQ due date.

Certification

The consultant certifies that the qualification has been arrived at independently and has been submitted without any collusion designed to limit competition. The responding firm further certifies that the materials, products, services and/or goods offered herein meet all requirements of the stated specifications and are equal in quality, value and performance with the highest quality, nationally advertised brand and/or trade names.

Disposition of Qualifications

All materials submitted in response to this RFQ become the property of the City of Hardin. One copy of each RFQ response submitted shall be retained for the official files of and will become public record after award of the Contract.

8. INFORMATION FOR CONSULTANTS

Contract

Within 14 calendar days after the date the Professional Services Contract is sent to the successful firm, the successful firm must fully execute and deliver the contract to The City of Hardin. Contract delivery may be completed through a scanned copy of the executed document, followed by a fully executed original copy sent via mail or other delivery service. If the successful firm fails to execute the contract, The City has the right to cancel the recommended award and reject the response. The City may then proceed with the next most responsive firm.

ATTACHMENT A – Proposer Information

Proposer’s Information Form

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The undersigned declares that she or he:

- Has carefully examined the RFQ specifications
- Is thoroughly familiar with its content
- Is authorized to represent the proposing firm; and
- Agrees to perform the work as set forth in the specifications of this request for qualifications.

PROPOSER (please print):

Firm Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Email(s): _____

Contact person, title, email, and telephone: _____

Proposer, if selected, intends to carry on the business as (check one):

Individual (sole proprietor)

Partnership

Corporation

When incorporated? _____

In which state? _____

Other (explain): _____

PROPOSER'S SIGNATURE

No proposal shall be accepted which has not been signed in ink in the appropriate space below:

By signing below, the submission of the qualifications shall be deemed a representation and certification by the Proposer that they have investigated all aspects of the RFQ, that they are aware of the applicable facts pertaining to the RFQ process, its procedures and requirements, and they have read and understand the RFQ. No request for modification of the proposal shall be considered after its submission on the grounds that the Proposer was not fully informed as to any fact or condition.

1 If Proposer is INDIVIDUAL/SOLE PROPRIETOR, sign here

Date: _____

Proposer's Signature

Proposer's typed name and title

2 If Proposer is PARTNERSHIP, at least two (2) Partners shall sign here:

Partnership Name (type or print)

Date: _____

Member of Partnership Signature

Date: _____

Member of Partnership Signature

3 If Proposer is a CORPORATION, the duly authorized officer shall sign as follows:

The undersigned certify that he/she is respectively:

_____ and _____

Signature

Title

Of the corporation named below; that they are designated to sign the Proposal Cost Form by resolution (attach a certified copy, with corporate seal, if applicable, notarized as to its authenticity or Secretary's certificate of authorization) for and on behalf of the below named CORPORATION, and that they are authorized to execute same for and on behalf of said CORPORATION.

Corporation Name (type or print)

By: _____

Date: _____

Title: _____