



City of Cedar Rapids – Economic Development Services
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Table of Contents

SECTION	PAGE
(1) SUMMARY	1
(2) GOALS & FUNDING PRIORITIES	2
(3) PROGRAM OVERVIEW	4
(4) RFP PROCESS SCHEDULE.....	4
(5) ELEGIBILITY & CONFLICTS OF INTEREST	4
(6) EXTENSION.....	5
(7) STAFF REVIEW.....	5
(8) PROPOSAL SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS	5
(9) STAFF CONTACT	7
(10) SELECTION COMMITTEE	8
(11) PROPOSAL EVALUATION.....	8
(12) AWARD, TERM & DISBURSEMENT	10
(13) CITY INFORMATION RESOURCES.....	10
(14) DISCLAIMER.....	11

ATTACHMENTS

- EXHIBIT A: LIST OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES
- EXHIBIT B: SELECTION COMMITTEE EVALUATION MATRIX
- EXHIBIT C: GRANT PROPOSAL FORM

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

CEDAR RAPIDS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IMPLEMENTATION GRANT PROGRAM

SECTION 1. SUMMARY

The City of Cedar Rapids (“City”) invites nonprofit organizations, having an interest in advancing growth and prosperity within the community (collectively “Proposer”) to submit project Proposals (“Proposal”) for Economic Development Implementation Grant awards. The award period will start in July 1, 2021, and grants will span a two-year cycle concluding on June 30, 2023. The City will consider any Proposals that achieve consistency with economic development planning goals as well as all municipal codes and requirements, made pursuant to this RFP.

Proposals received prior to the submittal deadline will be reviewed by a selection committee, based on evaluation criteria provided in this RFP document. The selection committee will include staff from the City’s Economic Development Services Division, City Council representatives and area business leaders. Committee review shall proceed on a competitive basis, and recommendations regarding funding of Proposals will be forwarded to the Cedar Rapids City Council. Final approval of all awards shall be made through action of the Cedar Rapids City Council by adoption of a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA).

The purpose of review at both the committee and City Council levels will be to assess the merit of individual Proposals, evaluate organizational capability to deliver services, determine whether a Proposal has potential to create positive economic impacts during the award period, and help sustain competitiveness of the City’s economy. Proposals must likewise demonstrate financial feasibility for their intended duration. The scope of any Proposal must align with goals and objectives identified through the City’s economic development planning process. Proposals should reflect an understanding of professional standards, practices, methods and strategies commonly utilized within the field of local economic development.

The City of Cedar Rapids Economic Services Division is located within the City Manager’s Office. Economic Development Services works with other City Departments as part of a cross-functional team to realize community goals for economic growth. To help ensure a positive influence on market conditions, successful economic development programs promote external collaborations. By working with economic development partners, the City of Cedar Rapids seeks to foster the benefits of collaboration to the greatest extent possible through the structure of this RFP process.

The full RFP may be accessed any time online at:

www.economicdevelopmentcr.com

Proposals will be accepted until **11:00 AM on April 30, 2021.**

Due to COVID-19 and the temporary closure of Cedar Rapids City Hall, Proposals must be submitted in **digital copy** via email as follows:

To: Economic Development Manager
RE: Cedar Rapids Economic Development
Implementation Grant Program
Email: EDservices@cedar-rapids.org

The City will not be bound to accept any or all Proposals and may decide to forgo services from external organizations as related to specific priorities or objectives.

SECTION 2. GOALS & FUNDING PRIORITIES

The City is seeking economic development Proposals that are consistent and well supported by the following goal areas taken from the City's Strategic Plan for Economic Development:

- Enhance Economic Growth
- Enhance Quality of Life
- Workforce Development
- Business Support Services
- Marketing and Communications

The Economic Development Services Division has prepared a list of specific Funding Priorities ("Economic Development Funding Priorities") representing service needs at the present time. This list of Economic Development Funding Priorities functions as the statement of needs and objectives relating to this RFP. Any Proposer submitting an proposal for review shall address at least one Economic Development Funding Priority through their Proposal. (See Exhibit A.)

Priorities are organized under four types of Economic Development Implementation Grant Funding Categories ("Funding Categories"). Each Funding Category represents a separate strategic direction and receives a pre-determined percentage allocation of total funding available in the current RFP cycle. Percentage allocations to categories and total funding available are set through the RFP process, and they are not subject to change. (See Exhibit B.)

Funding Categories contained in the list of Economic Development Priorities are as follows:

- Economic Development Project & Financial Assistance Proposals
- Small Business Development
- Economic Development Marketing Services
- Entrepreneurs & Startups

Proposers may apply for funding based on initiatives that address one Economic Development Priority (or more than one) from within the same Funding Categories. Proposals that include priorities from multiple Funding Categories will not be accepted. In every case, completed proposals shall reference all Economic Development Funding Priorities that apply to that specific proposal. A Proposal may not request more than the total amount of grant dollars allocated to the Funding Category containing the Economic Development Priorities identified on the proposal form.

EXAMPLE #1: *A local Cedar Rapids-based nonprofit wishes to submit a Proposal addressing two priorities under the Funding Category of Economic Development Marketing Services. Each of the two specific Economic Development Priorities from Exhibit A is listed by the Proposer on their grant proposal form. The funding request made is for \$10,000, which is an amount less than the maximum amount of funding available in this category.*

EXAMPLE #2: *A local Cedar Rapids-based nonprofit has developed one initiative that addresses all Economic Development Priorities contained under Economic Development Marketing Services. The proposer lists all relevant Economic Development Priorities on their grant proposal. Then the proposer decides to request the maximum amount of available funding, which is simply the total amount of grant dollars allocated to the Economic Development Marketing Services Funding Category.*

EXAMPLE #3: *A local Cedar Rapids-based nonprofit has developed two independent, small-scale initiatives. The two Proposals addresses Economic Development Funding Priorities from two, separate Funding Categories. Consequently, the nonprofit submits two grant proposals, one each for the two programs. Each proposal submits a funding request that is equal to half of the amount of grant dollars available in the respective categories. The proposer understands that the funding request put forward in the grant proposal cannot exceed the total amount allocated to the Funding Category the proposal references.*

Initially, the proposer has questions about whether it is necessary to submit one or two Grant Proposal forms. Through their reading of the RFP, the proposer realizes that Economic Development Services Staff are available to help answer questions and provide pre-Proposal feedback for informational purposes. The Proposer contacts economic development staff who answer their question by confirming two separate proposal forms with supporting documentation are required because each Proposal applies to a different funding category.

See Exhibit A for a complete list of City Economic Development Funding Priorities.

SECTION 3. PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The City of Cedar Rapids maintains an active local economic development program managed and administered by professional staff. Stakeholder participation from across the community helps to guide this effort. An inclusive planning framework creates opportunities for public-private collaboration, which is necessary for full implementation of services and programming.

More information about the scope of the City's economic development program activities are available online at www.economicdevelopmentcr.com.

SECTION 4. RFP PROCESS SCHEDULE

March 23, 2021	Resolution to invite competitive Proposals
March 30, 2021	RFP Informational Webinar City Hall Training Room (Lower Level) 101 First Street SW Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52241
April 30, 2021	11:00 a.m. - Proposal Deadline
May 14, 2021	Committee review complete
June 8, 2021	City Council Final Approval of Proposals*

Note: Bold items denote City Council action

**Subject to terms and conditions established in a Memorandum of Agreement*

SECTION 5. ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible to submit a Proposal pursuant to this RFP, a Proposer must be in good standing as a nonprofit recognized by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). Proof of nonprofit status is required to apply for a City of Cedar Rapids Economic Development Implementation Grant Program award. The organization shall also have as part of its mission a substantial focus or demonstrated commitment to economic improvement of the Cedar Rapids community.

(See Section 8, Part D.)

SECTION 5A. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

All Proposers must maintain written standards of conduct covering conflicts of interest and governing the actions of its employees engaged in the submission of a Proposal and administration of an award. No employee, officer, or agent may participate in the selection, award, or administration of a contract supported and economic development award funds if he or she has a real or apparent conflict of interest.

Such a conflict of interest would arise when the employee, officer, or agent, any member of his or her immediate family, his or her partner, or an organization which employs or is about to employ any of the parties indicated herein, has a financial or other interest in or a tangible personal benefit from a firm to be paid using economic development award funds. The officers, employees, and agents of the Proposer may neither solicit nor accept gratuities, favors, or anything of monetary value from contractors or parties to subcontracts. Proposers may set standards for situations in

which the financial interest is not substantial or the gift is an unsolicited item of nominal value. The standards of conduct must provide for disciplinary actions to be applied for violations of such standards by officers, employees, or agents of the Proposer.

All Proposers must also maintain written standards of conduct covering organizational conflicts of interest. Organizational conflicts of interest means that because of relationships with a parent company, affiliate, or subsidiary organization, the Proposer is unable or appears to be unable to be impartial in conducting a procurement action involving a related organization.

SECTION 6. EXTENSION

Due to the limited pool of dollars available in a given fiscal year, no requests for time extension to prepare a Proposal will be accepted. Organizations that miss the deadline will be invited to submit during the next round of requests for Proposal.

SECTION 7. STAFF REVIEW

Proposers are strongly encouraged to submit concepts to the City's Economic Development Services for informal review and comment prior to the Proposal deadline. Economic Development Services staff can provide confidential feedback to ensure Proposals have relevance to the specific economic development priorities cited.

(See Exhibit A.)

The level of review and comments provided by staff relates directly to the quality and detail provided by the Proposer. This type of preliminary staff review is not an indication of how a specific Proposal will score when evaluation criteria are applied by the selection committee.

SECTION 8. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Proposers must submit one (1) original hard copy and one (1) digital copy of their Economic Development Implementation Grant Proposal(s). Upon submission, all materials will become property of the City of Cedar Rapids. All Proposals must be submitted to the City of Cedar Rapids City Managers Office, 3rd Floor City Hall, no later than 11:00 AM on April 30, 2021. **No submissions will be accepted after this date and time or at any other location.**

(See Section 1 for detailed instructions relating to Proposal submission.)

Each submission must contain a grant Proposal with the following information:

A. Overview

- (1) Proposal Contact. Name, address and contact information of firm or individual responding to the Proposal.
- (2) Proposal Overview. Provide a brief description of the organization, year established, number of employees, types of projects undertaken, and any current economic development program initiatives underway.
- (3) Development Team. Provide a listing, qualifications and role of all of the team members anticipated to participate in the Proposal.
- (4) Experience. Provide a list, description and summary detailing the role of the firm in relevant projects/Proposals.
- (5) Optional Cover Letter: Proposers may elect to include a cover letter as an

attachment to the grant Proposal.

B. Project Proposal

- (1) Narrative Description. Provide a detailed explanation of the proposed initiative seeking funding. It should include a problem statement, outline critical tasks necessary to address the root cause, and address why the initiative will be successful.
- (2) Proposal Rationale and Strategy. Provide narrative to establish purpose and scope of Proposal with information supporting the financial and feasibility of the proposed project. The rationale and strategy will explain how the initiative will achieve desired outcomes.
- (3) Goals and Objectives. State the desired outcomes as well as how Proposal's implementation will be measured.
- (4) Scope of Work. Define a set of deliverables, including all related tasks and define when actions will be accomplished (as applicable):
 - a. Major deliverables
 - b. Relationship(s) of deliverables to objectives
 - c. Parties responsible
 - d. Implementation schedule
 - e. Resources, equipment, and facilities
 - f. Deadlines, timeline
 - g. Other relevant information
- (5) Partners. Provide information on any identified individuals or organizations also collaborating as part of the Proposal including letters of intent, or agreements and any other relevant documentation (as applicable).
- (6) Timeline. Provide a proposed project timeline across project lifecycle – Initiation, Planning, Execution, Monitoring & Control, and Closeout.

C. Project Financials

- (1) A budget showing sources and uses of all funds for the proposed project over the term of the grant award.
- (2) Proposer shall include financial documentation sufficient to assist the City in determining whether the Proposer has secured, or has the ability to secure, the necessary financial resources to accomplish tasks defined in the scope of work. The City reserves the right to determine the appropriateness and adequacy of the documentation submitted by Proposers. Acceptable documentation may include:
 - a. Financial statements (audited if available)
 - b. Annual reports (with financial information)
 - c. Identification of any other financing sources being used to finance the project, which shall at a minimum identify the source (i.e., type) of funding used.
- (3) Financial Capacity. Additional documentation may be provided at the proposer's discretion.
- (4) All financial information provided shall be represent best available data.

D. Economic Impact.

- (1) Provide estimates on the economic impact of the project:

- a. Number of permanent jobs created/retained;
 - b. Overall project investment;
 - c. Wage/income data
 - d. Define the desired outcomes to be measured
- (2) Any other figures determined by the Proposer to show economic impact

E. Proof of Nonprofit Status

- (1) Eligibility is based on organization having proof of nonprofit, tax-exempt status.
- a. IRS Determination Letter
 - b. Annual information return from IRS Tax Exempt Organization List (Form 990)
- (2) And the following additional documentation is required:
- a. Articles of Incorporation
 - b. Bylaws
 - c. List of Directors and Officers
 - d. Organizational Strategic Plan (Mission and vision statements if no plan exists)
 - e. Any Conflict of Interest (COI) Policies

F. Optional Materials

A Proposer may provide work samples, letters of support, or other relevant documentation not specified as submission requirement as an addendum to their proposal package.

SECTION 9. STAFF CONTACT

Economic Development Services Division:

Jasmine Almoayyed, Economic Development Manager
City Manager's Office
(319) 286-5822
J.Almoayyed@cedar-rapids.org

David Connolly, AICP, Economic Development Specialist
City Manager's Office
(319) 286-5067
d.connolly@cedar-rapids.org

SECTION 10. SELECTION COMMITTEE

All Proposals will be reviewed and evaluated by a Selection Committee established through the City. This review panel serves as a recommending body. It functions to make a recommendation of preferred development Proposal(s) for use in the broader RFP process.

The task of the Selection Committee will meet once to apply Economic Development Implementation Grant Program Scoring Criteria to each Proposal received. Scores will be determined for Proposals through use of simple weighted averages across the Scoring Criteria for all Proposals. Scores are a product the weight in points assigned to each Scoring Criterion times the Grade achieved on the Evaluation Matrix, as determined by the average of all individual reviews submitted by Selection Committee members. In total, a maximum of 50 Proposal Points are possible for each Proposal.

It is the City's practice to include a cross-section of community representatives, experts and business leaders in review of economic development Proposals. Panel members could typically include: City staff, elected officials, non-competing business leaders, representation from key industries, and/or other stakeholders the City deems necessary to provide an independent evaluation of Proposals. The review panel will make a recommendation of preferred Proposals for the City Council's consideration. These recommendations based upon Proposals which best satisfy scoring criteria provided in the next section.

Once Selection Committee recommendations are received, City Staff will negotiate best and final scope and funding amounts with Proposers. City staff reserve the right to assign additional Economic Development priorities to any Proposal received. Selection Committee recommendations for negotiated Proposals will be presented to City Council for deliberation, review and final action.

SECTION 11. PROPOSAL EVALUATION

Competitive project Proposals demonstrate understanding of City of Cedar Rapids Economic Development Funding Priorities. Proposals forward action plans through the Proposal process, which is capable of addressing individual needs identified through the RFP process.

Selection committee members will apply an Evaluation Matrix Grades to Scoring Criteria found below:

Organization: (Weight: 1 point)

- Organization has demonstrated track record of success in project area
- Outcomes reflect economic development best practice, are attainable and measurable
- Organization delivers value to the Cedar Rapids community

Scope and Implementation: (Weight: 2 points)

- Proposal represents clear response to City economic development priorities
- Proposal has concise description, set implementation schedule, and clearly defined deliverables
- Organization has capability to deliver services as stated
- Explanation of anticipated outcomes and performance measurement
- Organization's annual budget, financial statements (audited if available) and finance policies are included as part of the Proposal.

Financial Management and Administration: (Weight: 3 points)

- Proposed project aligns with organization's mission and creates synergy with other City programming

- Organization has demonstrated track record of good corporate governance
- Management and professional staff have skills, experience, and knowledge to execute successfully
- Clear statement of mission, vision and/or strategic plan is given in the Proposal

Project Impact: (Weight: 4 points)

- Proposal will create significant expansion of employment opportunities in Cedar Rapids
- Proposal will increase the likelihood of new capital investment that can significantly grow the Cedar Rapids tax base
- Proposal has potential to elevate real income of community residents
- Project will advance firm or productivity growth in target industries identified through the City of Cedar Rapids' local economic development process.

Evaluation of Proposals will be made on a competitive basis. As indicated previously, one standard method for evaluation and scoring will be applied to all Proposals received to determine how many Proposal Points each proposal receives.

Example: #1: All members of the Selection Committee give a Proposal the highest possible Grade of 5 across the four Scoring Criteria. This particular Proposal scores as follows:

- **Organization = Weight of 1 Point x Grade 5 = 5 Proposal Points**
 - (Or 10% of points for Proposals available in this category)
- **Scope/Implementation = Weight of 2 Points x Grade 5 = 10 Proposal Points**
 - (Or 20% of points for Proposals available in this category)
- **Financial, Management & Admin. = Weight of 3 Points x Grade 5 = 15 Proposal Points**
 - (Or 30% of points for Proposals available in this category)
- **Impact = Weight of 4 Points x Grade 5 = 20 Proposal Points**
 - (Or 40% of points for Proposals available in this category)
- **Total = The Proposal scores 50 out of 50 Proposal Points. (This is the maximum score possible.)**

Example #2: A Proposal receives the following grades, which are established from a simple average, created by combining values produced by each individual Selection Committee member's review:

- **Organization = Grade 4**
 - Weight of 1 Point x Grade 4 = 4 Proposal Points
- **Scope = Grade 3**
 - Weight of 2 Points x Grade 3 = 6 Proposal Points
- **Financial Management and Admin. = Grade 5**
 - Weight of 3 Points x Grade 5 = 15 Proposal Points
- **Impact = Grade 4**
 - Weight of 4 Points x Grade 4 = 16 Proposal Points
- **Total = The Proposal scores 41 out of 50 Proposal Points.**

SECTION 12. AWARD, TERM & DISBURSEMENT

Award of funds shall be finalized through execution of a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the Proposer and the City of Cedar Rapids. The City will provide economic development grant funds, on an annual basis, as indicated per the MOA for a term not to exceed two years. Under no circumstances will the City be obligated to make payment of funds for the current Economic Development Implementation Grant Cycle beyond the specified period of the FY 2022 and FY 2023 for the City of Cedar Rapids.

MOAs will include terms and conditions for receipt of award funding. Nonperformance, mismanagement or negligence, use of funds for purposes other than those identified through this grant seeking process, lack of documented impact, noncompliance with program reporting standards, and/or inactivity shall provide sufficient cause for the immediate termination of the award. In addition, the City Manager may (at any time) administratively determine whether, and to what extent, funds may be withheld temporarily to address problems or deficiencies in program implementation. The City Manager may, likewise, terminate an MOA for any of the reasons stated here, or for general failure to administer or initiate program activity.

Termination of an MOA with a grant recipient shall occur pursuant to written notification ending any obligation of the City to provide funding to the specified proposer under this grant program. Whether real or perceived, conflicts of interest or the failure to disclose conflicts of interest at the level of the recipient's leadership or individual staff members shall also be grounds for immediate termination of any grant agreement. Conflicts of interest – whether personal, contractual, financial or professional – shall also disqualify an organization from receiving grant funds through this award program.

Funds will be disbursed on a reimbursement basis twice annually within the City's fiscal year. Payments will be made pursuant to receipt and approval of a semi-annual performance report by the Economic Development Manager. Semi-annual performance reports will provide regular updates to Economic Development Services Division staff on outcomes and economic impact as outlined in individual grant proposals. Semi-annual report deadlines are as follows:

- **December 1, 2021 and June 1, 2022**
- **December 1, 2022 and June 1, 2023**

While City staff will send courtesy reminders to award recipients about reporting deadlines, it is incumbent on the Proposer, to remain current with all reporting obligations. Achieving and maintaining compliance with grant program requirements is the sole responsibility of the proposer. Failure to abide by or fulfill the terms of the MOA by the Proposer may result in termination of funding.

SECTION 13. CITY INFORMATION RESOURCES

- (1) City of Cedar Rapids Economic Development Portal
<https://www.economicdevelopmentcr.com/>
- (2) City Economic Development Studies & Reports
<https://www.economicdevelopmentcr.com/reports/>
- (3) City of Cedar Rapids Economic Dashboard
<https://www.economicdevelopmentcr.com/economic-dashboard/>

- (4) Cedar Rapids Business Survey
<http://cms.revize.com/revize/cedarrapids/Economic%20Development/2019-Business-Survey-Report.pdf>
- (5) Envision CR
http://www.cedar-rapids.org/local_government/departments_a_-_f/community_development/plans/envisioncr_Comprehensive_Plan.php

SECTION 14. DISCLAMER

- (1) The City reserves the right to determine the appropriateness and merit of all submitted Proposals. Issuance of this RFP does not obligate the City to enter into an agreement with any party submitting a Proposal, pursuant to this process.
- (2) All information submitted by the Proposer is public record and will be made available for public examination and copying

