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October 17, 2025

North Valley THRIVE 2.0 Consultant Request for Qualification #2025-13

A. BACKGROUND

California Jobs First is a statewide inclusive economic development initiative that has organized the state into thirteen regions. The counties of Merced, San Joaquin, and Stanislaus comprise the North San Joaquin Valley ("NSJV") region. To fulfill the goal of developing a regional economic plan under the California Jobs First initiative, the region formed a new collaborative, North Valley THRIVE (NVT). This collaborative is led by the Merced County Workforce Development Board and fiscally administered by Merced Community College District.

Central to the California Jobs First initiative is the development of a Strategic Plan identifying industry sectors of focus and additional strategies to enable economic growth. The North Valley THRIVE Strategic Plan centers on the development of the following industry sectors: Bioeconomy; Advanced Manufacturing and Clean Energy. North Valley THRIVE's Strategic Plan can be found on its website, northvalleythrive.org. Each of the industry sectors is supported by an Activation Plan.

B. OBJECTIVE

1. Explore various organizational models for North Valley THRIVE post California Jobs First, including:
 - a. Identification of various models statewide for civic regionalism and regional economic development organizations (e.g. Valley Vision, San Francisco Bay Area Planning and Urban Research Association-SPUR, Joint-Venture Silicon Valley, Monterey Bay Economic Partnership, Inland Economic Growth & Opportunity- IEGO, East Bay EDA, etc.)
 - b. Identify models from other states that are applicable to California.
 - c. Produce case studies and present to NVT leadership as well as prepare for community processes/outreach.
2. Facilitate introduction and connection to other economic development organizations in the mega-region (Bay Area, Monterey Region, Sacramento Region) and assist the NVT team in identifying opportunities for partnership and alignment.
3. Design and co-facilitate a region-wide stakeholder process to vet models, identify regional gaps, and secure community input, in partnership with a local community engagement partner.
4. Develop an organizational business plan and initial operating structure for the new entity, including: (1) staff leadership needs, organizational structure, and board composition; (2) fundraising, membership and sustainability framework; and (3) engagement model for the stewardship of government and elected stakeholders.
5. Provide consultation to North Valley THRIVE's Strategy Team, including participation in semi-weekly meetings, advisement on key activities and events, and other strategic opportunities.
6. Participate in related NVT 2.0 Subcommittee

C. BUDGET

North Valley THRIVE will allocate between \$75,000 and \$100,000 to fund the proposed activities. Applicants should propose budgets that are inclusive of all travel (limited to in-state, as out-of-state travel is not covered), meeting

expenses, production expenses, printing, subcontractor and partner costs (excluding management of the local community engagement partner), software, and related costs.

D. CONTRACT TERM:

The contract is expected to begin on **November 19, 2025**, and conclude by **May 31, 2026**.

E. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION:

Proposals should be no more than 5 pages and include the following:

- Budget: Provide a detailed breakdown of costs, including hourly rates (if applicable), estimated hours, travel (in-state only), materials, and any other fees. Ensure the total aligns with the \$75,000–\$100,000 allocation.
- Resume or Firm Profile: Include resumes of key personnel who will be involved, highlighting relevant qualifications.
- Experience and Expertise:
 - Describe your experience with similar projects in regional economic development, organizational modeling, or strategic planning for collaboratives or economic initiatives. Provide at least two examples of past work, including project scope, outcomes, client references (if available), and how they relate to North Valley THRIVE's objectives.
 - How many years of experience do you or your team have in civic regionalism, economic development organizations, or facilitating stakeholder processes in California or similar regions?
 - Highlight any specialized expertise in areas such as bioeconomy, advanced manufacturing, clean energy sectors, or partnerships with workforce development boards/community colleges.
 - Provide details of previous work involving case studies, business plan development, or connections between regional economic organizations.
- Proposed Approach: Outline your methodology for achieving each objective, including timelines, milestones, and how you will ensure effective collaboration with the North Valley THRIVE team (e.g., meeting participation and communication protocols).
- Availability: Confirm your capacity to meet the contract term and participate in semi-weekly meetings and subcommittee activities.

Interested parties are invited to submit their proposals by 2:00 P.M. October 23, 2025. Late submissions will not be considered. Email proposals to: Purchasingbids@mccd.edu.

F. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Selected vendors will be required to meet all Merced Community College District vendor and insurance requirements. The insurance requirements are as follows:

Coverage Required Limits per Occurrence –
General Liability \$1,000,000
Automobile Liability \$1,000,000
Workers' Comp/Employers' Liability \$1,000,000

Thank you for considering this request. We look forward to receiving your proposals and working together to strengthen community-industry collaboration through North Valley THRIVE

Sincerely,

Merced Community College District
 Andre Urquidez, Acting Director, Purchasing & Risk Management
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 209-384-6300

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