



Request for Qualifications

Northeastern Pennsylvania Defense Transition Partnership

Issuing Organization:

Northeastern Pennsylvania Alliance
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Introduction:

The Northeastern Pennsylvania (NEPA) Alliance is one of seven regional agencies designated as a Local Development District (LDD) by the state and federal governments to enhance economic and community development activities in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. NEPA Alliance serves a seven-county region that is composed of Carbon, Lackawanna, Luzerne, Monroe, Pike, Schuylkill, and Wayne counties; has a July 1, 2013 estimated total population of 1,021,027 and covers 4,476 square miles. NEPA Alliance was organized in 1964 by the private sector that saw the need for a regional approach to economic and community development issues within the region.

The NEPA Alliance is a 501(c)(4) public/private sector partnership with representation from government and non-governmental private sector organizations. NEPA Alliance’s goal is to provide a quality menu of programs and services that best match the needs of our partners, while providing tangible service to businesses, communities, and governments throughout the seven counties.

The NEPA Alliance programmatic services include: Business Financing; Government Contracting Assistance; International Trade Assistance; Nonprofit Assistance; Transportation Planning; Research and Information; and, Local Government Services.

The NEPA Alliance, working in conjunction with the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development’s (PA DCED), and the Partnership of Regional Economic Performance (PREP) Partners, was awarded a \$2.9M U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) Office of Economic Adjustment (OEA) Defense Industry Adjustment Grant, which funds the transition and diversification of the defense industry in the region: “**NE PA Defense Transition Partnership.**”

Mission:

The NEPA Alliance is a regional multi-county economic development agency providing leadership, planning, expertise, and services to regional and local governments, businesses, institutions, and individuals through innovative and beneficial collaborations and partnerships to enhance the economic development and quality of life of the area.

NEPA Alliance Goals

The NEPA Alliance has a positive impact on the economic and community development of the region, by utilizing the exceptional abilities of our professional staff to:

- ❖ Increase the number and quality of the services we provide to business clients;
- ❖ Strive to consistently achieve 100% customer satisfaction;
- ❖ Maintain and enhance financial stability of our organization;
- ❖ Provide support for the creation or retention of 2,250 jobs annually;
- ❖ Communicate the positive impact of our services on our region; and,
- ❖ Seek and develop partnerships with other organizations to enhance delivery of programs and services and utilize resources efficiently.

Program Background:

The defense industry is a critical economic sector in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The State Department of Labor and Industry reports that military installations add nearly \$30 billion to the state economy and account for more than 200,000 jobs, both directly and indirectly. With the realization of current and future military and defense spending reductions, the Commonwealth has established this initiative to lessen the impact on defense contractors, facilities and individuals. The request by PA DCED and NEPA to the OEA is in support of northeast Pennsylvania, where Tobyhanna Army Depot is the largest industrial employer, and plays a key role in the regional economy. The region has formed a unified network of workforce and economic development organizations to support the transition and diversification of the defense industry in the region –the **NE PA Defense Transition Partnership**.

The Commonwealth’s prime objective, through the assistance OEA is providing, is to strengthen and diversify the regional industrial sector and increase the global competitiveness of **defense impacted businesses**¹. This unique regional strategy described in this proposal leverages a well-established economic development infrastructure to deploy specialized assistance to defense impacted companies.

In preparation for the **NE PA Defense Transition Partnership Initiative**, members of the northeastern region of Pennsylvania’s economic development community at the request of the Commonwealth conducted a survey of regional businesses to determine the economic impact of DoD contract cancellations, DoD assessment not to proceed with previously approved weapon system(s), and/or recently-announced reductions in DoD spending. Approximately fifty (50) companies participated in the survey, which produced the following observations, supplemented by publicly-announced major reductions of DoD spending:

- ❖ From October 2012 through September 2013, Tobyhanna Army Depot workforce reduction is in excess of 1890;
- ❖ A regional General Dynamics facility specializing in large-caliber weapon systems has already laid-off many workers, and expects a total DoD-cutback related workforce reduction of over 250 Full Time Equivalents (“FTEs”);
- ❖ 85.0% of survey respondents provide goods or services directly to the DoD, or indirectly as part of the supply chain;
- ❖ 48.0% of survey respondents indicated DoD spending cuts will negatively impact their business;
- ❖ 67.0% of survey respondents did not have any specific strategies to recover from DoD spending cuts; and,
- ❖ 57.0% of survey respondents plan to lay-off or furlough employees.

Program Objectives:

The **NE PA Defense Transition Partnership Initiative** funding will be used for the implementation of a customized economic development strategy designed to address the following objectives:

¹ For the purposes of this Program a “defense impacted business” is a Pennsylvania business that is deriving a minimum of 5% business revenue from DoD contracts or subcontracts.

- ❖ **Objective 1:** Assist regional businesses with market diversification planning, implementation assistance, and business/technical support services needed to respond to the cancellation of DoD contracts, publicly-announced reductions in DoD spending, and/or the downsizing within the seven (7) county Northeastern Pennsylvania region from DoD facilities located in Pennsylvania.

Object 1 Outcomes: New sales; retained jobs; and, new jobs.

- ❖ **Objective 2:** Provide international export and foreign direct investment support to impacted companies by preparing informational materials, conducting trade missions, identifying buyers/distributors, researching export markets and attracting foreign direct investment/joint venture opportunities.

Objective 2 Outcomes: New sales; new customers; retained jobs; and, new jobs.

- ❖ **Objective 3:** Provide regional displaced workers with support programs, assistance, entrepreneurial education programs, and resources to become a viable employee or a new small business owner.

Objective 3 Outcomes: Creation of new businesses; and, reemployment of displaced workers.

- ❖ **Objective 4:** Conduct a comprehensive assessment of those companies currently affected by the reduction in contracts by the DoD as well as other companies across the Commonwealth that currently provide goods and services to our Nation’s military and will be affected by future DoD spending reductions. In addition, analyze the job skills possessed by impacted DoD employees that have (or may) face furloughs in order to help PA with its ongoing re-shoring and foreign direct investment efforts and provide new employment opportunities.

Objective 4 Outcomes: Development and Implementation of a data driven strategic plan to support PA supply chains, and workforce development needs.

The program plan of work is expected to generate the following outcomes, relative to this RFQ, during which OEA funding support is provided:

❖ Northeastern Pennsylvania Companies Engaged:	50
❖ Developed Market Diversification Plans:	25
❖ Implemented Market Diversification Plans:	21
❖ Referrals to PREP Partners & Other Entities:	16

Target audience

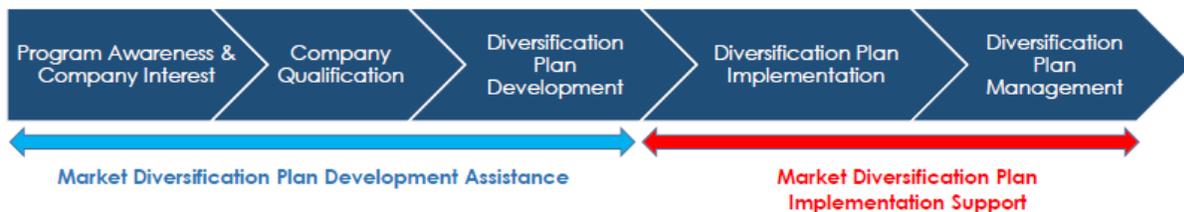
The target audience for the program, as to this RFQ, includes Northeastern Pennsylvania business owners who have been impacted by reductions in federal defense spending as a result of DoD reductions.

Scope of Work

Under the proposed approach, and relative to this RFQ, the **NE PA Defense Transition Partnership** will deliver to Pennsylvania’s northeastern businesses, directly impacted by recent DoD spending cuts, the following new product/service offerings:

- ❖ **Market Diversification Plan Development:** The program partners will take a *team* approach and use proven methodologies such as Technology Driven Market Intelligence, Technology Scouting, Traditional Market Research, Exporting Assistance/Overseas Market Research, Industrial Marketing and others, to develop a robust **Market Diversification Plan** for each business negatively impacted by reductions in DoD contracts and contract opportunities.
- ❖ **Market Diversification Plan Implementation:** To further accelerate the implementation of Market Diversification Plans within DoD-dependent businesses, OEA funds will be utilized to provide **implementation cost assistance** to offset technical assistance/support service proposal costs or other business strategy implementation costs, at the following levels:
 - Businesses with a moderate level of DoD expenditure dependency, defined as businesses deriving between five (5.0%) and thirty percent (30.0%) of business revenue from DoD contracts or sub-contracts, would qualify for OEA-supported program services up to a maximum of \$15,000² in support of Market Diversification Plan implementation.
 - Businesses with a high level of DoD expenditure dependency, defined as businesses deriving greater than thirty percent (30.0%) of business revenue from DoD contracts or sub-contracts, would qualify for OEA-supported program services with a maximum of \$25,000². A twenty-five percent (25.0%) match will be provided by the business towards their Market Diversification Plan implementation activities.

Overall Flow – Market Diversification Plan Development Assistance & Implementation Support



The NEPA Alliance is seeking to prequalify firms (Consultant or Firm), authorized to do business in Pennsylvania to conduct either or both of two groups of Market Diversification Plan services:

² A twenty-five percent (25.0%) match will be provided by the business towards their Market Diversification Plan implementation activities.

1. **Market Diversification Plan Development Assistance:** Provide consulting assistance support to the **NE PA Defense Transition Partnership** team to develop a **Market Diversification Plan** tailored to an identified regional business impacted by reduction in DoD spending and/or DoD contract cancellations.

2. **Market Diversification Plan Implementation Support:** Provide consulting implementation of the **NE PA Defense Transition Partnership** team’s **Market Diversification Plan**, for an identified regional business which has approved the recommendations contained in their **Market Diversification Plan**, and has entered into an agreement with the **NE PA Defense Transition Partnership** due to the subject impact to the business from reduction in DoD spending and/or DoD contract cancellations.
 - a. Areas of Business Support and Expertise: Please include the area of expertise and experience the firm specializes in based upon the following categories.
 - ❖ Sales Development
 - ❖ Branding, Marketing and E-commerce
 - ❖ Process Manufacturing/Engineering; Product Development; Operational & energy Efficiency
 - ❖ Strategic Planning
 - ❖ Organizational Management
 - ❖ Business Finance
 - ❖ International Business Development
 - ❖ Government Business Development

Firms may choose to apply for consideration as a Group 1 consultant, Group 2 consultant, or both. The list of prequalified firms will be provided to program approved businesses for their consideration in the implementation of their **Market Diversification Plan**. An approved business may choose to contract for implementation services with a consultant not on the prequalified list; however, they will be responsible for any delays or cost overruns resulting.

General/Required Information

1. **Rejection of Qualifications Packages:** This Request for Qualifications (RFQ) does not commit the Issuing Organization, NEPA Alliance (herein, the “Issuer”) to award a contract, to pay any costs incurred in the preparation of a RFQ submission, or to procure or contract for services. The Issuer reserves the right to accept or reject any or all RFQ’s received pursuant to this Request, to negotiate with all qualified Consultants, or to cancel in whole or in part, this RFQ, if it is in the best interest of the Issuer to do so.

2. **Incurring Costs:** The Issuer shall not be liable for any costs incurred by Consultants prior to, or in the development of a contract.

3. **Amendment to the Request for Qualifications:** If it becomes necessary to revise any part of the RFQ, an amendment will be issued to all Consultants which received the original RFQ, and who have expressed an interest.

4. **Response Date:** Issuer will receive RFQ responses from qualified Consultants electronically only to Kurt Bauman, **on an on-going basis until program completion.** RFQ responses shall be received electronically at: kbauman@nepa-alliance.org subject line “**RFQ – NE PA Defense Transition Partnership.**”
5. **Project Start Date:** The tentative start date for the project is January 1, 2015.
6. **Questions regarding this RFQ:** If you have questions regarding this RFQ, contact Kurt Bauman at (570) 655-5581, ext. 237 or via e-mail at kbauman@nepa-alliance.org.
7. **Qualifications Statement:** Consultants must submit a complete response to the Request for Qualifications using the format provided in order to be considered as a potential Consultant.
8. **Economy of Preparation:** Qualifications Packages should be prepared simply and economically, providing a straightforward, concise description of the Consultant’s ability to meet these requirements.
9. **Modifications:** The **NE PA Defense Transition Partnership** reserves the right to issue addenda or amendments to this RFQ.
10. **Improper Consideration:** The Consultant shall not offer (either directly or through an intermediary) any improper consideration such as, but not limited to, cash, discounts, services, the provision of travel or entertainment, or any items of value to any **NE PA Defense Transition Partnership** team organization and personnel in an attempt to secure favorable treatment or consideration in connection with this RFQ.
11. **Inaccuracies or Misrepresentations:** If, in the course of the RFQ process, the **NE PA Defense Transition Partnership** team determines the Consultant has made a material misstatement or misrepresentation or a materially inaccurate qualifications has been provided, the Consultant may be disqualified from the RFQ process.
12. **Oral Presentation:** Consultants submitting a Qualifications Package may be required to deliver an Oral Presentation before the steering committee after submission of the Qualifications Package and prior to final Consultant selection. It shall be required the individual present at the oral presentation be the firms project leader assigned to this initiative.
13. **Consultant Responsibilities:** The selected Consultants will be required to assume responsibility for all services offered in the proposal. This shall include all approved sub-contractors. Further, the **NE PA Defense Transition Partnership** team will consider the selected Consultant as the sole point of contact with regard to all contractual matters.
14. **Standard Contract:** The selected Consultants will be expected to enter into a contract that shall be provided by the Issuer.
15. **Consultant Rejection:** The Issuer shall notify in writing all Consultants not selected.

16. **Confidentiality:** Firms must use and maintain project participant information as confidential.
17. **Ownership of Responses:** All materials submitted in response to this RFQ shall become the property of NEPA, and shall not be returned to the responding firm.
18. **Insurance:** At a minimum, the firm will need the following, and to submit proof of such:
 - a. Worker’s Compensation Insurance as required by law.
 - b. Auto Liability Insurance with a combined single limit of \$300,000. Coverage must include owned, non-owned, and hired motor vehicles.
 - c. Commercial General Liability Insurance with not less than \$1,000,000 per occurrence for bodily injury and property damage liability, and an annual aggregate limit of not less than \$1,000,000.
 - d. Professional Errors and Omissions Insurance of not less than \$1,000,000 each claim.

The above requirements should not be interpreted to limit the liability of the Firm under this RFQ. The Consultant must provide prompt notification of any changes made to the above insurance terms/limits.

19. **Proposal Format:**

All interested and qualified Consultants are invited to submit a response for consideration. Submission of a response indicates the Consultant has read and understands this entire RFQ, and all concerns regarding this RFQ have been satisfied.

The proposal should be clear, accurate, and complete, with sufficient detail to enable the evaluation of the services and methods proposed.

- a. **Understanding the need:** The Consultant shall demonstrate an understanding of the overall need, and, client base.
- b. **Consultant Qualifications & Past Performance:** The Consultant shall outline the ability to meet the terms of the RFQ considering time constraint, quality, relevancy, etc. Describe previous experience in business consulting services relative to diversification planning from the past five years. Please outline similar projects that your consulting firm completed including the organization, contact person and telephone numbers for reference purposes. A minimum of three references shall be included.
 - i. Example Market Diversification Plans: If past firm work products include Market Diversification Plan(s), please provide a sample for Steering Committee review.

ii. Areas of Business Support and Expertise: Please include the area of expertise that firm which to provide implementation assistance based on the following categories.

- ❖ Sales Development
- ❖ Branding, Marketing and E-commerce
- ❖ Process Manufacturing/Engineering
- ❖ Strategic Planning
- ❖ International Business Development
- ❖ Government Business Development

- c. **Firm Organization:** Provide an organizational chart of the firm illustrating the functionality and the roles of all key project personnel (including sub-consultants).
- d. **Personnel Qualifications:** Refers to the competency of the professional personnel (inclusive of sub-consultants) assigned to the project. Provide one-page resumes for key personnel, including relevant licenses, certifications, and training. Qualifications will be measured by experience, certification, and education.
- e. **Conflict of Interest Disclosure:** Disclose any direct or indirect, actual or potential conflicts of interest relative to the project’s scope and partners.
- f. **Location:** Identify the location of the firm, and discuss how this relates to consulting service response time.
- g. **Primary Contact Person:** Firm shall designate a primary contact person for communications related to this RFQ, and subsequent work products, and provide the person’s full contact information, including a working email address.
- h. **Certification:** A copy of the RFQ certification signature block on page 11 of the RFQ.
20. **Subcontractor Approval:** Any/all subcontractors proposed to be used as part of this project must be disclosed to the Issuers for their approval. If subcontractors are to be used, a complete description of the subcontractor qualifications and personnel shall be provided

Criteria for Selection

Reviews: All Qualifications Package received from Consultants will be reviewed and evaluated by the Steering Committee, and may include other individuals/entities selected by the Committee. The Steering Committee will select Consultant(s) best qualified and experienced to meet the requirements of the Scope of Work, and best suits the needs of business to be served by the project.

Areas of Consideration: The following are criteria that will be used in making the Consultant selection:

- A. **Understanding the need:** The Consultant should have an understanding of the overall need, client base and usefulness of the project.
- B. **Consultant Qualifications & Past Performance:** The Consultant’s ability to meet the terms of the RFQ considering time constraint, quality, relevancy, etc.
- C. **Personnel Qualifications:** Refers to the competency of the professional personnel assigned to the project. Qualifications will be measured by experience, certification, and education, (curriculum vitae) especially the qualifications of the Project Manager.
- D. **Special Characteristics;** Special designations of the firm recognized with state or federal certifications or other noteworthy characteristics relevant to the project.

The Steering Committee will review and rank (based on a total of 100 points) in order all responses to the RFQ based primarily, but not exclusively, on the following factors:

- A. Responsiveness to the RFQ and compliance with RFQ requirements (*35 points*).
- B. Evaluation of the list or personnel specifically assigned to the proposed project, including their qualifications, overall experience and recent experience on projects of similar scope and complexity to the proposed project (*20 points*).
- C. Experience and performance based on the Steering Committees review of past performance on projects of similar scope and complexity. Evaluation of references (*25 points*).
- D. Availability of the firm and staff to be assigned to undertake the project (*15 points*).
- E. Extent of Disadvantage Business Enterprise participation (*5 points*).

Indemnification

Consultant shall indemnify and hold harmless **NEPA and NE PA Defense Transition Partnership Team**, against any and all claims, demands, suits, and judgments of sums of money, including costs of defense (including, but not limited to attorney’s fees) to any party for loss arising from any negligent act, error, omission, or breach on the part of the Consultant, its agents, servants, employees, or sub-consultants, in connection with services resulting from this RFQ, or from any breach of any obligations under this RFQ.

Certification

By my signature below, I certify that all statements are accurate and I/my firm can meet all terms and conditions of the RFQ, and will perform the services as specified.

Firm: _____

Name: _____

Title: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Email: _____