

Commerce Department Strategic Support Partners Request for Proposals

Questions & Answers – as of 12.20.24

Online Application Link is provided within the RFP posting.	https://pidcphila.com/contracts/strategic-support-partners/
Applicant Questions will be received on a rolling basis.	Please submit by emailing growphillyrequest@phila.gov
Answers will be continuously updated and posted online with the RFP Posting.	https://pidcphila.com/contracts/
RFP Close Date	March 31, 2025*
Proposals will be reviewed on a rolling basis as they are received. Approved consultants will be notified of project opportunities as needs arise. Each category will have a limited number of consultants selected, so early submission is strongly encouraged.	

1. Can independent consultants apply, or is this opportunity only for larger firms?

Independent consultants, non-profits, and for-profit companies of all sizes are welcome to apply. We value a wide range of expertise and encourage applications from individuals, teams, and organizations regardless of size.

2. Should I apply if I already receive Commerce funding to perform economic development work?

You may apply but note that this RFP is focused on identifying consultants to augment Commerce’s in-house operations. It is not a replacement for Commerce’s economic development programming RFPs. Carefully consider whether your mission and services align with the scope outlined in this RFP before applying.

3. Is there an advantage to applying early since proposals are reviewed on a rolling basis?

Yes, applying early ensures your proposal is reviewed sooner, increasing your likelihood of being included in the initial roster. Early inclusion may provide more opportunities to engage in consulting projects. However, all submissions received by the deadline will be given full consideration.

4. Can I apply for multiple categories?

Yes, you can apply for as many categories as align with your expertise. However, please limit each application submission to **three categories** to allow you to thoroughly describe your experience and qualifications for those areas.

5. Are specific qualifications or certifications required for categories like Data Science or Architectural Advisory Services?

Certifications are not mandatory but can enhance your application. The key criteria are demonstrated experience, relevant project work, and proven outcomes in the selected category.

6. How detailed does the pricing section need to be?

Please provide clear hourly rates and any tiered or project-based pricing models. Transparency helps us match you to opportunities effectively. There's no need for overly complex breakdowns at this stage. If you are proposing to offer the city discounted rates, or a portion of your services on a pro bono basis, please include those details as well.

7. How will I know if I'm selected?

Selected applicants will be informed via email and added to the Strategic Support Partners roster. Once on the roster, you'll receive notifications when relevant project opportunities arise.

8. If I'm selected, does inclusion on the roster guarantee work?

No, it does not guarantee work. Being on the roster qualifies you to participate in project-specific opportunities, but it does not guarantee a contract. However, this streamlined process gives you direct access to opportunities as they arise.

9. Will there be contracts offered prior to the 3.31.24 deadline?

Yes. Project needs may arise at any time and as they do, Commerce will reach out to those applicants who have already been approved.

10. How will contracts be structured and projects assigned?

Consultants may be engaged through either on-call contracts or project-specific contracts, depending on the nature of the work:

- a. On-Call Contracts: These agreements establish hourly rates and a maximum cap for services. When a project arises, a work order will be issued to request a plan for completing the work, including scope of services, budget, and timeline.
- b. Project-Specific Contracts: For certain projects, consultants on the roster may be asked to submit a proposed scope of services and budget. If selected, a contract will be executed with terms specific to that project's requirements.

Both approaches allow the Commerce Department to engage consultants in a way that aligns with the needs of each project. All contracts will be executed through PIDC (on behalf of the City of Philadelphia) and are typically for one year, with the potential for extensions.

11. How does the RFP prioritize diversity in its selection process?

The Commerce Department values diversity and inclusion as central to advancing equitable economic growth. Teams that reflect Philadelphia’s diversity and demonstrate equitable practices in leadership, decision-making, and service delivery will be prioritized.

12. Are partnerships with smaller, diverse organizations encouraged?

Yes, we strongly encourage collaborations with smaller and diverse organizations. These partnerships enrich service delivery by bringing complementary strengths and broader community representation. Be sure to highlight such collaborations in your application.

13. Can I get additional guidance on completing the application?

If you have specific questions, please email us at growphillyrequest@phila.gov. Updates and clarifications to the RFP will be provided via this Question & Answer document throughout the application period, which runs until March 31, 2025.

14. I’m a small business owner. How competitive is this process?

We encourage small businesses and first-time applicants to apply. Our goal is to create a robust and diverse roster of partners with a variety of expertise. Each applicant will be evaluated based on their ability to meet the specific needs outlined in the RFP.

15. How will Commerce ensure opportunities are shared equitably among rostered consultants?

Commerce will provide opportunities based on expertise, alignment with project needs, and the quality of work. We are committed to ensuring fair access to opportunities across the roster.