



**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**  
**CONSULTING SERVICES FOR**  
**SAN MATEO COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT CONVENING &**  
**PLANNING PROCESS**

PERFORMANCE PERIOD: May 17, 2021 to July 31, 2021

DATE RFP ISSUED: April 19, 2021

CONTACT PERSON: Luther Jackson  
Program Manager  
ljackson@novaworks.org

PROPOSALS DUE: May 3, 2021 3:00 p.m. PDT

SUBMIT TO: ljackson@novaworks.org

This RFP is posted on the NOVAworks website at: <https://novaworks.org/about/rfp>

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS  
CONSULTING SERVICES FOR  
SAN MATEO COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT CONVENING & PLANNING  
PROCESS**

**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The Workforce Board of the North Valley Job Training Consortium (NOVAworks) is issuing this Request for Proposals (“RFP”) for consulting services to assist NOVAworks in convening representatives of the San Mateo County workforce development ecosystem to design a series of workforce interventions that promote recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. It is the intent of NOVAworks to enter into a vendor relationship with one or more qualified organizations or individuals capable of providing the services described within this RFP. Included in this RFP are a scope of services and tasks and other information describing this opportunity. The performance period is May 17, 2021 through July 31, 2021.

**2.0 BACKGROUND**

The economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on San Mateo County residents has been severe. The county unemployment rate increased to 11.4% in April 2020 from 1.8% in December 2019, prior to the pandemic. As of February 12, 2021, county employment rates for all workers had decreased by 19.1 percent and the rates for workers earning less than \$27,000 per year had dropped by 32.6 percent according to the [track the recovery](#) website.

In response, the County contracted with NOVAworks in October 2020 to develop and administer a program providing paid work experience and supportive services for up to 30 county residents who, as a result of COVID, had either lost their jobs or had experienced cuts in working hours. In this work program, participants worked with local small businesses for up to six weeks at up to \$20 an hour to provide the businesses with additional staffing during the Thanksgiving to Christmas holiday season. Participants also qualified for supportive services such as assistance with rent or childcare expenses.

The County then hired NOVAworks to lead a strategic process to create a series of recommendations to guide workforce recovery as county job seekers and small businesses emerged from the pandemic. NOVAworks released its [Strategic Plan for Workforce Recovery](#) on March 1, 2021, with eight recommendations organized in the following buckets: 1). prioritize saving small businesses from permanent closure, 2). train unemployed workers for a new economy, and 3). connect employers to workforce talent in a transparent and inclusive manner.

On March 9, 2021, the County Board of Supervisors accepted the NOVAworks strategic plan and further directed the County Manager to enter into an agreement with NOVAworks “in a

total amount of not to exceed \$50,000 to lead the development of a countywide workforce development and training plan” in concert with regional community colleges, adult schools, community-based organizations and other stakeholders in the county workforce development ecosystem.

The Supervisors also directed the County Manager to report on the results of the workforce development and training plan process and submit a proposed budget for implementing recommendations that emerge from the process. The total budget for this and all County Strategic Recovery Plan initiatives is not to exceed \$5 million.

This RFP is seeking responses from a consultant or team of consultants to support NOVAworks in convening workforce stakeholders and designing a set of interventions that address the emerging needs of job seekers and incumbent workers seeking career opportunities. All convenings with NOVAworks and stakeholders will be conducted by videoconference due to COVID-19 restrictions.

NOVAworks is directed by the NOVA Workforce Board ([www.novaworks.org](http://www.novaworks.org)), which works on behalf of San Mateo County and the Santa Clara County cities of Cupertino, Los Altos, Milpitas, Mountain View, Palo Alto, Santa Clara and Sunnyvale. NOVAworks is administered by the City of Sunnyvale.

### **3.0 PROJECT SCOPE**

Under the direction of NOVAworks, the consultant(s) shall:

- Assist in creating an invitation list of planning process stakeholders.
- Recommend approaches for the scope of the planning process including meeting facilitation and data research and sharing protocols.
- Lead the meeting facilitation process through videoconference.
- Lead design of process for discerning appropriate workforce interventions and appropriate evaluation components.
- Forge group consensus from disparate perspectives and minimize personal and institutional agendas.
- Develop presentation materials for the recommended interventions for delivery to the County Manager, County Board of Supervisors and other stakeholders.
- Other duties as feasible and as assigned by NOVAworks.

### **4.0 QUALIFICATIONS**

Priority under this RFP shall be given to consultants with prior experience addressing the tasks listed in the Project Scope (Section 3.0). Specific qualifications include:

- An understanding of workforce development in the state of California and the

interconnection of workforce agencies, community colleges, adult schools, community-based organizations, employers and employer intermediaries.

- A demonstrated ability to forge group consensus from disparate perspectives and minimize personal and institutional agendas.
- A working knowledge of human centered design principles.
- A working knowledge of remote meeting facilitation techniques.
- A working knowledge of program evaluation theory and practice.

The consultant(s) selected to participate in this initiative must be able to work collaboratively with NOVAworks staff. Submissions should include information regarding existing regional networks and resources to achieve RFP objectives.

## **5.0 BUDGETARY CONSIDERATIONS**

Under the current funding, it is not anticipated that the contract(s) will exceed \$26,935. NOVAworks may choose to select more than one consultant for the project. The actual amount paid to the consultant(s) will vary depending on the final scope of each task assigned. Depending upon the initiative's success, there may be additional financial resources available during the course of or subsequent to the project period.

## **6.0 RFP PROCESS, SUBMITTAL AND REQUESTED INFORMATION**

Please address all questions regarding this RFP to Luther Jackson at [ljackson@novaworks.org](mailto:ljackson@novaworks.org).

Submittals should include:

- Introduction*: provide a brief letter of introduction on the consultant's letterhead transmitting all RFP information and including an electronic signature;
- Experience*: provide a profile of experiences that the consultant has had with California workforce development agencies, employers, economic development agencies, job seekers and community-based organizations and include significant professional relationships that can inform the work on this project. Also provide experiences employing human-centered design principles;
- References*: provide information and three references on public and private sector work relating to this project;
- Proposed fees and costs*: provide proposed total cost along with an hourly rate for members of the team who would be involved in the project, including any support personnel.
- Proposed workplan*: provide a proposed workplan for addressing the RFP scope within the proposed performance period.
- Availability and capacity*: provide an estimate of the number of hours available to devote to this initiative during the performance period.

## **7.0 RECEIPT OF PROPOSALS**

Responses must be received electronically by 3:00 p.m. Pacific Daylight Time on Monday, May 3, 2021. Please e-mail proposals to Luther Jackson at [ljackson@novaworks.org](mailto:ljackson@novaworks.org). Proposals not received by the due date and time will be rejected.

## **8.0 SELECTION PROCESS**

NOVAworks shall conduct a selection process to determine the best and most appropriate consultant(s) to meet its needs, as follows:

- a) NOVAworks shall call for an RFP response from interested and qualified consultants.
- b) NOVAworks staff shall screen all responses. Screening criteria may include, without limitation:
  - Qualifications of consultant(s) and staff;
  - Depth of California workforce system knowledge and relationships;
  - Experience on projects of similar size and scope;
  - Capability to deliver timely and high-quality services;
  - Reference checks on previous projects; and
  - Professional fee schedule.

c) NOVAworks shall assemble a Review Committee including workforce board members. The RFP Review Committee shall evaluate all proposals referred by NOVAworks staff after the initial screening process. The committee shall consider all of the program design factors described in the proposal and will evaluate how well the proposal meets the needs outlined herein. Each proposal shall be given a score between 0 and 100 and will be rated in the following categories:

1. Overall Program Design/Responsiveness to RFP (25 points): Proposals will be rated in terms of the creativity, practicality and potential effectiveness of the overall design.
2. Demonstrated Effectiveness and Past Performance (25)
3. Proposed Workplan (35)
4. Proposed Fees and Costs (15)

The Committee may conduct oral interviews – remotely – with the top two or three scoring proposers to further clarify and evaluate proposal details. The Committee shall disregard the previous scores and re-score the top two or three proposers based on the interview content.

The Review Committee, with NOVAworks staff assistance, shall then prepare a recommendation to NOVAworks director Kris Stadelman.

NOVAworks shall then enter into contract negotiations with the consultant(s) deemed best and most appropriate. The parties shall seek agreement on services and fees. If negotiations are not successful, NOVAworks may enter into negotiations with other organizations—at its sole discretion—and seek to reach agreement. This RFP does not commit NOVAworks to pay for any direct and/or indirect costs incurred in the preparation and presentation of a response. All finalists shall pay their own costs incurred in preparing for interviews.

## **9.0 PRINCIPALS AND REJECTION STATEMENT**

RFP respondents are advised that NOVAworks will only deal with principals or their designated agents with regard to this RFP. Furthermore, it is to be understood by principals and their agents that NOVAworks is not obligated to accept any RFP response or to negotiate with any respondents and NOVAworks reserves the right to accept the response that will best serve its interests. Additionally, NOVAworks reserves the right to negotiate simultaneously with more than one consultant if, in NOVAworks' sole opinion, it believes that simultaneously negotiating with more than one consultant is in the best interests of NOVAworks.

## **10.0 OWNERSHIP OF SUBMITTED MATERIALS**

All responses and related materials received by NOVAworks become its property and may be returned only at NOVAworks' option. This clause also pertains to all findings, documents, survey responses and any other materials generated or produced during the evaluation process.

## **11.0 INSPECTION**

As part of the review process, NOVAworks reserves the right to obtain any and all information associated with this RFP, including, but not limited to: inspecting service sites and/or equipment; contacting any individuals, agencies or employers listed in a proposal; or contacting other sources with knowledge of the bidder's performance, qualifications and/or financial solvency.

## **12.0 ACCEPTANCE OF PROPOSALS**

This RFP does not commit NOVAworks to award a contract, to pay any costs incurred in the preparation of a proposal to this request, or to procure or contract for services or supplies. NOVAworks reserves the right to accept or reject any or all responses received as a result of this request, to negotiate with all qualified sources, or to cancel in part or in its entirety this RFP if it is in the best interest of NOVAworks to do so. NOVAworks may require the offerors selected to participate in negotiations, and to submit such price, technical, or other revisions of their proposals as may result from negotiations.

### **13.0 TYPE OF CONTRACT**

NOVAworks reserves the right to utilize the most appropriate contract methodology, including performance-based and/or cost reimbursement. As NOVAworks' fiscal agent is the City of Sunnyvale, the contract shall be issued in the name of the City of Sunnyvale. Contracts pursuant to this RFP process will be subject to contracting requirements of the City of Sunnyvale.

### **14.0 CONTRACT AWARD**

NOVAworks may award a contract based upon offers received without discussion of such offers with the offeror. Each offer should be submitted in the most favorable terms from a price and technical standpoint. However, NOVAworks reserves the right to request additional data or oral discussions/presentations in support of submitted qualifications.

Prior to any contract negotiations, the applicant/agency must be prepared to submit the following as applicable:

- State and federal ID numbers
- Form W-9 with Federal ID number
- Local business license
- Proof of insurance
- Signatory authorization
- Audit report for the past fiscal year

### **15.0 INSURANCE AND INDEMNIFICATION REQUIREMENTS**

If awarded the contract, the Contractor must comply with the City of Sunnyvale's (City) requirements, including:

#### Insurance

The Contractor shall procure and maintain during the term of an agreement, insurance, in compliance with the sections below unless expressly waived, in writing, by the City. On or before commencement of the contract, Contractor shall furnish City with certificates showing the type, amount, class of operations covered, effective dates and dates of expiration of insurance coverage. Endorsements naming City as Additional Insured shall be submitted with the insurance certificates.

1. **Commercial General Liability**: \$1,000,000 per occurrence for bodily injury, personal injury and property damage and \$2,000,000 aggregate. ISO Occurrence Form CG 0001 is required.

2. **Automobile Liability**: \$1,000,000 per accident for bodily injury and property damage. ISO Form CA 0001 is required.

3. **Workers' Compensation** Statutory Limits and **Employer's Liability**: \$1,000,000 per accident for bodily injury or disease.

The liability and automobile insurance policies shall name the City as an additional insured only to the extent of the indemnification contained herein and shall provide at least thirty (30) days prior written notice to City of cancellation of the policy or reduction in the coverage.

The City will accept evidence of self-insurance from the Contractor that meets the above requirements.

### Indemnification

Contractor shall defend, indemnify, and hold harmless City, its officers, employees, agents and volunteers from and against any claims, losses, injuries, suits, actions or judgments and from any and all liability for any and all claims, losses, injuries, suits, actions or judgments filed or brought by any and all persons because of or arising or resulting from, or in connection with any negligent act, omission or willful misconduct by Contractor, or its officers, employees, agents or representatives. Contractor further agrees to reimburse City for all costs, reasonable attorneys' fees, expenses and liabilities incurred in any legal action arising out of any obligation of Contractor to be performed under this Agreement or arising from any negligence or willful misconduct of Contractor, its officers, employees, agents or representatives. Nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit apportionment of liability, damages and related defense costs as between Contractor and City for third-party claims in accordance with applicable provisions of California law. City shall notify Contractor of any third-party claims related to this Agreement within thirty (30) days of receipt, however, failure to provide such notice shall not operate to waive Contractor's obligations under this Section.