



**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION OF SARASOTA COUNTY  
REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS  
Economic Development Strategic Plan Update**

The Economic Development Corporation of Sarasota County (hereinafter referred to as the “EDC”) will receive statements of qualifications from individuals, corporations, partnerships, and other legal entities authorized to do business in Florida for the purpose of **providing an update to the Economic Development Strategic Plan.**

**TIME AND DATE DUE:** Twelve (12) signed copies and an electronic PDF version of the statement of qualifications must be received no later than 2:00 p.m., ET, April 15, 2008. Responses shall be labeled “RFQ for Economic Development Strategic Plan Update” and delivered to the Economic Development Corporation of Sarasota County, 2601 Cattlemen Road, Suite 201, Sarasota, Florida 34232.

The Request for Qualifications document will be available beginning March 14, 2008 at: [www.demandstar.com](http://www.demandstar.com) and [www.edcsarasotacounty.com](http://www.edcsarasotacounty.com). Additional information concerning economic conditions in Sarasota County may also be found at [www.edcsarasotacounty.com](http://www.edcsarasotacounty.com).

**FOR INFORMATION, CONTACT:**

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2601 Cattlemen Road, Suite 201  
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**BACKGROUND**

The community of Sarasota County has, for some time, recognized the value of a defined, systematic effort in examining the dynamics affecting the local business and economic development climate. As a result, the Economic Development Corporation of Sarasota County was created in 2004 to manage and implement a comprehensive and collaborative strategy to effect positive sustained economic growth.

The EDC is now seeking the services of a qualified party to provide various professional services necessary for updating the current five year Economic Development plan, Plan III, 2004-2009. This plan followed Plan II, 1998 – 2003 and Plan I, 1993-1998. The update (Plan IV) will continue to develop goals and objectives for sustained economic growth using the four strategic focus areas of Plan III as the basis of the new plan. These four strategic focus areas are: Value-added Industry Cluster Development; Innovation & Entrepreneurial Development; Business Climate Issues; and Local & Regional Cooperation.

The creation of partnerships among individuals and firms is acceptable in order to bring the appropriate skill sets and strategic thinking to this project. We are seeking only the most creative and innovative approach and successful respondents will demonstrate strength in all disciplines necessary for the development of such a plan.

It is anticipated that the services required to generate Plan IV should commence September 1, 2008 and conclude during February, 2009. An electronic version of Plan III is available on the EDC website at [www.edcsarasotacounty.com](http://www.edcsarasotacounty.com). This is offered for reference purposes only as the EDC is interested in new and creative solutions to advance and broaden the four strategic focus areas referenced above.

Respondents to this RFQ may be invited to the community for a two day in-depth interview and consultation during the first or second week of June 2008. The purpose of this visit is to learn about each other and share respective philosophies and ideas concerning economic development. Firms invited will be reimbursed at the rate of \$1,000 per day plus reasonable travel expenses. Reimbursement for travel expenses will be in accordance with Florida statute 112.061 and Sarasota County Ordinance 2005-214.

Following the visit, some or all of the respondents will be asked to prepare a comprehensive proposal indicating how they would provide the Scope of Services briefly outlined below.

## I. SCOPE OF SERVICES

The basic objective of Plan IV is to update Plan III using the four strategic focus areas from Plan III as the basis for the updated plan. Those four areas are: Value-added Industry Cluster Development; Innovation & Entrepreneurial Development; Business Climate Issues; and Local & Regional Cooperation. This new plan will not be a typical economic development plan where a consultant recommends approaches to business retention, attraction and expansion. Instead, this plan will help the community visualize its full potential and will explore alternative future scenarios with action plans and timeline for attaining those futures. Specifically the advisor will be asked to:

1. **Community Conversations:** Facilitate and solicit discussion in the community that will confirm and/or update the shared long-range vision for diverse and sustainable economic development in Sarasota County developed under Plan III.
2. **Competitiveness and Asset Evaluation:** Conduct an evaluation and analysis of Sarasota County's competitiveness and assets related to successfully implementing the community's economic development vision for the creation of a sustainable and diverse economy. As a part of this evaluation consideration should be given to conducting a leakage analysis that will show areas of potential economic opportunities. The evaluation should be specifically focused on the social, technological, economic, environmental and political characteristics of the community and should lead to the development of the alternative future scenarios mentioned above.
3. **Best practices:** Identify best practices and leading edge trends in economic development and examine them for applicability to Sarasota County.
4. **Action Plan:** Develop an updated five-year action plan focused on moving Sarasota County towards accomplishing the goals of the long-range plan. Development of this action plan should include measurable goals, objectives and action steps that will allow us to measure our progress towards reaching the long-range goals.
5. **Funding:** Explore best practices and recommend alternative funding sources for economic development including enterprise opportunities.
6. **Communications:** In the development of Plan IV the advisor is expected to maintain a broad openness with the community by employing a variety of communication techniques including a website, community meetings/forums, public presentation and one-on-one interviews.

### **Response Format for Qualifications**

Respondents shall submit twelve (12) hard copies and an electronic PDF version of their submittal. The response format shall contain a letter of transmittal and the following six (6)

tabs with stated information behind each tab. Where specified, the maximum number of pages in each section of the response shall consist of single-sided, 8-1/2" x 11" paper, using 12-point characters. Responses exceeding these limits may be considered non-responsive.

**Report on Qualifications** (maximum 25 pages for the response and an additional maximum of 10 pages of addenda)

- a. The history of the firm, its corporate structure, years in business, and current resources
- b. Technical, educational, and training accomplishments, including resumes, of dedicated staff. Also detail the experience of staff and any prospective subcontractors relative to similar projects
- c. List any public or private sector clients for whom the firm has provided or is providing like services. Include a point of contact for each
- d. List of any outstanding accomplishments of the firm that relate directly to the activities they would be providing to the EDC
- e. Description of innovative or unique approaches the firm suggests for executing the Scope of Services
- f. Any additional information that may assist the EDC in its evaluation

**Evaluation and Notification of Firms**

All firms responding to this Request for Qualifications by the deadline date of Tuesday, April 15, 2008 will be notified by Thursday, May 1, 2008 whether or not they have been chosen for a visit to the community during the first or second week of June 2008.