



**Section One – Introduction and Instructions**

**1.01 Purpose of the RFP**

This Request for Proposals (RFP) is issued by the Barry County Chamber of Commerce & Economic Development Alliance (BCEDA). The purpose of this RFP is to establish a contract with a qualified consultant to perform an independent commercial and housing analysis for Barry County, Michigan.

**1.02 Contacts**

Travis Alden, BCEDA President is the primary point of contact for this RFP.

221 W. State St.  
Hastings, MI 49058  
269-945-2454  
[travis@mibarry.com](mailto:travis@mibarry.com)

Additional contacts during the project will be:

Cindy Vujea, BCEDA Economic Development Coordinator  
[cindy@mibarry.com](mailto:cindy@mibarry.com)

Nichole Loudon, BCEDA Special Projects Coordinator  
[nichole@mibarry.com](mailto:nichole@mibarry.com)

**1.03 Schedule**

This schedule represents the BCEDA's best estimate of the timing for the RFP. If a component of this schedule such as the deadline for receipt of proposals is delayed, the rest of the schedule may be shifted accordingly.

- RFP Issued: February 1, 2017
- Proposals Due: February 24, 2017
- RFP review begins: February 27, 2017
- Interviews with consultants: March 2017
- Intent to award: April 1, 2017
- Work begins: June 2017

Note: execution of project may be contingent on securing additional funding, depending on the proposed costs received during the RFP process.

**1.04 Return Mailing Address and Deadline for Receipt of Proposals**

Offerors must submit one (1) electronic copy (PDF required) and five (5) hard copies of the proposal in a sealed envelope or package. Electronic copy may be sent via email.

Envelopes or packages containing proposals must be clearly addressed as follows:

**Barry County Chamber of Commerce**

**Attn: Travis Alden**

**Re: Market Analysis RFP**

**221 W. State St.**

**Hastings, MI 49058**

***Proposals must be received by the BCEDA no later than 12pm Friday, February 24, 2017.***

Offerors assume the risk of the method of dispatch chosen. The BCEDA assumes no responsibility for delays caused by any delivery service. Postmarking by the due date will not substitute for actual proposal receipt. Late proposals or amendments may be considered at the discretion of the BCEDA.

### **1.05 Questions**

Questions regarding this RFP are welcomed and encouraged if offeror seeks clarity on any part of the RFP. Please direct all questions to Travis Alden at the contact information above.

## ***Section Two – Scope of Work***

### **2.01 Background**

Located in west-central lower Michigan with a growing population of just under 60,000 residents, Barry County is a largely rural county with one City (Hastings, also the County Seat), four villages (Middleville, Nashville, Woodland and Freeport) and sixteen townships. Barry County's location is strategically advantageous; roughly equidistant from four larger population centers: Grand Rapids to the North, Kalamazoo and Battle Creek to the South and Lansing to the East. The Lake Michigan coast is less than an hour's drive to the West. Barry County is part of the Grand Rapids metro area labor-shed and statistical area.

Manufacturing is the largest employment sector in Barry County, employing approx. 40% of the County's labor force. The County is home to a number of large, significant employers, many of which maintain their national/global headquarters in Barry County. Significant employers in Barry County include the Bradford White Corporation, Spectrum Health Pennock, FlexFab Horizons International, Viking Corporation, Middleville Tool & Die, Bliss Clearing Niagara, Hastings Fiberglass Products, Hastings Manufacturing Co., and a large number of smaller companies providing high-quality, head-of-household jobs. With an unemployment rate of approx. 4%, the number one issue for most local employers is a lack of qualified and available talent to support growth.

The BCEDA – as both the Chamber of Commerce and the Economic Development Office for Barry County – is engaged closely with the various local governmental entities across the County. It is also a key partner – and in some cases, the parent organization – for the smaller business associations located in the individual communities. During the course of strategic planning work, a number of these entities have expressed a dire need for local commercial development. Communities – in conjunction with the BCEDA – are eager to embark on targeted commercial (retail, dining, service) recruitment and

entrepreneurial development efforts; however, data to quantify the opportunities for such businesses is lacking.

Moreover, these communities – as well as the County’s primary employers – have identified a lack of available housing as a roadblock for additional growth. From affordable, low-moderate income housing to executive-type housing, there is a lack of housing stock in general. A housing needs assessment is crucial if Barry County is to actively move forward with residential development and growth. In fact, residential development is on the BCEDA’s strategic goals list for the first time ever.

While independent, separate commercial market and housing needs assessments could be completed for each of the communities within Barry County, the BCEDA – as well as the coalition of communities within Barry County who are in support of this project – believes that taking a comprehensive approach with a county-wide project would not only result in a better and more actionable end product, but would also more accurately take into account the dynamics of how the communities are inter-related, from commuting patterns to employment crossover. We anticipate each community – based on the consultant’s professional opinion – to serve as a ‘node’ for this project.

To build a foundation for successful downtown revitalization and commercial corridor development in their respective communities, the completion of a comprehensive market analysis is imperative. This market study will identify the current and future business and cluster mix of the downtowns and commercial corridors in three key areas: Commercial (primarily retail and dining), Office and Residential. This will aid in business retention, expansion and recruitment efforts of these communities and Barry County, as a whole.

## **2.02 Project Objectives**

A project ‘leadership team’ of local Barry County stakeholders will be formed to review, interview and select the consultant for the project and guide the project’s process. BCEDA staff will serve as the primary local point of contact for the project.

The intent of the market analysis and strategy is to achieve the following for Barry County:

1. To identify market potentials for each ‘node’ community with respect to the following market segments: retail, dining/entertainment, personal & professional services, office and housing.
2. To quantify future demand for the market segments listed above, over a defined time horizon (five to ten years), in terms of nonresidential square footage and number of housing units by housing type.
3. To identify an optimal tenant mix for each ‘node’ community, including recommendations for geographically clustering mutually supporting uses, if relevant.
4. To develop a market-based development strategy founded on the market analysis. This market strategy is not intended to be a master plan for each community, but rather a focused set of market-driven recommendations for retaining, expanding and recruiting desired businesses as well as to attract commercial, residential and mixed use development.
5. Identification of catalytic projects for specific anchor properties within each ‘node’ community, if applicable.

### **2.03 Scope of Work**

The selected consultant will provide research, analysis and recommendations sufficient to accomplish the “Project Objectives” as stated above. At a minimum, the scope of work shall include the following:

1. Overview of the community, county and regional economy and market to provide a context for this analysis and strategy. Identification of local and regional trade areas for each ‘node’ community is crucial for this step.
2. A sales gap analysis and competition comparison for Barry County as a whole and/or each ‘node’ community.
3. Assembly and review of existing businesses and housing inventory addressing retail, dining, entertainment, personal and professional services, and offices, as well as all types of housing. The inventory will be based upon readily available existing data, and the consultant will fill voids and update data as needed.
4. Interviews with individuals and/or small groups to gain additional insights into market conditions. The BCEDA and community partners will help to identify stakeholder groups if desired. Intercept data gathering would also be helpful.
5. A written description of existing market conditions to address relevant issues such as the quantified amount of various businesses and housing types, vacancy space/units, product mix & pricing, and similar characteristics. In particular, this section should identify any key deterrents (real or perceived) to investment in Barry County or the communities within.
6. A written description of any conclusions reached concerning the impacts (positive or negative) of Barry County’s proximity to larger population, employment and commercial centers such as Grand Rapids and Kalamazoo.
7. Description of the optimal tenant mix and housing mix for each ‘node’ community based upon the projected future absorption trends and other relevant factors.
8. General conclusions highlighting the most significant findings and projections of the analysis as a bridge to the resulting market-based strategy.
9. The BCEDA – as the point organization for this project – will host public meetings in communities throughout Barry County to explain why this comprehensive market analysis is important and introduce the consultant. The consultant will then describe the project process, what the goals are for the study and describe the involvement and participation of the communities, stakeholders, volunteers and key BCEDA and other staff. The consultant shall also hold a follow-up public meeting at the conclusion of the study in each relevant community, and unveil the details results – what it specifically means to the business community and how the recommendations of the project may be implemented in each community.

### **2.04 Additive Alternatives**

The following additive alternatives are an integral part of this proposal. To be responsive, the offeror shall quote for the base bid and also for the following listed additive alternatives:

1. Recommendations of specific businesses that exist in other communities to target in a recruitment effort, based on the quantified opportunities and needs identified in the study. This also may include specific developers or housing contractors.
2. Recommendations of specific businesses that already exist in Barry County that could expand or diversify to capitalize on identified market opportunities.

3. Any branding or marketing recommendations to enhance the image of Barry County or the communities within. Any recommendations in this area should include the specific identity to be promoted as well as methods to promote it.
4. Recommended interventions to promote business and housing development. Examples of potential interventions to be explored include public or private financial incentives, special districts, marketing materials and strategies for recruitment efforts, and general improvements tied to physical and social issues (parking, place-making efforts, etc.)
5. Implementation steps for the strategy, including priorities, sequencing and approximate cost estimates.

### **2.05 Timeline**

Clearly include in proposal the proposed timeline for completion of the project, including any significant benchmark dates.

### **2.06 Cost**

Offeror should clearly define the proposed cost of the project, itemizing out the additive alternates. If there are any areas of the project that may be 'value engineered' by utilizing local resources (past studies, in-kind staff assistance, etc.) it would be helpful to include that.

## ***Section Three – Proposal Format and Content***

### **3.01 Submittal Requirements**

The proposal submittal must contain the following information:

1. **Cover Letter.** Provide name and address of the firm(s) and project contact person with address, phone and email. Summarize your understanding of the project scope and services being required. Provide a statement indicating your ability to provide timely services for this project and to meet the requirements of the proposed schedule. Indicate your acceptance of the requirements of this RFP. The cover letter must be signed by a duly authorized official of the firm. Consortiums, joint ventures, or teams submitting proposals must establish that contractual responsibility rests solely with one company or one legal entity. Each submittal should indicate the entity responsible for execution on behalf of the proposal team.
2. **Project Team.**
  - a. Prepare an organizational chart showing the project team
  - b. Provide resumes or a listing of information for each person included in your proposed project team. State the educational background of each individual, years of experience, length of employment with your firm, and previous project experience. For each person, list specific responsibilities on this project, experience on economic impact studies of similar size and type, specific qualifications applicable to this project, and any current work assignments which may affect availability for this project.
  - c. Any capacity and/or resources available that would enable you to back up and support the assigned staff.

- d. Areas of specialization, if any.
  - e. Two case studies involving market analysis and related business development work.
  - f. For the project manager and other “key” team members proposed, provide at least three client references (contact person, phone, email and summary of project).  
Experience in small towns and villages is highly desirable.
- 3. Project Approach**
- a. Provide a description of your project approach including – but not limited to – all items listed above, a work plan and estimated personnel hours, if available. Any changes that your team might recommend to the overall scope of work should be indicated and explained.
  - b. Any additional information that would uniquely qualify your team for this project.

## **Section Four – Review of Proposals and Selection**

### **4.01 Selection Criteria**

Upon receipt of the proposals, BCEDA staff will evaluate the completeness of each proposal. All complete proposals will be forwarded to all members of the project’s leadership team.

The leadership team will rely on the qualitative information contained and presented in the proposals, interviews, and reference checks in making the decision to select the most qualified firm to provide services for this project. Selection criteria will be based on:

1. Appropriate explanation detailing the approach to the project objectives and scope of work as stated in sections 2.02, 2.03 and 2.04
2. Firm background and applicable project experience
3. Project team members’ experience with comparable projects
4. Past performance with the BCEDA, its stakeholders or with similar organizations
5. Knowledge and insight into the local and/or regional economy
6. Abilities of personnel

Based on evaluation of written proposals, the leadership team may ask a number of firms and their representatives to present a proposal for services, e.g. interview with the leadership team. The BCEDA reserves the right to not select a firm as part of this process if the leadership team feels the criteria of the project have not been met or an agreement cannot be reached with any of the interviewed firms.

## ***Section Five – Standard Proposal Information***

### **5.01 Authorized Signature**

An individual authorized to bind the Offeror to the provisions of the RFP must sign all proposals.

### **5.02 Preparation Costs**

The BCEDA – including all members of the project leadership team will not pay any cost associated with the preparation, submittal, presentation or evaluation of any proposal.

### **5.03 Conflict of Interest**

Offerors must disclose any instances where the firm or any individuals working on the project has a possible conflict of interest and, if so, the nature of that conflict. The BCEDA reserves the right to cancel the project if any interest disclosed from any source could either give the appearance of or cause speculation as to the objectivity of the Offeror's proposal. The BCEDA's determination regarding any questions of conflict of interest is final.

### **5.04 Offeror's Certification**

By signature on the proposal, the Offeror certifies that it complies with:

1. The laws of the State of Michigan
2. All applicable local, state and federal laws, codes and regulations
3. All terms, conditions and requirements set forth in this RFP
4. A condition that the proposal submitted was independently arrived at without collusion
5. A condition that the offer will remain open and valid for a period of ninety (90) days, and any condition that the firm and/or any individuals working on the project do not have a possible conflict of interest. If the Offeror fails to comply with the provisions stated here, the BCEDA reserves the right to reject the proposal.