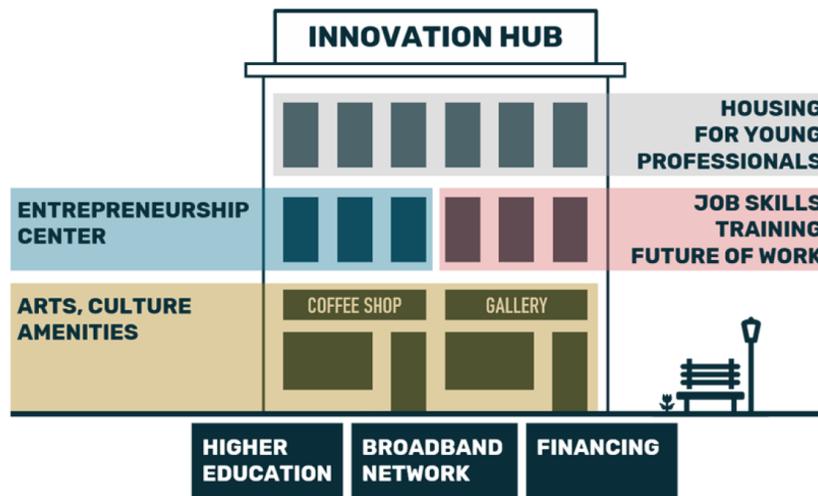


# Request for Proposals

## Downtown Lewiston Innovation Hub Feasibility Study and Business Plan



RFP Issued by:



### Clearwater Economic Development Association

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## REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR FEASIBILITY STUDY AND BUSINESS PLAN

Clearwater Economic Development Association, Inc. (CEDA), in partnership and on behalf of Beautiful Downtown Lewiston Revitalization Corporation (BDL), is seeking proposals from planning professionals to complete a feasibility study and business plan for an Innovation Hub in downtown Lewiston, Idaho, as a venue for co-working space for economic development agencies, start-up and existing firms, and a location for business acceleration programs to launch and expand business activity. The Innovation Hub will contribute to community economic development by providing incubator space for small businesses, programming to assist entrepreneurs, with a focus on tech-sector industry development, and providing a location for “remote workers.”

BDL is the lead agency in partnership with CEDA on this project. Incorporated in 2003, BDL is an Idaho 501(c)3 non-profit organization, governed by a 13-member Board of Directors, whose mission is “to create a vital, inviting downtown district in Lewiston which promotes quality business, cultural, and community growth.” More information on the building and on BDL may be found at:

<http://beautifuldowntownlewiston.com/>

CEDA is a private, non-profit 501(c)(3) organization that provides economic and community development services within the Idaho counties of Nez Perce, Idaho, Lewis, Clearwater, and Latah. Our mission is to “assist businesses and community by acting as a conduit to needed resources.” More information about CEDA may be found at: [www.clearwater-eda.org](http://www.clearwater-eda.org).

This project contract will not exceed \$30,000 and will be completed over five (5) months. This project is funded by the USDA Rural Business Development (RBDG) grant program, BDL and Valley Vision, the Lewiston-Clarkston Valley public-private nonprofit leading the region on business recruitment, local business retention and expansion, and business climate improvement. CEDA is serving as an intermediary for the project. BDL will provide public meeting and stakeholder engagement, and coordination of a Project Steering Committee

### Project Background

The Downtown Lewiston Innovation Hub concept arose during development of the [Lewiston Downtown Master Plan](#), which BDL spearheaded in 2018-19. Downtown Lewiston offers the unique combination of historic buildings, community character, low cost of living, and access to broadband accounting for the “foundational elements” of an attractive live-work downtown for digital-based entrepreneurs.

With the Downtown Master Plan as a guide, BDL spent the second half of 2019 working with downtown property owners to develop a Business Improvement District (BID) proposal that would create stable funding for downtown revitalization efforts, including funding for an Innovation Hub. In considering development of the Innovation Hub, BDL and Valley Vision collaboratively issued a Request for Proposals

to determine the interest of private-sector building owners to work with us in developing the Innovation Hub in their historic downtown building.

Downtown Lewiston is the historic commercial core for a nine-county region and is one of the fastest-revitalizing downtowns in the region. Private investment has thrived through adaptive reuse of underutilized historic buildings as commercial and residential spaces, adding 50 new residential units and \$30 million in tax base growth between 2005 and 2019. The Downtown Lewiston Urban Renewal District provided funding for infrastructure projects that remediated blight and addressed infrastructure deficiencies between 2004 and 2020. Additionally, the Port of Lewiston has made high-speed fiber internet available to nearly every downtown building, which makes downtown Lewiston the natural location for an Innovation Hub.

Business in downtown Lewiston attract customers within the region, as well as tourists visiting the area to explore its phenomenal access to recreation, award-winning wines, or unique cultural heritage. Downtown Lewiston is one of the remaining urban centers in Idaho to “take off” economically through business growth and investment. The area also has significant challenges. Lewiston, and the region, has the slowest-growing population within the state, where Kootenai County and the Boise Metro Area eclipse the local demographics. The region has been aging more rapidly compared to state averages. However, younger people and families - tired of the urban congestion and loss of place - are beginning to migrate back to the region. The 25-40-year-old cohort is the main target for the Innovation Hub. Anecdotally, BDL reports that the last four buildings that changed ownership in downtown Lewiston were purchased by buyers under the age of 40.

The City of Lewiston has made downtown Lewiston’s revitalization a priority. Spearheaded by City Councilor John Pernsteiner, the Innovation Hub concept received unanimous support from the Lewiston City Council in discussion at their May 2020 Work Session meeting. The City is committed to providing at least some capital funding for the renovation of a downtown building in which the Innovation Hub would be housed. The City is also working with the project partners identified in this RFP to pursue federal funding to capitalize development of the Innovation Hub.

## **Project Partners**

Project partners in the facility and their anticipated roles are listed below:

- City of Lewiston - expressed a commitment to assisting with funding to rehabilitate a downtown building and would consider assuming ownership or a leasehold interest of the facility for use as an Innovation Hub pending the requirements of funding sources.
- BDL - is one of the economic development agencies that is committed to co-locating their office in the facility. BDL will also collaborate with Valley Vision and LCSC to coordinate entrepreneur training opportunities in the space.
- Valley Vision - co-location in the facility and is committed to developing the angel investor fund that will be available to entrepreneurs who participate in Innovation Hub programming.
- Port of Lewiston - leverage the Port’s investment in high-speed fiber internet network to strengthen the innovation culture in downtown Lewiston.

- Lewis-Clark State College and its Small Business Development Center – manage an entrepreneur/business accelerator program at the Hub.
- Lewis-Clark Valley Chamber of Commerce- may have a physical presence in the Innovation Hub and will partner on entrepreneurial ecosystem development.
- Private sector businesses are interested in providing donated services and infrastructure to support the project

## Scope of Work

CEDA is seeking a business and economic development consultant or team to conduct a feasibility analysis and create a business plan for the development and operation of the Downtown Lewiston Innovation Hub. The consultant must have demonstrated experience in planning and evaluating public-private initiatives to launch, grow and mentor businesses, and building synergy between project partners to create a long-term successful venture.

The project components will include:

1. **Feasibility analysis:** A feasibility study establishing the market demand for the specific start-up companies proposed for incubation/acceleration and the presence of necessary resources and community support. The analysis should demonstrate how the Innovation Hub generates benefits to the LC Valley and region-wide.
  - a) Market research on potential users who would pay rent to access the space, including economic development agencies who may be “anchor tenants,” related entrepreneurs, startups, and other interested businesses or community organizations.
  - b) Information gathering regarding the facilities, facility characteristics, amenities, and types of spaces that potential co-working space tenants would be interested in renting.
  - c) Information gathering on the type of entrepreneurial ecosystem social gathering that entrepreneurs would want to occur, and with what regularity, in the Innovation Hub.
2. **Business Plan:** A business plan with detailed demonstration that facility and sponsoring agencies have the financial capacity to operate the facility and reach a positive cash flow within three years.
  - a) Evaluation of similar facilities in our region and a break-down of how they operate, including ownership of the space (or lead tenant status, if applicable), staffing, financial management and risk management.
  - b) Recommendation of which type of management approach (operation and organizational structure) would best fit the Downtown Lewiston Innovation Hub concept.
  - c) Prospective revenue of the Innovation Hub, between anchor tenants, and coworking tenants, other organizations, and special events.
  - d) Prospective expenses of the Innovation Hub, including initial outfitting costs, annual operating costs, and ongoing payroll costs if staff is recommended.
3. Within the business plan, provide a guide/outline of a management plan for operation that includes:

- a) Tenant/client selection policy that includes a description of the types of businesses sought and any established selection criteria
- b) Tenant lease or license agreement (if applicable) that enumerates the shared services to be provided; delineates the business assistance policy, including the provision of management, technical, and training assistance, and the graduation policy; and establishes periodic access to the tenant's business records to permit assessment of the financial and operational viability of the tenant's business
- c) Business assistance policy that outlines the various types of assistance that will be provided to start-up firms, including how support will be provided to tenants/clients with access to capital needed to grow their businesses successfully
- d) Staffing plan that details the talent and resources that will be dedicated to supporting the startup companies accepted
- e) Tenant graduation policy that is documented as a provision of the tenant lease or license agreement (if applicable) with clear requirements for tenant graduation from the facility or services; and
- f) Performance plan that includes how the entity will track the success of tenants/clients, specifically identifying what performance measurement data are proposed to be collected from tenants/clients and for what period of time during and after the service period the data will be collected. This should also include members of any oversight or policy board that will be responsible for setting performance,

The project will be guided by a Steering Committee, under the direction of the BDL Executive Director, to provide input and feedback to the consultant. The Steering Committee includes BDL staff, Valley Vision staff, a private-sector stakeholder, the City of Lewiston, and a representative from the Port of Lewiston. CEDA staff will also meet with the Project Steering Committee.

## Deliverables

The consultant shall be responsible for providing each of the following as the project deliverables.

- 1) Draft feasibility analysis and business plan
- 2) Slide deck of any public presentations related to the project
- 3) Final feasibility analysis and business plan

In creating the feasibility and business plan, the consultant will:

- a. Negotiate and sign a contract for service
- b. Interview at least 10 stakeholders identified by the Steering Committee as having knowledge of entrepreneurial ecosystem development
- c. Complete the Scope of Work identified in the RFP
- d. Develop a draft feasibility analysis and business plan and review it with the Steering Committee and CEDA
- e. Make no more than two presentations of the draft feasibility analysis and business plan to interested stakeholders or elected officials

- f. The final feasibility analysis and business plan will be presented to the project Steering Committee, which will make a recommendation to approve the deliverables and present that recommendation in writing to CEDA

## Project Schedule

July 13, 2020	RFP Announcement
August 3, 2020	Deadline for Submissions to CEDA
August 17-21, 2020	Interviews in Lewiston or may be conducted remotely
August 24, 2020	Projected date to select consultant
August 31, 2020	Projected date for project to be under contract
December 1, 2020	Complete Research and Draft feasibility analysis and business plan
December 15, 2020	Presentation of draft feasibility and business plan to Steering Committee
February 1, 2021	Final feasibility analysis and business plan due to CEDA
March 1, 2021	Final plans submitted to the USDA (grantor) by CEDA

## Evaluation Criteria:

Respondents will be evaluated according to these criteria:

**Capability to Perform Project** (i.e., ability to perform work in Idaho; firm history; areas of expertise; commitment to provide necessary resources to perform & complete project). (25 pts.)

**Relevant Project Experience** (i.e., description of other projects executed by the firm that demonstrate relevant experience. List of all public sector clients for whom you have performed similar work in the past five years, which should include name, address, and phone number of a person who can be contacted regarding the firm’s performance on the project). (35 pts.)

**Qualifications of Project Team** (i.e., resumes for the key people assigned to the project including sub-consultants. Key personnel roles and responsibilities on this project. Identify project manager who will be responsible for the day-to-day management of project tasks and will be primary point of contact). (25 pts.)

**Project Approach and Schedule** (i.e., the tasks that must be accomplished to complete the project. How the firm proposes to execute the tasks. Unique aspects of the project and alternative approaches CEDA might wish to consider). (15 pts.)

Total Written Proposal Points Possible = 100

The Selection Committee may choose to interview the highest-ranking architects. If this option is exercised, an additional maximum of 25 points will be added to those interviewed based on presentations. In person interviews or remotely, will be scheduled and done by the committee.(25 pts.)

Total Proposal Points Possible = 125

## Award

Award will be made to the most qualified offer or who is deemed most advantageous to CEDA, all evaluation criteria considered. Unsuccessful offers will be notified as soon as possible. CEDA reserves the right to reject all proposals if one is not found to be responsive to this project.

## Proposal Format & Submission

Electronic proposals in PDF format will be accepted. Proposals should not exceed 20 pages (cover letter, resumes, etc. are included in the 20 pages). Email file size delivery cannot exceed 10 MB.

Proposals should be submitted to:

Dodd Snodgrass at [dsnodgrass@clearwater-eda.org](mailto:dsnodgrass@clearwater-eda.org), 208-791-4456

## Proposal Deadline:

All responses must be received by **12:00 pm (PDT), August 3, 2020**.

## Type of Contract:

The agreement will be on a fixed price basis, with payment terms to be negotiated with the selected offer. The contract form will be an approved and negotiated owner/consultant form.

*This solicitation is being offered in accordance with 2 CFR Part 200. CEDA reserves the right to negotiate an agreement based on fair and reasonable compensation for the scope of work and services proposed, as well as the right to reject any and all responses deemed unqualified, unsatisfactory or inappropriate.*