

**Valley Economic Development Center
North Los Angeles Small Business Development Center**

**Request for Qualifications (RFQ)
Business Consulting and Training Services**

2002

INTRODUCTION

Proposals are being requested from Consultants experienced in providing consulting and training services to small business owners in the Greater Los Angeles region. Only written proposals, shall be considered. All materials submitted shall become part of the proposal. Questions regarding this proposal request for qualifications (RFQ) should be directed to:

Corporate Services/HR
Consultant RFQ
VEDC/SBDC
5121 Van Nuys Blvd. 3rd Floor
Van Nuys, CA 91403

***PLEASE NO PHONE CALLS**

The Request for Qualification (RFQ) is to identify qualified business consultants and trainers located throughout Los Angeles and Ventura County who would become eligible to provide business assistance to small businesses through the Small Business Development Center network.

SECTION I

OVERVIEW OF THE VALLEY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CENTER (VEDC) and THE SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTER (SBDC)

The mission of the Valley Economic Development Center (VEDC) is to be the leading provider of consulting, training, financing and workforce solutions to the business community.

We strive to maximize our economic impact by aligning our resources to help communities achieve their economic objectives. We are highly involved in community economic development projects, represented in many key business committees and actively participate in the development and implementation of key community economic strategies.

We have always been proactive in our efforts to develop services. Our strong belief in the importance of integration and partnerships has greatly contributed to our organization's exceptional program and performance.

The North Los Angeles County Small Business Development Center (SBDC) is a program hosted by the VEDC and is funded by the Small Business Administration (SBA) and the California Technology, Trade & Commerce Agency, and the City of Los Angeles. The SBDC is the “consulting arm” of the VEDC as part of a greater network of services to help small to medium sized businesses grow and succeed.

It is the SBDC's commitment to provide confidential, quality business counseling services to improve the skills of existing and prospective small business owners. Our

counseling services provide advice, guidance and/or instruction concerning the formation, management, financing and operation of small business enterprises through workshops, one-on-one consulting, and loan packaging.

This Request for Qualifications (RFQ) solicits the services of qualified business counselors to provide business-consulting and training services to VEDC's and SBDC's small business clients.

SECTION II BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In selecting consultants from this RFQ process the VEDC/SBDC will review each proposals for demonstrated experience that meets the following criteria:

- Rapport with clients – can communicate effectively with entrepreneurs and engage the cooperation of the business in the implementation process
- Professional integrity - how the consultant interprets and respects the code of ethics and conduct (attached)
- Technical competence - knowledge and experience needed for dealing with client's technical problems and producing results of desired level
- Assignment design - ability to define and clarify the "scope of work" with the client
- Capability to deliver - the ability to access other related services, resource, location, flexibility and other features of the VEDC/SBDC, demonstrating the ability to actually deliver what was promised to the Center and to the small business client
- Professional image of the consultant - demonstration of the consultant's consistent achievements in consulting e.g. as an expert in their field
- Experience – the extent to which the consultant can demonstrate experience in working with small businesses

Consultants should indicate how they would address the following essential responsibilities of the business-counseling role at the VEDC/SBDC:

- Provide business-consulting services to business owners, on a one-on-one basis or in small groups in the areas of business planning, marketing, operations management, financial planning, general business practices that will result in economic impact within realistic timeframes and using available resources
- Direct business to appropriate business resources
- Develop and conduct training programs
- Coordinate with the Director

Proposals must include sufficient detail to permit proper evaluation.

Minimum Requirements

Any proposal that does not include the following will be rejected from further consideration:

1. Printed Material that clearly states Business Name and location: (business card or other printed marketing materials meets this requirement)
2. Proof of professional liability insurance
3. List of at least three client references: Must include business name, contact person, address and phone numbers

4. Availability for consulting/training (please include days, approximate times, including availability on evenings and weekends.)

SECTION III PROPOSAL FORMAT AND OUTLINE

The proposal shall be limited to 10 pages, including pre-printed resumes, company documents and similar appendix type materials that the Consultant believes will aid in determining qualifications.

1. Transmittal Letter and Executive Summary

This piece should introduce the Consultant (including title, address, phone numbers) and include a brief statement of the Consultant's understanding of the work to be done.

The Executive Summary should provide a brief overview of the entire proposal and highlight key aspects of the proposal.

2. Qualifications of the Consultant/Trainer

- Qualifications, including education and experience of Consultant
- A statement of past work performed of a similar nature that would indicate qualifications of the Consultant
- The names of clients, client's contract person and telephone number, type of project, brief description of the activities/work and date work was performed for the client. The VEDC/SBDC reserves the right to contract the named clients at any time.

3. Attachments

To be considered, each proposal must include the following as attachments:

- Marketing Materials/Business Card that clearly states the consultant's business name and address
- Proof of Professional Liability Insurance

SECTION IV EVALUATION PROCESS

VEDC/SBDC will review submitted proposals with reference to the program delivery and experience factors set forth. The intent is to select those consultants that have the level of technical capability to perform the services outlined in this RFQ and that match the current demands of the Center.

All responses to this RFQ should be mailed to:

Corporate Services/HR
Consultant RFQ
VEDC/SBDC
5121 Van Nuys Blvd. 3rd Floor
Van Nuys, CA 91403

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WRITTEN CODE OF CONDUCT

While performing services for the North Los Angeles County Small Business Development Center, consultants, employees, volunteers and members of their household or close relatives shall not:

- a. Engage in or participate in activities which create a conflict of interest or the appearance of conflict of interest.**
- b. Recommend the purchase of goods or services from sources in which they have a direct or indirect interest in or represent.**
- c. Accept fees, commissions or things of value from third parties as a result of recommending any services, equipment or supplies to an VEDC/SBDC client.**
- d. Accept fees, commissions or things of value from an VEDC/SBDC client.**
- e. As an employee of the VEDC/SBDC, solicit the private engagement of their services as a paid consultant to an VEDC/SBDC client at any time during or within sixty (60) days subsequent to the term of their employment with the VEDC/SBDC.**
- f. As a volunteer of the VEDC/SBDC, solicit the private engagement of their services as a paid consultant to a VEDC/SBDC client at any time prior to the formal termination of agreed-upon services, i.e., completion of scope of work as formally documented by Center Director.**
- g. The consultant, employee, or volunteer also agrees to:**
 - (1) Hold the affairs of their clients in strict confidence.**
 - (2) Maintain high standards of professional conduct.**

CERTIFICATION OF CONTRACT CONSULTANT, EMPLOYEE, VOLUNTEER

I have read and understand this agreement and agree to abide by it. The above has been discussed and thoroughly explained to me by my immediate supervisor or Center Director.

Signature Date

Print Name: _____

ADDITIONAL CERTIFICATION OF EMPLOYEE

As an employee, I further understand that adherence to this code of conduct, including all of the foregoing, is a condition of my employment with the VEDC/SBDC and the violation of this condition is cause for immediate termination.

Signature Date

DEFINITION

1. **Member of the Household**

Includes the spouse and minor children and all relatives who reside in the same household.

2. **Close Relative**

Is an ancestor, lineal descendant, brother or sister and the lineal descendants or either, spouse, father-in-law, mother-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, brother-in-law, or sister-in-law. A "close relative" may also be a "member of the household".

3. **Appearance of Conflicts of Interest**

Examples could include recommending the purchase of goods or services from the following, including members of their household or close relatives:

- a. A personal friend.
- b. A former supervisor, business associate or co-worker.
- c. A person with whom an SBDC employee or volunteer is considering a business or commercial transaction.