



**MARYLAND WOMEN'S
BUSINESS CENTER**

Expert guidance. Real results.

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
TRAINING CURRICULUM REDEVELOPMENT**

Proposals Due:

5:00 pm EST on Friday, December 6, 2024

RFP Release Date:

Issued October 28, 2024

A. Overview

The Maryland Women's Business Center (MWBC), a signature program of Rockville Economic Development, Inc. and a U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) designated resource center, was established in 2010 with a mission to empower small businesses and women entrepreneurs to launch and grow in Maryland's Capital Region. MWBC fulfills its mission by providing small businesses and women entrepreneurs with the essential tools and resources they need to successfully launch and grow their ventures. This support includes comprehensive training programs, personalized business counseling, networking opportunities, and access to vital resources to help them achieve their business goals. Now in our 14th year, MWBC proudly collaborates and serves the cities of Bowie, Frederick and Rockville along with Frederick, Howard, Montgomery, and Prince George's counties.

MWBC Shop Local, a cohort-based retail incubator program of MWBC, was crafted to lower the barriers of opportunity and serve as a launchpad for startup and early-state retail and small-scale manufacturing entrepreneurs. It blends both program-based and space-based incubator models, combining the strengths of each to introduce diverse, locally owned businesses to the marketplace. The program-based model offers technical assistance, mentorship, and access to capital, focusing on nurturing and supporting small retail businesses to stimulate local economic growth. The space-based model reduces financial risk by providing shared retail space at nominal fees.

B. Scope of Work

Since its launch in 2019, MWBC Shop Local has supported over 50 entrepreneurs, expanding from one storefront to three, alongside three pop-up locations. To enhance the program's accessibility and impact, we seek to redevelop and formalize our training curriculum to better serve cohort participants and those not yet engaged in the incubator. This includes businesses that are not yet ready for the program, established companies looking to enhance their competitiveness and adapt to market changes, and entrepreneurs in the ideation stage seeking to ensure they have the foundational knowledge and skills for success in the retail sector.

The firm selected will provide the following tasks:

- **Evaluate Existing Training Curriculum** - Assess the current curriculum, focusing on content, structure, delivery methods, and outcomes. This evaluation will identify strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement. The goal is to create a more dynamic and practical curriculum tailored to the specific needs of small-scale manufacturing and retail businesses.

- **Develop New Training Content** - Based on the evaluation, the firm will develop new topics that are not currently covered in the existing curriculum. These may include visual merchandising, inventory turnover strategies, customer experience optimization, and retail-specific financial metrics. At the same time, the firm will streamline or remove existing topics from the current curriculum to ensure the training is practical and relevant to the immediate needs of retail entrepreneurs. The updated curriculum should focus on practical, real-world applications that participants can immediately implement in their business.
- **Develop Presentation Content and Educational Resources** - Create presentation materials and instructional guides to train advisors on delivering the curriculum effectively. This will include clear, engaging content and practical homework assignments for participants to apply key concepts. Modules should incorporate interactive and hands-on learning experiences that increase engagement. The materials should meet the needs of participants at different business stages and learning styles.
- **Pilot and Refine Curriculum** - Implement a pilot session to test the new materials, followed by an evaluation phase for adjustments.
- **Outreach and Engagement** - Engage with consultants to ensure that the curriculum is accessible to a broad range of entrepreneurs, including those from underrepresented communities.

Any firm interested in submitting an application should email Danette Nguyen at danette@marylandwbc.org to receive a copy of the current MWBC Shop Local training curriculum.

C. Proposal Requirements

Applicants should submit proposals submitted in 8 ½' x 11' size and not more than 5 pages excluding cover letter, qualifications, references, budget, timeline, and sample materials. Proposals must include the following information:

1. Cover Letter – This should include the name of firm, address, and proposal contact information. The proposal contact should include name, title, mailing address, phone number and email of the person whom MWBC should contact regarding the proposal and who is authorized to bind the firm.
2. Qualifications – This should outline the team who would perform the work and their background, as well as provide information about similar work for other organizations.
3. References – Provide a minimum of (3) three references that can speak directly to your firm's experience with developing training curriculum.
4. Approach to Tasks – In no more than five (5) pages, applicants should describe their approach to completing the scope of work tasks.
5. Budget – Applicant should provide a budget for the completion of all tasks. MWBC anticipates negotiating a detailed scope of work and budget for the tasks prior to contract execution. The costs will not exceed the maximum ceiling value of the contract (\$20,000).
6. Timeline for Completion of Scope of Work – The applicant should provide a timeline with milestones for the completion of all tasks.
7. Sample Materials – The Applicant should provide at least one example of a training material previously created.

Proposals should be submitted by 5:00 pm EST on Friday, December 6 to danette@marylandwbc.org.

Proposals must be received by the time specified at the email address listed. Any proposals received after the deadline will not be considered.

D. Selection Process

Proposals will be received for completeness, applicant experience, experience with similar work, references, and reasonableness of cost. Interviews may be requested with select applicants.

E. General Conditions

If MWBC awards a contract, the contract will be awarded to the responsible firm whose offer is most advantageous to MWBC, based upon the evaluation criteria for expertise, responsiveness, and price. MWBC reserves the right to negotiate any and all elements of any proposal received. MWBC has no legal requirements to execute a contract on the basis of any proposal received.

MWBC reserves the right to waive any defect in this procurement process or to make changes to this solicitation as deemed necessary, accept or reject any or all proposals received, to cancel this Request in part, or in its entirety; or to reissue the RFP.

Firms possessing the capacity and demonstrated ability to perform successfully and who are not debarred and/or suspended from conducting business with the state and federal funded agencies are invited to respond.

F. Contact Person

Applicants may contact Danette Nguyen, Managing Director for MWBC, for further information regarding questions for this RFP. Deadline for inquiries is November 18, 2024. Inquiries will be responded to no later than November 22, 2024. All requests for interpretation or questions must be sent by email to danette@marylandwbc.org and must include the subject line "RFP: Training Curriculum Redevelopment".