



**JACKSONVILLE ONSLOW**  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## **REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS**

Economic Development Services for  
Jacksonville Onslow Economic Development  
Five-Year Economic Development Strategic Plan

**Due Date: Thursday, July 11<sup>th</sup>, 2024 (5:00 PM deadline)**

### **Introduction**

Jacksonville Onslow Economic Development (JOED) is requesting statements of qualification from qualified professional consultants specializing in economic development services for technical analysis, facilitation, and planning activities required for the development of a comprehensive economic development strategic plan. The project will include the review of relevant community demographic and economic data, a SWOT analysis of our local economy, community visioning and stakeholder group engagements to capture the vision of our residents, an assessment of our local economic climate, and the community's capacity for additional growth. This data will culminate in a comprehensive economic development strategy for JOED and the Onslow Community. This plan shall set forth specific goals and objectives for growing and diversifying Onslow's economy and creating community prosperity over the target period, and a detailed action plan for how to achieve strategic objectives.

### **Background**

JOED is a 501(c)6 North Carolina Corporation. It is governed by an 18-member Board of Directors that is elected by its investors. In addition to the 18 elected members, there are 22 Ex Officio Board members, representing public and non-profit entities in the community. JOED investors include private, public, and non-profit entities. Business decisions of JOED are made by an Executive Committee that is made up of ten elected Board members and two representatives of local government (one each from Onslow County government and the City of Jacksonville.) In existence since 1970, its service area is the entirety of Onslow County.

JOED's Vision is to provide comprehensive economic development leadership to our Onslow Community. JOED defines "our Onslow Community" as the entirety of Onslow County, including its unincorporated areas, the City of Jacksonville, and the Towns of Swansboro, Richlands, Holly Ridge, North Topsail Beach, and Surf City.

JOED defines economic development as a series of programs that seek, as their common objective, the creation and maintenance of community prosperity. Further, JOED defines community prosperity as the concomitant realization of a strong and growing tax base; thriving and resilient local businesses; and the individual wealth of its citizens. JOED is a member of North Carolina's Southeast (NCSE) which provides our global marketing services and serves as a hub for regional economic development networking.

Onslow County is a coastal North Carolina county located halfway between the coastal cities of Wilmington and Beaufort. The county is traversed north – south by US Highway 17, and east – west by NC Highway 24. The county's overall population is currently around 218,000, which reflects 2.17% growth in the past year.

The Jacksonville Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) is the County of Onslow. The Jacksonville Unified Municipal Planning Organization (JUMPO) provides planning services for the entire County, including each of the incorporated towns. Onslow County is also a member of the East Carolina Council of Governments.

Home to Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune and Marine Corps Air Station New River, the county has hosted, since World War II, a significant military population. Though the county's military population has remained largely steady over these decades, the portion of the population unaffiliated with the Bases continues to grow, reflecting an increasingly diverse economy and demographics.

### **Project Stakeholders**

The primary stakeholders for this project will be the JOED Board of Directors. The Board consists of member investors from the private and public sector. JOED's Executive Director is the staff liaison for the Board.

The JOED Board of Directors will convene a Strategic Planning Committee, made up of Board members, investors, and select community stakeholders for the purposes of guiding this planning effort. Additionally other stakeholder groups and public input is strongly desired as part of the project.

### **Scope of Work**

The consultant shall provide professional services to support the tasks listed below. JOED will work jointly with the selected consultant to develop a final, comprehensive scope of work, fee structure, and schedule for the project. Responses to this Request for Qualifications should demonstrate the consultant's experience and expertise with the following range of services included in the project's ultimate scope of work:

1. Review and analyze existing demographic, economic, housing, and labor force data. Use this data to show key demographic, social, economic, and financial trends and forecasts for inclusion into the final strategic plan. Please provide the data sources you propose to use in your response. Additional consideration will be given to firms that can demonstrate effective visual representation of this data.
2. Review and analyze relevant master planning documents for the community and incorporate the visions contained therein into the final report for this project.
3. Engage in a current SWOT analysis to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats that affect our local economy.
4. Hold a minimum of two (2) community visioning sessions and several stakeholder group

engagements to capture community and stakeholder views on Onslow's future and incorporate this information into the final report. The Strategic Planning Committee and JOED staff members will also be available for any needed consultation. Provide a basic layout of your proposed meeting schedule with community and stakeholders groups in your response.

5. Prepare a customized economic development strategic plan for JOED for the next five years, setting forth specific goals and objectives for capitalizing on existing economic opportunities and suggesting potential solutions to the economic development challenges that our community faces.

The final report shall include a vision and mission for community economic development. It will provide data and other information that enables stakeholders to agree on a common understanding of reality and establish an overall direction of the plan.

The report shall include strategic goals and proposed activities, projects, and programs meant to implement the goals set forth in the strategy.

The final plan shall include recommendations for implementation of these activities and the preparation of basic performance measures to track and evaluate progress towards achieving the stated goals of the overall strategy. The implementation plan shall organize, prioritize, and sequence economic development efforts, with short and long-term actions to achieve the goals.

Specific questions to be answered by this plan include but are not limited to:

- a. Targeted sectors for recruitment: Recommendations on what business sectors Onslow should focus its efforts on for future growth (i.e., retail, general office, light industrial, professional services, business park, tourism, etc.).
- b. Business attraction and retention: Preparation of a basic business attraction/retention strategy for preferred business sectors identified by this report.
- c. Industrial Product Development: Recommendations for the development of future industrial parks and shell buildings that would be responsive to the findings in this report.
- d. Strategic Infrastructure Investment: Recommendations for investments in transportation, water & sewer, and other infrastructure that are responsive to the findings in this report.
- e. Labor and Workforce Development: Recommendations for how best to leverage our workforce pipelines (to include transitioning servicemembers and military spouses) and existing workforce development assets.
- f. Quality of Life Amenities: Recommendations for achieving housing variety and availability; addressing the needs for entertainment and recreation amenities; and filling retail and service sector gaps, all commensurate with the findings of this report.
- g. Equitable Practices: Recommend practices that consider factors such as social equity, diversity, and inclusion throughout the planning and implementation processes.

## Budget Information

The budget for this project will be established following consultant selection and fee negotiation.

## Evaluation Criteria

We will evaluate each response we receive and rank them based on the evaluation criteria listed below.

<b>1.</b>	Completeness of the submitted materials.	<b>5 points</b>
<b>2.</b>	Qualification statement that includes a cover letter, a roster of team members who will be working on this project, their professional qualifications, technical knowledge, and experience with creating economic development strategic reports. Include a price for your proposal.	<b>10 points</b>
<b>3.</b>	Demonstration of specialized experience related to the development of economic development strategic reports. Please describe what your team's approach to this assignment will be and outline how you will proceed with the creation of this report. Identify the sources of data you intend to use to complete the data review on page 3 of this RFP.	<b>40 points</b>
<b>4.</b>	Provide two examples of a similar report you have created for a community similar in size. If there are sections of this report where your approach will differ substantially from the examples given, explain this in as much detail as possible.	<b>20 points</b>
<b>5.</b>	Provide examples of your capacity to successfully convene, manage, and gather data from community visioning events, stakeholder group sessions and other outreach activities.	<b>15 points</b>
<b>6.</b>	Graphic design: Provide an example of an economic development strategic report you have produced for a previous client that highlights your firms' ability to effectively show data in a graphic format.	<b>10 points</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100 points</b>

## **Delivery of RFQ Responses**

Deliver one hard copy of your proposal and an electronic copy on a USB flash drive (including the qualification statement) in a sealed envelope to the following address no later than **2:00 PM on Thursday, July 11<sup>th</sup>, 2024**:

### **Qualifications for JOED Economic Development Strategic Plan**

Attn: Mark Sutherland, CECD  
Executive Director, JOED  
421 Court St  
Jacksonville, NC 28540

Address questions, comments, or concerns regarding the project directly to Mark Sutherland, JOED Executive Director, at [msutherland@joednc.com](mailto:msutherland@joednc.com). The deadline for submitting questions is 5:00 PM on July 5<sup>th</sup>, 2024. A response to this Request for Qualifications received after the above specified time will be deemed non-responsive. Submissions that are late, incomplete, or misdirected will be considered non-responsive, with no exceptions.

A consultant submitting a proposal may request that all or portions of its proposal remain confidential. The consultant must mark those portions “confidential” in the header and footer of each page.

JOED reserves the right to cancel this request in whole or in part at any time, or otherwise reject any and all responses to this Request for Qualifications for reasons deemed by JOED that such an action would be in JOED’s best interest. In all circumstances, JOED is not liable for any costs incurred by the consultant in the proposal preparation or follow-up fee negotiations.

## **Changes to the RFQ**

JOED may change the terms and conditions of this RFQ through written addenda. JOED will post addenda, if any, to its website at the following address: [www.joednc.com](http://www.joednc.com) JOED will not otherwise notify proposers of addenda. By submitting a proposal, every consultant represents that it has reviewed the addenda, and the proposal complies with the addenda.