

**SOUTHERN ALLEGHENIES PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION  
(SAP&DC)**

# **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

**FOR**

**PA Outdoor Industry Assessment & Implementation Plan**

**For the Period**

**July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025**

**INQUIRIES AND PROPOSALS SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO:**

**Debbi Prosser**

**Director, Business Development**

**Southern Alleghenies Planning & Development Commission**

**3 Sheraton Drive**

**Altoona, PA 16601**

**Telephone Number: 814-949-6522**

**E-mail Address: [prosser@sapdc.org](mailto:prosser@sapdc.org)**

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## I. GENERAL INFORMATION

### A. Purpose

This Request for Proposals (RFP) seeks proposals for a provider to assess the current outdoor industry in Pennsylvania and suggest strategies to establish an outdoor business alliance to organize and advocate for Pennsylvania's outdoor-related businesses. The business alliance will become the lead advocate for Pennsylvania's outdoor industry and a primary private sector partner of Pennsylvania's Office of Outdoor Recreation.

### B. Who May Respond

Any consultant or organization with appropriate expertise and in good standing with both the state and federal government may respond. Proposals that include partnerships between multiple organizations with applicable areas of expertise are allowable. Parties submitting proposals in response to this RFP are referred to herein individually as "Offeror" or collectively as "Offerors."

### C. Description of Entity

SAP&DC, a nonprofit corporation that serves six counties in South-Central Pennsylvania, has been determined to be exempt from Federal income tax under Section 501(c) (4) of the Internal Revenue Code. It is governed by a 19-member volunteer Board of Directors. Administrative offices and all records are located at 3 Sheraton Drive, Altoona, PA 16601.

SAP&DC is the grantee for the Appalachian Regional Commission and PA Department of Conservation and National Resources grants which will support this project. Funds to be awarded to the Offeror submitting the proposal selected by SAP&DC pursuant to this RFP are equally state and federal funds.

### D. Proposal Information

#### 1. Closing Submission Date

Proposals must be submitted no later than 4:00 PM EST on **April 17, 2024**.

#### 2. Project Budget

The budget for this project is an amount not to exceed \$200,000. Offerors are encouraged to prepare proposals in accordance with this budget.

#### 3. Submission Instructions

Proposals and supporting materials must be submitted in electronic format via e-mail to Debbi Prosser at [prosser@sapdc.org](mailto:prosser@sapdc.org). A confirmation of receipt will be provided by SAP&DC.

Questions regarding submission instructions may be addressed to:

Debbi Prosser  
Director, Business Development  
814-949-6522  
E-mail: [prosser@sapdc.org](mailto:prosser@sapdc.org)

It is the responsibility of all Offerors to ensure that SAP&DC receives the proposal by the date and time specified above. Late proposals will not be considered.

**4. Inquiries**

Inquiries concerning this RFP should be directed to Debbi Prosser, 814-949-6522 or [prosser@sapdc.org](mailto:prosser@sapdc.org). E-mailed inquiries are preferred so that a written record can be maintained. Inquires will be accepted until 12:00 noon EST **April 12, 2024**.

**5. Conditions of Proposal**

All costs incurred in the preparation of a proposal responding to this RFP will be the responsibility of the Offeror submitting the proposal and shall not be reimbursed by SAP&DC.

**6. Right to Reject**

SAP&DC reserves the right to reject any and all proposals received in response to this RFP. A contract for the accepted proposal will be based upon the factors described in this RFP.

**7. Small and/or Minority-Owned Businesses**

Efforts will be made by SAP&DC to utilize small businesses and minority-owned businesses. An Offeror qualifies as a small business firm, if it meets the definition of “small business” as established by the Small Business Administration (13 CFR 121.201), by having average annual receipts for the last three fiscal years of less than six million dollars.

**8. Notification of Award**

**Offerors may be asked to give a presentation at the Project Steering Committee meeting scheduled for May 3, 2024 virtually between **9:00am and 2:00pm**.** It is expected that a decision selecting the successful Offeror will be made on May 22, 2024. Upon conclusion of final negotiations with the successful Offeror, all other Offerors submitting proposals in response to this RFP will be informed, in writing, of the name of the successful Offeror.

**E. Contract Information**

**1. Type of Contract**

Firm Fixed Price.

**2. Period of Performance**

The period of performance for this program will be from July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025.

**3. Payment**

Payment will be made when SAP&DC has determined that the work has been satisfactorily completed. Should SAP&DC reject the work; SAP&DC's authorized representative will notify the Subcontractor in writing of such rejection giving the reason(s). The right to reject the work shall extend throughout the term of this contract and for ninety (90) days after the Subcontractor submits the final invoice for payment.

Progress payments will be allowed to the extent that SAP&DC can determine that satisfactory progress is being made. SAP&DC will withhold 10% of the total contract amount until final delivery and acceptance of the work in total.

**4. Options**

At the discretion of SAP&DC, this contract can be terminated at any time or extended beyond the specified contract period. The cost for the option periods will be agreed upon by SAP&DC and the Subcontractor.

**5. Confidentiality**

The Subcontractor agrees to keep the information related to all contracts in confidence.

## II. PROPOSAL GUIDELINES

### A. Proposal Format

Proposals should not exceed ten (10) pages in length and should be typed on 8.5 X 11 inch pages with margins no smaller than one (1) inch. Font size should be no smaller than twelve (12) point. Supporting materials can be provided in addition to the ten (10) page scope of work as attachments. Proposals must be submitted electronically (PDF format) to Debbi Prosser via e-mail at [prosser@sapdc.org](mailto:prosser@sapdc.org). SAP&DC will provide a confirmation of receipt.

### B. Proposal Outline

#### 1. Understanding of Work to be Performed

Each Offeror should demonstrate its understanding of why the project is needed and how it will meet SAP&DC's needs. Offerors should not repeat the Statement of Work, but rather describe how the Offeror will accomplish the tasks defined within the work program within the specified time limits.

#### 2. Service Delivery Process

Each proposal must describe how the Offeror proposes to complete all tasks identified in the Statement of Work included in Section IV of this RFP. The Offeror must also include a timeline that demonstrates the completion of each task within the limits of the specified period of performance. The timeline should include project milestones that details the completion date of each task outlined in the Statement of Work.

#### 3. Organizational Experience/Past Performance

Each Offeror should describe its organization, size (in relation to the proposed services to be performed), and structure. Indicate if appropriate, if the Offeror is a small, minority-owned, or disadvantaged business enterprise (DBE). DBEs are certified by the Pennsylvania Unified Certification Program (PA UCP) in accordance with 49 CFR Part 26. The following information must be obtained from Offerors who maintain DBE status:

- a) Firm name;
- b) Firm address;
- c) Firm's status as a DBE or non-DBE;
- d) Age of firm; and
- e) Annual gross receipts of the firm. Specifically indicate which gross receipts bracket your firm falls under:
  - o Less than \$500,000
  - o \$500,000-\$1 million
  - o \$1-\$2 million
  - o \$2- \$5 million
  - o Greater than \$5 million

The Offeror should also describe its prior experience that qualifies the Offeror to fulfill the tasks described in this RFP based on past performance of the same or similar projects

and programs. Include all prior experience with similar programs and the operation of programs financed by the Federal/State Government.

**4. Staff Qualifications**

Each Offeror should identify all personnel that will be assigned to the project, including contact information, and specifically identify the project manager. Each Offeror should also describe the relevant qualifications of staff to perform the proposed service, including technical, educational, and work background. This section of the proposal should include descriptions staff team makeup, overall supervision to be exercised, and prior experience of the individual staff team members.

**5. Cost Proposal**

All Offerors must submit their total project cost, along with a task-by-task cost breakdown for each of the major tasks defined within the Statement of Work in Section IV of this RFP.

### III. PROPOSAL EVALUATION

**A. Proposal Contents**

All proposals must follow the specified format and include all required elements listed in Section II of this RFP.

**B. Nonresponsive Proposals**

Proposals may be judged non-responsive and removed from further consideration if any of the following occur:

1. The proposal is not received timely in accordance with the terms of this RFP.
2. The proposal does not follow the specified format.
3. The proposal is not adequate for the reviewers to form a judgment that the proposed undertaking would comply with federal and state requirements.
4. The amount of the proposal exceeds the amount of funding available for the project.

**C. Evaluation**

Evaluation of each proposal will be based on the following criteria:

Criteria	Value
<b>PROPOSER'S METHOD FOR PROVIDING REQUESTED SERVICE</b>	<b>75</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrated understanding of the overall project and its goals</li> </ul>	25
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Process described to analyze the framework in other states who have established private sector outdoor recreation industry leadership groups.</li> </ul>	10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Process described to analyze the outdoor recreation industry in PA and current organizations that function as advocates for sectors of the outdoor recreation industry.</li> </ul>	10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Process described to identify the gaps in PA that should be filled by a newly established outdoor recreation business alliance.</li> </ul>	10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Process described to Develop a strategy to establish an Outdoor Recreation Business Alliance.</li> </ul>	20
<b>PROPOSER'S QUALIFICATIONS, EXPERIENCE, AND STAFFING</b>	<b>20</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Qualifications of the designated project manager and other key personnel to carryout the project</li> </ul>	10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relevant past projects with a focus on implementable/action plans and strategies</li> </ul>	10
<b>COMPENSATION</b>	<b>5</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cost relative to the proposed services and deliverables provided</li> </ul>	5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>

**D. Review Process**

Proposals will be initially reviewed and evaluated by the Project Steering Committee using the above evaluation criteria. However, final selection of an Offeror will be at the sole discretion of the SAP&DC Board of Directors. SAP&DC may, at its discretion, request presentations by or meetings with any or all Offerors to clarify or negotiate modifications to the Offerors' proposals. The Steering Committee has set aside time in the morning on **May 3, 2024 between 9 am and 2:00 pm**, to interview proposers if that should be necessary. All proposers should be available to participate in a virtual interview on that date if they are invited to do so. However, SAP&DC reserves the right to make an award without further discussion of the proposals submitted. Therefore, proposals should be submitted initially on the most favorable terms, from both technical and price standpoints, that the Offeror can propose. SAP&DC contemplates award of the contract to the responsible Offeror with the highest total points.

## **IV. STATEMENT OF WORK**

### **Background**

Pennsylvania's outdoor economy and industry provide vital contributions to statewide and local community and economic development. These contributions are a direct result of conserved natural resources, recreational resources like trails and parks, and the outdoor recreation that occurs on and in them. This project is needed to develop a sustainably organized outdoor industry, including planning for an outdoor business alliance, to address a void in development of Pennsylvania's outdoor economy. This is identified in the 2020-2024 PA Statewide Outdoor Recreation Plan, by the findings of PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resource's Growing Outdoor Recreation for Pennsylvania stakeholder engagement process, Pennsylvania Environmental Council's State of Play conference, the State Outdoor Business Alliance Network and Confluence of States, and in the work being conducted regionally in the PA Wilds, along the Schuylkill River Greenway, and by SAP&DC.

The project will benefit the Commonwealth by building the capacity of Pennsylvania's outdoor industry to be an effective advocate and state government partner for outdoor and recreation development. This will especially benefit underserved communities, both geographic and sociodemographic, because they are the very communities both currently suffering the greatest lack of capacity and least able to build their capacity without external support.

The Commonwealth recently established an Office of Outdoor Recreation. The outdoor industry organization developed through this project will provide primary partnership to the Office in advancing outdoor-based community and economic development. It is mutually beneficial that the Office and this partnership be developed with reference to each other and vital that the partnership be present to support the Office in its critical formative years.

### **Overview of Project**

This project proposes an inclusive partnership-based approach to organize and empower Pennsylvania's outdoor industry as a means to stimulate growth of Pennsylvania's outdoor economy. The product of this project will be a comprehensive and directly implementable 'roadmap' for:

- Understanding the role of Pennsylvania's outdoor industry in economic and community development
- Engaging Pennsylvania's outdoor industry to support economic and community development through the outdoors.
- Positioning a Pennsylvania outdoor business alliance for sustained success.

### **Task 1.0 Analyzing the framework in other states who have established private sector outdoor recreation industry leadership groups.**

- 1.1. Identify and analyze the opportunities and challenges associated with existing state organizational frameworks and assess their financial, political, and social sustainability.
- 1.2. Identify and analyze the priorities and activities of existing state and national outdoor business advocacy organizations and assess their effectiveness at advancing priorities identified above in Task 1.1.

1.3. Identify and analyze the activities of alternative state and national organizations and assess their effectiveness at advancing priorities identified in Tasks 1.1 and 1.2.

**Task 2.0 Analyze the outdoor recreation industry in PA and current organizations that function as advocates for sectors of the outdoor recreation industry.**

2.1. Design and implement an outreach campaign to engage Pennsylvania outdoor businesses, solicit input on needs for advocacy, and mobilize the industry for future engagement with an outdoor business alliance.

2.2. Describe and map the scope, diversity, and distribution of Pennsylvania's outdoor industry, including identifying existing and emerging outdoor industry leaders and "hotspots" or concentrations of critical mass.

2.3. Identify private sector advocacy and trade organizations that directly or indirectly support or are connected to the outdoor industry. Map and analyze relationships among them and with the outdoor industry.

**Task 3.0 Identify the gaps in PA that should be filled by a newly established outdoor recreation business alliance.**

3.1 Describe and organize the full range of advocacy needs for Pennsylvania's outdoor industry.

3.2. Organize, assess, and prioritize the advocacy needs that should be addressed by a Pennsylvania outdoor business alliance and those that should be addressed by other or existing advocacy organizations.

**Task 4.0 Develop a strategy to establish an Outdoor Recreation Business Alliance**

4.1. Describe alternative organizational, operating, funding, and membership/constituent structures for a Pennsylvania outdoor business alliance.

4.2 Identify and recommend a preferred structure with rationale for recommendation and challenges to be considered.

4.3. Identify short and long-term goals and objectives for a Pennsylvania outdoor business alliance.

4.4 Recommend organizational and working relationships and collaborations among a Pennsylvania outdoor business alliance and existing state and national outdoor and related advocacy organizations.

4.4. Outline and describe the steps, resources, relationships, and strategies necessary to establish and ensure, to the greatest extent possible, the immediate success of a Pennsylvania outdoor business alliance.