



Request for Qualifications (RFQ)

Northeast Alabama Area Economic Adjustment Strategy

Issued by The Top of Alabama Regional Council of Governments (TARCOG)

July 31st, 2015

5075 Research Drive NW
Huntsville, Alabama 35805



Request for Qualifications

Northeast Alabama Economic Adjustment Strategy

July 31st, 2015

Study Objectives:

The Top of Alabama Regional Council of Governments (TARCOG) is seeking consulting services to prepare an economic impact analysis report that will review current conditions relating to industrial downsizing in the Northeast Alabama Area Labor Market. The project is intended to estimate the economic impact of industry downsizing on the appropriate county and the three-county region of DeKalb, Marshall, and Jackson counties in Alabama in terms of jobs, expenditures, tax revenues, and in-lieu-of-tax payments by the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA). Impact estimates will be calculated for a 5-year period following the milestone date to be provided by TARCOG. Impacts will additionally be estimated in the top 10 industry sectors of the region. The Contractor will also provide to TARCOG regional economic jobs impact multipliers for up to 10 industry sectors that would allow the economic recovery planning committee to estimate the jobs impact on the region of a new plant in any of the 10 industries specified.

Regional Economic Factors:

On January 24th, 2014, Pilgrim's Pride announced the closure of its facility located in Boaz, located in Marshall County, Alabama. The poultry processing site was the largest employer in Marshall County and had been in operation for approximately 60 years (1954 site began production). The above noted facility employed approximately 1,200 workers prior to closure. With the loss of Pilgrim's Pride in Marshall County both the City of Boaz and the Marshall County Commission face estimated financial impacts in the millions of dollars stemming from lost tax revenues in addition to lost annual payroll wages by local

workers. In addition to employees directly affected by the closure, it is estimated that thousands of agricultural jobs will be indirectly affected as well.

Since 2011, Jackson County, Alabama has lost approximately 700 jobs due to the shutdown of 8/8 existing Tennessee Valley Authority coal-fired energy plants near Stevenson, Alabama and has also felt the economic impact of TVA divestment in the Bellefonte Nuclear Power Plant facility near Hollywood, Alabama. The loss of these high wage positions continues to be felt throughout Jackson County. Not only have commercial, housing and retail businesses been impacted, but also local governments due to the stagnated local economy. The Tennessee Valley Authority is the largest property owner in Jackson County. As a federal agency, TVA pays "in-lieu-of-property taxes" to local municipalities and Jackson County. Divestment by TVA in Widow's Creek, Bellefonte and other properties owned that have caused private property values throughout Jackson County to decline. Local government entities within the region have also received notably less support from TVA via "in-lieu-of-property taxes" due to lessened property values.

On June 4th, 2015, Shaw Industries, a flooring company, announced that it is cutting 160 jobs from its plant in the northeast Alabama town of Valley Head. This site, one of the largest employers in DeKalb County, and the largest employer within Valley Head, makes yarn for carpets. Shaw Industries has cited a lack of demand for the carpet products as the reasoning behind this recent episode of downsizing.

Research Approach:

Contractor will use data provided by TARCOG and the planning committee(s) to use for the analysis. The Contractors will make no provisions to collect data but may need to make contact with private or public entities to clarify data submitted. Specifically, the closing of the Pilgrims Pride food processing facility, downsizing of Shaw Industries, as well as the downsizing of the TVA's Widow's Creek power plant will be the major industry losses analyzed. An analysis of the employed workforce level and new job announcements for each county will be considered in the analysis.

Consultant Qualifications:

The consultants shall represent a firm or team of national caliber with experience in and understanding of economic development in the Southeastern United States that offers the following knowledge base, services and relevant experience:

- Economic Development Planning
- Economic Impact Analysis
- Strategic Planning
- Workforce Development

The lead firm need not be located in the Southeastern United States, but a closer proximity is helpful to provide immediate access, reduce project costs, and assist with data collection and other localized services. This firm must be qualified to do business in the State of Alabama under contract funded by federal and local government sources.

Records and deliverables must be available and accessible for review by funding authorities (EDA Investment #04-69-06956).

Scope of Services:

The Scope of Services prepared by the consultant should address the following tasks, at a minimum. The consultant will work with an in-house team of planning and economic development staff from TARCOG, local governments, workforce agencies and the local economic development agency. An analysis results findings report will be presented for each of the three counties and for the three-county region as a whole. Each county report will show the relevant impacts on the county and on the region as described in the previously study objectives sector. Information to be included will be the direct and indirect impacts on jobs, spending, and local taxes including TVA's in-lieu-of-tax payments.

Deliverables:

The following deliverables are required, at a minimum:

- Reports: The consultant prepares a final report documenting the plan and planning process, data sources and analysis, and recommendations. Preliminary and final report with text, illustrations, and mapping that addresses the scope of services. Final document shall be delivered in hard copy (5 copies) and digital version on disk (PDF).
- Database and related ArcMap information compatible with the TARCOG GIS system that includes data presented in the final document.

Fee:

The fee for professional services and all project-related expenses shall be specified in the proposal and shall not exceed \$15,000.

Timeframe:

All planning activities should be complete and an acceptable final report should be delivered within 120 days of notification of selection of a consultant.

Selection Process:

A committee of staff, which may be augmented by other stakeholders (e.g. county economic development agencies, chambers of commerce, education leaders), will review Qualifications, participate in the interview process and select the consultant. The process will take the following steps:

TENTATIVE DATES:	STEPS:
July 31, 2015	RFP announcement published
August 24 th , 2015	Qualifications Due to TARCOG by 12:00 Noon
August 25 th ,	Selection of Contractor Made

2015	
August 28 th , 2015	Plan Initiation/Award Notification

Proposal Outline:

An acceptable response to this Request for Qualifications will thoroughly address the consultant qualifications and scope of work described and will include, at a minimum, the following information:

- Cover Letter
- Team Contacts. The firm(s) included in the proposal, all related contact information for each firm, and identifying the firm(s) principal-in-charge/project manager.
- Team Overview. The firm(s) services, qualifications, and related project experience (within at least the past five years).
- Personnel and Experience. The personnel to participate in this project, including roles and responsibilities, resumes and qualifications, and related experience within at least the past five years.
- Scope of Services. The proposed scope of services and approach. The proposal may propose alternative approaches and methodologies to the scope presented within this request, which will be evaluated by a selection committee.
- Fee. The proposed fee with expenses presented as a line item within the overall fee. Hourly rates should be provided for each person proposed by the consultant.
- References. Five references for related projects completed by the key staff in the past five years. Include links or electronic copies of relevant projects.
- Appendix including any additional, relevant information

Five copies of Qualifications should be submitted to Nancy Robertson, Executive Director, TARCOG, 5075 Research Drive NW, Huntsville, Alabama 35805 by the proposal deadline of 12:00 PM Central August 24th, 2015 to be considered. Qualifications may be delivered by carrier or hand delivered to the physical address. All Qualifications must be sealed. Late submissions will not be considered.

Questions:

All questions may be directed to Lucas Blankenship, Director of Planning, TARCOG at lucasblankenship@tarcog.us or at 256-716-2483. Email correspondence is encouraged.