



## REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

# Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

for the **Southeastern Connecticut Enterprise Region**

Submit Proposals to:

Executive Director,  
Southeastern CT Enterprise Region  
PO Box 867  
19-B Thames Street  
Groton, CT 06340  
[sector@sector.org](mailto:sector@sector.org)

**RFP Submittal Deadline: 4:00 PM (EST) August 31, 2021**

## **Announcement**

The Southeastern CT Enterprise Region (seCTer) seeks proposals from qualified professionals who are knowledgeable in research and development, public outreach, comprehensive planning and data analysis to **update** the region's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) using the current framework already provided in current CEDS report.

## **Background Information**

In 2002, the first CEDS was written and implemented for southeastern Connecticut. To date, four CEDS have been written by seCTer with input from hundreds of partners throughout the region. In 2013, seCTer obtained Economic Development District (EDD) status for the twenty-two cities, towns and boroughs in the region. EDDs set the stage for regional collaboration towards cohesive planning for economic development success. Southeastern Connecticut was the first designated EDD in the state of CT, demonstrating the long-standing spirit of collaboration in our region.

## **About CEDS**

The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) contributes to effective economic development in America's communities and regions through a locally-based, regionally-driven economic development planning process. Economic development planning – as implemented through the CEDS – is not only a cornerstone of the U.S. Economic Development Administration's (EDA) programs, but successfully serves as a means to engage community leaders, leverage the involvement of the private sector, and establish a strategic blueprint for regional collaboration. The CEDS provides the capacity-building foundation by which the public sector, working in conjunction with other economic actors (individuals, firms, industries), creates the environment for regional economic prosperity.

Simply put, a CEDS is a strategy-driven plan for regional economic development. A CEDS is the result of a regionally owned planning process designed to build capacity and guide the economic prosperity and resiliency of an area or region. It is a key component in establishing and maintaining a robust economic ecosystem by helping to build regional capacity (through hard and soft infrastructure) that contributes to individual, firm, and community success. The CEDS provides a vehicle for individuals, organizations, local governments, institutes of learning, and private industry to engage in a meaningful conversation and debate about what capacity building efforts would best serve economic development in the region.

The CEDS must include the following:

- Summary of background information
- SWOT analysis
- Strategic direction/Action plan
- Evaluation framework
- Concept of resilience & post COVID-19 recovery

The National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) recognized our region's 2017 CEDS as a national best practice model. Access to our most recent CEDS is available online at [CEDS-for-website.pdf \(secter.org\)](https://secter.org/CEDS-for-website.pdf).

## Scope of Work

Using seCTer's current CEDS framework, the final scope of services to be provided by the selected Consultant will be developed in partnership with seCTer's CEDS Committee. The scope may include the following elements:

- Updating demographic, economic and industry analysis: Work with staff & CEDS committee to develop an updated demographic analysis for the region.
- Provide administrative support to schedule meetings and track attendees.
- Stakeholder Engagement: Assist seCTer staff & CEDS committee with the identification of stakeholder groups and/or individuals for the purpose of input and discussion. Develop and facilitate, in coordination with staff, a public input strategy (number, frequency, time, location, etc.) to insure the greatest level of participation.
- Update & develop current Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT): List strategic issues based on stakeholder input and developed in coordination with CEDS committee that can serve as the basis for formulating goals, objectives and strategies.
- Plan Development: In partnership with staff, develop the CEDS report. The CEDS report should be an attractive, engaging, and accessible document that outlines a clear approach to moving the needle for the region. An Executive Summary as well as supplemental reports providing more detailed analysis of demographic and economic trends, historical reports, meeting summaries and development projects will be developed as appendices. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion strategies are important to our region and must be included to the fullest extent possible.

## Deliverables

A completed Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy must be provided to the CEDS committee for review, comment and recommendation to the seCTer Board of Directors. The draft plan will include goals, objectives and strategies that assist stakeholders in diversifying and expanding the economic base of the region.

## Plan Area



## Proposed Project Timeline

Action Item(s)	Timeline
Focus Groups: Identify stakeholders, schedule & hold focus groups	September 1, 2021 – November 30, 2021
Review & summarize SWOT Analysis	December 1, 2021 – January 11, 2022
Draft CEDS for Economic Development Committee	January 12, 2022 – March 8, 2022
Upload draft CEDS to seCTer website for public view	April 11, 2022
Public comment period	April 11, 2022 – May 10, 2022
Initiate approval process	June 7, 2022

## Budget

The allocated budget for this scope of work is \$40,000. The winning proposal will be determined on a number of factors including quality, cost, efficiency, qualifications and experience.

## Proposal Content

Responses to this RFP should:

- Include a detailed work plan that addresses the overall timeline and milestones necessary to complete the CEDS development work identified in the RFP
- Identify specific activities that will be accomplished
- Identify staffing that will be devoted to each activity
- Describe the work product that will be produced
- Identify methods and tools of research, evaluations, forecasting, analysis
- Describe what approach will be used to ensure Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) is included in CEDS update
- Include
  - Qualification descriptions of personnel assigned to this project, specifically addressing previous CEDS experience
  - A process for communicating with seCTer staff
  - A budget outline specifically addressing costs associated with each Scope of Work item
  - A timeline for status reports, draft report, and hard copy and electronic delivery of draft CEDS document
  - A minimum of two similar projects completed by consultant
  - Reference contact information

## Evaluation Criteria

- Qualification/experience of prime and sub consultant(s) with studies of similar scope and size
- Demonstrated knowledge of economic development principals and trends, especially in Connecticut and New England markets
- Demonstrated knowledge of current EDA requirements for CEDS

- Experience in leading collaborative workshops, focus groups, and outreach events
- Past record of performance on similar projects
- Proposed cost of the study and demonstration of commitment for meeting the project schedule
- Completeness and quality of proposal submission

### RFP Selection Schedule

- RFP issue date: July 2, 2021
- Deadline for proposals: August 31, 2021
- Review by RFP Committee: TBD
- Consultant interviews: TBD
- Consultant selected: TBD
- Contract commencement: TBD
- Project completion date: October 31, 2022

### CEDS Partner Entities

Partner entities include, but are not limited to:

#### Federal

- U.S. Economic Development Association (EDA)
- U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA)
- Department of Defense, Defense Logistics Agency
- Naval Submarine Base New London
- U.S. Coast Guard Academy

#### State

- AdvanceCT
- CT Airport Authority
- CT Main Street
- CT Office of Military Affairs
- CTNext/CT Innovations
- CT Office of Policy and Management
- CT Port Authority
- Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD)

#### Municipalities

- Bozrah
- City of Groton
- Colchester
- East Lyme
- Franklin
- Griswold
- Groton
- Lebanon
- Ledyard
- Lisbon
- Montville
- New London
- North Stonington
- Norwich
- Preston
- Salem
- Stonington
- Sprague
- Waterford
- Windham

- Southeastern CT Council of Governments

#### Tribal

- The Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation
- The Mohegan Tribal Nation

## Chambers of Commerce/Economic Development Organizations

- BIOCT Innovation Commons
- Chamber of Commerce of Eastern CT
- Eastern Advanced Manufacturing Alliance
- Eastern CT Workforce Investment Board
- Eastern Regional Tourism District
- Greater Mystic Chamber of Commerce
- Greater Norwich Area Chamber of Commerce
- Naval & Maritime Consortium
- Northeastern CT Chamber of Commerce
- Norwich Community Development Corporation
- Ocean Community Chamber of Commerce
- Preston Riverwalk
- Renaissance Community Development Corporation
- Southeastern CT Central Labor Council
- Southeastern CT Cultural Coalition
- Southeastern CT Housing Alliance
- Thames River Innovation Place (TRIP)
- Windham Region Chamber of Commerce

## About seCTer

The Southeastern Connecticut Enterprise Region (seCTer) is a non-profit, public-private regional economic development agency serving the 20 towns, two boroughs and two Native American Tribal Nations of Southeastern Connecticut.

SeCTer's mission is to promote and preserve the region's attractiveness, to encourage new businesses, and to assist and to nurture existing and expanding local enterprises. SeCTer is the agency responsible for developing and implementing the [Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy \(CEDS\)](#) for the Southeastern CT Economic Development District in close partnership/coordination with the Southeastern CT Council of Governments and other regional organizations.

## Channels

Website: [www.secter.org](http://www.secter.org)

Facebook: [@secternlc](#)

LinkedIn: [@secter-southeastern-ct-enterprise-region](#)

Twitter: [@seCTer](#)

## Proposal deadline

Proposals will be accepted until 4:00 PM, August 31, 2021. Any proposals received after this date and time will not be considered. To submit a proposal electronically, email to [secter@secter.org](mailto:secter@secter.org).

## Contacts

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## Questions

Please submit questions in writing via email to [secter@secter.org](mailto:secter@secter.org).