

Justin S. Greene
Commissioner, District 1

Anna Hansen
Commissioner, District 2

Camilla Bustamante
Commissioner, District 3



Anna T. Hamilton
Commissioner, District 4

Hank Hughes
Commissioner, District 5

Gregory S. Shaffer
County Manager

MEMORANDUM FOR SOLE SOURCE DETERMINATION AND POSTING

DATE: October 17, 2024

TO: File

FROM: Bill Taylor, Procurement Manager *BT*

RE: Sole Source Determination per Section 13-1-126 NMSA 1978 to Contract With the Regional Development Corporation for the Business Expansion and Retention Program for Santa Fe County, for a Total Amount of \$250,000.00, Inclusive of NM GRT.

BACKGROUND:

The County Economic Development Plan adopted in 2024, provide economic assistance to new or expanding companies in Santa Fe County. The Business Expansion and Retention Program includes:

- Business Outreach facilitated through holding events at a number of locations throughout the County, in both English and Spanish.
- Operating a micro-Grant program for existing target industries, businesses and no-profits.
- Providing individual business technical support
- Providing online business educational resources
- Creating marketing materials and marketing the program
- Providing quarterly progress reports, including outcome-based and long-term tracking

The Regional Development Corporation (RDC) is a private non-profit 501© organization dedicated to improving economic development in northern New Mexico. The RDC provides private investment opportunities and technical assistance to facilitate job growth and diversify the economies of communities in the following seven Counties:

- Los Alamos County
- Mora County
- Rio Arriba County
- Sandoval County
- San Miguel County
- Santa Fe County
- Taos County

As well as other municipalities and Native American Tribes in northern New Mexico.

Further, the contract with RDC will include a unique online program for providing educational resources to businesses provided by the Thornbridge Academy, a veteran-owned non-profit with decades of experience helping small businesses by helping them learn how to help themselves through online self-paced learning modules. These web-based tools have been developed to educate and evaluate business owners working with the RDC. These tools will provide business owners with a real-world education resource and will align and enhance the RDC mission to provide technical assistance, funding opportunities, and resources for small business owners. All elements of this economic development program will be available to any clients selected by the RDC for the duration of the agreement.

The Web-based program includes:

- A Centralized Training Portal
- Educational Modules to provide applicants with educational resources
- Video Tutorials
- Downloadable resources
- Evaluation Tools
- Bilingual Support
- Tracking
- Technical Support

The County worked alongside the City of Santa Fe to procure the services through a competitive solicitation. The University of New Mexico, Rainforest Innovations and the Arrowhead Center at NM State University submitted responses that would require them to create the platforms necessary to launch the program. The RDC already has the platform, outreach network and program to effectively provide the necessary services on an immediate basis.

DETERMINATION:

Due to the unique economic development and support program that is currently in place with the Regional Development Corporation, as well as the uniqueness with RDC's contacts and current economic development in northern New Mexico, it is the determination of the County Central Purchasing Office and Chief Procurement Officer that it is in the best interest of the County that a contract with the Regional Development Corporation be awarded without competitive sealed bids pursuant to NMSA 1978, 13-1-126 Sole Source Procurement.

Contract Information:

Vendor: Regional Development Corporation
441 Greg Ave.
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501
Pat Vanderpool, Executive Director

Attachment A: RDC Proposal



10/7/24

Regional Development Corporation Proposal to Santa Fe County

Background and Overview

The Regional Development Corporation (RDC) is a private non-profit economic development organization that has been serving Los Alamos, Rio Arriba, Santa Fe, Taos, San Miguel, Mora and Sandoval Counties and the Native American Pueblos therein since 1996. The RDC develops effective workforce programs and provides technical assistance and funding opportunities to small businesses to increase revenues, facilitate job growth, diversify the economy, and develop a well-educated workforce in the region.

The organization works with all types of for-profit businesses including tribal entrepreneurs, technology and manufacturing businesses, and small businesses. The focus is increasingly on developing rural small businesses in order to build vibrant local communities in underserved and less-populated areas of our service region.

In 2015, the RDC proposed a Micro-Grant program to Santa Fe County and entered into an agreement to operate it through 2018. Over the 4-year span of the Santa Fe County Program, \$20,000 per year was provided by the County for an average of 27 awardees of \$3,000.00 each. In 2019 the RDC received funding from Triad National Security to create a regional Micro-Grant Fund geared at sustaining and growing small rural businesses in the RDC's seven-county service region. When COVID hit in 2020, these grants became a critical funding source for businesses that encountered overwhelming challenges due to the pandemic.

The current RDC Micro-Grant program has grown considerably since its inception from 8 applicants and 5 awardees in 2019 to 170 applicants and 59 awardees in 2023. This year's 59 awardees were spread over the RDC's seven-county service area. Twenty of these awardees are located in the proposed Santa Fe County (SSFC) service area; we intend to increase that number with this proposal.

In addition to the lack of awareness about funding opportunities, there is a lack of one-on-one technical support in the field in SSFC. Small businesses in this area often don't have the time or wherewithal to locate needed resources and aren't able to drive long distances to meet with organizations in person. This proposal reflects our request for \$100,000 per year for two years to enhance our existing Business Retention and Expansion efforts in Santa Fe County (SSFC) by offering bilingual events, one-on-one in-person technical support, and additional Micro-Grants to improve small business success. The RDC will target the County's targeted industries as identified in the 2024 Economic Development plan, including outdoor recreation, value added agriculture, Arts, culture and creative industries and organizations working to alleviate poverty and advance affordable housing. The outreach and grant program will also include non-profit organizations.



Proposal

The RDC proposes to provide technical support services and increase the number of Micro-Grant awards to businesses in underserved and the most rural parts of **Santa Fe County (SFC)**, including the following communities:

- Santa Fe Airport Road Corridor
- La Cienega
- Cerrillos
- Madrid
- Galisteo
- Golden
- Edgewood
- Stanley

The RDC's goal is to continue to expand economic development efforts in Santa Fe County through our Business Retention and Expansion (BR&E) program. This expansion will include:

- 1) hiring a Spanish-speaker on an hourly basis to assist with translation and interpretation services to clients in the Santa Fe Airport corridor,
- 2) providing additional one-on-one in-person visits to SSFC businesses,
- 3) increasing awareness of the RDC Micro-Grant to SSFC businesses, and
- 4) providing in-person Information sessions about the Micro-Grant and other free to low-cost resources.

Micro-Grants for Santa Fe County

- Marketing efforts to increase awareness of the RDC Micro-Grant (bilingual)
- In-person Information Sessions about the RDC Micro-Grant and other Resources (bilingual)
- Increase eligible applicants in Santa Fe County so at least sixteen (16) awards are made each year

Eligibility: any for-profit or non-profit small business that has been in business for at least one year and is located in this targeted area of Santa Fe County. Application must detail exactly what equipment, software or services will be purchased with the funding and identify how the purchases will move the business forward.

Targeted Industry Focus

- Outdoor Recreation
- Arts, Culture & Creative industries
- Value Added Agriculture
- Green Industry and Alternative Energy
- Film and Digital Media
- Housing



Technical Support Services

- Provide one-on-one technical assistance and mentoring to all Micro-Grant applicants, regardless of whether or not they are awarded.
- Help businesses identify free and low-cost resources to best benefit their needs (bilingual, as needed)

Administrative Costs

- Cost for Small Events

In-Person Events

Host in-person "Micro-Grant and Other Business Resources" Information Sessions, focused on the airport road corridor, Santa Fe County portions of Espanola and other areas as needed.

- Invite business resource partners to make presentations, based on topics determined by one-on-one business visits

Bilingual translation & interpretation (pilot project)

- Contract with a bilingual Spanish-speaking college student (or similar) in the area to assist with translation of marketing material and Micro-Grant application, bilingual events, and in-person technical support visits

Online Resources Provided by Thornebridge Academy

This proposal includes a unique online component for offering educational resources to businesses provided through Thornebridge Academy, a veteran owned non-profit with decades of experience helping small businesses by helping them learn how to help themselves through online self-paced learning modules. These web-based tools have been developed to educate and evaluate business owners working with the Regional Development Corporation (RDC) in this proposal. These tools will provide business owners with real-world educational resources and will align and enhance the RDC's mission to provide technical assistance, funding opportunities, and resources for small business owners. All elements of this online resource will also be available to any clients selected by the RDC for the duration of the agreement.

This web based tool will include:

- A Centralized Training Portal
- Educational Modules to provide applicants with educational resources
- Video Tutorials
- Downloadable resources
- Evaluation Tools
- Bilingual Support
- Tracking
- Technical support

Online Program details are attached to this proposal and delivery of these services will be the responsibility of Thornebridge Academy.



QUOTE

October 7, 2024

Budget

	Micro-Grant Awards	Technical Support Workshops (one-on-one & 3-part Sessions).	Administrative Cost 10%	In-Person Events	Bilingual Jr. BR&E Outreach Rep	Total
Year 1	\$48,000 16 @\$3,000	\$4,000	\$12,500	\$8,500	\$27,000 4 hrs/week \$50/hr	100,000
	Thornebridge Web Based Tools					25,000
Year 2	\$48,000 16 @\$3,000	\$4,000	\$12,500	\$8,500	\$27,000 4 hrs/week@ \$50/hr	100,000
	Thornebridge Web Based Tools					25,000
					TOTAL	\$250,000

*Total number of awardees could vary subject to a grant value modification.

The Micro-grant and Business Technical Assistance Program, utilizing American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds, will adhere to the program goals in the allowable spending categories and confirms that program funds will be completely expended by December 31, 2026.

Pat Vanderpool, Executive Director of RDC

Date

Joaquin Amador, Thornebridge Academy

Date



PROPOSAL

PROVIDING WEB-BASED
TOOLS TO EDUCATE AND
EVALUATE RDC CLIENTS IN
SANTA FE COUNTY

Prepared For :
Juan E. Torres
santa Fe County

Pat Vanderpool
RDC

About Us



Thornebridge Academy

We have decades of experience helping small businesses, most importantly by helping them learn how to help themselves.

We are not-for-profit and veteran-owned.

OUR TEAM

GREAT TEAMWORK

J. AMADOR



With experience ranging from dot-com startup to multi-billion dollar companies and consulting to small New Mexico businesses, Joaquin has learned to apply critical thinking and best practices to help businesses solve problems and improve their bottom line.

A.J. CARRABUS



A.J. Carrabus is a highly skilled financial and management professional with a strong track record of turning around struggling businesses. With expertise gained from years as a business owner and financial manager, he can quickly assess and identify opportunities for profit growth and strategic expansion.

OVERVIEW

This proposal aims to provide web-based tools to educate and evaluate business owners working with the Regional Development Corporation (RDC). These tools will provide business owners with real-world educational resources. The tools provided will align with the RDC's mission to provide technical assistance, funding opportunities, and resources for small business owners. All elements of this proposal will be available to any clients selected by the RDC for the duration of the agreement.

Objectives

1. Centralized Training Portal

Provide our web-based portal that allows prospective business owners to receive pre-recorded business training and digital resources that support the coursework provided.

2. Educational Modules

Provide applicants with educational resources to help them better understand business fundamentals and other business growth topics. These resources will include:

Video Tutorials: Step-by-step videos guide applicants through business fundamentals and critical thinking. The five segments include approximately 20 total hours of video instruction across a wide range of topics:

Segment One – Getting Started

- Benefits of Entrepreneurship
- What are the first questions
- Generating business ideas

- Identifying Market Opportunities
- Legal Structure and Registration
- Building a Better Business Plan

Segment Two – Financing and Funding

- Funding your business
- Budgeting and Financial Projections

Segment Three – Marketing

- Building Your Brand
- Sales and Marketing Strategies

Segment Four – Operations and Management

- Operations and Logistics
- Critical Business Thinking
- Team Building
- Time Management and Productivity
- Customer Service and Satisfaction

Segment 5 – Scaling and Growth

- Scaling your business

3. Downloadable Resources: PDF guides and templates to help applicants develop systems to help them operate their businesses efficiently.

4. Evaluation Tools

The platform provides various tools to evaluate the understanding of the material presented and also provides an evaluation of the business and its readiness to accept funding.

OVERVIEW

These tools will include:

Quizzes at the end of each training module test understanding of the presentation. Students cannot proceed to the next module until they have achieved a passing grade. Certificates of completion will be provided and can be used as requirements for grant applications.

Business Health Assessments: Questionnaires to assess the current state of the business and its ability to grow if it receives funding. This questionnaire can also be used periodically to assess the businesses' benchmarked performance. Can utilize weighted measures to capture potential risk and potential positive impact in the community

Financial Health Calculators: These tools help business owners calculate and track financial metrics impacting their businesses.

5. Bilingual Support

The platform will offer multilingual support, particularly in English and Spanish, ensuring that language barriers do not hinder the education process. Video training and supporting documentation will be provided in English and Spanish to facilitate access to the provided resources.

6. Tracking

Our platform provides tracking of enrollment, course, and quiz completion rates in the aggregate and by individual enrollees.

We can also couple this with the business evaluation tools to provide ongoing longitudinal views of the business as it grows.

7. Website/Page

We will provide a dedicated website for this program as a gateway to our tools and data or assist in creating a page on the existing RDC website.

8. Evolution

Program specifics and materials are designed to be flexible and can be adjusted or added to based on RDC needs to respond to changing business environments or to address specific business-related issues. Requests for additional video or support materials beyond what is provided in this proposal will be handled on a case-by-case basis, with a scope of work to be agreed upon by both parties.

9. Support

As part of this proposal, we will provide all necessary support and guidance related to the materials and technology provided by Thornebridge Academy

Budget:

\$25,000 per annum