



Request for Proposal

Needs Assessment for Volunteer Board Member Training
of the Community Business Development Corporations (CBDCs)

Issue Date: October 30, 2020

Due Date: February 12, 2021 4:00 pm (A.S.T.)

RFP #: 10/30/20

Inquiries and Proposals should be directed to:

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Senior Program Coordinator
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BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Atlantic Association of Community Business Development Corporations

The Atlantic Association of Community Business Development Corporations (AACBDC) is a network of autonomous, not-for-profit organizations that work with all levels of government and the private sector to meet the needs of small businesses throughout the Atlantic region.

In rural Atlantic Canada, there are 41 Corporations dedicated to the development of small business and job creation. We also form part of a larger network of CBDCs/CFDCs referred to as the Community Future Network of Canada. This group encompasses a larger network of some 269 corporations across Canada who are dedicated to meeting the financing and advisory needs of small and medium-sized rural based businesses. The CBDCs have been in operation for over 30 years and have 10 CBDC offices located throughout New Brunswick, 15 offices located in Newfoundland and Labrador, 13 offices in Nova Scotia and 3 on Prince Edward Island. As well, within Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Newfoundland and Labrador, there exists a Provincial Association office with an Executive Director and various sub-committees such as Marketing, Standardization, MIS, etc.

CBDCs assist in the creation of small businesses by providing financial and technical services to entrepreneurs. Typically, our services are targeted to entrepreneurs who require customized financing not normally available from traditional sources.

The Atlantic Association of Community Business Development Corporations (AACBDC) administers, on behalf of its 41 member CBDCs, several programs and initiatives. The AACBDC carries out an extensive management information systems (MIS) project, Atlantic wide. The Association, through the Atlantic Canada Community Business Investment Fund (ACCBIF), provides a central pool of investment funds.

The AACBDC also carries out Atlantic wide marketing initiatives through the Atlantic Communications Committee. This committee is responsible for developing and executing a marketing strategy on an annual basis. The marketing strategies include items such as a digital Annual Report, Coordinated TV Ads, Web Banner Ads, flash drive project, coordination of our toll-free number and our Atlantic website www.cbdc.ca.

Governance and Education for both staff and boards is also a priority. The Governance and Education committee delivers a work plan that includes training initiatives for both staff and board members. The CBDC Business Lending Program was developed a few years ago and has been delivered throughout the Atlantic Provinces to over 100 staff members. We have developed a staff orientation guide as well as a lending guide for new and existing staff. We partner with Saint Marys' University and offer a subsidy to staff to enroll in their Certificate in Financial Management Program. We partner with the University of Moncton and offer subsidized seats to staff to enroll in the Modern-Day Management Program. We have developed and will deliver a coaching and counseling program for new CBDC staff and each year we produce learning videos, to name a few initiatives.

With respect to Board training, we have developed a board member orientation manual which we are offering during lunch and learns starting this month. We partner with Community Futures Learning Initiative to deliver 13 board training modules. These modules are

customized to the Community Futures organization and can be offered in person or by webinar. Each of these modules are 3 hours in length. We are getting ready to launch our own online board governance training program that consists of 11 modules. We have produced videos on Conflict of Interest, Business Lending for Boards, and Confidentiality to name a few. Just in time board training is also available to any board by request.

Mission

The mission of the AACBDC is:

To foster, support, and sustain the advancement of member Community Business Development Corporations so they can help develop rural economies in Atlantic Canada through small and medium-sized business development.

Vision

The vision for the AACBDC is:

The Atlantic Association of Community Business Development Corporations, a member-driven organization, is respected by its partners and its stakeholders in Atlantic Canada and nationally as a leader in advocating on behalf of its members, administering programs, identifying opportunities, and encouraging innovation and growth.

PURPOSE

You are invited to submit a proposal to develop and implement a needs assessment to determine the training needs of board members of the 41 CBDCs.

Within the most recent strategic plan (2018-2023), Governance and Education has been deemed an area of emphasis. The strategic plan outlines that a professional, capable complement of volunteers is a key driver of CBDC success. The objectives of the strategic plan also reflect that the AACBDC will be recognized as a learning organization that assists its staff, provincial associations, and member CBDCs to achieve their education and training goals.

The purpose of developing this needs assessment is to ensure continuous skill development of CBDC board members as they grow and strengthen their respective Corporations. Training is the foundation for obtaining quality output from our volunteer boards and the findings of this will enhance our existing training programs.

STATEMENT OF NEED

The AACBDC recognizes the value of training and development and the importance of CBDC Boards having the capacity to meet the challenges of governance issues facing nonprofit organizations today, more specifically, small business lending organizations such as the CBDCs, in a virtual environment.

BOARD PROFILE

Each of the 41 CBDCs have a volunteer board profile consisting of 8-10 members. Overall, there are over 400 volunteers that govern the CBDCs. The length of board terms of each CBDC consists of three 3-year terms, not to exceed 9 years. Boards meet monthly and since the onset of the pandemic; meetings have been held in a virtual environment in all rural areas of Atlantic Canada despite the technology infrastructure or lack thereof.

The AACBDC conducted a review of board training needs in 2012 through a survey. This review identified the need to develop training that provides all boards with the skills they needed to be successful within the

CBDC environment in which we operate.

The primary objective of this RFP is to identify the training needs and then outline a training plan that focuses on the knowledge gaps of the CBDC board members when considering what they know vs what they need to know to fill this volunteer position effectively. It is our desire that current board members will participate in this training and will be able to adopt and transfer the skills and knowledge gained into their own Corporation, strengthening any deficiencies that exist as they govern their respective CBDCs. The training needs to be relevant and it needs to match the requirements of the learners.

As training needs are identified it is important that delivery include both a web-based and/or classroom setting across central areas of Atlantic Canada. ***Training delivery and implementation is not part of this RFP. That part of the project will be explored upon completion of the curriculum development phase.***

Training elements

As community-based lenders, it is important that the training consultant has a thorough understanding of the role that CBDCs play in rural communities. It is important to note that each CBDC is governed by independent volunteer board of directors that are responsible for the overall governance of each Corporation. Autonomy and independence is of paramount importance to the CBDCs, while at the same time ensuring that clients across the Atlantic Provinces receive the same level of service whether they are in Guysborough NS or Stephenville, NL or Bathurst, NB or Summerside, PEI.

The training elements involved need to reflect the work that CBDCs do as developmental/high-risk lenders in their community; trying to maintain a balance between character-based lending and the preservation of capital. All aspects of good governance practices, from policy development, to work plans to loan assessments through to risk management and performance appraisals need to be addressed.

DELIVERABLES, SCHEDULE, AND COST

The proposal should contain the following:

- Identification of the process to be used to assess the existing knowledge and desired knowledge of board members with respect to governance of a CBDC board;
- A schedule of the time frame and costing to implement the process to determine the existing knowledge of CBDC board members and the desired knowledge level of boards, with respect to governance of a CBDC board;
- An assessment and a detailed report on the current knowledge level of CBDC board members; with respect to governance of a CBDC board;
- An assessment and a detailed report of the desired knowledge level of board members, with respect to governance of a CBDC board;
- An outline of the training needs required by new board members and by experienced board members of all CBDCs;
- Identification of specific training programs (as identified in the needs assessment) and sources of where these programs can be obtained, including bilingual programs;
- Identification of the most appropriate training delivery (in house or virtual) for each topic and course;
- Identification of the most appropriate times for training delivery (what months are more suitable, what days of the week are more suitable, what hours of the day are more suitable);
- Identification of measures of success, including an evaluation tool;
- Identification of how the training should be grouped and offered (i.e. by adjacent CBDCs, by regions, by provinces, by experience level of the board member or by topic of personal interest);
- Based on the findings, provide a training schedule (specific to board training) for the 2020/2021 fiscal year, 2021/2022 fiscal year and 2022/2023 fiscal year;

Please reference the key action dates for timing. The level of effort in the RFP response will reflect the above deliverables.

A contract will be developed between the AACBDC and the consultant detailing the terms and conditions for the work. Funds will be released according to the release of funds schedule listed below.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS FOR CONSULTANTS

Training consultants shall have at least five years' experience in developing needs assessments. Training consultants shall provide at least three professional references who can speak to the level of professionalism and work ethic of the training consultant.

PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS AND INFORMATION

Key Action Dates

Event	Date	
Issuance of RFP	October 30, 2020	11:00 AM
Final Date for Questions	November 10, 2020	4:00 PM
Final Date for Proposal Submission	November 17, 2020	4:00 PM
Proposal Opening	November 18, 2020	4:00 PM
Proposed Award Date	November 27, 2020	4:00 PM
Draft Training Plan Completion	January 18, 2021	4:00PM
Final Training Plan Completed	February 12, 2021	4:00 PM

BID PROCESS

Consultants may submit their proposals (**Section I, II and III**) electronically and will be accepted through to **November 17th, 2020 at 4:00 pm. Please refer to the checklist of requirements (Attachment A).**

Electronic proposals must be submitted in PDF format only, to shaunna.scott@cbdc.ca. It is the responsibility of the proposer to ensure proposals have been received.

The proposal must be plainly identified with the RFP number and title, your firm name and address, as shown in the following example:

(Agency Name and Address)
(RFP Number)
(RFP Name)

Inquiries

To ensure the AACBDC maintains an open competition process, all inquiries regarding this RFP must be provided in writing only, via email to shaunna.scott@cbdc.ca.

Conditions of Bid

All costs incurred in the preparation of a proposal will be the responsibility of the consultant (firm, proposer) and will not be reimbursed by the AACBDC.

Right to Reject

The AACBDC reserves the right to reject any or all proposals or any part of same; to award a contract(s)

other than to the lowest bid, and to use the accepted bid as the basis and point of departure for final contract negotiations; to waive irregularities and/or informalities; and to make any decisions which the AACBDC deems to be in its own best interest.

A proposal may be rejected if it is conditional or incomplete, or if it contains any alterations of form or other irregularities of any kind. The AACBDC may reject any or all proposals and may waive an immaterial deviation in a proposal. The AACBDC waiver of an immaterial deviation shall in no way modify the RFP document or excuse the proposer from full compliance with all requirements if awarded the agreement.

Modify

A consultant may modify a proposal after its submission by withdrawing its original proposal and resubmitting a new proposal prior to the proposal submission deadline as set forth in the Key Action Dates. Proposal modifications offered in any other manner, oral or written, will not be considered.

The AACBDC may modify the RFP prior to the date fixed for submission of proposals by the issuance of an addendum to all parties who received a proposal package.

Withdraw

A consultant may withdraw its proposal by submitting a written withdrawal request to the AACBDC, signed by the consultant or an authorized agent. A consultant may thereafter submit a new proposal prior to the proposal submission deadline. Proposals may not be withdrawn without cause after the proposal submission deadline.

This notice is forwarded for information and invitation only and is not to be construed as a contract, or as a commitment to contract. Award of any contract(s) is subject to the availability of funding.

Administrative Requirements

The selected consultant must sign and return all contracts to AACBDC within ten (10) days of the receipt of the contract.

All invoices and supporting documentation must be submitted within thirty (30) days of the contract end date. Failure to do so may result in non-payment.

Disclaimer

The AACBDC assumes no responsibility or liability for costs incurred by the consultant prior to the effective date of any contract resulting from this RFP. The consultant may be required to obtain licenses as well as liability insurance.

Notification of Award

Proposals will be reviewed with notification of acceptance or refusal within the time frame listed above.

Ownership/copyright of materials

The AACBDC will have complete and full ownership and use of all reports and new materials (“works”) produced by the consultant under this project and shall have copyright therein. In consideration of entering into the agreement, the consultant must agree, in writing, to waive all moral rights (as defined by the Canadian Copyright Act) in any works in which copyright subsists.

EVALUATION

Proposal Evaluation Criteria

All proposals will be reviewed and rated by an AACBDC review team. Incomplete proposals or proposals

that fail to follow the submission guidelines will not be considered for review.

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 to form a judgment by the reviewers.

Rating Criteria (Out of 100 points):

Qualifications - 25 points

Merits of the proposal - 50 points

Costs - 25 points

The AACBDC reserves the right to make an award without further discussion of the proposals submitted.

Award

Notice of the proposed award shall be communicated to the training consultant according to the time schedule listed above.

Disposition of Proposals

Upon proposal opening, all documents submitted in response to this RFP will become the property of the AACBDC and will be returned only if requested in writing by the consultant.

Proposal packages may be returned only at the consultants' expense unless such expense is waived by the AACBDC.

Agreement Execution and Performance

Performance shall start not later than 10 days, or on the express date set by the AACBDC and the training consultant after all approvals have been obtained and the agreement is fully executed. Should the training consultant fail to commence work at the agreed upon time, the AACBDC, upon five (5) days written notice to the training consultant, reserves the right to terminate the agreement. In addition, the training consultant shall be liable to the AACBDC for the difference between the training consultant proposal price and the actual cost of performing work by another training consultant.

All performance under the agreement shall be completed on or before the final curriculum completion date of the agreement.

Release of Funds

The following constitutes the release of payment by the AACBDC to the prospective training consultant:

- (a) 50% released upon presentation of the draft training outline;
- (b) 50% released upon successful completion of the project.

SECTION I – PROPOSAL COVER PAGE

Atlantic Association of CBDCs
Request for Needs Assessment

Applicant Organization		
Street Address		
City	Province	Postal Code
Printed Name		Title of Applicant's Authorized Representative
Telephone Number		Mobile number
E-mail Address		Web site
Certification		
<p>I certify that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(a) I have been authorized to submit and sign this proposal on behalf of the submitting organization;(b) that the quote is accurate and true to the best of my knowledge, the costs are reasonable and necessary for the proposed service;(c) the proposed costs do not duplicate other funds already available, or which may become available, to pay the projected costs;(d) my organization will implement the services in compliance with the stipulations and guidelines set forth by AACBDC.		
Authorized Signature		Date

SECTION II – QUALIFICATIONS / PROPOSAL COMPONENTS

Complete the following information and submit **one electronic copy** with the signed Proposal Cover Page (**Section I**). Complete responses are required for each section. All proposals must include the following:

A. Organizational Background

Provide a brief description (100 words or less) of your organization.

B. Experience/Qualifications

The proposal should include a brief history of the firm or individual, its size, and its experience with training development services for the nonprofit and/or lending industry.

C. Capacity to Provide Service

Describe the personnel to be assigned to this project including their relevant experience, linguistic capacity, along with any specific software or platforms associated with the content design.

D. Needs Assessment Process

Describe the proposed needs assessment process, information gathering process (primary method and secondary method), and information analysis process, expected number of responses to be considered a success and outcomes.

E. Budget and Cost Effectiveness

The total costs of all tasks and milestones should be detailed (including applicable tax).

Translation of the needs assessment material is a requirement prior to distribution. Translation costs will be the responsibility of the AACBDC.

F. References

Please attach references including names, organization, and contact information for three (3) clients who can provide insights regarding skills, qualifications, and needs assessment design.

G. Services in Both Official Languages

The AACBDC provides programs and services in both official languages, the needs assessment needs to be offered in both official languages. The consultant will work with the client's translator to complete the French version of the written assessment material. Translation costs will be the responsibility of the AACBDC.

SECTION III

If awarded the contract, the consultant hereby certifies and assures that it will fully comply with the following federal regulations (if applicable to your organization):

Certification and Other Terms/Conditions

- The signing individual certifies that he/she is authorized to contract on behalf of the organization offering this proposal.
- The signing individual certifies that the prices in this proposal have been arrived at independently, without consultation, communication, or agreements made for the purpose of restricting competition.
- When delivering services under an approved contract, the contractor shall work under the broad supervision of the AACBDC Senior Program Coordinator.
- The signing individual certifies that there has been no attempt by him/her or anyone in their organization to discourage any potential applicant from submitting a proposal.
- The signing individual certifies that he/she has read and understands all the information in this Request for Proposals.
- The signing individual certifies that his/her organization, and any individuals to be assigned to the project, does not have a record of substandard work and has not been debarred or suspended from doing work with any federal, provincial, or local government.
- The AACBDC reserves the right to negotiate the best and final offer with the applicant selected.
- Payments shall be made on a cost reimbursement basis (no advances) according to the release of funds schedule. Invoices shall detail expenses based on the line items in the proposal budget. Generally, the AACBDC will pay invoices within 30 days of receipt, unless questions arise as to the appropriateness of an expense.
- All information received by the consultant during the contract period is considered confidential and shall be protected to the utmost ability of the contractor.
- The contract awarded under this RFP shall be subject to and interpreted under the laws and jurisdiction of the Province of Nova Scotia.

Signature _____ **Date** _____

(Signed certification/conditions to be returned with the proposal)

ATTACHMENT A

SUBMISSION CHECKLIST

Please note that the following is a proposal checklist.

Did you include:

_____ Section I - Proposal Cover Page

_____ Section II - Qualifications/ Proposal Components (references included)

_____ Section III - Certification