



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
Fields of Gold – Shenandoah Valley’s Farm Trail
Fund Development Plan

PURPOSE

The Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission (CSPDC) is seeking proposals from well-qualified consultants to create a comprehensive fund development plan for Fields of Gold – Shenandoah Valley’s Farm Trail (www.fieldsofgold.org). Presently, the Fields of Gold program is primarily dependent on federal and state grants to fund the program’s activities. The fund development plan will focus on organizational goals and objectives, capacity, and current and potential funding and giving. This service is needed to meet the demand for strategic and diversified funding, preferably unrestricted funds, to support the sustained growth of the Fields of Gold agritourism program.

BACKGROUND

Fields of Gold – Shenandoah Valley’s Farm Trail is a regional agritourism program in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. Fields of Gold is an economic development initiative that both directly markets the Farm Trail’s 200+ members and provides business support services to these valued agritourism businesses to help them grow and prosper. By collectively marketing the region’s agritourism businesses and activities, the Fields of Gold program is able to create a more coordinated tourism experience for the traveling public and better brand the region as an agritourism destination.

The Fields of Gold program is coordinated by the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission. The program serves the following eight counties and five cities in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia:

- Counties: Augusta, Bath, Botetourt, Highland, Page, Rockbridge, Rockingham, Shenandoah
- Cities: Buena Vista, Harrisonburg, Lexington, Staunton, Waynesboro

In February 2014, the Fields of Gold Steering Committee approved the [2014-2018 Strategic Plan for the Fields of Gold Regional Agritourism Program](#). This document outlines an action plan to guide the transition of the Fields of Gold program into a self-sufficient program. The strategic plan lays the foundation for capturing the program’s growth potential that was identified through an [economic impact analysis of agritourism](#) performed for the Fields of Gold program in 2012 by Chmura Economics & Analytics. The requested fund development plan will build on funding goals and objectives identified in the strategic plan.

DELIVERABLES

It is expected that the consultant will:

- Work with an identified team of CSPDC staff and Fields of Gold stakeholders to create a comprehensive fund development plan that aligns with the program's organizational goals;
- Assess and quantify the Fields of Gold program's fundraising potential;
- Assess the productivity and effectiveness of proposed fund development activities;
- Assess the fundraising readiness as related to organizational capacity to support and sustain fundraising activities;
- Set monetary benchmarks for individual, corporation, and foundation giving; public funding through state and federal grants and locality support; and Fields of Gold fundraising strategies;
- Develop a list of the top 50 donor prospects within three categories: individual, corporation, and foundation giving;
- In addition to direct solicitation, develop a list of 10 fundraising strategies (events/activities/sales) with a high rate of return. For each strategy, identify potential sponsors;
- Develop a solicitation strategy; and
- Develop a 3-year timeline for achieving targets.

All work is to be completed no later than November 30, 2017. This contract is supported by the Governor's Agriculture and Forestry Industries Development Fund (AFID) Planning Grant Program administered through the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS).

PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

Deadline for Receipt. Proposals are due by 4:00 PM on Friday, August 25, 2017. Proposals received after the deadline will be rejected.

Submittal Requirements

Consultants shall submit one (1) digital copy on a CD or flash drive and five (5) paper copies of the proposal to:

Elizabeth McCarty, AICP
Director of Planning
Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission
112 MacTanly Place
Staunton, VA 24401
elizabeth@cspdc.org

Paper copies of the proposal must be submitted on 8.5"x11" paper. Proposals shall not exceed a total of fifteen (15) pages.

At a minimum, the following information should be included.

1. Responding firm's name;
2. Firm's address and contact information;
3. In narrative form, describe your approach to completing the deliverables for the Fields of Gold Fund Development Plan;
4. Names, roles, and qualifications of personnel who would be working on the project;
5. Timeline for the proposed work;
6. Examples of at least three completed projects with similar deliverables;
7. Three references (name, address, phone number, email address); and
8. Budget of services to be provided.

All inquiries for information should be in writing and directed to: Elizabeth McCarty, AICP, Director of Planning, Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission, 112 MacTanly Place, Staunton, VA 24401, (540) 885-5174, elizabeth@cspdc.org.

REVIEW OF PROPOSALS

Evaluation Criteria. Generally, the Review Committee will consider the firm's overall suitability to provide services within the time, budget, and operational constraints that may be present and the comments and/or recommendations of the firm's previous clients, references, and others. The proposals will be reviewed by a Review Committee comprised of CSPDC staff and Fields of Gold stakeholders/partners. Proposals shall be evaluated by the Review Committee using the following criteria:

Evaluation of proposals and selection of the consultant will be based upon:

- Experience of the firm with similar fund development plans;
- Understanding of the project; familiarity with agritourism or similar programs;
- Clarity of the proposal;
- Approach to the fund development plan;
- Demonstrated ability to write clearly and in lay language;
- Credentials and roles of personnel assigned to the project;
- Cost of proposal;
- Ability to meet specific timelines; and
- Approachability and willingness to work collaboratively with CSPDC staff and Fields of Gold committee members.

Statement of Intent. The CSPDC reserves the right to reject any or all responses to this Request for Proposals. The CSPDC will not reimburse costs of preparing and mailing the consultant proposals. The CSPDC reserves the right to ask for clarification in the proposal should the need arise.