



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

Regional Planning Consultant – Southeast Nebraska Water/Wastewater Infrastructure

Issued by:

Southeast Nebraska Development District (SEND D)

Contact: James Owens, Senior Community Development Specialist

Email: jowens@sendd.org

Phone: 402.907.2028

Website: www.sendd.org

Proposal Due Date: August 22, 2025

1. INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

The Southeast Nebraska Development District (SEND D), a regional planning and economic development organization serving Southeast Nebraska, is soliciting proposals from qualified consultants to support the development of a regional planning document focused on water and wastewater infrastructure. This project is part of the 6 Regions, One Nebraska initiative, supported by the Nebraska Department of Economic Development (NDED) and funded through ARPA's State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF). SEND D received \$200,000 to implement this regional planning effort, and has budgeted \$100,000 for the services described in the RFP.

To date, SEND D has collaborated with the University of Nebraska–Lincoln (UNL) to develop and deploy a comprehensive infrastructure survey tool using Strata Platforms' Lasso system. A graduate research assistant (GRA) is assisting with outreach and early-stage data collection. Survey efforts are currently underway and have been distributed to approximately 60% of the region.

SEND D is seeking a consultant to build on this work—supporting continued data gathering, analysis, and the creation of a regional plan that will guide future infrastructure investment, help communities access funding, and promote workforce development throughout Southeast Nebraska.

2. PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Southeast Nebraska Regional Infrastructure Project seeks to understand and address the challenges facing water and wastewater systems in rural communities. The final regional plan will serve as a resource to:

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Employer*



- Document the current condition and capacity of systems
- Identify gaps, risks, and barriers to system improvement
- Offer localized and regional strategies for investment, collaboration, and shared services
- Strengthen the region's competitiveness for infrastructure funding
- Support workforce development strategies tied to utility operations and system upgrades

This plan must be actionable, data-driven, and developed with rural realities in mind.

3. SCOPE OF SERVICES

The selected consultant will be expected to perform the following tasks in collaboration with SENDD and UNL:

- A. Planning & Coordination
 - Review the current infrastructure survey tool and Lasso platform
 - Attend kickoff meetings and participate in periodic check-ins with SENDD and regional partners
- B. Data Collection & Analysis
 - Assist with continued community outreach and follow-up to complete survey data collection
 - Interpret survey responses and perform regional infrastructure analysis
 - Identify common system types, age, condition, compliance issues, and anticipated upgrade needs
- C. Regional Plan Development
 - Draft a regional infrastructure planning document that:
 - Summarizes findings across the 15-county region
 - Highlights system vulnerabilities and local priorities
 - Outlines recommended improvements and investment strategies
 - Suggests possible models for shared services or regionalization
 - Incorporates workforce development needs and partnerships
- D. Engagement & Reporting
 - Provide stakeholder engagement strategies and assist with at least one regional input session or presentation
 - Submit a final planning document and executive summary suitable for public and stakeholder audiences

4. PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

Please submit a concise proposal that includes the following sections:

1. Cover Letter
2. Firm Qualifications & Experience
 - Relevant planning experience, particularly in water/wastewater infrastructure and rural contexts
 - Experience working with regional organizations, university partners, and/or public sector clients

3. Approach & Work Plan
 - Methodology for completing the scope of services
4. Timeline and project management strategy
5. Staffing Plan
 - Identification of key staff and their qualifications
 - Estimated level of effort per task
6. Project Budget
 - Cost proposal with hourly rates and estimated costs by task
7. References
 - Contact information for at least two reasonably similar projects completed in the past five years

Proposals must be submitted in PDF format via email to jowens@sendd.org by 5PM on August 22, 2025, or delivered in person to the SENDD Lincoln Office at 7407 O Street, Lincoln, NE 68510.

5. SELECTION CRITERIA

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

CRITERIA	WEIGHT
QUALIFICATIONS AND RELEVANT EXPERIENCE	30%
UNDERSTANDING OF PROJECT AND PROPOSED APPROACH	30%
COST EFFECTIVENESS	20%
PERSONNEL AND ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY	15%
REFERENCES AND PAST PERFORMANCE	5%

6. ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Funding Source: This project is funded through the Nebraska Department of Economic Development using ARPA SLFRF funds. All applicable federal regulations apply, including 2 CFR 200.

Timeline: Project activities are anticipated to begin by the week of September 1, 2025 and must be completed no later than August 31, 2026.

Disclaimers:

- SENDD reserves the right to reject any or all proposals.
- This RFP does not commit SENDD to award a contract, pay any costs incurred in preparation of proposals, or procure any services.

- Any contract awarded will be subject to successful negotiation and compliance with all applicable state and federal regulations.

Questions regarding this RFP must be submitted by August 15, 2025. For questions or clarifications, please contact:

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