



Franklin County Community Development Corporation Strategic Framework Development Request for Proposal

May 3, 2024

Mission: *Our purpose is to stimulate a more vital rural economy, to maximize community control over our future destiny, and to expand opportunities for low- and moderate-income residents.*

A note about the RFP process: We understand that answering RFPs can be a lot of work with no guarantee of securing the job. It's our aim to make the process as simple as possible for those who decide to submit a proposal, and we want to get to know you and your approach to the work. We will respond to each person who sends in a proposal. We will invite the top candidates to an interview.

Budget: We have budgeted \$15,000 for this project.

Organization Background

Founded in Greenfield, Massachusetts, in 1979 and serving western and central Massachusetts, the Franklin County Community Development Corporation (FCCDC) is an economic development nonprofit providing business assistance, access to capital, and commercial office and manufacturing space. Through our many programs, we also focus on farm and food businesses.

As an organization we have prioritized racial, social, and economic justice practices as a fundamental foundation as we journey into the future. We've also reflected on the shifts of a post-COVID world and seek to apply what we have learned to our work.

The FCCDC was started 45 years ago to serve the residents and businesses of Franklin County. Over the years, our focus has broadened, and we now serve all western Massachusetts, while some of our programs cover the entire state.

Historically, the FCCDC staff and board have created strategic plans with the help of consultants; the last plan was started in 2019 but was not completed because of the pandemic. Now that our staff, organization, and geographic footprint have grown, a strategic planning process will ensure our programs and priorities are aligned with our values and serve communities that we have not reached in the past.

Project Overview

As an organization, our plans for longevity and sustainability require that our staff, board, donors, funders, collaborators, clients, and community are aware of who we are and what we do. The current leadership has taken the organization from a small local economic development agency to a regional player that has elevated thousands of small businesses, farms, and food entrepreneurs in western Massachusetts. As we approach our 50th anniversary, we want to ensure that we remain strong as an organization, no matter who holds leadership roles.

Framework Details

FCCDC is intentionally seeking a "framework" as opposed to a "plan." Unlike a plan that outlines objectives and details specific tasks to achieve them, a framework provides a structure within which an organization can operate. It is a tool that can be used regularly to ensure organizational activities are in alignment with our mission and guiding principles. We expect the framework will allow us to:

- be adaptable to evolving community needs,
- provide guidance to staff while providing flexibility to achieve the mission,
- and easily communicate our mission to the communities we serve.

FCCDC's strategic framework will be a long-term, living document that acts as the foundation from which we build our work. This framework will allow FCCDC to:

- **Articulate and communicate our guiding principles and mission.**
 - Tracking and transparency: The framework should allow staff and board members to revisit and gauge our progress and commitment to our guiding principles and mission.
 - Brand positioning: The framework should help us present the FCCDC as a trustworthy, knowledgeable organization that delivers on our promise and our commitment to help our clients. The work and mission of the organization should inspire financial support from existing and new funders and donors.
 - Potential mission and brand updates: It is our hope that the framework will initiate discussions that will inform future processes that will determine whether and how to update the mission statement, change our name to better reflect what we do and who we serve, and recast our visual identity.
- **Ensure long-term operational viability**
 - Program review: We want input from stakeholders to inform our programming and make improvements to areas where we are not

optimally serving our clients. We expect this framework show where our services provide high quality, relevant information that supports clients with resources, technical assistance, and financing with one-on-one and team support—and where we need to improve.

- Workplace of choice: We want the FCCDC to be a place where people feel supported to do good work; where staff is organized holistically, rather than hierarchically; and where roles and responsibilities are clear and transparent.
- Operational recommendations: The organization should remain financially stable, sound, and diversified and our operations and technology should remain secure, up to date, standardized, efficient, and affordable.

Project Scope

Anticipated Project Dates: June through October 2024

This project will include:

- Design and facilitate a strategic framework process that meets the criteria outlined, with racial justice as a fundamental foundation;
- Development of a strategic framework document;
- Development of an implementation/integration plan for staff to execute.

FCCDC envisions the work to be completed in three stages:

- Stage 1: Pre-planning | This stage requires the consultant to work with the Steering Committee to plan project activities, familiarize themselves with the background of the FCCDC and the nonprofit landscape, and draft a summary report in preparation for the strategic framework planning session. This may include:
 - Meetings with project Steering Committee to inform logistics and timeline of project;
 - Briefly reviewing the FCCDC's history, programs, and impact within the context of other organizations working with small businesses of all types, including farm and food businesses;
 - Gather stakeholder input to receive staff, board, partner, client, donor, and community impressions including communities we have not yet reached.
- Stage 2: Strategic Planning & Framework Creation | At this stage, the consultant leads the development and delivery of a framework document through an in-person staff and board retreat and ongoing work with the Steering Committee. This may include:

- Facilitation of an in-person planning session or sessions and provision of any relevant tools/materials/pre-work;
- Debrief of the retreat with the steering committee;
- Leading development of a framework that:
 - Articulates organizational mission and guiding principles;
 - Clarifies high-level priority areas and goals (short-, mid-, long-term);
 - Provides strategies for integrating the use of this framework into the daily fabric of the organization;
 - Provides mechanisms for ongoing assessment of organizational activities;
 - Provides strategies for communication and outreach messaging.
- **Stage 3: Implementation & Evaluation Support** | This stage requires the consultant to assist the FCCDC by providing direction on the implementation and evaluation process. This may include:
 - Providing tools for staff and leadership to implement use of this framework;
 - Demonstrating to staff how the framework can be used to inform regular work;
 - Follow-up with FCCDC leadership to gauge the progress of the implementation after framework delivery and make supplementary recommendations.



Application & Selection Process

FCCDC seeks a consultant who demonstrates:

- A successful track record of developing strategic plans and/or frameworks for nonprofits, especially those focused on economic development and/or within the agriculture and food sectors;
- A commitment to racial, social, and economic justice;
- Strong facilitation skills and ability to create inclusive environments to gather input, promote innovative thinking, and integrate diverse viewpoints;
- Experience in gathering and synthesizing data to drive the strategic process;
- Project management skills.

Please include the following in your proposal:

- A brief summary of your strategic planning experience, including the qualifications of you and your team (if applicable), such as work activities, expertise, knowledge, skills, and experience;
- How you see yourself contributing to FCCDC's racial justice commitment in the creation of this framework;
- A short description of how you will approach this project, including a timeline outlining major tasks/activities, milestones, and deliverables;
- Project budget and proposed payment schedule;
- Sample(s) of previous work product(s);
- Three client/professional references, including a brief summary of the work and client name, phone number, and email address.

Submission & Evaluation Process

Subject to change.

RFP release:	May 6 (Mon.)
RFP questions to FCCDC:	May 17 (Fri.)
Proposals Due:	May 27 (Mon.)
Selections Made:	June 7 (Fri.)
Anticipated Project Dates:	June – October 2024

Proposals should be submitted via PDF or Word format to resumes@fccdc.org with the subject line "Strategic Framework Proposal" by May 26. Any inquiries concerning this RFP can also be directed to resumes@fccdc.org.

FCCDC will select the consultant based on which one we feel will deliver the highest quality deliverable at the best value. Proposals, with names and identifying details redacted, will be reviewed by a designated selection committee of FCCDC staff and board members.