

Request for Proposals (RFP)
Lincoln County Economic Development Study and Strategy

Purpose

Lincoln County Regional Planning Commission (LCRPC) is soliciting proposals from qualified firms to conduct an economic analysis and develop a comprehensive economic development strategy for Lincoln County. A successful candidate will analyze the county's current conditions, review studies, and use feedback from a public survey, focus groups, and an advisory committee to develop a 5-year (2028-2033) economic development strategy .

Background

Lincoln County is a rural county in Maine consisting of 19 towns and a population of approximately 35,000. With 450 miles of tidal coastline, Lincoln County has incredible economic growth opportunities due to its expansive shoreline, pristine natural resources, dynamic community, and impressive cultural assets. The county is close to Portland and Bar Harbor markets, and is well positioned within the greater northeast region with access to Boston and New York markets. However, external economic pressures and demographic trends remain a major challenge for this bucolic county which requires intentional and committed attention. These trends have risen home prices, driven workforce shortages, and increased economic disparities. Lincoln County has always been a prime destination for retirees, second-home owners, and tourists. While these elements are an important part of the economy, there is also a need to ensure year-round living is not only attainable but thriving for all age groups.

LCRPC has been working to counteract some of these challenging outcomes through a variety of strategies, including actions outlined in the 2023 Lincoln County Housing Needs Assessment, many of which are designed to stimulate housing production. To complement and build on this work, the comprehensive economic development strategy project will produce a data-driven, high-impact strategy for economic development that will enhance the return on investment for private sector, municipal, state, and federal investments, which will attract new economic activity, enhance existing businesses, and diversify the economy. This strategy will also allow the county to leverage natural resources for economic opportunities while also ensuring their long-term protection. The goal for this project is to help the county, towns, businesses, and community see what's possible and move from a shrinking economy to one that is sustainably growing and investing in a bright future.

Project Overview

This project will analyze current economic conditions and community needs, establish a shared vision informed by community feedback, assess potential growth opportunities, develop strategies to sustainably grow the regional economy, create an implementation plan to achieve goals identified through this project, and establish metrics to track progress over time.

Scope of Work

The selected firm will be responsible for completing the tasks and services outlined in the below scope of work by December 31, 2027. As a qualified economic development firm, we welcome proposals that adjust this scope where appropriate, while still ensuring that the stated deliverables will be met.

Task #1: Project Management (February 2027 - December 2027)

The consultant will work closely with LCRPC staff to ensure project expectations are met and time and resources are used effectively. We expect the consultant to attend the following meetings, while also responding to emails and phone calls as needed in between, as needed:

1. 1 virtual kickoff meeting in February between LCRPC and consultant (60 minutes)
2. 12 virtual monthly check-in meetings between LCRPC and consultant (30 minutes each)
3. 2 virtual or hybrid advisory committee meetings (90 minutes each)
4. 1 in person report release meeting to present the findings, strategy, conclusion, and recommendations of the project

Task #2: Current Conditions and Data Analysis (March 2027 - June 2027)

The consultant will analyze economic and demographic data, past local and regional studies (including those related to housing, transportation, and economic development), and other relevant information to inform a robust current conditions section of the report. All data for this task will be agreed upon by the consultant and LCRPC staff prior to analysis.

Task #3: Public Engagement Planning and Analysis (March 2027 - June 2027)

LCRPC will be responsible for developing and implementing public engagement, in collaboration with the consultant and the advisory committee. With LCRPC as lead, the consultant will help inform planning for the public engagement portion of the project and will analyze all input provided by the community. Public engagement will be sought through a widely distributed community survey, focus groups, and an advisory committee. The consultant will develop a community vision for the future and community priorities using the information gained through the public engagement process.

Task #4: Economic Development Strategy (June 2027 - December 2027)

Using information analyzed from Task #2 and Task #3, the consultant will develop community priorities and create an economic growth strategy for Lincoln County.

Task #5: Economic Development Strategy Action Plan (June 2027 - December 2027)

The consultant will develop an action plan to achieve strategic economic goals identified through this project which will outline the effort, cost, level of impact, risks, and timeline associated with potential strategies. These actions should be effective, feasible, tangible, time bound, and measurable. In addition to this implementation plan, the consultant will develop metrics and methods to measure progress over time, with a timeline for each action to be achieved.

Task #6: Lincoln County Economic Development Study, Strategy, and Action Plan

The consultant will deliver a draft Lincoln County Economic Development Study, Strategy, and Action Plan report to LCRPC no later than October 31, 2027 and a final report due by December 1, 2027.

Budget

This project is funded by LCRPC limited reserves from Lincoln County and cannot exceed a total cost of \$80,000.

Proposal Format and Submission Instructions

Proposals must include the following elements in the order below:

1. **Name and point of contact:** Primary project manager working with LCRPC staff managing the project.
2. **Project experience:** Include a list of at least three similar projects completed in the last five years. For each project, include client contact information, projected budget, final costs, and timeline from start to project completion.
3. **Firm experience:** Provide information about how long the firm has been providing this type of service and how the work has been conducted. Also include information about the type of clients served including, but not limited to, geographic area, types of governments served, and size of population served.
4. **Project team profile:** Provide a brief profile of the team members (including subcontractors) who would be directly involved in the proposed project and their relevant experience.
5. **Statement of capacity:** Provide a statement of their capacity to perform the anticipated tasks for this project.
6. **Proposed timeline:** For each task, the firm shall provide a statement of the proposed timeline for this project, including major milestones and anticipated review times. This project must be completed by no later than December 1, 2027.
7. **Deliverables:** Provide a list and description of the deliverables the firm anticipates delivering to LCRPC upon project completion.
8. **Cost breakdown:** The firm shall provide a breakdown of the costs for each task, including the efforts required for each task, hourly rates, hours to complete each task, and total labor costs.

Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated by a selection committee consisting of the Lincoln County Administrator and LCRPC staff. Proposal selection will be based on qualifications, experience, capacity, timeline, deliverables, and project cost described in the proposal with the RFP.

Submission Instructions

Lincoln County, via the Lincoln County Regional Planning Commission (LCRPC), will be accepting proposals through 2:00PM on Tuesday, December 15, 2026. Formal proposals should be sent electronically to Alex Zipparo (azipparo@lcrpc.org) via email, U.S. Mail, or hand-delivery. Our mailing address is: 297 Bath Road, Wiscasset, ME 04578.

Contract Award

The contract will be awarded based on the best combination of cost, experience, and solution. The selected vendor will be notified no earlier than Thursday, January 7, 2026, and a contract will be executed shortly thereafter.

This is a fixed-price contract, inclusive of all services rendered to Lincoln County. Contracts will be paid monthly, following receipt and review of monthly invoices to Lincoln County.

Contact Information

For any questions regarding this RFP, please contact:

Alex Zipparo
azipparo@lcrpc.org
(207) 882-5985