

Request for Proposal (RFP): Development of NoCo Works Online Resource Platform

- **RFP Release Date:** August 8, 2024
- **RFP Response Deadline:** September 11, 2024
- **Clarifying Questions Period** August 8 - August 30, 2024
- **Evaluation Period:** September 12 - September 17, 2024
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Introduction & Background

NoCo Works is committed to creating a regional coalition dedicated to fostering an inclusive and economically healthy community. Our mission is to establish an effective, efficient, and aligned talent and workforce ecosystem for Northern Colorado, delivering measurable results that benefit all stakeholders.

NoCo Works takes a multi-faceted approach to talent and workforce development, engaging key stakeholders from the private sector, government, nonprofits, and education. Our guiding pillars include:

1. Supporting NoCo employers in attracting, retaining, and growing their workforce.
2. Assisting the workforce—both current and future—in obtaining and retaining quality jobs in NoCo.
3. Enhancing the prosperity of our talent and workforce systems to benefit the entire NoCo ecosystem.

We actively establish outcome-driven metrics across six key areas: business resources, economic inclusion, external barriers, talent pipeline, training & development, and work-based learning. Our impact is measured through the benefits provided to workers (both incumbent and job seekers), employers, and wrap-around services, including public partners and community-based organizations.

NoCo Works invites proposals from experienced vendors to develop an online "one-stop shop" platform. This initiative aims to unify and provide easy access to workforce resources for employees, employers, educators, service providers, and community members across Northern Colorado. The platform will focus on uplifting the resources and efforts for the NoCo Works steering committee along with the six identified key areas and their subcommittees above.

Objective

The objective of this Request for Proposal (RFP) is to gather detailed information from experts regarding their capabilities, experience, technological approaches, and innovation in creating a comprehensive platform that serves as a central hub for workforce development resources in Northern Colorado (Larimer and Weld counties). Throughout NoCo Works' primary and secondary research, the greatest identified need is to have a “one-stop shop” where employees and employers alike can go to get their talent and workforce questions answered. This platform will not primarily generate new content; rather, it will focus on connecting employers and job seekers to the organizational experts in the region in a user-friendly and timely manner. We acknowledge that the scope of work may exceed your organization's area of expertise. We still encourage you to complete the RFP, highlighting your strengths and strategy to collaborate or partner with others to fulfill the entire scope.

Scope of Work

The expected scope of work for this project includes the following components:

1. Design and Development

- **Creation of a User-Friendly, Accessible Platform:** Develop an intuitive online platform that aggregates and organizes resources for easy access by various stakeholders, including employers, employees, and community-based organizations in Northern Colorado (Larimer and Weld counties). The website and Chat Bot will meet the basic requirements of HB21-1110 regarding website accessibility for persons with disabilities.
- **Feature Implementation:** Incorporate features that allow users to add resources, receive real-time updates, and get personalized resource recommendations.

2. System Integration

- **Integration with Existing Systems:** Ensure seamless integration with current workforce development and talent systems, complying with data security standards to protect user information.

3. User Experience and Design

- **Intuitive Interface Design:** Design the AI interface to be intuitive and accessible, highlighting key components of a talent pipeline. Ensure the platform is user-friendly for business owners with varied tech proficiencies.

4. Marketing and Outreach

- **Promotion Strategy Development:** Develop marketing strategies to promote the AI tool and overall platform. The target audience are businesses, but the intention of the website is to serve businesses, workforce (employees and job seekers), and community-based organizations. Forge partnerships with relevant organizations, community groups, and other entities to enhance product reach and effectiveness.
- **Strategy Implementation:** Provide a clear and detailed plan for executing the marketing and outreach strategy. This should include timelines, milestones, targeted channels, key performance indicators (KPIs), and methods for tracking and reporting progress to ensure effective execution and measurable outcomes.

5. Analytics and Performance Measurement

- **Monitor Performance:** Track the usage, performance, and outcomes of the platform to evaluate their impact and effectiveness. Use analytics tools to generate insights and report on the product's performance to stakeholders.

6. AI Chat Bot Development

- **Vision and Strategy Setting:** Develop a centralized AI tool to assist small-to-midsize businesses in mapping out talent needs and identifying regional resources and partnerships.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Collaborate with stakeholders, including business owners, community partners, NoCo sector partnerships, and technical teams, to ensure the AI tool meets diverse needs.
- **Product Oversight & Quality Assurance:** Guide development teams, conduct multiple rounds of beta-testing, and ensure ongoing maintenance. Implement quality assurance processes to ensure the AI tool functions correctly, is user-friendly, and is free of critical bugs. Facilitate regular user testing and feedback sessions.

7. Legal and Ethical Compliance

- **Compliance Standards:** Ensure the platform and AI tool comply with relevant laws, regulations, and ethical standards, particularly related to data privacy and security. Include user prompts to avoid inputting Personally Identifiable Information (PII), Controlled Unclassified Information (CUI), and generally business-sensitive information.

8. Continuous Improvement

- **Iterative Development:** Continuously iterate the platform and AI tool based on user feedback, performance data, and evolving business and community needs. Act as a product owner team to ensure the tool remains a valuable asset for small business owners, contributing to local economic development and empowerment.

9. Resource and Website Review

- **Existing Resources Analysis:** Conduct a thorough review of existing resources and websites, to understand what currently exists. Ensure that NoCoWorks.com is designed to be supplemental to these sites rather than duplicating them.
- **Commitment to Non-Duplication:** create a strategy for the website (and NoCo Works staff) to connect and elevate existing resources, ensuring that NoCoWorks.com complements and enhances the existing ecosystem without replacing or duplicating current resources.
- **Strategic Alignment:** Ensure the design and functionality of NoCoWorks.com align with and support other regional workforce development efforts, fostering collaboration and minimizing redundancy.

Vendor Response Requirements

Vendors responding to this RFP should provide the following information:

- **Company Profile:** Including experience with similar projects.
- **Resumes:** Attachments of resumes for staff assigned to the project
- **Proposed Solution:** Overview of the proposed solution and technology stack.
- **Examples of Previous Work:** Demonstrating the development of similar platforms.
- **Project Methodology and Timeline:** Detailing strategies, milestones, and timelines to achieve the scope of work. This can include what components your company may want to outsource/collaborate within the methodology and timeline.
 - Achievements in first six months, year 1, year 2
- **Estimated Budget and Pricing Model:** Detailed funding for the services to be rendered.
 - NoCo Works has secured an initial funding of \$55,000 for the design and launch of the named scope of work. We ask that vendors provide a budget and scope of work based on their own design model and expertise. This can (and should) supersede the initial funding acquired.
- **Post-Launch Support and Maintenance:** Details on ongoing support and maintenance services. This is included, but not limited to ongoing systems maintenance and potential enhancements via feedback from the field.
- **AI Chat Bot Implementation:** Strategies for integrating AI chat bot technology, including vision, requirements management, stakeholder engagement, product development, quality assurance, user experience, marketing, analytics, ongoing maintenance, and compliance.

**We recognize that an applicant may not hold expertise within all of the vendor requirements. Therefore, we ask that vendors complete the RFP based on their expertise and clearly indicate their strategy to partner, outsource, or collaborate with other experts to fulfill this RFP comprehensively.*

Evaluation Criteria

Responses will be evaluated based on:

WEIGHTING FACTOR	QUALIFICATION	STANDARD
2.0	Scope of Proposal	Does the proposal address all elements of the RFP? Does the proposal show an understanding of the project objectives, use of innovation, and methodology to be used and results/outcomes required by the project? Are there any exceptions to the specifications, Scope of Work, or agreement?
2.0	Firm Capability	Does the firm have the resources, financial strength, capacity and support capabilities required to successfully complete the project on-time and in-budget? Has the firm successfully completed previous projects of this type and scope? Ability to provide ongoing support and maintenance capabilities?
1.0	Assigned Personnel	Do the persons who will be working on the project have the necessary skills and qualifications? Are sufficient people of the requisite skills and qualifications assigned to the project?
1.0	Availability	Can the work be completed in the necessary time? Can the target start and completion dates be met? Are other qualified personnel available to assist in meeting the project schedule if required? Is the project team available to attend meetings as required by the Scope of Work?
2.0	Regionalism	Does the firm demonstrate a commitment to regionalism and Northern Colorado workforce ecosystem in both their Scope of Work for the project, and their day-to-day business operating processes and procedures?
2.0	Cost & Work Hours	Does the proposal include detailed cost break-down for each cost element as applicable and are the line-item costs competitive? Do the proposed cost and work hours compare favorably with the Project Manager's estimate? Are the work hours presented reasonable for the effort required by each project task or phase?

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Contact Information

For questions regarding this RFP, please contact:

- **Email:** Kelsey Baun, NoCo Works Program Manager at info@nocoworks.com
- **Phone:** 970-231-0132 OR 970-498-6612

Additional Information

The selected vendor will be expected to collaborate closely with NoCo Works to ensure the successful implementation of the online platform. This includes regular updates, meetings, and adherence to the project timeline and budget.

By submitting a proposal, the vendor agrees to comply with all requirements outlined in this RFP and to participate in the evaluation and selection process as described.