



Request for Proposal

**Early - Stage Business Advisor and
Project Manager**

Central Alberta Regional Innovation Network Startup Incubator

August 5, 2021

Request for Proposals

For: Early-Stage Business Advisor / Project Manager

Date Issued: August 5, 2021

Submission Deadline: August 16, 2021

Introduction:

This Request for Proposals (“RFP) is an invitation by Community Futures Central Alberta to prospective proponents to submit proposals for the provision of overall Project Management and Implementation, and Facilitation of the Central Alberta Regional Innovation Network Early-Stage Business Incubator.

Organizational Overview:

Community Futures Central Alberta is a community driven, non-profit organization staffed by business professionals and guided by a volunteer Board of Directors. We provide a wide range of small business services and business management tools for people wanting to start, expand, franchise, or sell a business. We also run several specialized business programs, organize exciting business events, and actively work with community and business leaders to foster rural economic growth.

Funded in Western Canada by Western Economic Diversification Canada, Community Futures has been supporting small business and rural economic diversification since 1986. There are 27 Community Futures offices in rural communities throughout Alberta, and a total of 269 across the country.

Community Futures Central Alberta receives core-operating funding from Canada through Western Economic Diversification Canada. We currently operate under a multi-year agreement. Community Futures Central Alberta manages community economic development projects with partner organizations and funders including the Central Alberta Innovation Network. For more information on the Corporation please contact Kelly Kierluk, General Manager of the Corporation at 403-342-2055 (ext. 201) or refer to our corporate web page at www.central.albertacf.com

The Central Alberta Regional Innovation (CARIN) Early-Stage Incubator

Central Alberta is a dynamic region that has a variety of entrepreneurial ambitions and industry backgrounds. Incubators in the region have helped entrepreneurs develop their ideas, strengthen their business skills, and provide one-on-one coaching and business networking. The CARIN Startup Incubator provides further reach in the region and includes enhancements that are needed by knowledge based and industry specific businesses, which include (not listed in order of need):

- Basic business training
- Market research/validation
- Prototyping services
- Coaching/mentoring
- Network creation
- An entry point to all the services
- Targeted sector training
- Building companies to export

The Central Alberta STARTUP Incubator, entering it's second year, brings a focused approach to this program by focusing on three knowledge-based areas:

- Agriculture,
- Manufacturing
- An oil pivot

Project Scope

The Central Alberta STARTUP Incubator will focus on three streams: Agriculture, Manufacturing, and companies who are doing an oil industry pivot. These early-stage entrepreneurs will be technology and knowledge-based companies within the three streams and will be developing companies aligned to export their services and products.

The successful proponent will:

- Develop cohort-based programming that is industry focused. There is the expectation that experts will be brought in who can help strengthen the entrepreneur's business ideas as they are built.
- Programming will consist of a minimum 2 cohort-based programs that are 8-10 weeks in length, with a minimum overall participation of 15 participants throughout the project.
- Recruitment of knowledge-based entrepreneur participation
- Create a community that connects entrepreneurs with other entrepreneurs, companies, and support organizations to develop their network of resources.
- Work with partner organizations to build on and develop early-stage entrepreneur curriculum to ensure consistent training in Central Alberta. This would include weekly homework to assist in growing and developing their companies and prepare them for additional programming such as LeanStack Accelerator Program.
- Bring in experts in emerging technology to have the companies start to think about how to apply innovative technologies to their products.

- Develop criteria for self-evaluation at the beginning and end of the program to provide feedback and opportunities to reflect on where they have pivoted.
- Ensure that the program incorporates tools and resources that assist to utilize external markets and build companies from the beginning that could be scaled for export.
- Bring in industry experts, and mentor the entrepreneurs through scheduled weekly check-ins
- Identify 2-3 companies in the incubator and coach them so they are ready for GrowthX, LeanStack or a similar program.
- Build on the marketing plan to advertise CARIN's support for early-stage entrepreneurs (increase web traffic to the CARIN website by 30%)
- Track demographics of entrepreneurs supported as well as key performance metrics

Proposal Guidelines, Budget, Timelines and Requirements

- This RFP is an open and competitive process.
- Proposals received after **11:59 p.m. Monday August 16, 2021**, will not be considered. If you have previously submitted a proposal, you do not need to resubmit unless the change of scope will affect your timelines and price quoted.
- The successful candidate will be decided no later than **Monday August 23rd**
- If you have alternative solutions or suggestions for the direction of this project, please submit them with your proposal.
- The price you quote should be inclusive. If your price excludes certain fees or charges, please provide a detailed list of excluded fees with a complete explanation of the nature of those fees. The budget must encompass all costs that are likely to be incurred by the successful candidate during this contract.
- If the execution of the work to be performed by your company requires the hiring of sub-contractors, please clearly state that in your proposal. Sub-contractors must be identified and the work they will perform must be defined. Community Futures Central Alberta will not refuse a proposal based on the use of sub-contractors; however, we retain the right to refuse the sub-contractors you have selected.
- Provisions of this RFP and the contents of the successful responses are considered available for inclusion in the final contractual obligations.
- Please provide cost proposals to accomplish the scope outlined.
- Community Futures Central Alberta has allocated \$90,000 for this contract

The project completion date is March 31, 2022

Contract Terms

Community Futures Central Alberta will negotiate the contract terms upon selection of a contractor. All contracts are subject to review by Community Futures Central Alberta, and the project will be awarded upon the signing of the contract, which will outline terms, scope, budget, and other necessary items.

Deliver proposals to the attention of:

Kelly Kierluk

General Manager

Community Futures Central Alberta

kkierluk@albertacf.com

Proposals that meet the mandatory requirements will be evaluated with the following criteria:

Suitability of the Proposal: The proposal meets the needs and criteria set forth in the RFP.

Expertise: The proposal demonstrates a high-level of expertise in marketing, communications, and project management.

Experience: The candidate has successfully completed similar projects, ideally in central Alberta. This individual will have experience in working with entrepreneurs, particularly at the start-up or ideation phase, and in workshop delivery and facilitation, coaching and mentoring.

Preference will be given to individuals with a Certified Management Consultant (CMC) designation, Project Management Professional (PMP) certification, or equivalent experience.

Value for Price: The price is commensurate with the value offered by the candidate.

Presentation: The information is presented in a clear, logical manner and is well-organized.

Please provide the following as part of your proposal:

- Examples of similarly complex projects
- Minimum of 2 client references showing the candidate's commitment to quality and customer service.
- Project timeline with major tasks and milestones
- Project budget by line item