



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS Q&A

FOR
Certified Sites Program

ISSUED BY:

WISCONSIN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

ON: **02/13/2026**

All questions regarding this RFP must be submitted in writing to Sarah Bowns at sarah.bownds@wedc.org by 2/27/2026 at 4:00 pm CT.

PROPOSALS MUST BE SUBMITTED BY:
03/13/2026, 4:00 PM CT

To:
Sarah Bowns
WEDC @ The Hub
2352 S. Park Street West Washington Avenue, Suite 303
Madison, WI 53713

LOOK FORWARD 

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

- 1. Do you anticipate continuing to accept applications once per year, or move to a rolling application?**
 - a. That is yet to be determined.

- 2. Does participation in the contract preclude the consultant performing other work for the applicant? For example, if an engineering firm is selected to administer the program, can they also work for the applicant to conduct the environmental review or master planning? Is there a conflict if the firm is doing unrelated work for the applicant?**
 - a. Any studies or work that are among the requirements for certification would constitute a conflict of interest in the view of WEDC.
 - b. Unrelated work or studies not required by the program for certification do not pose a conflict of interest.

- 3. Who is currently providing these services? If they are being delivered by a consultant, can WEDA provide a copy of the contract?**
 - a. As noted within the downloadable program materials, it is Site Selection Group.
 - b. WEDA cannot provide information on WEDC contracts. WEDC could provide a copy of the contract if they submit an open records request via the online portal: <https://wedc.org/transparency/public-records->

- 4. To better understand level of effort, can you provide copies of past technical assistance deliverables:**

Each site selection consulting firm has their own means of addressing these deliverables, and they are considered proprietary. We have done our best to describe our expectations in more detail below:

 - a. Desktop Site Review
 - i. This comprises a comprehensive review of all required certification studies and data through the lens of a site selector vetting the site for a potential project.
 - b. On-site visit report
 - i. The RFP states "On-site Visit" not report. This is a summary of findings and recommendations on all aspects of the site visit experience.
 - c. Items 4 c-h fall under the bulleted section for Comprehensive Analysis and Report
 - i. Executive Summary
 1. This is to be a summary of findings suitable for executive level review.
 - ii. Strategic Development Plan
 1. The consulting firm should give a multi- stage/ multi- phase plan for suggestions the community/site owner can take to increase the competitiveness of the site.
 - iii. Technical Site Readiness Evaluation
 1. Review and analyze site information gathered during the in-person site visits.
 2. Conduct additional desktop analysis on candidate sites.
 3. Prepare a summary of results for the Technical Site Analysis that includes an evaluation matrix, site strengths and weaknesses, and site improvement recommendations.

Improvement recommendations will incorporate a return on investment metric.

- iv. Target Industry Assessment
 1. Conduct a data-driven desktop target industry overview that seeks to score and rank target industries for marketing purposes.
 2. Summarize the results of the target industry overview.
 - v. Labor Assessment
 1. Review and analyze workforce information gathered during the in-person site visits.
 2. Conduct additional desktop analysis on workforce characteristics.
 3. Prepare a summary of results for the Labor Assessment that includes key workforce statistics, strengths, and weaknesses, and suggested strategic recommendations.
 - vi. Competitive Assessment
 1. Benchmark the site against competitor sites both inside and outside of Wisconsin, across at least 3 additional states (negotiable). The consultant is responsible for identifying and gathering data on the competing sites.
- d. If this detail is insufficient, you may submit an open records request for past program deliverables via the online portal:
<https://wedc.org/transparency/public-records->

5. You ask for an annual administration fee but have not indicated the scope of work anticipated. Can you list the expectations/role of the consultant with regard to administration, as well as what material, printing, promotional, or other costs will be the responsibility of the consultant?

- a. There are no anticipated printing or promotional costs.
- b. This fee is meant to be a consideration towards the amount of staff time that will be spent administering the program and conducting related research and analysis. Depending on the firm's experience administering similar programs and size of the team supporting this contract, the hours of work needed and total staff time, and cost will vary. It will also include:
 - i. Desktop creation of:
 1. Program materials and requests for information form
 2. Project timelines
 3. Customized PowerPoint presentations
 4. Certification documents (marketing-focused value proposition piece and certification completion letter/document)

6. Wisconsin is a large state, and travel costs will vary significantly based on the applicant's location. Will you accept a fixed fee, plus travel approach (following State travel policies) to pricing for tasks including a site visit?

- a. Yes, this should be submitted as a fixed trip fee, plus travel expenses.

7. How many sites have gone through the program each year over the last few years?

- a. Approximately two per year since 2023.

- 8. Are the Site Assessment and Strategy Report for internal (WEDC and community) use or is it designed to be an external tool for marketing purposes? If internal use, are there any external deliverables?**
- This is an internal deliverable intended for WEDC and community use. It is not intended as a marketing tool.
- 9. Are there any sites still working towards achieving certification? If so, how will these sites be addressed if you switch providers?**
- There is one site nearing certification. It is expected that the current provider will complete that certification within the year, it will not transfer forward with the new contract.
- 10. How are you currently marketing your certified sites?**
- Each community receives a PDF brochure, and properties are posted to our Certified Sites web page.
- 11. Do you anticipate the new provider will overhaul the current program including deliverables and materials or just tweak it based on their experiences and expertise?**
- For Full Site Certification, we expect only minor changes to the program, if any.
 - The following earlier stage engagement elements will be new to the program:
 - Early-Stage certification for sites beginning the path to industrial site readiness but not yet ready to apply for full certification, including an industry fit analysis, site visit, and readiness gap analysis.
 - Re-certification of previously certified site. Desktop Site Review only, no site visit or Comprehensive Analysis & Report.
 - Regional Industrial Site Readiness Seminar half day, in person event convened upon request of a Regional EDO partner organization.
- 12. The RFI mentions contributing to continuous program improvement. Is the expectation an overhaul before the program year starts or changes later into the contract?**
- Continuous improvement will occur on an incremental and rolling basis after the contract begins.
- 13. Different programs across the country have different levels of review. i.e., some programs seek to "check-off" that items are completed while others do a deep-dive into the consistency and accuracy of the information. For example, a high-level review may just ensure that a survey has been completed whereas a deep dive would ensure that all the findings in the title opinion/insurance match the survey. What is the current level of review of materials? And what is the level of review anticipated under the next provider? The level of review greatly impacts the pricing.**
- Our program provides in-depth review of due diligence, checking for consistency, accuracy, and potential obstacles to development.
 - The selected provider will need to provide in-depth technical review consistent with our current provider's level of detail. It is expected that the project team will have members with knowledge and experience across all technical aspects of site review (Legal, utilities, geotechnical etc.).

14. What does capacity-building support for communities mean in application? Is it within the scope of the RFP, or are there additional needs that communities may need that we should be aware of?

- a. This is within the scope of the RFP and refers to guiding stakeholders that are presently pursuing certification toward resources and relationships that equip them to address future site readiness needs independently.

15. How does the program handle sites that begin the process but decide not to execute the development plan?

- a. WEDC and the consultant make every effort to support completion. If a site chooses not to proceed, WEDC issues a letter ending the engagement. Communities may reapply in a future cycle, though due diligence materials may need to be updated. The community portion of the certification fee for work performed is not waived or forwarded to future cycles.

16. Does WEDC have a budget for the 3-year program? If so, can you please share the budgeted amount?

- a. WEDC budgets on an annual basis. Responses to this RFP are intended to inform future conversations, however, if you require a number to work from you may use the historical number of \$79,000 per year.

17. Regarding the evolution of the Program, are we allowed to alter the existing scope to propose our company's methodology? Can the following, but not limited to, be changed:

Intent form?

Property evaluation guidelines (i.e., only public property)?

Due diligence guidelines/documentation?

Certification thresholds?

Request for Information (RFI) document?

Required attachments?

Final deliverables?

Marketing brochures/materials (i.e., front-facing decision-making data)?

- a. Possibly. WEDC does not intend to significantly alter full certification criteria but seeks flexibility for developing a community-centered readiness pipeline. A full program overhaul is not anticipated due to limited internal capacity, but WEDC is willing to accept outside methodologies as long as they accomplish existing program goals.

18. Is a Highest & Best Use determination included in the current program scope?

- a. No, the program does not currently provide a Highest and Best Use determination for the tax parcels undergoing certification.

19. Will the communities have to commit to monies for participating in the program and the cost of due diligence studies? If so, is the \$7,500 amount fixed pricing for this program?

- a. WEDC is open to reducing the community participation fee, provided the certification cost continues to be split equally between the applicant and WEDC.

20. Is there a limit on the number of sites a LEDO can submit? If so, what is the limit?

- a. There is no limit. WEDC does, however, seek to encourage statewide geographic distribution.

21. How many communities and sites do you anticipate (have a goal for) going through the program?

- a. Participation will depend on the cost model and structure proposed. Earlier-stage engagement options should increase participation. Historically, WEDC has targeted three full certifications per year.
- b. Respondents should provide cafeteria style "per site/community" pricing as requested in Section V.

22. How many regional site seminars do you envision?

- a. 2-3 regional seminars per year.

23. Are references expected for the "relevant engagements" we list to indicate a relevant experience?

- a. Individual references will strengthen a response but are not a requirement.
- b. If references are not available, it would be worth stating the reason (ie. Retirement or change in employer)

24. Can relevant travel expenses be charged, pending approval, in addition to the fixed costs provided for the various services?

- a. Travel expenses such as transportation, lodging, meals and incidentals may be charged provided they are reasonable and necessary.
- b. These items can be further explored and clarified during contract negotiations.

25. Do anticipated "out of pocket costs" include anticipated travel expenses? Can relevant travel expenses be charged, pending approval, in addition to the fixed costs provided for the various services?

- a. Yes, travel expenses are expected to fall under out-of-pocket costs.
- b. Yes, but please note that WEDC will not reimburse or remit payment until after the actual date of travel. (Post-visit)
- c. These items can be further explored and clarified during contract negotiations.

26. If the work is conducted at a fixed fee, do we need to break out the number of hours each team member will provide for each activity? Similarly, since each product will be provided at a fixed rate, do we need to provide a billing rate per hour for each team member? The fixed price will supersede the hours required or a billing rate.

- a. No.
- b. The rates per hour are relevant towards evaluating any unexpected projects that may be identified during the contract term that directly relate to site readiness efforts but are not explicitly stated in the contract (ie. Statement of Work or Master Services Agreement.)

27. Will the recertification process involve a one-time review of existing documentation with findings delivered to staff, or will it require an ongoing evaluation of newly submitted materials, culminating in SSG providing a formal recommendation to WEDC regarding approval?

- a. The intent is for the recertification scope to involve a one-time review. Sites will be invited to submit current due diligence materials, and the vendor will complete a single comprehensive review of each site resulting in a deliverable that:
 - i. Describes the site's current stage of readiness (its readiness pipeline position), and
 - ii. identifies any recommended next steps needed to move toward full recertification, if applicable.
- b. The intent is that each existing certified site that is more than six years old will be eligible for this one-time recertification review. This eligibility applies once per site; it is not an ongoing or recurring evaluation process.
- c. If a site chooses to submit only partial documentation for review, they will not be fully recertified but will still receive a review and the benefits listed above.

28. Is the scope of recertification efforts broadly left to the applicant to determine?

- a. Yes, please see the following response (Question 29).

29. The RFP reads as though the recertification scope primarily involves due diligence review; can you please confirm if this is a correct understanding?

- a. The intent is for the recertification scope to involve a one-time review. Sites will be invited to submit current due diligence materials, and the vendor will complete a single comprehensive review of each site resulting in a deliverable that:
 - i. Describes the site's current stage of readiness (its readiness pipeline position), and
 - ii. identifies any recommended next steps needed to move toward full recertification, if applicable.
- b. The intent is that each existing certified site that is more than six years old will be eligible for this one-time recertification review. This eligibility applies once per site; it is not an ongoing or recurring evaluation process.
- c. If a site chooses to submit only partial documentation for review, they will not be fully recertified but will still receive a review and the benefits listed above.

30. If pages are marked "confidential" does this mean WEDC will exclude those pages from a public records request?

- a. Marking materials as confidential helps us identify what you consider sensitive. However, as a public agency, WEDC must comply with Wisconsin's Open Records Law.
- b. All records are subject to review, and we must independently determine whether any specific statutory exemption applies, such as those for trade secrets, competitive harm, or personally identifiable information.
- c. If an exemption applies, the information can be redacted or withheld; if not, we are legally required to release it.

31. Should travel expenses be included in the fixed costs?

- a. No, please do not include travel expenses in the fixed cost. Reasonable and necessary travel expenses will be reimbursed.

32. Is there an engineering partner currently associated with the site program?

- a. No. Applicants are presently responsible for identifying and working with their own engineering partners.

33. Could you provide information on the budget from previous rounds?

- a. WEDC budgets on an annual basis. Responses to this RFP are intended to inform future conversations, however, if you require a number to work from you may use the historical number of \$79,000 per year.

34. Is there a minimum or maximum number of sites that must be reviewed per round/per fiscal year?

- a. The number is yet to be determined and is dependent upon both program demand and available budget.

35. Could you confirm which sections of the "Comprehensive Analysis and Report" you would like included in the early-stage certification?

- a. As this is a new program element, specific deliverables are not yet set in stone. At a minimum, it should include an industry fit analysis and readiness gap analysis.

36. Regarding "early-stage" sites: are these determined prior to the start of scope?

- a. No.

37. Do you envision multiple rounds per year?

- a. That is yet to be determined.

38. Is the expectation to have the final deliverable/ "Comprehensive Analysis and Report" completed prior to certification/due diligence process or once the site is fully certified?

- a. It presently is delivered one month after the site visit and before the final certification, however, we may be open to alternative workflow suggestions.

39. Do you have an estimated/target number of sites to be evaluated for 1) full site certification and 2) early-stage certification each year?

40. Could you provide an example of a "Strategic Development Plan"? Also, is this something that the Consultant is solely responsible for producing?

- a. The consulting firm should give a multi-stage/ multi-phase plan for suggestions the community/site owner can take to increase the competitiveness of the site.
- b. Each site selection consulting firm has their own means of addressing this deliverable, and they are typically considered proprietary.
- c. Yes, the consultant is solely responsible for producing this.

41. On Page 18 of 20 of the "Wisconsin Certified Sites Program Overview" (updated July 1, 2025), the "Fee Structure" is outlined for the applicants. That page also includes a list of "Scope of Services" titled: "Deliverables Include:"

- a. Desktop Site Review
- b. On-site visit
- c. Executive Summary
- d. Strategic Development Plan
- e. Technical Site Readiness Evaluation
- f. Target Industry Assessment
- g. Labor Assessment
- h. Competitive Assessment
- i. Certification process coordination
- j. On-going support

The question is: The last two bullets listed above: "Certification Process Coordination" and "On-Going Support", were not outlined in the RFP. Should those be included under the "annual program administration fee" or the "full site certification"?

- a. The certification process may exceed a singly fiscal year, however it is expected that the selected firm will continue to coordinate that site's certification process and provide ongoing support until complete, or withdrawn from the program by either the community or WEDC. WEDC proposes a period not to exceed 3 years from the date of application for full certification (negotiable).
- b. Therefore, it is the respondent's choice whether to include those two bullets in the annual fee or in the site's certification fee. In either case the payment is intended to cover the length of the period for full certification, up to 3 years (negotiable).

42. Please provide examples and/or expectations of what "on-going support" may entail.

- a. Ongoing support may include virtual meetings with site teams and their related contractors (environmental consultants) or other state agencies (DNR)

43. For "Early-Stage Certification", would a community know that they are seeking an early-stage certification at the outset, or would this be established at some point during the full site certification process (e.g., following the desktop review, site visit, etc.)?

- a. This determination would be made upon review of the preliminary application materials, well before the site visit and before the final in depth technical desktop review.

44. As part of Phase 1 (WEDC Certified Site Letter of Interest review), will the vendor be responsible for reviewing Letters of Interest during the annual application period and determining which sites move to the next phase?

- a. Yes

45. Can WEDC confirm the expectation to certify three sites per year, and are there plans to increase this number? If yes, please describe the increase.

- a. Historically, WEDC has targeted three full certifications per year. We expect that to increase as demand for the program builds moving forward.
- b. WEDC expects engagement to increase due to
 - i. The introduction of earlier-stage engagement options
 - ii. WEDC is deploying a new marketing strategy for this program
 - iii. Potential matching funds for required due diligence studies

46. For planning purposes, how many total sites does WEDC anticipate the vendor will need to analyze annually, and what is the expected breakdown among Full Sites, Early-Stage Sites, and Re-certification sites?

- a. These numbers are yet to be determined and are dependent upon both program demand and available budget. For that reason, Respondents should provide cafeteria style “per site/community” pricing as requested in Section V.
- b. WEDC seeks flexibility and partnership from the selected vendor in working towards the ultimate goal of helping foster statewide site readiness.

47. Can WEDC share more details on the expectations for the Regional Industrial Site Readiness Seminars? For example, the # per year, frequency, and lead time to schedule.

- a. WEDC envisions 2-3 regional seminars per year. The frequency and lead time are negotiable
- b. Event dates will be determined in consultation with key regional partners to maximize attendance.
- c. WEDC seeks flexibility and partnership from the selected vendor in working towards the ultimate goal of helping foster statewide site readiness.

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