REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS (RFQ):

SUBMISSION DEADLINE
Friday, March 5, 2021 at 3:00 PM

SUBMISSION CONTACT AND ADDRESS
Ms. Cynthia van Zelm, Executive Director
Mansfield Downtown Partnership, Inc.
860.429.2740
vanzelmca@mansfieldct.org

Proposals will be accepted in electronic form only.

PURPOSE
The Mansfield Downtown Partnership, Inc. (“Partnership”) is seeking to obtain the services of a qualified Consultant to work with the Partnership Board of Directors and staff to develop a Revenue Generation/Financial Plan for the Partnership.

A fact sheet on the non-profit (501 (c) (3)) Partnership is included as Appendix B.

BACKGROUND SUMMARY
Since its inception in 2001, the Partnership’s operations have been funded equally by the Town of Mansfield (“Town”), and the University of Connecticut (“UConn”). Support has increased over the years as the Partnership has grown in terms of mission, and consequently, staff. To a much lesser extent, but not insignificantly, the Partnership relies on supporters (individuals, businesses, and organizations) for its operating budget.

The current budget for the Partnership operations for FY2020-2021 (July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021) is $354,000. This includes $150,000 each from the Town and UConn, and $14,000 from members/supporters. This also includes separate funding of $40,000 from the Town for the Partnership’s contract with the Town of Mansfield to provide town-wide economic development services.

In addition, the Partnership seeks donations for several of its events including the Celebrate Mansfield Festival, Summer Stroll, Summer Concerts on the Square, Moonlight Movies, John E. Jackman Bike Tour, and Winter Welcome. A new event – a street dance party – is currently being planned. Smaller budgets for Trick or Treat, and Small Business Saturday are currently being taken out of the operating budget. For 2021, all events are pending COVID-19 health and safety restrictions, but events remain a goal for the Partnership going forward.
The Partnership has a fund balance of $349,768 as of July 1, 2020. The goal is not to use the fund balance for Partnership operations.

A particular challenge for the Partnership has been to maintain, and ultimately increase, its budget from its members/supporters. For the past several years, the amount of funding coming from supporters has generally stagnated due to 1) difficulty of articulating the importance of the Partnership now that Storrs Center has been built; 2) generating worthwhile benefits for membership, and 3) an aging donor base, among other reasons. In addition, due to the demands of other priorities, fundraising has not been as high of a priority. While the approach to supporters and supporter requests have evolved over the years, there has not been a concentrated outside review of best practices for the Partnership’s efforts to secure supporters.

Given the background above, the consultant should evaluate whether seeking support from members to fund the Partnership’s operations is an effective and prudent way to fund operations.

Along with the focus on the Partnership’s supporter base, the two other areas of evaluation needed are event fundraising and how best to utilize the Partnership’s fund balance.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

Develop a Revenue Generation/Financial Plan to ensure sustainable funding for the operations and events for the Partnership and recommend best uses for the Partnership’s fund balance. The Revenue Generation/Financial plan must include specific tasks and goals for the Partnership Board, its Finance and Growth Committee, and staff to implement.

Products and services include:

1. Development of a Revenue Generation/Financial Plan for the Partnership including but not limited to:
   a. Evaluation of current budget and financial support including funding from Town, UConn, and supporters;
   b. If supporters are still a viable option for funding, develop methods to maintain and recruit new supporters, including a review and potential changes to current and future supporter benefits;
   c. Innovative revenue generation techniques for Partnership operations and events;
   d. Recommendation on role of the Board of Directors and staff on revenue generation tasks;
   e. Ideas for developing and maintaining relationships with donors;

2. Review of current Partnership goals; review of events including event goals;

3. Review of Partnership operating and event budgets;

4. Review of current Partnership fundraising materials (letters, forms, brochures, etc.);

5. Review of Partnership promotional materials, website, social media, as necessary;
6. Meeting with the Partnership Executive Director on current and past fundraising efforts;

7. Meeting with Town of Mansfield Director of Finance on Town's investment policy;

8. Discussion with the Finance and Growth Committee and Board of Directors on its goals for Revenue Generation/Financial Plan, as well as financial goals;

9. Review of draft Revenue Generation/Financial Plan with Finance and Growth Committee;

10. Review of final draft of Revenue Generation/Financial Plan with Board of Directors;

11. Delivery of final Revenue Generation/Financial Plan in both written and digital versions

SUBMITTALS
Submissions should include the following components:

1. Description of Consultant’s firm and firm’s areas of expertise, particularly as they relate to the project described above;

2. Names and resumes of the firm’s project manager and staff members who will lead and be assigned to the project;

3. Proposed scope of work, a fee schedule, and timeline for the project activities;

4. A resume and brochures of other related completed projects with an emphasis on small non-profits;

5. Three references.

SUBMITTAL CRITERIA
The following criteria shall be considered in evaluating the submissions:

1. The reputation, experience, and efficiency of the Consultant, including prior experience working with quasi-municipal agencies, downtown organizations, municipalities, and institutions of higher education;

2. The ability of the Consultant to perform the contract or provide the goods and services within the time specified;

3. The comparative quality of the goods and services bid;

4. The Consultant’s performance under similar projects;

5. The Consultant’s references;

6. Fee schedule for proposed work;
7. The number and scope of conditions attached to the proposal;

8. The Consultant’s interest in the project, as well as their understanding of the project scope and the specific requirements of the Partnership;

9. The Consultant’s schedule of completion;

10. The application of all of the above criteria to any sub-consultants, subcontractors, or products to be utilized by the Partnership;

11. General qualifications of the Consultant and the qualifications of the assigned staff and interview evaluation;

12. Financial strength of the Consultant;

13. Any other criteria deemed relevant by the Partnership.

Submissions must be received electronically by the Mansfield Downtown Partnership by 3:00 pm, Eastern Standard Time on March 5. Proposals received after said closing time of 3:00 pm, local time, on said date will not be accepted. Proposals should include the following in the subject line: REVENUE GENERATION/FINANCIAL PLAN.

Submissions will be accepted via email only. Please e-mail the proposal to Cynthia van Zelm at vanzelmca@mansfieldct.org.

The Partnership intends to “short-list” Consultants responding to this RFQ and to interview two or more Consultants to accurately assess their qualifications. The Partnership will negotiate a final scope of services and fee proposal with the selected Consultant. The goal is to have the Fundraising/Financial Plan completed by summer 2021. It should be noted that the Partnership is scheduled to begin a strategic planning process this spring related to the goals for Downtown Storrs.

Please address any questions related to this RFQ to Cynthia van Zelm, Executive Director, at 860.429.2740 or via e-mail at vanzelmca@mansfieldct.org.

Please see required Standard Terms and Conditions in Appendix A.
APPENDIX A: STANDARD TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Consultants shall be aware of the following terms and conditions addressing Requests for Qualifications for the Partnership:

1. The Partnership does not expressly state or imply any obligation to reimburse firms for any expenses incurred in preparing submissions in response to this request.

2. The Partnership reserves the right to reject any or all submissions, to select a firm in a manner that is advantageous to the Partnership, and to waive any or all formalities in the bidding.

3. The Partnership does not and shall not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, color, creed, national origin, age, marital status, sexual orientation, or disability of the Consultant, its employees, or its contractors in the award to the successful Consultant.

4. The selected firm must be able to meet all Partnership, state, and federal affirmative action and equal employment opportunity practices and guidelines.

5. The Partnership reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, to consider alternatives, to award the contract to a Consultant in part or parts, to waive any informalities and irregularities, and to resolicit proposals, at its sole discretion.

6. The Partnership reserves the right to conduct such investigations of and discussions with those who have submitted proposals (“Consultants”) or other persons or entities as deemed necessary to assist in the evaluation of any proposal or to secure maximum clarification and completeness of any proposal.

7. All proposals submitted must be valid for a minimum period of sixty (60) days after the date of the proposal opening. Each Consultant must submit with the proposal a list of all subcontractors, independent contractors, or sub-consultants employed or proposed to be employed by the Consultant in the performance of the contract.

8. The Partnership reserves the right to select the most responsible and responsive proposal that it finds to be within the best interests of the Partnership, including the right to select a Consultant for reasons other than lowest price.

9. The Partnership makes no guarantees to any Consultant. The only obligations to be undertaken by the Partnership will be those contained in the negotiated contract with the successful Consultant.

10. All work product generated by Consultant will be the property of the Partnership, including without limitation all rights to reproduce, license, assign, sell, and otherwise use the work product in any form, size, format, or medium for any purpose. Consultant will convey and assign all rights of ownership and authorship in the work product to the Partnership.

11. The Consultant will agree not to discriminate through the services or activities made possible by or resulting from any future contract on the grounds of sex, race, color, creed, national origin, age (except minimum age and retirement provisions), marital status, sexual orientation, or disability. Any violation of this provision shall be considered to be a violation of a material provision of any future contract and shall be grounds for cancellation, termination, or suspension of said contract. The Consultant shall at all times, both in the proposal and in the contract process, comply with all applicable city, state, and federal anti-discrimination laws, rules, regulations, and requirements thereof.
MANSFIELD DOWNTOWN PARTNERSHIP, INC.
FACT SHEET

THE PARTNERSHIP
The Mansfield Downtown Partnership, Inc. is an independent, 501(c)(3) non-profit organization with a mission to foster the development, management, and promotion of Downtown Storrs – a vibrant and economically successful mixed-use downtown at the heart of our community. As a public-private partnership, the organization is composed of representatives from the community, business, town, and the University of Connecticut. The Partnership is governed by a 12-member Board of Directors.

DOWNTOWN STORRS
Downtown Storrs is vibrant, walkable downtown district in the Town of Mansfield, CT, adjacent to the University of Connecticut. Downtown Storrs is home to over 60 businesses, the Town Hall, the Mansfield Community Center, the regional high school, residential apartments and townhomes, public open spaces, and Betsy Paterson Square.

In 2001, the Partnership was tasked by the Mansfield Town Council to oversee the revitalization of the downtown. The Partnership coordinated the public and private efforts to redevelop the area, including creating a new zoning district, improving the streetscape, extending utilities, constructing mixed-use buildings, new streets, and a public square, Betsy Paterson Square. The Partnership selected the master developer for Storrs Center, the newly constructed mixed-use buildings which house commercial uses on the first floor and The Oaks on the Square rental apartments on the upper floors.

The Partnership continues to serve as a convener between business owners, property owners, Town administrators, and University officials for the entire downtown district.

The Partnership promotes and markets Downtown Storrs as an exciting destination with a multitude of retail, dining, entertainment, and service options.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
The Mansfield Downtown Partnership coordinates economic development efforts on behalf of the Town of Mansfield and staffs the Economic Development Commission (EDC). With the Partnership’s guidance, the EDC has created a comprehensive work plan to address a variety of economic development tasks and goals for the Town. In this instance, the Partnership’s work encompasses the entire town and is not limited to the downtown.

EVENTS
One of the ways in which the Partnership promotes Downtown Storrs is through community events. The wide array of events hosted by the Partnership draw diverse audiences to explore the area and patronize the downtown businesses. As is typical of a college town, the summer has traditionally been a quieter time of year in Mansfield, so the Partnership has focused much of its event schedule on the summer, bringing in visitors from around the region for concerts, movies, and more.
EVENTS, continued
The Partnership’s annual events in Downtown Storrs include:

- Celebrate Mansfield Festival – Largest event in town, held annually in September
- Summer Concerts on the Square – Outdoors series of musical performances in June and July
- John E. Jackman Tour de Mansfield – Cycling event held annually in June
- Moonlight Movies – Outdoor movies series in the summer
- Trick-or-Treat in Downtown Storrs – Free trick-or-treating event
- Winter Welcome – Annual event in early December to celebrate the start of winter

All of the Partnership’s events are free and open to the public with the exception of the Tour de Mansfield, for which there is a registration fee. The Partnership’s events draw all ages, from families with young children to college students to seniors. Please see our website for more information about our events.

The Partnership also coordinates the use of Betsy Paterson Square for events hosted by residents, community organizations, and student groups. Individuals and groups may request the use of Paterson Square through a simple request process. Information about reserving Paterson Square is available on the Partnership website.

AWARDS
The Partnership has received statewide and national recognition for its work on revitalizing Downtown Storrs, including:

- 2018 Revitalization Award from Windham Region Chamber of Commerce
- 2016 Award of Excellence: Public Space from CT Main Street Center for Betsy Paterson Square
- 2015 Finalist for ULI Global Awards of Excellence from Urban Land Institute
- 2015 Award of Excellence: Planning from CT Main Street Center
- 2013 Award of Excellence: Economic and Business Development from CT Main Street Center

GRANTS
The Partnership has been instrumental in securing state, federal, and private grant funding for the redevelopment of Downtown Storrs. To date, the Partnership has secured over $25 million for planning, public infrastructure, multimodal transportation, and public spaces in Downtown Storrs on behalf of the Town of Mansfield.