



Request For Proposals

Business Grants Coordinator

Spokane Independent Metro Business Alliance (SIMBA)

RFP open until filled

Budget: \$20k

Term: Present to May 31, 2023

About SIMBA

SIMBA is the independent business alliance of the Spokane-Coeur d'Alene metro region. We build a prosperous, equitable, and local economy by organizing and educating regional businesses, consumers, and partners.

SIMBA envisions a connected, interdependent, supportive, and collaborative local economy with shared opportunities, broadened ownership, and unique community character.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The purpose of this project is to benefit low-income, underserved, and rural communities by helping businesses that are members of these communities thrive through participation in the Live Local INW Community Marketplace.

Across the Inland Northwest in both urban and rural communities, under-represented and smaller-sized businesses lack reliable, easy-to-use, and values-aligned tools to promote their businesses and products and reach the much larger pool of local-first customers outside their town or county. This is especially noted along the main streets of smaller and rural communities in the region like Colfax, Kettle Falls, Palouse, or Colville. This project will help diverse, local, independent businesses in these areas bridge the rural-urban gap by connecting them with regional market consumers looking for their unique goods and services. It will also support businesses by closing the digital divide that keeps many entrepreneurs limited to Facebook, email, and foot traffic promotion to find, engage, and serve a much larger audience of "good fit" customers.

This Live Local INW Community Marketplace project will create an online and mobile app-powered community marketplace platform that attracts and equitably directs the economic

potential of individual consumers, locally-owned businesses, and institutions across Washington State who want an easier way to shop and buy locally.

By expanding our existing commitment to provide the resources and tools for local businesses and business serving organizational partners, this project will make it much easier for regional consumers to support a diverse network of rural and urban microenterprise businesses.

This project will serve to catalyze invaluable opportunities for the newly-formed Business Equity Coalition of the Inland Northwest (BECiN) to strengthen relationships among its coalition members and community partners, and to give regional consumers and institutions another way to strengthen the resilience and equitable representation of our local and regional economies. In addition to the marketplace, the project consists of outreach to partner organizations and local businesses, and grantmaking.

STATEMENT OF WORK

Overview

The contractor will work with SIMBA staff, team members and coalition partner organizations to facilitate a Live Local Marketing Grant Program, whereby SIMBA will be re-granting money awarded as part of an SBIF grant through the WA Dept of Commerce through approximately 30-50 small marketing grants through the Live Local INW campaign. The re-grant program should be designed to encourage businesses to utilize the Live Local brand and campaign messaging and strategy resources to drive awareness of the benefits of shopping at locally-owned businesses, and incentivize the behavior of shifting spending to locally-owned businesses, especially those owned by underrepresented entrepreneurs. The grant money must be distributed by May 31, 2023, though the awardees do not have to spend the money by that date. This contractor will oversee the other aspects of the regranting happening within the Live Local INW Community Marketplace project, which include another contractor who is responsible for implementing two defined scopes to deliver Partner Grants to members of the BECiN and Live Local Coalitions, and distributing an Event Sponsorship budget. The selected contractor will possess the skills to quickly engage with appropriate businesses and partners to design and implement the re-granting program.

Services

The contractor will provide the following services as part of this project:

	Service	Hours (if applicable)	Cost Subtotal
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1	<p><i>Develop Grant program:</i> Define and document eligibility criteria, develop application form, application process and define deadlines. A draft document with business grant program guidance is already available to work from.</p>		
2	<p><i>Communication of Grant program:</i> Work with appropriate project resources to market the grant and notify appropriate businesses that the application is available. Targeted promotion to BIPOC-owned businesses and other specific underserved business owner audiences is strongly preferred to broad public dissemination of the funding opportunity.</p>		
3	<p><i>Direct Business Engagement:</i> Facilitate regional outreach of existing partner network, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Providing education on campaign participation benefits, including financial incentives and promotional opportunities. ● Attend meetings required to facilitate contact and participation. ● Identify points of contact at each organization to streamline communication and collaboration. 		
4	<p><i>Facilitate Grant Program:</i> Ensure that the pool of grant applications is truly diverse. A goal is to have approximately a 50-20% acceptance rate from the final pool of applicants so as to not adversely cost businesses time writing proposals that will not ultimately be funded. Define criteria for vetting applications, assemble and coordinate a panel to review and award grants. Goals include having between 30-50% of the awardees be BIPOC-owned businesses if at all possible, with 50-80%+ of awardees belonging to under-represented business owning demographic groups more broadly. Work with the project finance team to ensure grant money is distributed appropriately.</p>		
5	<p><i>Partner Grants and Event Sponsorship Oversight:</i> Work with the Partner Grant and Event Sponsorship Coordinator to ensure all re-granting activities are following best practices, are within scope and are on time.</p>		
6	<p><i>Reporting:</i> Work with the project team to provide necessary reporting documentation as well as data and metrics for tracking types of businesses benefited.</p>		

BUDGET AND TIMELINE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We want to highlight and provide context for the RFP timeline requirements and budget, which are unique to this opportunity.

This contract is being funded through a special, one-time grant from the Washington State Department of Commerce that was – by design – required to be disbursed and executed in a short timeframe. This timeframe is, by association, reflected in our RFP process. Key timelines related to this role include:

- Grant application live 4/17
- Grant applications due 5/5
- Review applications by 5/12
- Announce winners by 5/19
- Funds distributed by 5/26

SIMBA is committed to ensuring that this process is as accessible and supportive for you as possible, given the unique parameters. With that, we welcome questions and conversation, especially if you are perceiving potential roadblocks or need more clarity. Tiffany Harms is our RFP point person and would be happy to check in with you. She can be reached at team@spokaneindependent.org and 253-224-8080.

EVALUATION METRICS

SIMBA will evaluate bidders and proposals based on the following criteria:

- Previous experience/past performance history.
- Projected costs.
- Experience and technical expertise.
- Bidders must demonstrate the organizational capacity to conduct the work required by this project.
- SIMBA shall grant preference to SIMBA members and partners, in accordance with Federal law.
- SIMBA shall award contracts only to responsible contractors possessing the ability to perform successfully under the terms and conditions of this project.

SIMBA will not pay for travel, lodging, or per-diem unless specifically mandated in the requirements.

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Bidders must adhere to the following guidelines to be considered:

- Submissions are to be directed to Tiffany Harms at team@spokaneindependent.org.
- Include samples and references with your proposal.

- Proposals should not be more than 10 pages. Failure to comply with this guideline will result in an automatic rejection.
- A proposed schedule must also be included and clearly expressed.
- Include pricing using the table provided above under Statement of Work.
- If you are interested in more than one open RFP opportunity, you must submit a separate proposal for each.

UEI AND INVOICING REQUIREMENTS

The grant we are working under requires that all vendors possess an active UEI (Universal Entity Identifier) number in order to receive payment. This means that we will need all selected vendors to have a UEI by the first invoicing deadline on April 25, 2023. While this is a no-cost process to complete, it does include multiple steps that we want vendors to have time to move through. To obtain a UEI visit sam.gov. Please don't hesitate to reach out to us if you have any questions.

CONTACT INFORMATION

For questions or concerns connected to this RFP, please don't hesitate to reach out to:

Tiffany Harms (*pronouns: she/her*)

Recruiting and HR Consultant, Juno Collaborative Consulting

Spokane Independent Metro Business Alliance

team@spokaneindependent.org | 253-224-8080