



City of Somerville
Request for Information
Somerville Small Business
Technical Assistance Program

Background and Intent

Somerville is a city located in Middlesex County, Massachusetts, just two miles north of Boston. Occupying slightly more than four square miles and with a population of 81,360, including thriving immigrant communities from all over the world, Somerville is the most densely populated community in New England and one of the most ethnically diverse cities in the nation. Rich in both history and culture, the City of Somerville boasts numerous historical sites, community spaces, businesses, non-profits, retailers, and restaurants.

The Economic Development Division of Somerville wants to support small businesses to start, scale, and sustain to continue to support the economic vitality of our community. To do so, the City wants to support individual or group support to work with businesses.

During the COVID 19 pandemic, the City of Somerville offered multiple rounds of relief funding. Following the economic disruption of COVID 19, the City of Somerville seeks to continue to support small businesses and aims to shift support to making business owners in Somerville more knowledgeable in relevant business categories. Through this Request for Information (RFI), the City of Somerville is seeking information about skill sets of providers across the following technical assistance categories:

- Business formation, planning, and strategy
- Legal assistance
- Accounting, bookkeeping, financial management
- Marketing and branding
- Digital Branding
- Website creation and development
- Graphic Design
- Succession planning, specifically employee ownership and cooperative planning
- Digital literacy
- Financial literacy
- Human resource practices
- Contracting, bid response support
- Other topics that may benefit a small business

This RFI will allow interested providers to showcase their skills, value, and experience working with and support small business owners by responding to the inquiry. This RFI is open to non-profit or for-profit entities. Upon review, the City will review the inquiry and determine future consideration as a qualified Small Business Technical Assistance provider.

Please note that this inquiry does not guarantee any paid projects at present or in the future. Qualified vendors for future services will be contacted as eligible projects arise.

Appendix A: Informational Response

Please submit your responses to the following questions via email to economicdevelopment@somervillema.gov

We are open to all types of experience and expertise, whether academic, professional or personal. Please take the following prompts as guidance in helping explain the story of how you or your firm can be most successful in helping the small business community of Somerville.

Part 1- Tell us about yourself (up to two pages)

Please tell us more about why you are submitting a response to this request for information, and how your background (and background of your team) qualifies you as a provider. Please detail out the area/s of technical assistance you are most qualified in.

Part 2- Tell us about your experience (up to five pages total)

- What are the services that you or your firm have provided to small business owners?
- What are your experiences with providing group or cohort type of services to small business owners? What are your experiences with providing individual services to small business owners?
- What specific business owners and industries have you or your firm worked with?
- What are you or your firm's experience working with public sector agencies/ departments?
- What are some programs you or your firm have led providing services to low-moderate income individuals? What parts of aspects of those programs were most helpful to local businesses?
- What is you or your firm's ability to provide services in languages other than English?
- What are you or your firm's experiences working with diverse groups such as women-owned, immigrant-owned, veteran-owned, BIPOC-owned, disability-owned, LGBT-owned businesses?
- Do you or your firm have the ability to work with small business owners that may not have digital capacity or high digital literacy?
- What is you or your firm's experiences providing services in urban areas like Somerville or similar communities?
- Please provide at least two past examples of work you've done with the small business community. Including details regarding challenges encountered, measures of success, and iterative practices would be beneficial to include.

Appendix B: Contact

Please contact Kelly O’Laughlin, Economic Development Planner, with any questions or concerns.
Kolaughlin@somervillema.gov

Appendix C: Timeline

Responses will be accepted on a rolling basis. The City of Somerville staff will contact you with next steps.

Appendix D: Terms and Conditions

This RFI is for information and planning purposes only and shall not be construed as a solicitation or as an obligation on the part of the City to issue any competitive procurement or award a contract.

The City will not award a contract on the basis of responses to this RFI nor otherwise pay for the preparation of any information submitted, for any vendor presentation, or the City’s use of such information.

By submitting, the respondent authorizes the City of Boston to publicize, refer to, and use your response as it sees fit.