



Request for Proposals

Market and Demand Analysis

Creative Corridor: Planning for Trail-Connected Downtown Revitalization

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Issued by: **Community Project Hub of SWPA**

Issue date: **July 16, 2026**

Proposals due: **August 16, 2026, 5:00 PM ET**

Budget: **Not to exceed \$35,000**

Contact: **Emily Brown, Community Project Hub of SWPA, emily@swpahub.org**

Introduction

The Community Project Hub of SWPA (“the CoHub”) invites proposals from qualified consultants to conduct a market and demand analysis in support of Creative Corridor: Planning for Trail-Connected Downtown Revitalization, a 12-month planning project funded primarily through an Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) POWER planning grant.

The project will develop a coordinated, implementable strategy for space-based economic revitalization in five trail-connected downtowns along the Great Allegheny Passage (GAP) in Fayette and Westmoreland Counties, Pennsylvania: West Newton, Smithton, Sutersville, Ohiopyle, and Connellsville. This planning grant focuses on leveraging the region’s existing tourism assets to build a year-round, diversified economy driven by arts-based entrepreneurship and creative reuse of underutilized properties.

The CoHub leads the project in partnership with the Redevelopment Authority of Westmoreland County, the Redevelopment Authority of the County of Fayette, Touchstone Center for Crafts (creative economy intermediary), and Shiftworks (creative professionals outreach).

The CoHub is a non-profit technical assistance provider that helps municipalities, nonprofits, and community organizations across Southwestern Pennsylvania navigate funding, build readiness, and turn local ideas into real projects. We envision a region of thriving communities proactively shaping a responsible future and connected by shared momentum.

Scope of Work

The selected consultant will conduct a market and demand analysis examining visitor, resident, and spending patterns across the five project communities to identify market “leakage” and opportunities to strengthen year-round creative and tourism economies. The engagement is expected to include:

1. **Data review and synthesis.** Review existing studies and data, including the 2021 GAP Economic Impact Report, trail-use counts, and visitor and credit-card spending data available through the Laurel Highlands Visitors Bureau, and identify remaining gaps. The CoHub’s internal team will complete a preliminary background review that will be shared at kickoff.
2. **Visitor and resident market analysis.** Characterize current visitor volumes, origins, seasonality, spending patterns, and trip behavior along the corridor, and profile resident market demand within relevant trade areas for each community.
3. **Leakage and gap analysis.** Identify categories where visitor and resident spending is leaving the corridor communities, and quantify unmet demand relevant to arts, maker, craft, food, lodging, and experiential tourism enterprises.
4. **Opportunity identification.** Translate findings into market-supported opportunities for creative-sector and visitor-facing enterprises, with attention to year-round (four-season) viability, and provide community-level differentiation across the five boroughs where data allows.
5. **Deliverables.** A methodology memo (within three weeks of kickoff); a draft report with findings presented to the project team; a final written report with community-level summaries; a presentation of findings to project partners (virtual acceptable); and underlying data files or tables in editable formats.

The consultant will coordinate with the CoHub team, which is concurrently conducting a high-level space assessment, GIS mapping, and community engagement. Consultant findings should be structured so they can feed directly into property portfolios and an investment prospectus. The CoHub will facilitate access to partner data sources and convene check-in calls approximately every two to three weeks.

Anticipated Schedule

Milestone	Date
RFP issued	July 16, 2026
Deadline for questions	July 31, 2026
Responses to questions distributed	August 5, 2026
Proposals due	August 16, 2026, 5:00 PM ET
Finalist interviews (if needed, virtual)	Week of August 24, 2026
Selection and notification	September 4, 2026
Contract execution / work begins	Mid-September 2026
Draft findings presented	Late November 2026
Final report and presentation	December 18, 2026

The CoHub reserves the right to adjust this schedule; proposers will be notified of any changes.

Budget

The total budget for this engagement **shall not exceed \$35,000**, inclusive of all professional fees, travel, data acquisition, and expenses. Proposals should include a cost breakdown by task. This engagement is funded through an ARC POWER planning grant, and the selected consultant must comply with applicable federal grant requirements, including record-keeping sufficient to support grant reporting and invoicing.

Proposal Requirements

Proposals should not exceed 12 pages (excluding resumes and work samples) and must include:

1. **Understanding and approach.** A description of the proposed methodology, data sources, and analytical tools, including how the consultant will address community-level analysis for five small boroughs and four-season demand.
2. **Relevant experience.** Descriptions of at least two comparable engagements, preferably involving rural or trail-connected communities, outdoor recreation economies, or arts, craft, and experiential tourism.
3. **Project team.** Names, roles, and qualifications of assigned staff, with resumes attached.
4. **Work sample.** Two examples of a completed market, demand, or leakage analysis within the last three years (may be provided as a link).
5. **References.** Two client references from comparable projects, with contact information.
6. **Cost proposal.** Total cost with a breakdown by task and staff hours, and hourly rates for any additional services.
7. **Schedule.** Confirmation of ability to meet the anticipated schedule, or a proposed alternative.

Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated by a review committee composed of CoHub staff and project partners using the following criteria:

Criterion	Points
Relevant experience: market/demand analysis in rural, trail-connected, or outdoor-recreation communities; arts, craft, and experiential tourism economies	30
Proposed approach and methodology, including data sources and community-level analysis	30
Qualifications of assigned staff	15
Cost proposal and value within budget	15
Familiarity with Southwestern Pennsylvania and the Great Allegheny Passage corridor	10
Total	100

Pennsylvania-based firms and firms with demonstrated familiarity with the Southwestern Pennsylvania region are encouraged to apply.

Submission Instructions

All interested parties who plan to respond to this RFP must register via the [RFP Inquiry form](#) no later than **5 PM EST on July 31, 2026**. Instructions for submitting a proposal will be shared to the point of contact listed in the inquiry form on **Wednesday, August 5th**.

Proposals are due no later than 5 PM ET on August 16, 2026.

Any questions concerning this RFP must be submitted via email addressed to yinz@swpahub.org with “Creative Corridor: Planning for Trail-Connected Downtown Revitalization” in the subject line by 5 PM EST on Friday, July 31st, 2026. Responses will be shared with all parties known to be preparing proposals on Wednesday, August 5th.

Terms and Conditions

- This RFP does not commit CoHub to award a contract or pay any costs incurred in preparing a proposal.
- CoHub reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals, to waive informalities, to request clarifications or additional information, and to negotiate scope and cost with the selected firm.
- The selected consultant will enter into a professional services agreement with the Community Project Hub of SWPA via our fiscal sponsor Nonprofit Partners Inc.. Payment will be tied to deliverable milestones and subject to CoHub’s grant invoicing procedures.
- All deliverables, data, and work products produced under this engagement will become the property of CoHub and its project partners, and may be shared publicly.
- The consultant must comply with all applicable federal, state, and local requirements associated with ARC POWER grant funding.