



REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS (RFQ)

Notice for professional service providers

We are currently requesting qualifications and pricing from professional service providers to provide contracted legal, accounting, marketing, and human resource consulting services to small business owners as a part of the [Small Business Initiative](#) (SBI), in partnership with the City of Akron, Akron Urban League, and Western Reserve Community Fund.

For consideration, submit a response packet to the point of contact listed below by **July 12, 2024 at 5 PM ET**.

RFQ Open Period:	June 21 – July 12, 2024
Question Period:	June 21 – June 28, 2024
Application Due Date:	July 12, 2024
Application Page Limit:	15, including exhibits
Announcement Date:	Week of July 22, 2024
Service Period:	August 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025
Organization Name:	Bounce Innovation Hub
Organization Address:	526 S. Main Street Suite 609 Akron, OH 44311
Contact Name & Position:	Emmanuel Hilton, Vice President of Strategic Initiatives
Contact Number:	(330) 780-0649
Contact Email:	ehilton@bouncehub.org

Questions should be submitted to ehilton@bouncehub.org by 5 PM ET on June 28, 2024.

All those wishing to be considered must submit a formal response packet via email to ehilton@bouncehub.org by 5 PM ET on July 12, 2024.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>SECTION</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
Request for Qualifications Cover Letter	
I. Introduction to Bounce	1
II. Overview of the Small Business Initiative	1
III. Business Summary	2
IV. Legal Documents	3
V. Service Delivery and Pricing	3
VI. DEI Policy and/or Initiatives	3
VII. Exhibits and Other Documents	3
VIII. Evaluation	4
IX. Small Business Initiative Overview Materials	4

I. Introduction to Bounce:

Bounce Innovation Hub was founded in January 2018 and serves northeast Ohio entrepreneurs, startups, and small businesses. Located in downtown Akron, Bounce stands on the foundation of Akron's first wave of innovation and industry in a former B.F. Goodrich tire plant. Bounce operates a 300,000 square foot facility that includes private offices and lab space, co-working, event and conference room space. With more than 60 organizations in the building, Bounce accounts for more than 300 people working and creating in a vibrant environment. Between 2018-2023, Bounce has supported its clients in creating 682 new jobs, raising over \$74M in third party investments, generating over \$279M in revenues and earning 144 non-provisional patents. Since Bounce's launch, the organization has served over 650 diverse entrepreneurs across Northeast Ohio.

II. Overview of the Small Business Initiative:

This project is one arm of a recently announced collaborative effort that aims to strengthen and grow Akron's small businesses through technical assistance, business and financial counseling, and access to affordable professional services. The Small Business Initiative launched in 2024, when Bounce, Akron Urban League, and Western Reserve Community Fund partnered to amplify existing support measures for small businesses, with particular emphasis on the needs of Black entrepreneurs, in an effort galvanized by a \$750,000 contribution from the City of Akron. For its role in SBI, Bounce provides administrative management to the process of providing small businesses served by the partner organizations with access to free or significantly discounted professional services.

To fulfill this responsibility, we seek professional service providers that satisfy the below requirements.

- Employ personnel that have acquired expertise, technical skills, and certification or professional licensure (if applicable) in legal, accounting, marketing, and human resource consulting services
- Have a strong commitment to providing high-quality services to all clients
- Utilize ethical pricing models for service delivery
- Have experience serving the unique needs of entrepreneurs
- Possess the cultural competence necessary to serve a diverse population
- Have a diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) policy and/or deploy company-wide DEI initiatives

Qualified providers will have demonstrated experience, expertise, technical skill, and certification or professional licensure (if applicable) in the practice of legal, accounting, marketing, and human resource consulting. Response packets should include a detailed service delivery narrative and cost quotes on a per project and/or hourly basis. Furthermore, substantive confirmation of a commitment to DEI-aligned practices and initiatives, or adherence to a DEI policy, is required.

For the sake of clarity, below are the four categories of service, along with examples of services requested (and not requested) to be delivered to clients. This list is not intended to be exhaustive.

- **Legal**
 - Requested: standard business work, such as the creation of operating agreements; drafting, reviewing, and negotiating contracts; entity formation; and trademark filing
 - Not requested: Litigation

- **Accounting**
 - Requested: Non-attest services, such as financial forecasting, chart of accounts creation, QuickBooks setup and short-term bookkeeping, and financial statement preparation
 - Not requested: Attest services

- **Marketing**
 - Requested: Graphic design, such as logo creation; SEO solutions; social media account creation and content planning; and creation of marketing and/or communication strategies
 - Not requested: Website development

- **Human Resources**
 - Requested: Creation of employee handbooks, checklists for hiring, and job descriptions; development of recruitment strategies; and general HR consulting
 - Not requested: Employee recruitment and direct payroll services

III. **Business Summary:**

Please present a clear and organized summary of your approach to service provision in a narrative format, including any necessary attachment.

- Company summary
- Mission Statement
- Business objectives and goals
- Differentiation
 - How is your service provision different from, or superior to, competitors?
- Background of key staff and leadership
 - Key staff include all team members that will provide direct services to clients acquired through Bounce
 - Résumés can be included

IV. Legal Documents:

Please include the following documentation as attachments, and include any narrative needed.

- Certification of Good Standing with the Ohio Secretary of State
- Insurance coverage
- Professional licensure

V. Service Delivery and Pricing:

Please provide a narrative describing the relevant services you provide and pricing for those services.

Additionally, please provide the following.

- List of services and pricing on the per project and/or per hour basis
- Days and hours of operation
- How staff are assigned to projects
- Capability to meet client needs

VI. DEI Policy and/or Initiatives:

Please provide a copy of any DEI policy currently in effect at the company. Additionally, provide any documentation attesting to formal DEI training completed, such as certification or other licensure, or commitment to advancing DEI in the form of substantive community engagement.

Bounce is a community-focused entrepreneurial hub. Under this initiative, we seek to connect entrepreneurs in need of legal, accounting, marketing, and human resource consulting services with providers that incorporate the values of DEI into their work. Relatedly, as a results- and outcomes-driven economic development organization, Bounce expects providers to be able to communicate how they gauge their commitment in the area of DEI.

In relation to the submission of background materials for key staff and leadership, please be sure to elucidate or expound upon experience working with members of historically underserved populations, especially if in the context of entrepreneurship.

VII. Exhibits and Other Documents:

Please include any additional documents, attachments, or exhibits that you believe will make your application more compelling. Limit additional documentation to no more than five pages. However, exceptions are accepted in the case of links to public articles, white papers, etc. that (1) demonstrate domain- or DEI-specific expertise and (2) may reasonably impact our decision-making in the selection process.

We request succinctness in submitted materials, as quality—not quantity—will be the factor of significance.

VIII. Evaluation:

Professional services providers will be selected based upon the following criteria.

- Quality of service delivery
- Affordability of services
- Quality of experience, expertise, and technical skill of key staff and leadership
- Experience serving the needs of entrepreneurs
- Commitment to DEI-aligned practices or initiatives, both on the individual- and organization-level
- Bounce may request an interview with key staff and leadership

IX. Small Business Initiative Overview Materials:

- A. [SBI Press Release](#)