

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Industry Cluster Study Update

Released by:
**Pacific Mountain
Workforce Development Council**

Release Date: Friday, September 10, 2026
Due Date: Monday, October 12, 2026 at 4:00 PM (Pacific Time)
Proposed Contract Period: November 9, 2026 – February 26, 2027



Pacific Mountain Workforce Development Council
201 5th Ave SW, Suite 401
Olympia, WA

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Section I

Introduction

The Pacific Mountain Workforce Development Council (PacMtn) is releasing this request for proposal in partnership with the Evergreen Coast Economic Development District for the purpose of aligning its strategic plan with the current Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for the region,

Background

In 2009, at the request of the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (Workforce Board), the Legislature enacted Substitute House Bill 1323 establishing strategic clusters as the organizing framework for coordinating state and local workforce and economic development planning and service delivery.

In support of Substitute House Bill 1323, PacMtn contracted the completion of a cluster analysis report. The Targeted Cluster Identification & Strategic Alignment Report (Cluster Study) was completed September 2012, and the data has been updated multiple times, the most recent of which occurred in 2022 and was used to create PacMtn's current 4-year strategic plan.

The Cluster Study enabled PacMtn, the local Economic Development Councils and local educational organizations to identify and significantly improve their collective (macro) and individual (micro) long-term strategies for providing local workforce and economic development planning and service delivery.

The Cluster Study also updates the base line data resource. This resource allows for long term workforce and economic development strategies, and promotes and enhances partnerships between the EDCs, PacMtn, and Educational Leaders in creating a vibrant and dynamic regional economy.

The Cluster Study update should have broad based community participation and be a document that is readily accessible to regional stakeholders. Stakeholders should be able to use it as a guide to understanding the workforce as a driver of the regional economy and enable those who consult it to take actions that will improve outcomes for the workforce. The Cluster Study should be easily incorporated and leveraged into other regional documents to access federal funds, private sector resources, and state support which can advance a region's goals and objectives. Its quality should be judged by its usefulness as a tool for regional workforce decision-making.

Note: Industry Cluster is defined as a geographic concentration of interdependent competitive firms that do business with each other, including firms that sell inside and outside of the geographic region as well as support firms that supply new materials, components, business services, and other institutions including government and education.

PacMtn WDC Background Information

PacMtn is a Washington State 501 (c) (3) nonprofit corporation responsible for the administration and finances of the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act programs. PacMtn operates within Grays Harbor, Lewis, Mason, Pacific, and Thurston counties. The administrative offices are located at 201 5th Avenue SW, Ste. 401, Olympia, WA 98501.. Additional information on PacMtn is available on our website at <http://www.pacmtn.org/our-mission/>.

Project Scope and Conditions

The selected vendor will work with PacMtn staff, representatives of our local economic development partners, select WDC Board Members and knowledgeable community leaders throughout this process. The vendor will:

- Review previous cluster indicators
- Evaluate and recommend any new indicators
- Work with stakeholders to facilitate the refinement of that list
- Complete a data analysis of regional sector data based on the final approved list of indicators
- Identify emerging subsectors and collaborate with local EDCs to create localized conversations about those emerging sectors

This Cluster Study will provide quantitative data encompassing the 5-county PacMtn region, including Pacific, Grays Harbor, Thurston, Mason, and Lewis counties. The geographic locus of strategic clusters should be regional and county-specific, but not statewide.

Priority Data Elements: Three Priority Data Elements will be used to identify the strategic clusters. They are:

- A. The relative concentration of jobs is high, as measured by location quotient greater than 1 (except healthcare and construction);
- B. There is a critical mass of jobs in the region, as measured by employment; and
- C. A high percent of jobs are in the middle and high wage ranges.

The proposed budget for the Cluster Study is not to exceed \$50,000.

There are four primary vendor deliverables for this project (all which must be coordinated with a local project committee and PacMtn.) All proposals should reflect the following deliverables.

1. Recommended data indicators for a holistic regional analysis

- a. Review the previous cluster indicators and evaluate the need to modify indicators.
- b. Narrow the list of required indicators for the update to those most closely aligned with the **Priority Data Elements**.

2. Updated data confirming current sectors and analyzing new/emerging sectors

- a. Analyze workforce data from the region.
- b. Provide a written report of the data findings to PacMtn. Report should include:
 - i. Overview of final indicators used in the development of recommended sectors;
 - ii. Emphasis on analytical data updates for each sector reported by county and the region;
 - iii. Provide any recommendations for the updating of key sectors that are recognized as focus areas by the PacMtn Region;

3. Community conversation

- a. Convene and facilitate project committee.
- b. Convene and facilitate open discussion meetings with each of the local economic development partners to enable community involvement and feedback in the updating of sector indicators. The focus should include engagement on the primary indicators, and indicators/process that is being recommended to evaluate for new/emerging sectors.
- c. Present draft final findings to PacMtn Executive Finance Committee, and to PacMtn Board.
- d. Present progress at a mutually agreed regional economic development event or conference to update stakeholders.

4. Recommended methods to identify emerging and/or subsectors in the localized communities

Project deliverables in this section will incorporate leading economic indicators to identify emerging strategic sectors/cluster trends of both industry and employment using: (a) anecdotal information, (b) current emerging industries, and (c) possible transformations of declining industries. The analysis should:

- a. Identify additional indicators that should be used in the development of emerging and/or subsectors.
- b. Collaborate with project committee to build consensus on recommended indicators, and other processes needed for selecting emerging and/or subsectors. Additional feedback should come from open localized community discussions.
- c. Build a list of recommended emerging and/or subsectors located in each county.
- d. Produce a report focused on recommending process/indicators to be used in the development of emerging and/or subsectors, and include a list of recommended emerging and/or subsectors by county.

Timeline

- Review workforce/economic indicators used to define regional clusters.
- Coordinate project committee to recommend and approval final list of indicators to be used in update.
- Coordinate/facilitate monthly check in/progress update meetings with the project committee.
- Partner with local economic development agencies or other approved agencies to host a briefing/feedback session in each county.
- Update data associated with the final indicators selected.
- Available to present at a full Board meeting or per the request of the Board Chair.
- Join PacMtn at a mutually agreed regional economic development event or conference to update stakeholders on current project progress.
- Submit final materials to PacMtn by the end of contact period.

Original Data Indicators

The original cluster analysis worked with the project committee to identify eighteen (18) data indicators. The project committee will again need to determine if this list needs to be updated, or if the eighteen (18) data indicators can remain the same. See the example below:

1. Historical Job Growth and Current Size of Sector Workforce
2. Future Job Growth Projection
3. Location Quotient
4. Industry Average Wage
5. Mid-Wage Occupations
6. High-Wage Occupations
7. Change in Industry Average Wages
8. Establishments
9. Shift-Share Analysis
10. Job Multiplier Effects
11. Earnings Multiplier Effects
12. Level of Output
13. Output per Job
14. Export Orientation
15. Excess Demand
16. Research and Development Occupations
17. Workforce Compatibility
18. Entrepreneurial Growth Potential

Section II

Contract Term

PacMtn is targeting Cluster Study Update to begin immediately and go through February 26, 2027. A detailed project schedule identifying tasks and milestones will be developed upon contract award. The term of the contract will commence upon signature of agreed upon contract terms, scope of work and deliverables and will continue through completion of the cluster study update.

Community conversations (listening sessions) should be scheduled as a part of the study. The intent of these conversations is to provide a micro-picture of emerging industries and subsectors within the county-specific areas of the PacMtn region.

The vendor's primary project contacts will be available to present at a full board meeting at the request of the board chair. Additionally, vendor will present on current project progress at a mutually agreed regional economic development event or conference. PacMtn and regional collaborators will roll out the implementation plan by February 26, 2027.

Policy of Competition

The Pacific Mountain Workforce Development Council conducts all procurement transactions in a manner providing full and open competition. The RFP identifies all evaluation factors and their relative importance. All responses will be honored to the maximum extent practical. Technical, financial, and organizational evaluations will be made of all proposals received found to be responsive to the RFP.

The Pacific Mountain Workforce Development Council will carry out the procurement review responsibilities with complete impartiality and without preferential treatment to any response.

Questions and Answers

Questions regarding this RFP may be submitted to contracts@pacmtn.org. Please reference "Industry Cluster Study Update RFP" in the subject line when submitting questions.

Questions and responses will be posted on PacMtn's Service Provider Opportunities webpage within 3–4 business days of receipt to ensure that all prospective Bidders have access to the same information.

Submittal Instructions

Proposals must be submitted electronically via email to contracts@pacmtn.org with the subject line: **"RFP Bid: Industry Cluster Study Update."**

Each proposal must include:

- A completed Proposal Cover Page and Certification Form (attached to this RFP);
- A response to the requested information outlined in the Project Scope and Conditions,

using the prescribed format provided in Section III; and

- No additional attachments beyond the materials specifically requested in this RFP.

RFP Key Events and Dates

Proposal Requests Issued	Friday, September 10, 2026
Bidders Conference, 10:00 AM (Pacific Time) via Microsoft Teams	Wednesday, September 23, 2026
Deadline for Receipt of Questions, 4:00 PM (Pacific Time)	Monday, September 28, 2026
Deadline for Receipt of Proposals, 4:00 PM (Pacific Time)	Monday, October 12, 2026
Formal Review Process of Proposals Begins	Tuesday, October 13, 2026
Interviews scheduled (if necessary)	October 19 – 20, 2026
Successful Bidder / Notice of Intent to Award Posted	Wednesday, October 21, 2026
Seven-Day Appeal Period	October 21– 28, 2026
Appeal Period Ends	Wednesday, October 28, 2026
Contract and Budget Negotiations Begin	Thursday, October 27, 2026
Contract and Budget Negotiations End	Friday, November 6, 2026
Contract Start Date	Monday, November 9, 2026

Note: PacMtn reserves the right to modify the dates and timelines identified above as necessary during the procurement process. Any changes to the RFP schedule will be communicated to prospective bidders and/or posted on the appropriate procurement webpage.

Bidders Conference

Date: Wednesday, September 23, 2026

Time: 10:00 AM PT

Location: [Microsoft Teams](#)

Evaluation and Selection Criteria

All proposals received by the submission deadline will first undergo an initial screening for responsiveness and minimum qualifications. This screening will determine whether the proposal meets the minimum requirements established in this RFP, including submission requirements, required qualifications, completeness of the proposal, and the Bidder's demonstrated ability to perform the requested services.

Proposals that do not meet the minimum qualifications or mandatory requirements of this RFP will not advance to the formal evaluation and scoring process. Only proposals determined to be responsive and to meet the minimum qualifications will be evaluated further.

Proposals advancing to the formal evaluation process will be evaluated based on the Bidder's demonstrated ability to successfully complete the scope of work and meet the needs of PacMtn and the Evergreen Coast Economic Development District. Evaluation will consider the quality, completeness, responsiveness, and overall value of each proposal.

Evaluation criteria will include, but are not limited to, the following:

- **Experience and Qualifications:** Demonstrated experience completing comparable industry cluster studies, regional economic analyses, Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) support, labor market research, or similar workforce and economic development projects.
- **Understanding of Services to Be Provided:** Demonstrated understanding of the purpose, objectives, scope, and intended outcomes of the project, including the complementary workforce and economic development needs of PacMtn and Evergreen Coast EDD.
- **Personnel Expertise:** Qualifications, experience, and relevant subject-matter expertise of the personnel assigned to the project, including experience in economic analysis, labor market research, industry cluster analysis, workforce development, economic development, and stakeholder engagement, as applicable.
- **Compatibility with End Users:** Ability to develop findings, data, tools, and recommendations that are accessible, practical, and useful to a range of regional stakeholders, including workforce and economic development organizations, local governments, employers, education and training partners, and community organizations.
- **Project Approach and Methodology:** Quality and feasibility of the proposed approach, including research methods, data sources, stakeholder engagement, project management, communication, and the Bidder's ability to complete required deliverables within the established timeframe.
- **Past Performance and Client Satisfaction:** Demonstrated record of successful performance on similar projects, including quality of work, responsiveness, ability to meet deadlines, and satisfaction of previous clients or end users.
- **Value of Proposed Services and Cost:** Reasonableness and competitiveness of the proposed cost in relation to the scope, quality, and value of the services offered. Cost will be considered as part of the overall evaluation and will not necessarily be the sole determining factor in selection.

Proposal Narrative and Evaluation Weighting

Proposals that successfully pass the initial screening for responsiveness and minimum qualifications will be evaluated and scored using the following weighted criteria:

Background & Relevant Experience — 25%

Provide a brief narrative describing the following:

- A brief overview of your organization, including the number of employees.
- Three (3) professional references, including full contact information.
- Clear identification of any collaborating or partnering organizations, including organization

name, primary contact information, and the services they will provide.

- A description of your organization's experience completing similar projects, particularly industry cluster studies, regional economic analysis, labor market research, CEDS-related work, or comparable workforce and economic development projects. Hyperlinks may be provided to examples of previous work; examples should not be submitted as additional attachments.

Organizational Capacity & Qualifications — 25%

Provide a brief narrative describing the following:

- A brief history of your organization, including how long it has been in business and its experience managing projects of similar size, scope, and complexity.
- The qualifications and relevant expertise of the personnel who will be assigned to this project.
- Why your organization is uniquely qualified to perform the requested services.
- How your organization will ensure successful and timely delivery of the agreed-upon services and deliverables.
- Your organization's capacity to manage the project and coordinate effectively with PacMtn, Evergreen Coast EDD, and other project stakeholders.

Project Approach & Understanding — 30%

Provide a narrative describing the following:

- Your understanding of the purpose, objectives, and intended outcomes of this joint project and the respective needs of PacMtn and Evergreen Coast EDD.
- Your proposed approach and methodology for completing the industry cluster study, regional economic analysis, and work supporting the future CEDS.
- Proposed data sources, research methods, analytical tools, and other resources.
- Your approach to identifying and analyzing existing, emerging, and high-growth industry clusters and related workforce and economic development opportunities.
- Your proposed approach to stakeholder engagement and incorporating regional input.
- How the resulting analysis, findings, and recommendations will be made useful and actionable for workforce and economic development planning.
- Your proposed project management and communication approach.
- A proposed timeline identifying major activities, milestones, and deliverables.
- Anticipated challenges or risks and how they will be addressed.
- Any additional methods, tools, or approaches that would add value to the project.

Fiscal Proposal & Overall Value — 20%

Provide a bid that includes:

- The total proposed cost for the full range of services.
- An explanation and itemized listing, as applicable, of all costs and fees proposed for the project.
- A brief description of the methodology used to establish the proposed pricing.
- Identification of any in-kind services or additional value included in the proposal, if applicable.
- Sufficient detail to allow evaluators to determine the reasonableness of the proposed cost in

relation to the scope, quality, and value of the services offered.

Total — 100%

Evaluation Category	Weight	Maximum Points
Background & Relevant Experience	25%	25
Organizational Capacity & Qualifications	25%	25
Project Approach & Understanding	30%	30
Fiscal Proposal & Overall Value	20%	20
Total	100%	100

The proposed cost will be evaluated as part of the overall value of the proposal and will not, by itself, determine the successful Bidder.

Award of Contract

Submittal of a successful proposal(s) does not constitute a contract with PacMtn. The contract award will not be final until PacMtn and the successful proposer have executed a mutually satisfactory contractual agreement.

Appeal Process

Any appeal of the final vendor(s) selected must state the basis of the appeal. Appeals can be sent in writing within seven (7) calendar days after the publication of the successful vendor(s) to:

William Westmoreland, CEO
Pacific Mountain Workforce Development Council
201 5th Ave SW, Suite 401
Olympia, WA 98501
contracts@PacMtn.org

Proposal Cover Page

A. Application Cover Sheet

On behalf of

Proposer Organization

Address

City

State

Zip Code

B. Certification

CERTIFICATION

The information contained in this proposal fairly represents the proposer's agency, organization, or business and its proposed operating plans. I acknowledge that I have read and understand the requirements of the RFP and am prepared to implement services as specified in this proposal. I certify that the proposed program services have been designed in compliance with the RFP requirements and WIOA regulations. I also certify that I am authorized to sign this proposal. This proposal is firm for a period of at least ninety (90) days from the deadline for RFP submission.

I affirm that no employee and/or PacMtn Council Member or officer of any governmental agency has any financial or other interest in this organization.

Name _____ Title _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

E-Mail _____

Signature _____

Section III

Proposal Format

Your responses to the inquiries below should be submitted electronically with the following format restrictions:

- 8 1/2" X 11" page size with 1" margins]
- 12 point Arial or Calibri font
- Double spaced (itemized bid information may be single paced)
- Total submission, including cover page (on the previous page), should be no longer than 7 pages

Submissions of greater length than seven (7) pages will be *disqualified*.

Proposal Narrative

Background

Provide a brief narrative describing the following:

- A brief overview of your organization, including number of employees.
- Three (3) professional references, including full contact information (address, phone, email).
- Clear identification of collaborating or partnering organizations, including organization name, primary contact information, the services they will provide.
- Short description of work history in completion of similar projects. Hyperlinks may be used to highlight projects, but projects should not be attached.

Organizational Capacity

Provide a brief narrative describing the following:

- A brief history of your organization, including how long you have been in business, and how many projects of similar scale you have experience with.
- Why your organization is pursuing the work, how it is uniquely qualified to perform it, and why it should be chosen as the successful bidder.
- How your organization will ensure successful delivery of agreed upon services.

Project Approach & Understanding

Provide a narrative describing your organization's understanding of the project and proposed approach to successfully completing the scope of work. At a minimum, address the following:

- Your understanding of the purpose and objectives of this joint project and the respective needs of PacMtn and the Evergreen Coast Economic Development District.
- Your proposed approach and methodology for completing the industry cluster study, regional economic analysis, and work supporting development of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS).
- The data sources, research methods, analytical tools, and other resources you anticipate using to complete the work.

- Your approach to identifying and analyzing existing, emerging, and high-growth industry clusters and related workforce and economic development opportunities within the five-county region.
- Your approach to stakeholder engagement, including how you will gather and incorporate input from employers, workforce and economic development partners, local governments, education and training providers, community organizations, and other regional stakeholders, as appropriate.
- How your approach will ensure that the resulting analysis, findings, and recommendations are useful and actionable for both workforce development and economic development planning.
- Your proposed project management and communication approach, including how you will coordinate with PacMtn and Evergreen Coast EDD throughout the project.
- A proposed project timeline identifying major activities, milestones, stakeholder engagement activities, draft deliverables, and final deliverables.
- Any anticipated challenges, limitations, or risks associated with completing the project and how your organization proposes to address them.
- Any additional methods, tools, deliverables, or approaches your organization recommends that would add value to the project.

Fiscal

Provide a bid that includes:

- A total bid amount for full range of services, plus:
 - Explanation and listing of all costs and fees applicant proposes to charge PacMtn for services.
 - A brief description of how you are pricing your services, including any itemized costs if relevant.
 - Listing of any in-kind services included in this proposal, if applicable.

Please briefly describe the following:

- Whether your organization is bonded or carries liability insurance. If so, describe.
- Whether your organization has filed for bankruptcy in the past three years.
- Whether your organization is currently involved in or has pending legal action relating to organization operations or financial transactions. If so, describe.

Miscellaneous

1. PacMtn will select the proposal which is most qualified to provide the services which will achieve the overall objectives of this Proposal Request.
2. PacMtn reserves the right to make such investigation as it deems necessary to determine the ability of proposers to furnish the required services, and proposers shall furnish all such information for this purpose as PacMtn may request.
3. PacMtn reserves the right to reject any proposals for failure to meet the requirements contained herein, to waive any technicalities, and to select the proposal which, in PacMtn's sole judgment, best meets the project requirements.
4. PacMtn reserves the right to reject, or to seek modifications of any proposal offered if in PacMtn's sole discretion the proposal does not meet the overall RFP objectives.

5. PacMtn reserves the right to offer an award to the next highest rated proposal if a contract cannot be successfully negotiated, or to renegotiate or reissue an RFP should an appeal for non-award be upheld.
6. This Proposal Requests is not in itself an offer of work, it does not commit the Pacific Mountain Workforce Development Council to fund any proposals submitted, nor is it liable for any costs incurred in the preparation or research of proposals.
7. The RFP creates no obligation on the part of PacMtn to award a contract or to compensate the proposer for any costs incurred. PacMtn reserves the right to award a contract based upon proposals received without further discussion or negotiation. Proposers should not rely upon the opportunity to alter their qualifications during discussions.
8. Any funding awarded will be subject to the availability of federal funding granted to the Pacific Mountain Workforce Development Council through the State of Washington Employment Security Department and the U.S. Department of Labor. Should the availability of such funding decrease before or following any award to a sub-recipient, the award will be revised accordingly. In addition, if awarded, the contractor must be willing to alter program design based on subsequent direction provided by the state, U.S. Department of Labor or PacMtn.
9. Proposals that are not funded will not be returned.