



65 West Main Street | Uniontown, PA 15401 | 724-437-4571

Section 1: Introduction and Background

1.1 Overview

A coalition of Fayette County stakeholders, comprising nonprofit organizations, private employers, and municipal leaders, seeks consultant services to develop a comprehensive workforce education system responsive to regional labor market needs following the announcement of Penn State Fayette's campus closure. This initiative acknowledges fundamental demographic and enrollment shifts affecting rural higher education while recognizing persistent employer demand for skilled workers in healthcare, construction, manufacturing, and related sectors.

1.2 Context

Fayette County, Pennsylvania, exemplifies challenges facing post-industrial rural communities across Appalachia. Population decline, outmigration of working-age residents, and shifting higher education economics have created a gap between traditional educational delivery models and actual workforce needs. Rather than replacing the departing institution with a similar model, stakeholders seek a right-sized, employer-connected system designed specifically for Fayette County's current and projected workforce demands.

1.3 Issuing Authority

Fayette Chamber of Commerce | 65 West Main Street, Uniontown, PA 15401

1.4 Key Dates

Milestone	Date
RFP Release	3/2/2026
Questions Due	3/16/2026
Responses to Questions Posted	3/18/2026
Proposals Due	4/06/2026
Interviews (if conducted)	4/13/2026
Selection Announced	4/15/2026
Contract Execution	5/01/2026

Section 2: Scope of Work

The selected consultant team shall complete three interconnected work streams, each informing the others and culminating in actionable recommendations.

Work Stream 1: Workforce Education System Design

2.1.1 Labor Market Analysis

- Conduct quantitative analysis of current and projected employment by sector in Fayette County and the surrounding labor market, drawing on Pennsylvania Department of Labor data, employer surveys, and regional economic development intelligence
- Identify high-demand occupations with viable career pathways, emphasizing (but not limited to), healthcare (nursing, allied health, behavioral health), construction trades, advanced manufacturing, and emerging sectors
- Map existing training capacity against identified demand gaps
- Project enrollment potential based on demographic analysis, including adult learners, incumbent workers seeking advancement, and traditional-age students

2.1.2 Best Practices Research

- Document successful models of regional workforce education systems serving similar rural and post-industrial communities, including but not limited to:
 - Early college high school programs (ECHS) with demonstrated outcomes
 - Employer-driven certificate and credential programs
 - Competency-based and accelerated degree pathways
 - Hybrid delivery models combining in-person instruction with remote learning
 - Community college branch campus and consortium arrangements
- Conduct site visits or detailed interviews with three to five exemplary programs
- Analyze governance structures, funding mechanisms, and sustainability models

2.1.3 Stakeholder Engagement and Convening

- Facilitate a minimum of four convenings bringing together employers, educational institutions, workforce development boards, K-12 districts, community organizations, and prospective students
- Conduct individual interviews with major employers to understand specific skill requirements, hiring challenges, and willingness to participate in program design and support
- Engage potential educational partners, including community colleges, regional universities, and technical training providers, regarding interest and capacity
- Document stakeholder priorities and build consensus around system design principles

2.1.4 Conceptual Business Model Development

- Propose governance and organizational structure options with analysis of advantages, disadvantages, and feasibility for each
- Develop financial proformas, including startup costs, operating expenses, and revenue projections across multiple scenarios

- Identify potential funding sources, including federal workforce development funds, Perkins grants, state support, employer contributions, tuition, and philanthropic investment
- Recommend credential and program mix aligned with labor market analysis
- Design employer partnership framework, including work-based learning, apprenticeships, and hiring commitments
- Proposals of outcomes, metrics and accountability structures

Work Stream 2: Penn State Fayette Campus Assessment

2.2.1 Facilities Evaluation

- Conduct a comprehensive assessment of existing campus facilities, including building conditions, deferred maintenance, ADA compliance, and technology infrastructure
- Evaluate site characteristics, including acreage, environmental conditions, access, and parking
- Assess utility systems and capacity for continued educational use

2.2.2 Acquisition and Ownership Analysis

- Research Penn State's disposition timeline, process, and any restrictions on future use
- Analyze municipal ownership options, including direct acquisition, authority structure, or public-private partnership
- Estimate acquisition costs and financing options
- Project ongoing operating and capital costs under municipal ownership

2.2.3 SWOT Analysis

- Document strengths of the campus location for workforce education delivery
- Identify weaknesses and challenges of the isolated campus model for the target student population
- Assess opportunities for campus utilization beyond core educational programming
- Analyze threats, including competing uses, environmental liabilities, financial sustainability risks and competitive environment of regional education.

2.2.4 Recommendations

- Provide clear recommendations regarding campus acquisition, including conditions under which it would or would not advance workforce education goals
- If acquisition is recommended, propose governance, financing, and operating structure

Work Stream 3: Implementation Planning and Reporting

2.4.1 Final Deliverables

- Comprehensive written report documenting all findings, analysis, and recommendations
- Executive summary suitable for public distribution and stakeholder communication
- Presentation materials for stakeholder briefings
- Implementation roadmap with phased action steps, responsible parties, and timelines

2.4.2 Presentations

- Present findings to the transition team at a minimum of three intervals: following completion of the research phase, upon delivery of draft recommendations, and upon final report delivery
- Present final recommendations to broader stakeholder group
- Support stakeholder communications as requested

Section 3: Qualifications and Team Requirements

3.1 Required Expertise

Proposing teams must demonstrate substantial experience in the following areas:

Workforce Development and Education Planning

- Design and implementation of employer-driven workforce education programs
- Understanding of community college, technical education, and early college high school models
- Experience with competency-based education and alternative credentialing
- Knowledge of federal and state workforce development funding streams

Real Estate and Community Development Finance

- New Markets Tax Credit transaction structuring and investor relations
- Historic Tax Credit rehabilitation projects
- Opportunity Zone investment structures
- Complex public-private financing, including state and federal sources
- Municipal real estate acquisition and disposition

Facilities Planning and Architecture

- Educational facilities assessment and programming
- Adaptive reuse and historic rehabilitation
- Conceptual design and cost estimation

Rural and Regional Economic Development

- Understanding of Appalachian economic conditions and opportunities
- Experience with post-industrial community transitions
- Familiarity with the Pennsylvania economic development landscape

3.2 Team Structure

Proposals should identify:

- Lead firm and project principal with overall responsibility
- Key personnel for each work stream with relevant experience
- Subconsultant firms and their roles

- Proposed hours and involvement of each team member

3.3 Local Presence

While national expertise is valued, teams should demonstrate how they will maintain meaningful engagement with Fayette County stakeholders throughout the project. Proposals should describe:

- Planned on-site presence during project execution
- Approach to stakeholder engagement and facilitation
- Any existing relationships or prior work in southwestern Pennsylvania

Section 4: Proposal Requirements

4.1 Format and Length

Proposals shall not exceed thirty pages, excluding resumes, work samples, and required attachments. Use a minimum eleven-point font with one-inch margins.

4.2 Required Content

Cover Letter

- Identify lead firm and principal contact
- Confirm acceptance of terms and conditions
- Summarize key qualifications and differentiators

Understanding and Approach

- Demonstrate understanding of Fayette County context and project objectives
- Describe overall approach to the engagement
- Identify key questions, challenges, or opportunities the team anticipates

Methodology

- Detail proposed methodology for each work stream
- Describe stakeholder engagement approach
- Identify data sources and research methods
- Explain how work streams will be integrated

Team and Qualifications

- Organizational chart showing team structure
- Brief firm descriptions for all participating organizations
- Key personnel resumes (may be appended)
- Relevant project experience with references

Work Plan and Timeline

- Proposed project schedule with milestones
- Deliverables list with submission dates
- Meeting and presentation schedule

Budget

- Detailed fee proposal by work stream and task
- Hourly rates for key personnel
- Estimated reimbursable expenses
- Total not-to-exceed amount

References

- Three to five references from comparable engagements
- Include client name, project description, and contact information

4.3 Submission Instructions

Submit one electronic copy in PDF format to:

mnutall@fayettechamber.ocm

Subject Line: Fayette County Workforce Education RFP Response

Hard copies are not required.

Section 5: Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

Criterion	Weight
Understanding of context and project objectives	15%
Methodology and approach	25%
Team qualifications and relevant experience	30%
Work plan and feasibility of timeline	10%
Budget reasonableness and value	15%
Local engagement approach	5%

The selection committee reserves the right to request interviews with finalist teams before making a final selection.

Section 6: Budget Guidance and Fee Estimate

6.1 Estimated Fee Range

Based on the scope described, the issuing authority anticipates total professional fees in the range of **\$170,000 to \$250,000** for all three work streams. This estimate assumes:

- Four to six months project duration
- Substantial but focused stakeholder engagement
- Conceptual-level design and cost estimating for real estate components
- Comprehensive but not exhaustive best practices research

6.2 Budget Allocation Guidance

As a reference point, the following allocation is suggested though proposers may adjust based on their approach:

Work Stream	Estimated Range
Work Stream 1: Workforce Education System Design	\$80,000 – \$125,000
Work Stream 2: Penn State Campus Assessment	\$40,000 – \$50,000
Work Stream 3: Reporting and Presentations	\$50,000 – \$75,000
Total	\$170,000 – \$250,000

6.3 Fee Proposal Requirements

Proposals must include:

- Lump sum fee for complete scope with breakdown by work stream
- Hourly rates for additional services if requested
- Assumptions underlying the fee proposal
- Description of what is included in reimbursable expenses

Section 7: Terms and Conditions

7.1 Contract Type

The selected consultant will enter into a professional services agreement with the Fayette Chamber of Commerce/The Redstone Foundation. The contract will be structured as a fixed-fee engagement with payments tied to deliverable milestones.

7.2 Insurance Requirements

The selected consultant must maintain professional liability insurance with minimum coverage of \$1,000,000 per occurrence and general liability insurance with minimum coverage of \$1,000,000 per occurrence.

7.3 Ownership of Work Product

All deliverables produced under this engagement shall become the property of the Fayette Chamber of Commerce and may be shared with stakeholders and the public at the organization's discretion.

7.4 Reservation of Rights

The issuing authority reserves the right to:

- Reject any or all proposals
- Request additional information from proposers
- Negotiate scope and fee with selected consultant
- Cancel this procurement at any time
- Award contract to other than the lowest-cost proposer

Section 8: Questions and Communications

All questions regarding this RFP must be submitted in writing to:

Muriel Johnson-Nuttall | mnutall@fayettechamber.com

Questions received by 3/06/2026 will be answered in a written addendum distributed to all known prospective proposers and posted to www.fayettechamber.com.

Proposers are prohibited from contacting steering committee members, stakeholder organizations, or other parties regarding this procurement except through the designated contract.

Appendix B: Background Materials

The following materials are available to prospective proposers upon request:

1. Penn State Fayette campus site plan and available facility information
2. Fayette County demographic and economic data compilation
3. Transition Team membership and organizational affiliations
4. Summary of stakeholder discussions to date

To request materials, contact Muriel Johnson-Nuttall | mnutall@fayettechamber.com

Appendix C: Map and Site Information

[To be included: Maps showing Penn State Fayette campus location, site, and regional context including major employers, transportation networks, and demographic patterns]

This RFP was prepared by the Eberly Campus Transition Team with support from the Fayette Chamber of Commerce, Muriel Johnson-Nuttall, Executive Director - mnutall@fayettechamber.com; The County of Fayette, Scott Dunn, Commissioner Chairman - sdunn@fayettepa.org.