



**Request for Proposals (RFP): Questions and Answers
Consultant to Develop Connecticut Strategic Economic Action Plan
Implementation Period: 2027–2029**

Issued by

AdvanceCT Foundation, Inc. (“AdvanceCT Foundation”), in collaboration with the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development (“DECD”) and AdvanceCT.

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Strategic Direction & “Big Bets”

Q1. Interest in Specific Big Bets or Themes

Are there any large-scale ideas, themes, or types of initiatives that AdvanceCT, DECD, or the Foundation Board are particularly interested in seeing considered or tested through this process?

At this time, there are no predefined initiatives or designated “big bets.” The intent of this engagement is to identify, evaluate, and define potential large-scale opportunities through a structured strategic planning and discovery process.

Q2. Definition of a “Big Bet”

How does AdvanceCT define a “big bet” in practical terms (e.g., scale of effort, investment magnitude, and expected return within the 2027–2029 window)?

A “big bet” is defined as a significant economic development initiative that is expected to materially influence Connecticut’s economic trajectory well beyond the 2027–2029

execution window. Such initiatives should generate sustained job and value creation, build upon Connecticut's existing economic strengths, and require a heightened level of focus to execute. This focus may include state investment, coordinated leadership, and/or sustained collaboration among public and private stakeholders.

Q3. Success Definition

If we reconvene in December 2029, what three measurable outcomes would definitively indicate that this Action Plan succeeded?

A central objective of the Action Plan is to define clear, measurable milestones and outcomes. These success metrics will be developed as part of the planning process.

Q4. Stakeholder-Specific Outcomes

Which outcomes would matter most to the Governor, Legislature, employers, and regional partners respectively?

Stakeholder-specific outcomes will be identified and articulated through the strategic planning and discovery process.

Industry Clusters & Regional Structure

Q5. Number of Clusters Expected

Is there an expected number or range of industry clusters that will be identified and prioritized as part of this engagement?

AdvanceCT Foundation anticipates examining approximately six to nine clusters in total. The work product should consider some of the clusters identified in the 2019–2020 effort that represent key industries for Connecticut, including finance, insurance, advanced manufacturing/aerospace and defense, and life sciences. In addition, the analysis should assess emerging areas that merit attention and investment. While not traditional industry clusters, the work product should also consider opportunities in emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence and quantum technologies.

Q6. Cluster Strategy Scope

Is there an expectation around the number of cluster or industry strategies that will need to be developed throughout the course of the project?

This question is duplicative of Question 5 and should be considered jointly. The expectation is to focus on approximately six to nine industry clusters.

Q7. Regional Framework

Should consultants consider the three regions defined by AdvanceCT as the expected way to organize regional analysis and strategy?

AdvanceCT Foundation is open to alternative regional frameworks proposed by the consultant, provided they support rigorous analysis and effective strategy development.

Prior CERC Work & Lessons Learned**Q8. Availability of Prior Materials**

Are all 2019–2020 CERC materials listed in Section IX finalized and available upon RFP release, or will additional documentation be shared later?

The 2019–2020 materials that will be shared as part of this process are available on the RFP website at advancect.org/EAP2026-RFP in the “background documents” section.

Q9. Desired Elements to Carry Forward

Are there specific elements of the prior CERC strategy that AdvanceCT or DECD wishes to see carried forward?

Well-established industry clusters identified in the prior work, as referenced in Question 5, should be included. In addition, the Growth and Inclusion metrics used in the prior diagnostics remain important and should continue to inform the analysis. These metrics may be expanded to encompass additional priority areas, including housing, energy, and other relevant factors.

Q10. Execution History & Barriers

What has historically prevented Connecticut from executing effectively on prior economic strategies, and what is structurally different this time?

Connecticut executed a number of initiatives stemming from the 2019–2020 economic development work; however, priorities were necessarily adjusted in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to the Economic Action Plan, related reforms and changes were informed by other efforts during that period, including the work of the state’s Commission on Fiscal Stability and Economic Growth.

Historically, barriers to execution have included a strong municipal focus that can limit regional coordination; entrenched interests with significant influence over policy outcomes; structural challenges in Connecticut’s regulatory approval processes; and, in some cases, the absence of a sustained implementation champion outside of state government to advance complex, multi-stakeholder initiatives.

While these challenges are not entirely new, the current environment includes strengthened leadership within state government and increased engagement from the business community, including through the Steering Committee. This alignment is intended to support clearer ownership, stronger coordination, and more effective execution going forward.

Q11. Lessons Learned Analysis

Beyond updating data, should the consultant assess what has occurred over the past five years, including drivers of change and barriers to progress?

Yes. Insights from recent experience should inform the structure, priorities, and implementation approach of the Action Plan.

Q12. Prior Consultant Involvement

Did any consulting team support the prior 2019–2020 work?

Yes. A consulting team supported the prior effort.

Governance, Decision Rights & Accountability

Q13. Ultimate Accountability

Which single agency or entity will ultimately be accountable for overseeing execution of the Action Plan?

Ultimate accountability for execution will rest with the Governor of the State of Connecticut. The Governor may leverage public and private organizations and resources to support implementation.

Q14. Consultant Role in Alignment

Is the consultant expected to actively facilitate alignment among state agencies, or only recommend governance structures?

The consultant is expected to recommend governance and alignment structures. While direct facilitation among state agencies is not anticipated, the Action Plan should be implementation-ready and reflect political realities and institutional context.

Q15. Steering Committee Status

Has the Steering Committee already been formed, and will membership be finalized prior to project kickoff?

The Steering Committee is currently in formation and is expected to be finalized prior to project kickoff.

Q16. Regulatory & Legislative Recommendations

Should regulatory or legislative change recommendations be high-level or drafted with implementation specificity?

Recommendations should be implementation-ready. While not prescriptive to regulators or legislators, they should be sufficiently specific to support effective execution.

Workforce & Talent Systems

Q17. Depth of Workforce System Change

How open is the client to recommending structural changes to workforce and talent systems?

AdvanceCT Foundation is open to considering recommendations for structural changes that improve the effectiveness of workforce and talent systems.

Q18. Talent Attraction Scope

Is talent attraction and retention expected to include quality-of-life and branding strategies, or only labor system interventions?

This engagement is expected to focus on labor system interventions. Quality-of-life and branding strategies are not anticipated components of the scope.

Affordability Strategy

Q19. Relative Affordability Priorities

Among housing, energy, and healthcare affordability, which domains are highest priority politically and operationally?

Additional clarification is required to appropriately address this question. Relative priorities will be considered in the context of the broader strategy.

Q20. Competitiveness vs. Social Outcomes

Should affordability strategies primarily support competitiveness for talent and employers, or also pursue broader social outcomes?

Affordability strategies should support both economic competitiveness and broader social outcomes. Trade-offs should be managed through a collaborative and iterative approach.

Q21. Equity & Inclusion Metrics

Are there preferred metrics for equity and inclusion for workforce and affordability/access?

Metrics included in the 2019–2020 diagnostics materials provide a strong foundation, as referenced in Question 9. AdvanceCT is open to modifications or expansions to these metrics that would more effectively measure current conditions and track progress over time.

Stakeholder Engagement & Market Testing

Q22. Engagement Volume Expectations

Is there an expected total engagement count beyond the approximately 50 senior business leader interviews specified?

No additional engagement volume is anticipated beyond what is outlined in the RFP.

Q23. Rationale for 50 Interviews

Is there a specific reason the goal of approximately 50 senior business leader interviews was chosen?

The objective is to obtain a sufficiently diverse and representative range of perspectives. AdvanceCT Foundation is open to alternative engagement approaches that achieve this goal.

Q24. Recruitment & Scheduling Responsibility

Will AdvanceCT or DECD provide contact lists and handle outreach and scheduling, or is the consultant fully responsible?

Connecticut leadership will provide contact lists and facilitate warm introductions. The consultant will be responsible for scheduling interviews and executing the engagement activities.

Q25. Client Logistical Support

What level of logistical support should the consultant expect from the client team?

AdvanceCT Foundation and its partners will work collaboratively with the consultant to support execution of the engagement.

Execution Model & Playbook

Q26. Playbook Ownership Post-Delivery

Who is expected to own, maintain, and use the Execution Playbook after delivery?

The Governor elect of the State of Connecticut will be the recipient of the Action Plan in December 2026. Execution ownership and partner roles will be determined by the Office of the Governor.-elect of the State of Connecticut will be the recipient of the Action Plan in December 2026. Execution ownership and partner roles will be determined by the Office of the Governor.

Q27. Internal Capability Constraints

What internal capability gaps should the strategy work around rather than attempt to fix?

The capabilities needed for execution of the Action Plan and any gaps and proposed workarounds should be evaluated as part of the planning process.

Q28. Playbook Format

Is the Execution Playbook intended as a static document or a digital, interactive tool?

The Execution Playbook should be a static document.

Budget, Fees & Contracting

Q29. Budget Estimate (posted 2/6/2026)

Can you share the budget range that has been established for this project?

Our priority is developing a comprehensive strategic plan that meaningfully addresses the needs and goals outlined in the RFP. We are focused on the quality, rigor, and relevance of the proposed approach rather than prescribing a fixed budget at this stage.

That said, for planning purposes, respondents may consider the general range up to approximately \$1–1.5 million. However, we welcome proposals that thoughtfully justify a different level of investment based on scope, methodology, deliverables, and overall value. We encourage you to propose what you believe is necessary to deliver the strongest possible outcome in alignment with the RFP.

Q30. Implementation Funding

Is there an anticipated or potential budget to implement recommended initiatives?

There is no predefined implementation budget. Recommendations regarding implementation funding should be included as part of the deliverables.

Q31. Fixed-Price Contracting

Would AdvanceCT consider awarding this contract as a fixed-price engagement?

Yes.

Q32. Optional Enhancements Pricing

Should optional enhancements be priced separately in the budget proposal?

Yes.

Proposal Mechanics & Eligibility

Q33. Resumes Submission

Should resumes be included, and if so, may they be submitted as an appendix?

Resumes are not required; however, to the extent they demonstrate the consultant team's expertise and ability to execute the scope of work, they may be helpful to include. Submission as an appendix is acceptable.

Q34. Consulting Teaming

Are AdvanceCT and stakeholders open to a partnership between two consulting firms to execute the scope of work?

Yes.