



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Program Director, Central Virginia Futures

Issued by: Central Virginia Partnership for Economic Development (CVPED)

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Questions due: October 7, 2026, 11:59 PM ET

Responses due: October 15, 2026, 11:59 PM ET

Contact: Helen Cauthen, President, hcauthen@centralvirginia.org

1. Purpose

CVPED invites proposals from qualified firms and individual contractors to serve as Program Director of Central Virginia Futures. This is a 12-month engagement beginning no later than January 4, 2027.

The Program Director will lead the start-up phase of the initiative. They will serve as its strategic lead, principal coordinator, and public champion, turning a regional strategy into a nationally recognized innovation and economic development initiative.

CVPED welcomes responses from any location. However, the engagement requires regular in-person presence throughout Central Virginia, as described in Section 5.

2. Background

About CVPED

CVPED is a not-for-profit public/private partnership and the regional economic development organization for Central Virginia. Its mission is to advance innovative strategies for regional economic prosperity in the City of Charlottesville and the Counties of Albemarle, Culpeper, Fluvanna, Greene, Louisa, Madison, Nelson, and Orange.

About Central Virginia Futures

Central Virginia Futures is a new initiative, housed within CVPED, based on the recommendations of the recently released TEconomy report. That report outlines a strategy to position Central Virginia as a nationally recognized innovation hub. It calls for concentrating investment and collaboration around two high-growth sectors: **biosciences** and **national security**.

CVPED is now seeking a Program Director to lead the effort through its first year.

3. Scope of Services

The TEconomy report provides the strategic foundation for Central Virginia Futures, but it is a starting point, not a mandate. CVPED is not committed to pursuing every recommendation in the report,

implementing recommendations exactly as described, or limiting the initiative to what the report recommends.

The specific nature of the work will evolve, largely guided by the Program Director's vision. The areas below describe CVPED's baseline expectations. Respondents are encouraged to propose their own approach, priorities, and sequencing, including strategies and activities beyond those in the TEconomy report.

Strategic Leadership

- Serve as the primary champion and spokesperson for Central Virginia Futures.
- Establish annual goals, performance metrics, and action plans aligned with regional priorities.
- Identify initiatives for partners to drive, and establish robust plans for those initiatives.
- Drive coordination among regional stakeholders to achieve shared economic development and innovation objectives.
- Identify emerging opportunities and position the region to capitalize on national and global market trends.
- Recommend and help develop operational, budgetary, governance, and organizational frameworks for consideration by CVPED and the Central Virginia Futures governing bodies.

Resource Development

- Develop a sustainable funding model for Central Virginia Futures.
- Lead efforts to attract federal investment and to create and strengthen industry partnerships.
- Develop relationships with corporate leaders, investors, and innovation ecosystem partners nationwide.
- Pursue grant funding, sponsorships, and public-private investment.

Branding & Communications

- Lead development and execution of a unified Central Virginia Futures brand and marketing strategy. CVPED is separately engaging an external marketing firm. The Program Director will provide strategic direction and oversight of that work; marketing production and execution are not part of this scope.
- Communicate the region's strengths, assets, and success stories to regional, state, and national audiences.
- Serve as a public-facing innovation leader for the region at conferences, industry events, and stakeholder meetings.
- Oversee production of an annual report, impact metrics, and strategic communications.

Implementation Management

- Lead implementation of Central Virginia Futures initiatives.
- Build and maintain strong relationships with:
 - CvilleBioHub
 - Central Virginia National Security Alliance
 - University of Virginia

- Federal and state agencies
- Federal and state legislators
- Bioscience, national security, and technology companies
- Local economic developers
- Workforce and education partners
- Investors and philanthropic organizations
- Other stakeholders as needed
- Facilitate collaboration among independent organizations and a diverse range of stakeholders.
- Support CVPED’s business attraction efforts related to bioscience and national security.
- Ensure efforts complement, and do not duplicate or conflict with, other regional or locality-specific initiatives.
- Convene regional leadership forums and working groups focused on strategic growth opportunities.
- Establish and manage routines and reporting mechanisms to monitor progress against goals, metrics, and action plans.

4. First-Year Outcomes

By the end of the 12-month engagement, CVPED expects the Program Director to have:

- Established the Central Virginia Futures organization and governance structure.
- Developed a sustainable funding model.
- Cultivated participation and support for the initiative across all Central Virginia jurisdictions.
- Increased the region's visibility and national recognition, including completing branding and marketing for the initiative.
- Prioritized a set of initial strategies, drawing on the TEconomy report and other opportunities the Program Director identifies, with a clear owner and successful launch for each top priority.
- Proposed a long term operating plan for Central Virginia Futures including required staff capabilities.

Proposals should explain how the respondent's approach will advance these outcomes over the year.

5. Engagement Terms

Term

- The engagement is expected to last 12 months, with work beginning no later than January 4, 2027.
- It may be extended based on performance and the success of the Central Virginia Futures initiative.

Contractor Relationship

- The Program Director will provide services to CVPED as an independent contractor.
- The final reporting structure will be confirmed before the contract is signed. CVPED anticipates that the Program Director will report to a steering committee made up of CVPED board members and local leaders in the biosciences and national security.
- The President of CVPED will administer the contract.

- The Contractor will retain sole discretion and control over the manner, method, and means by which services are performed.
- Nothing in this engagement creates an employer-employee relationship between CVPED and the Contractor.

Location and In-Person Presence

- The Program Director may work from CVPED's offices in Albemarle County, Virginia, or remotely.
- Respondents need not be based in Central Virginia. However, the engagement requires in-person presence throughout the region on a regular basis, at least weekly.

Compensation and Expenses

- Compensation will be a fixed fee, paid in equal monthly installments over the 12-month term.
- Responses should clearly indicate what is and is not included in the fixed fee.
 - Please note, travel to and from Central Virginia is not reimbursable. This includes transportation, lodging, and meals associated with in-person presence in the region, so these costs should be included in the proposed fee.

Negotiation

- CVPED reserves the right to negotiate scope and fee with respondents invited to interview.

6. Qualifications

Qualifications may be met across a team. Each proposal must designate a single Lead, who will be accountable for delivery and serve as CVPED's primary point of contact.

Required

- Expertise in both biosciences and national security, reflecting the two sectors at the center of the Central Virginia Futures strategy. This may be met across the team, but the Lead must have deep expertise in at least one of these sectors, and ideally both.
- Experience managing complex, multi-stakeholder initiatives.
- Strong relationship-building, facilitation, and consensus-building skills.
- Exceptional written, verbal, and public presentation abilities.
- Experience with strategic planning, budget management, and organizational leadership.
- Experience securing grants, sponsorships, and public-private investment.
- An existing regional or national network in the biosciences, national security, and/or tech sectors.

Preferred

- Familiarity with Virginia and its economic development ecosystem.

7. Submission Requirements

Proposals must be submitted as a **single PDF** and may not exceed **five (5) pages**, excluding resumes and references. Proposals should include the following, in this order:

1. **Proposed scope of work.** Describe your vision for Central Virginia Futures, your approach to the scope of services in Section 3, and how you will advance the first-year outcomes in Section 4.
2. **Timeline.** Provide a rough timeline for the 12-month engagement, recognizing that it will evolve. Give particular attention to what you will accomplish in the first 90 days.
3. **Team qualifications.** Identify the Lead and each team member's role. Describe relevant qualifications, including how the team meets the biosciences and national security requirement.
4. **Committed capacity.** State the share of your time the Lead and each team member will devote to this engagement, as a percentage of time or hours per month. Describe the nature of your other professional commitments during the term. Explain how you will meet the in-person presence requirement.
5. **Budget.** Propose a fixed monthly fee, inclusive of all travel to and from Central Virginia, to be paid in equal installments over 12 months. The budget should correspond to the capacity described in item 2. Separately, identify any anticipated expenses not included in the fee, such as conference or national travel, with estimated costs where possible.
6. **Resumes** for the Lead and each team member. (Excluded from the page limit.)
7. **References.** Provide three references for the Lead or team who can attest to your capabilities relevant to the proposal. Include each reference's name, organization, relationship to the respondent, and contact information. (Excluded from the page limit.)

8. Evaluation Criteria

CVPED will evaluate proposals on the following criteria:

- Scope of proposed services
- Expertise and experience
- Demonstrated ability to set a vision for and take ownership of the work
- Capacity to deliver the work
- Budget

Budget is one factor among several. CVPED will not necessarily select the lowest-cost proposal. Respondents selected as finalists will be invited to interview by October 30, 2026.

9. Timeline

Milestone	Date
RFP released	September 25, 2026
Questions due	October 7, 2026, 11:59 PM ET
Answers distributed	October 9, 2026
Proposals due	October 15, 2026, 11:59 PM ET
Interview invitations extended	By October 30, 2026
Interviews	Early November 2026

Milestone	Date
Work begins	No later than January 4, 2027

10. Questions and Submission

Questions

- Direct all questions by email to Helen Cauthen, President, CVPED, at hcauthen@centralvirginia.org.
- Questions are due by **October 7, 2026, at 11:59 PM ET**.
- On October 9, 2026, CVPED will share all questions and answers with everyone who has submitted a question or expressed interest by the October 7 deadline. Respondents who want to receive the answers but have no questions should email Ms. Cauthen by that date to express interest.

Submission

- Email proposals as a PDF to hcauthen@centralvirginia.org by **October 15, 2026, at 11:59 PM ET**.
- Use the subject line: "Central Virginia Futures Program Director RFP – [Respondent Name]".
- Proposals received after the deadline may not be considered.

11. General Terms

- **Public disclosure.** CVPED is a public/private partnership, so proposals may be subject to public disclosure.
- **No obligation to award.** This RFP does not commit CVPED to award a contract. CVPED may reject any or all proposals, waive minor irregularities, or cancel this RFP at any time.
- **Clarifications.** CVPED may request clarification or additional information from any respondent.
- **Negotiation.** CVPED may negotiate scope and fee with respondents invited to interview.
- **Amendments.** CVPED may amend this RFP. Amendments will be shared with all respondents who have expressed interest.
- **Respondent costs.** Respondents bear all costs of preparing proposals and participating in interviews.
- **Contract.** Any engagement will be governed by a written agreement executed by both parties. Issuing this RFP does not create a contract.