

Texas Association of Regional Councils



Comprehensive Strategic Planning Request for Proposals

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Proposal Schedule

Action/Milestone	Due Date
RFP Issued to Consultants	March 4, 2022
RFP Deadline for Consultants	April 14, 2022
Deadline for Consultants Extended	April 29, 2022
Virtual Interviews Set with Consultants	April 19-22, 2022 May 2-6, 2022
Selection of Consultant	April 29, 2022 May 9, 2022
Start Date for Strategic Planning Process & Sessions	May/June 2022

Proposal Submittal Instructions

The deadline to submit proposals has been extended to April 29, 2022. Electronic proposal must be received no later than 5 PM CST on ~~Thursday, April 14, 2022~~ Friday, April 29, 2022. Proposals received after this deadline will not be accepted or considered.

Send inquiries and final RFP to:

TARC Strategic Planning Team
tarc@txregionalcouncil.org

Introduction

The Texas Association of Regional Councils (TARC) is seeking proposals from consultants/firms to guide the association with the development of a comprehensive strategic plan including planning, facilitation and development of a strategic plan for 2023-TBD. The consulting engagement will help us navigate the strategic planning process with the end result of the development of a strategic plan that guides our work and association member efforts for a number of years. The timeframe (projected number of years) of the plan will depend on recommendations and discussions with consultant. TARC anticipates that the initial planning process will take a few months in order to provide adequate time for participation by the Strategic Planning Team and then a year to solicit feedback from membership. The outcome of the process will be a written strategic plan document that presents the planning process, the research, the analysis and strategies along with an implementation plan that will guide the association for years to come.

Please note that this RFP requests the services of a consultant/firm to facilitate the strategic planning process. The association is aware that there are a variety of perspectives, models, and approaches available to develop a strategic planning document; therefore, the successful consultant/firm should be able to discern which model or model(s) will best enable the association to complete its organizational and programmatic goals. We are seeking creative, engaging, efficient and cost competitive proposals. The association encourages any inquires with respect to the expectations and/or scope sought through this proposal by email to tarc@txregionalcouncil.org.

We are seeking a consultant or team of consultants who are knowledgeable in the field of membership organization strategic planning, local government, and who are creative, engaging, efficient, and cost competitive.

All proposals received by 5 PM CST on ~~Thursday, April 14, 2022~~ Friday, April 29, 2022 will receive full consideration.

Background

Formed in 1973 and celebrating 50 years in 2023, the Texas Association of Regional Councils (TARC) is the statewide association of regional councils, whose members are focused on enhancing quality of life through regional strategies, partnerships and solutions. The 24 regional councils, also known as councils of governments (COGs), are comprised of city, county and special district members working together to implement cost- effective, results-oriented strategies that address statewide and local needs on a regional scale. TARC is a quasi-governmental association with each of the 24 COGs as its membership and a governing board comprised of a representative from each of the regions, predominately local elected officials.

TARC also has an Executive Directors' Council comprised of the Executive Director of each member council that serves as an advisory group. TARC has a full-time staff of four people, two of who are almost 100% dedicated to grant programs.

TARC has an active work-program that includes the following focus areas around member services, outreach, research and communications, and program and grant operations including:

- Assisting regional councils of governments in building the capabilities of their member governments;
- Provide a forum for the exchange of information and ideas in support of the concept of regional planning and development;
- Educate other organizations and individuals about regionalism and the services rendered to all levels of government and community leaders by regional councils; and
- Administer TARC grant contracts and continue to identify and develop potential funding sources to enhance TARC's capacity to support its member organizations.

For additional information about the TARC and its membership, please see Attachment A on page 8.

Scope of Services

The consultant/firm will facilitate an organizational process which will consist of:

- Review TARC's information available on the association's website, www.txregionalcouncil.org and Twitter feed, @txregionalcouncil.org.
- Conduct a situational analysis of the organization.
- Inform the overall design process for the Strategic Planning process, create, and implement methods to gather information, identify emerging themes.
- Identify and assess the association's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.
- Based on the assessment, facilitate solidifying or refining the association's Mission, Vision and Values.
- Facilitate the development of strategic goals and objectives that support the Mission, Vision and Values.
- Provide recommendations on marketing and communication points to the members and outside organizations.
- Facilitate the development of performance goals.
- Identify potential strategic initiatives with outcomes that support member objectives.
- Facilitate the distinctions between strategy and operational excellence (i.e., internal operational improvements) during the development and planning process.
- Propose the optimum level of engagement for the Strategic Planning Team and

membership stakeholders and meeting frequency to manage overall process.

- Facilitate the development of a process to keep the TARC Board of Directors & TARC Executive Directors' Council engaged in a continual strategic planning process and prepare meeting agendas to guide strategic discussions and feedback loops.
 - In-person opportunities for planning sessions and interactions include June 9-10, 2022, in Beaumont, Texas, September 27-29, 2022, in Austin, February 2023 in Austin and June 2023, location TBD.
- Submit recommendations for appropriate implementation measures that the association staff can take to administer the comprehensive strategic plan.
- Assist with presentation of strategic plan as part of 50th anniversary celebration in September of 2023.

TARC's Strategic Planning Team Preparation

TARC envisions a virtual meeting in May dedicated to preparing for the strategic planning effort followed by a kick-off effort June 9-10 in Beaumont and additional sessions to be scheduled as referenced above in Austin. We seek input from consultant/firm to help structure and facilitate the sessions to maximize impact. Among topics that can be addressed during the sessions are:

- **Needs Assessment** – Assessment of values, strengths, weaknesses and competencies of the association.
- **Program Inventory and Analysis** – Inventory existing program offerings and services to identify gaps and opportunities for delivery options, partnerships and collaborations.
- **Identification of Opportunities, Strategies and Vision** – Refine the vision for the association which identifies its priorities, opportunities and strategies, and clarifies the association's role and confirms its mission and values.
- **Member Services** – How can the association be structured and operate to maximize member services and sustain these services at a high level.
- **Member Participation**—Advise membership of work that must be undertaken in regions to further association efforts.

Information Gathering

During this phase, the consultant/firm will collect data and information to become more familiar with TARC.

Such information may include, but should not be limited to, an inventory of association resources including its finances, infrastructure, staff, opportunities, inventory of employees, history, geography, and technology.

The consultant/firm will describe the methodology used to identify vital challenges and opportunities. In addition, an action plan will be developed to define implementation steps and techniques along with a schedule of target dates to further define the goals.

Report Review

At the end of the engagement, the consultant/firm will draft a final plan document for presentation to the TARC Strategic Planning Team. The consultant/firm will participate in review and refinement of this document. The TARC Strategic Planning Team and the consultant/firm will work collectively to develop a series of implementation techniques designed to keep the board and members engaged in the implementation of the identified goals, objectives and initiatives of the strategic plan.

This process will be coordinated with an implementation committee tasked with meeting regularly to ensure the strategic plan remains a viable “living” project for the next three to five years. At a minimum, the consultant will provide the following deliverables:

- A recommended package of materials suitable for distribution to board and members.
- A final strategic plan document that includes an implementation plan with defined timeline and milestones intended to measure the association’s progress.
- An executive summary and public presentation outlining the strategic plan.

Proposal Process

Consultant/firm will be asked to provide the following items:

1. Cover letter of interest
2. Legal name of consultant or firm, address, phone, email, year the firm was established and type of business
3. An organization chart indicating roles for all individuals involved on this project. Please include brief resumes of all individuals identifying their qualifications and experience.
4. A clear articulation of the consultant/firm’s approach to be used in this project including a proposed schedule and description of the proposed methods of staff, board and member involvement.
5. A summary of qualifications, related experience and at least two references related to strategic planning development.
6. Proposed scope of work, expected timeline to complete, project approach and plan to accomplish the work.

7. A minimum of two (2) examples of relevant written work related to strategic planning.
8. Fee schedule and proposed total cost to accomplish the work. This may include specific sessions being in-person and others being virtual.

Proposal Submission Requirements

Along with the RFP responses, TARC requests contact information for at least two business references for strategic planning efforts. The references must be using or have used the services requested in this RFP. The preferred candidate shall have experience in the strategic planning of membership-based organizations.

Evaluation of Proposals

The TARC Strategic Planning Team will review and evaluate all properly submitted proposals that are received on or before the deadline. The committee will first review each proposal for compliance with the minimum qualifications and mandatory requirements. The committee shall participate in the analysis of the proposals, the interview process and the final recommendation of the selected consultant/firm for the project.

The committee will rank proposals based on the criteria stated below:

- Responsiveness
- Experience in strategic planning
- Specific qualifications of the primary staff who will help manage the project
- Project approach and methodology
- Cost of services

A Quick Guide to Councils of Governments in Texas



KEY FACTS

- Texas has 24 councils of governments that represent all 254 counties. These organizations were formed more than 50 years ago.
- Councils of governments' planning activities vary among regions, but typically include: planning for economic growth, emergency preparedness, disaster recovery, emergency communications, criminal justice, environmental quality and services for the elderly.
- Each council's policy decisions are made by its board of directors. At least two-thirds of this governing body must be elected officials from participating counties or municipalities.
- In fiscal year 2019, Texas' 24 councils of governments collectively received, administered and awarded approximately \$957.8 million in revenue from federal, state, and local sources.



STATUTORY REFERENCES

The Texas Local Government Code, Chapter 391.

Councils of governments (COG), regional councils, or regional planning commissions are political subdivisions created under Texas statute to improve the health, safety, and general welfare of residents and to plan for future development. These councils were organized to guide unified development and improve efficiency within regions. Regional councils are not governments and have no authority to make laws, levy taxes, or exercise police powers. Texas has 24 COGs that represent all 254 counties. These regions are made up of counties, cities, school districts, and special districts and were developed from 1966 to the early 1970s.



REVENUE SOURCES

COGs primarily receive funding from federal sources, but the councils also receive funding from state and local sources. On the local level, a COG collects dues from and for its member governments. A COG may receive direct or indirect federal grants through the state.



PROGRAMS & SERVICES

COGs are authorized to conduct planning; assist local governments in implementing plans; contract with local, state, and federal governments and other public and private agencies to provide community services; and assist local governments in solving governmental problems. Texas' COGs conduct regional planning activities that vary among regions. Typically, these activities include:

- Community and economic development
- Criminal justice planning
- Developing regional emergency preparedness strategies
- Disaster recovery
- Maintaining and improving regional 9-1-1 systems
- Services for the elderly
- Overseeing regional planning for environmental issues



TRANSPARENCY & REPORTING

Regional councils are subject to audits and monitoring based on the grants they receive. In addition, Texas Local Government Code requires that each COG report annually:

- The amount and source of funds received.
- The amount and source of funds expended.
- The results of an audit of the RPC's affairs prepared by an independent certified public accountant.

COORDINATION

The Texas Association of Regional Councils (TARC) is the statewide association of regional councils, whose members are focused on enhancing quality of life through regional strategies, partnerships and solutions. The 24 regional councils, also known as councils of governments (COGs), are comprised of city, county and special district members working together to implement cost-effective, results-oriented strategies that address statewide and local needs on a regional scale.

Finding common ground across Texas

From the statehouse to the firehouse, TARC members work with state and federal partners on vital projects and initiatives, harnessing local expertise to tackle important issues.

Statewide coverage, regional focus

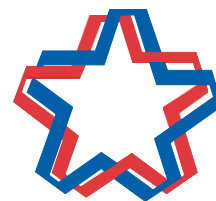
The 24 regional councils help local governments across Texas find solutions to pressing issues, from homeland security and environmental quality to emergency communications and services for seniors.

Local expertise solving regional challenges

TARC members are a bridge between federal, state and local governments, helping cities and counties solve challenges and impact the future regionally.

Building regional partnerships to enhance collaboration among communities

Regional councils help spur economic development across Texas by strengthening efficiency and cooperation across geographic boundaries.



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of Regional Councils**

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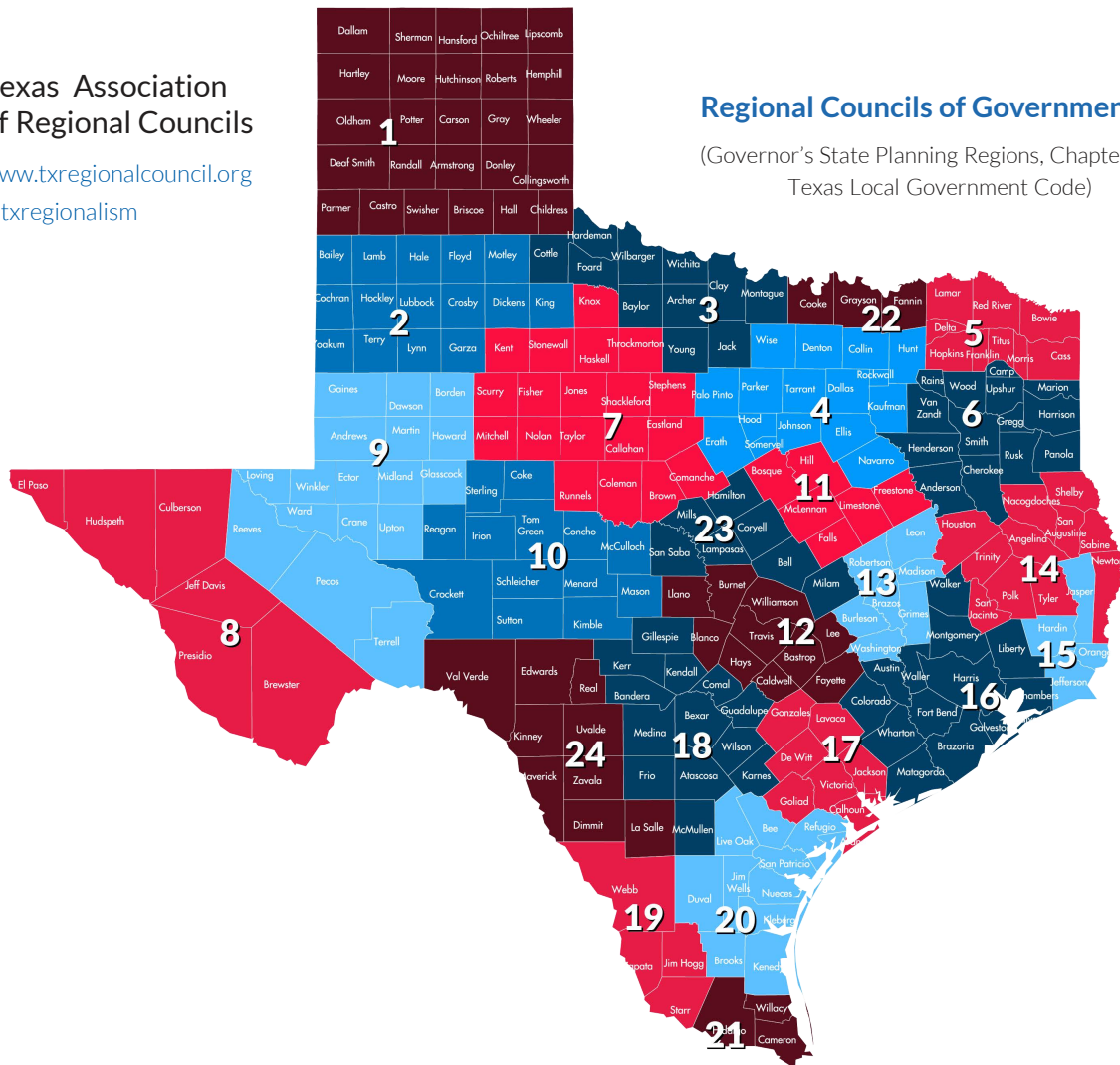


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Regional Councils of Governments

(Governor's State Planning Regions, Chapter 391,
Texas Local Government Code)



Region Name

1. Panhandle Regional Planning Commission
2. South Plains Association of Governments
3. Nortex Regional Planning Commission
4. North Central Texas Council of Governments
5. Ark-Tex Area Council of Governments
6. East Texas Council of Governments
7. West Central Texas Council of Governments
8. Rio Grande Council of Governments
9. Permian Basin Regional Planning Commission
10. Concho Valley Council of Governments
11. Heart of Texas Council of Governments
12. Capital Area Council of Governments
13. Brazos Valley Council of Governments
14. Deep East Texas Council of Governments
15. South East Texas Regional Planning Commission
16. Houston-Galveston Area Council
17. Golden Crescent Regional Planning Commission
18. Alamo Area Council of Governments
19. South Texas Development Council
20. Coastal Bend Council of Governments
21. Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council
22. Texoma Council of Governments
23. Central Texas Council of Governments
24. Middle Rio Grande Development Council

Abbreviation

- PRPC
SPAG
NORTEX
NCTCOG
ARK-TEX
ETCOG
WCTCOG
RGCOG
PBRPC
CVCOG
HOTCOG
CAPCOG
BVCOG
DETCOG
SETRPC
HGAC
GCRPC
AACOG
STDC
CBCOG
LRGVDC
TCOG
CTCOG
MRGDC

Website

- www.theprpc.org
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@TexomaCOG
@CentralTexasCOG