REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Regional Business and Data Center Infrastructure Assessment

Date of Issue: November 18, 2026

Proposal Deadline: December 18, 2026, at 5:00 PM EST

Questions about this RFP:

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Proposal submissions:

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1. Program Overview

The Centralina Economic Development District (CEDD) seeks a consultant to complete Phase 1 of a GIS-based Regional Business and Data Center Infrastructure Assessment, funded through the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) Helene Disaster Grant. The assessment is primarily an infrastructure asset inventory and data gap analysis, supported by a limited feasibility review and direct engagement with utilities and industry stakeholders. It will inventory and map existing and approved data centers and the energy, water, wastewater, communications and transportation infrastructure that supports them across eight grant-eligible Centralina counties, and document known limitations and missing data. The consultant will also map the region's existing Tier 1 major economic industries (see Key Terms) by NAICS code across all nine counties, to show how industry concentrations relate to data center sites and infrastructure capacity.

Anson County is included as a separate component due to grant funding limitations. It carries its own cost proposal, including the Anson County portion of the industry's mapping and, if awarded, will be billed as a separate invoice (see Appendix A). Deliverables are a GIS asset inventory and spatial analysis, a current conditions and feasibility summary, and an Excel gap analysis matrix. The assessment documents existing conditions and information gaps. It does not promote or oppose data center development, and it does not provide engineering designs or investment recommendations. Findings may inform future economic development planning and EDA funding opportunities.

CEDD is affiliated with Centralina Regional Council and received the EDA Helene Disaster Grant from EDA. This two-year grant program focuses on assessing critical infrastructure needs, identifying potential risks and strengthening regional infrastructure planning for resilience.

The required assessment covers these eight grant-eligible Centralina counties: Cabarrus, Gaston, Iredell, Lincoln, Mecklenburg, Rowan, Stanly and Union. Anson County, the ninth county in the Economic Development District, is addressed as a separate component with the same scope of services, as described in Appendix A.

CEDD anticipates issuing a separate RFP for Phase 2, a broader regional infrastructure assessment under the EDA Helene Disaster Grant. Findings from this assessment may inform that work. The two contracts will be independently procured and managed by CEDD. Firms interested in both opportunities are welcome to submit separate proposals when the Phase 2 RFP becomes available, subject to applicable procurement requirements.

Key Dates

Milestone	Date
RFP issued	November 18, 2026
Deadline for questions	December 4, 2026, at 5:00 PM EST
Proposals due	December 18, 2026, at 5:00 PM EST
Anticipated consultant selection	Early January 2027
Target completion of assessment	April 2027

2. Scope of Services – Phase 1

Key Terms

- Data center: This proposal considers: AI data centers: Facilities built for artificial intelligence workloads, using high-performance GPUs and TPUs and low-latency architecture to train and deploy machine learning models at scale; Enterprise data centers: Company-owned and operated facilities, typically on corporate campuses, that serve internal users; Managed services data centers: Facilities managed by a third party on a company's behalf, with equipment and infrastructure leased rather than purchased; Colocation data centers: Off-premises facilities owned by others where a company rents space; the host provides the building, cooling, bandwidth, and security, while the company manages its own servers, storage, and firewalls; Cloud data centers: Off-premises facilities, often hyperscale, where a cloud provider such as AWS, Google Cloud, or Microsoft Azure hosts data and applications; Edge data centers: Smaller, decentralized facilities located close to end users and devices that process data locally to reduce latency for real-time applications
- Existing data center: A data center that is operational as of the RFP issue date.
- Approved data center: A facility that is not yet operational but has reached a qualifying approval stage, such as zoning, site plan or permit approval.
- Reliable sources: Utility providers, federal, state and local government agencies, and published utility or planning documents.
- Targeted outreach: Direct contact with utility providers and industry stakeholders to confirm information that cannot be verified from published sources. A minimum of 2 contacts per county is preferred.
- Tier 1 industries: The Centralina regional economy includes a robust service sector and several growing industry clusters in advanced manufacturing; financial services; health; distribution; and logistics and information technology these are often classified as Tier 1 industries because they contribute the highest share of the metro's GDP and employment, are Anchor major employers and attract national and international investment and drive regional economic growth and resilience. This term is distinct from the Tier 1 economic distress designation of Anson County described in Appendix A.
- NAICS: The North American Industry Classification System. Industry mapping shall use NAICS codes from the most current edition available in the selected data source.

Task 1 – Regional Data and Asset Inventory

The consultant shall review and build upon existing GIS data resources provided by CEDD and independently collect additional available information on existing and approved data centers across the region.

Using these resources and additional data sources identified by the consultant, the consultant shall develop a GIS-based infrastructure inventory and maps identifying relevant energy, water and wastewater, communications infrastructure and transportation routes, including major corridors. The inventory shall document available information on service coverage, infrastructure capacity and known limitations, with missing information identified for the gap analysis.

The consultant shall also identify and map the region's existing Tier 1 major economic industries (see Key Terms) across all nine Centralina counties using NAICS code, using reliable sources (see Key Terms). The mapping shall show the location and concentration of Tier 1 industries and shall be presented with data center locations and infrastructure capacity information to show how they relate. The Anson County portion of the mapping shall be identified separately and priced as part of the separate Anson County component (see Appendix A).

CEDD has initiated a review of existing regional GIS datasets and anticipates providing a preliminary data inventory, available source files and data center locations. The consultant shall use relevant information for the assessment and independently obtain additional data needed to complete the work.

Resulting deliverable: Deliverable 1 – Regional Infrastructure Asset Inventory and Spatial Analysis (see Section 3).

Task 2 – Feasibility Review and Stakeholder Engagement

Using the GIS inventory developed in Task 1 and other reliable sources (see Key Terms), the consultant shall evaluate infrastructure requirements associated with existing and potential data center operations and assess current infrastructure conditions, available capacity and identified limitations across the region.

The assessment shall examine known service coverage, documented capacity limitations, transportation access, land use constraints and mapped hazards such as floodplains and steep slopes.

The consultant shall conduct targeted outreach (see Key Terms) to relevant utility providers and industry stakeholders to confirm available infrastructure information, identify known limitations and document information gaps. Engagement may include emails, telephone calls or virtual discussions. The consultant shall distinguish verified information from conditions that could not be confirmed and summarize stakeholder input in the final assessment.

Resulting deliverable: Deliverable 2 – Current Conditions and Feasibility Summary (see Section 3).

Task 3 – Data Gap Analysis and Final Assessment

The consultant shall identify gaps in available infrastructure, industry and economic asset data, including missing information, incomplete geographic coverage and limitations that prevent a complete assessment. The findings shall be summarized in a structured gap analysis matrix (Deliverable 3).

The final assessment shall summarize feasibility findings, stakeholder input and information gaps.

Resulting deliverable: Deliverable 3 – Infrastructure Data Gap Analysis Matrix, with key gap findings also summarized in Deliverable 2 (see Section 3).

Out of Scope

This assessment documents existing conditions and information gaps. Detailed engineering studies, field investigations, proprietary network assessments, site endorsements, engineering designs, infrastructure investment recommendations and proposed solutions are not required.

3. Required Deliverables

The consultant shall provide one consolidated Regional Business and Data Center Infrastructure Assessment covering the eight grant-eligible Centralina counties described in Section 1, with the Anson County component addressed separately (see Appendix A). The final submission shall include:

Deliverable 1 – Regional Infrastructure Asset Inventory and Spatial Analysis

An organized GIS-based inventory and maps identifying existing and approved data centers; available energy, water, wastewater and communications infrastructure; transportation routes including major corridors; and relevant land use and natural hazard information. The deliverable shall also include maps and supporting data tables of the region's existing Tier 1 major economic industries identified by NAICS code for all nine counties, with Anson County shown separately.

Deliverable 2 – Current Conditions and Feasibility Summary

A concise assessment documenting existing infrastructure conditions, available capacity information and known limitations, transportation access, land use constraints, mapped natural hazards and findings from utility and industry stakeholder engagement. The assessment shall distinguish verified information from conditions that cannot be confirmed.

The final assessment shall include a brief summary of key findings, infrastructure conditions, documented limitations and significant data gaps. The summary shall also briefly identify the organizations contacted, information obtained and any remaining information gaps.

Deliverable 3 – Infrastructure Data Gap Analysis Matrix

An Excel matrix identifying available data, information sources, metadata, geographic coverage, missing or incomplete information, known limitations and areas requiring additional verification.

File Submission: The consultant shall provide supporting GIS datasets in GeoPackage or shapefile format, editable Excel inventories and matrices (including NAICS industry data underlying the industry maps), PDF maps, and the final assessment in Word and PDF formats. All files shall include source documentation and be submitted electronically through a CEDD-designated shared project folder.

4. Consultant Responsibilities, Qualifications and Schedule

The consultant shall be responsible for research, GIS data collection and analysis, stakeholder outreach and preparation of the final deliverables. CEDD will serve as the primary contact and provide available background information. The consultant shall participate in one virtual kickoff meeting and at least one additional mid-point and pre-final deliverable virtual progress check-in with CEDD. Please budget for a minimum of 3 virtual session up to 60 minutes each.

Firms should demonstrate relevant experience with regional infrastructure assessments, GIS analysis, utility systems and data center infrastructure requirements. Familiarity with the Centralina region, including its infrastructure providers, economic development conditions and industry stakeholders, will be considered during proposal evaluation. Firms should also demonstrate experience working directly with energy, water, wastewater and communications providers to obtain and evaluate infrastructure information.

Firms located outside the Carolinas may apply but must demonstrate how their regional knowledge, relevant experience and professional relationships will allow them to complete the assessment within the proposed schedule.

CEDD anticipates consultant selection in early January 2027, with work beginning after contract execution and the assessment targeted for completion in April 2027. Proposals shall include a realistic schedule showing milestones and the final delivery date.

5. Proposal Submission

Submit one concise PDF proposal (maximum six pages) by December 18, 2026, at 5:00 PM EST, via email to cedd@centralina.org with the subject line "RFP – Regional Bus Data Ctr – [Firm Name]." The completed Bidder Submittal Sheet (Appendix B) does not count toward the six-page limit.

Include:

- Firm contact information and relevant experience in GIS analysis, utility systems, data center infrastructure or regional infrastructure assessments.
- Brief work approach, including proposed data sources (including NAICS industry mapping), independent utility and industry stakeholder engagement, GIS analysis and project schedule.
- Proposed project team, brief qualifications of key personnel and up to three examples of comparable work.
- Proposed total fee for the assessment of the eight grant-eligible counties, including the NAICS industry mapping for those counties, and a separate cost proposal for the Anson County component described in Appendix A, including its portion of the NAICS industry mapping. The Anson County cost shall be identified separately from the fee for the eight grant-eligible counties and, if awarded, will be billed as a separate invoice for the proposed Anson County activities (see Appendix A for the invoice process).
- Any significant assumptions, exclusions or actual or potential conflicts of interest.
- Completed Bidder Submittal Sheet (Appendix B), including identification of key personnel.

CEDD is not publishing a budget range for this procurement. Firms shall propose a total fee appropriate to the scope of services.

6. Evaluation and Selection

CEDD will evaluate proposals based on the following criteria:

- Understanding of the project and proposed approach – 30% (addressed in the work approach)
- Relevant experience and qualifications, including regional knowledge, data center conditions and utility engagement – 25% (addressed in the firm experience, project team and comparable work)
- Quality and usefulness of proposed deliverables – 10% (addressed in the work approach)
- Project schedule – 15% (addressed in the project schedule)
- Proposed cost – 20% (addressed in the proposed total fee)

The separate Anson County cost proposal described in Appendix A is included in the evaluation and will be scored under these criteria, with the resulting points added to the proposal score.

Selection will follow Centralina Regional Council's procurement procedures and is subject to required approvals. The proposal in its entirety, including the Anson County component, may be awarded at CEDD's discretion, subject to funding availability and approval by EDA and CEDD funding entities.

Appendix A – Anson County RFP Component

Anson County is part of Centralina's nine-county Economic Development District but is not included in the approved geographic scope of the EDA Helene Disaster Grant.

Anson is designated a Tier 1 economically distressed county by the North Carolina Department of Commerce and has experienced interest from data center developers. CEDD is interested in obtaining comparable infrastructure information for Anson to support regional economic development planning.

Firms responding to this RFP are to provide a separate cost proposal to extend the same scope of services (Tasks 1–3 and Deliverables 1–3) to Anson County.

The assessment would follow the same methodology and deliverable requirements outlined in the main RFP, with Anson County findings and supporting data identified separately.

The Anson County component shall include the Anson County portion of the Tier 1 industry mapping by NAICS code, so that the nine-county industry mapping described in Task 1 and Deliverable 1 is complete. The Anson County industry mapping shall be priced within the separate Anson County cost.

The Anson County assessment will be funded separately from the EDA Helene Disaster Grant. The proposal in its entirety, including the Anson County component, may be awarded at CEDD's discretion, subject to funding availability and approval by EDA and CEDD funding entities.

The proposal shall identify the additional cost and schedule associated with completing the Anson County assessment as a separate task, deliverable and cost to ensure the bidder is able to conduct the scope activities with this unique Anson County component.

Invoicing for the Anson County component: If the Anson County component is awarded, the consultant shall bill it as a separate invoice from the eight-county assessment, for the proposed Anson County activities only. Anson County costs shall not be combined with eight-county invoices. Each Anson County invoice shall be clearly identified as the Anson County component and itemize the Anson County tasks and deliverables billed, consistent with the separate cost proposal. The consultant shall not begin or bill for Anson County activities until CEDD issues notice that funding and required approvals are in place. If the Anson County component is not awarded, the eight-county assessment shall proceed under its own cost and invoicing.

Appendix B – Bidder Submittal Sheet

Bidders shall complete this submittal sheet to confirm that each proposal requirement has been addressed and to show where it appears in the proposal. Identify the key personnel who will perform the work in Part 3. This submittal sheet (Appendix B) does not count toward the six-page proposal limit.

Part 1 – Bidder Information

Firm name	
Mailing address	
Primary contact name and title	
Telephone	
Email	
Firm located outside the Carolinas?	☐ Yes ☐ No

Part 2 – Proposal Requirements Checklist

For each requirement, check the box when the item is complete and note where it appears in the proposal.

#	Proposal Requirement	RFP Reference	Completed	Location in Proposal (Section / Page)
1	Proposal submitted as one concise PDF (maximum six pages) by December 18, 2026, at 5:00 PM EST, via email to cedd@centralina.org with the subject line "RFP – Regional Business and Data Center Infrastructure Assessment – [Firm Name]."	Section 5	☐ Yes	
2	Firm contact information.	Section 5	☐ Yes	
3	Relevant experience in GIS analysis, utility systems, data center infrastructure or regional infrastructure assessments.	Sections 4, 5	☐ Yes	
4	Experience working directly with energy, water, wastewater and communications providers, and familiarity with the Centralina region.	Section 4	☐ Yes	
5	Firms located outside the Carolinas: demonstration of regional knowledge, relevant experience and professional relationships to complete the assessment within the proposed schedule.	Section 4	☐ Yes ☐ N/A	

6	Work approach addressing Tasks 1–3 and Deliverables 1–3.	Sections 2, 3, 5	☐ Yes	
7	Proposed data sources, including the source for NAICS Tier 1 industry mapping across all nine counties, with Anson shown separately	Sections 2, 5 (Task 1)	☐ Yes	
8	Independent utility and industry stakeholder engagement approach.	Sections 2, 5 (Task 2)	☐ Yes	
9	GIS analysis approach.	Sections 2, 5 (Task 1)	☐ Yes	
10	Realistic project schedule showing milestones and the final delivery date.	Sections 4, 5	☐ Yes	
11	Proposed project team and brief qualifications of key personnel (complete Part 3 of this sheet).	Section 5	☐ Yes	
12	Up to three examples of comparable work.	Section 5	☐ Yes	
13	Proposed total fee for the eight-county assessment, including the NAICS industry mapping for those counties.	Section 5	☐ Yes	
14	Separate cost proposal for the Anson County component, including its portion of the NAICS industry mapping, identified separately from the eight-county fee and acknowledging a separate invoice if awarded.	Section 5, Appendix A	☐ Yes	
15	Additional cost and schedule for the Anson County assessment identified as a separate task, deliverable and cost.	Appendix A	☐ Yes	
16	Significant assumptions, exclusions, and any actual or potential conflicts of interest.	Section 5	☐ Yes ☐ None	

Part 3 – Key Personnel

Identify each key person who will perform the work, including the project manager and primary point of contact, and any subconsultants. Include brief qualifications in the proposal and note where they appear. Add rows as needed.

#	Name	Title and Firm / Organization	Project Role	Tasks Assigned (Task 1, 2, 3 and/or Anson County)	Relevant Qualifications and Years of Experience	Location in Proposal (Section / Page)
1			Project Manager / Primary Point of Contact			
2						
3						
4						
5						

Part 4 – Bidder Certification

The undersigned certifies that the information in this submittal sheet is accurate, that the proposal addresses each requirement checked above, and that any requirement not addressed is identified as an assumption or exclusion in the proposal.

Authorized representative signature	
Printed name and title	
Date	