

How to Respond to an RFI

What is an RFI?

An RFI is a formal “Request for Information” from a site selection consultant or company searching for a new location for the expansion of operations. The information categories, as well as the geography to cover, are supplied by the consultant or company.

What does an RFI contain?

The top five types of information requested in RFIs are:

- Available Properties
- Labor Force
- Incentives
- Transportation (highway, rail, air)
- Utilities (sewer, water, electric, natural gas, telecommunications)

Having these five key categories of information on hand and current will enable you to quickly and easily respond to a RFI request.

You will receive individual emails from the GOED announcing new RFIs. Please review these emails closely – they will identify the GOED Business Development Representative (BDR) who is working the lead and the GOED Research staff person who is gathering the statewide data and packaging the RFI in either an electronic or hard copy format. The email will also have an attachment – the RFI Community Checklist – which details the company requirements and the data responsibilities of the community and state.

Do You Meet the Basic Qualifications?

Before you put a response together, make sure you meet the basic qualifications of the RFI. Qualifications will vary by RFI, so please review it carefully. Some common needs include:

- Do you have an available building? If not, and if the company is willing to build, do you have an industrial park or available land?
- Is your information on available land and buildings current and readily available?
- Are you utilizing the free listings on the GOED website for land and buildings?
<http://www.sdreadytowork.com/Find-Properties.aspx>
- Are you able to meet the power needs?
- Do you have rail access or major highway access?
- Is there an adequate labor force in the area to meet the company's employment needs?

If you have questions or want to discuss your qualifications, please visit with the lead BDR identified in the RFI email.

Tailoring your Response

The audience for your RFI response is a harried, time-crunched executive or site selector. Therefore, it is important for you to share your message quickly and concisely. Here are some do's and don'ts for submitting RFIs:

Do:

- Do "put your best food forward"
- Do include a cover letter addressed to the BDR at GOED
- Do use headings and bullets/numbers to break up sections and points
- Do keep sentences brief
- Do include links where prospects can get more information IF (and only if) you have appropriately summed up what the link refers to and this information has been requested
- Do address all the company's information needs
- Do consider developing a "look" for all materials you send out for recruitment purposes (branding) – high school students with an interest in graphic design may be able to help with this for no to minimal cost

Don't:

- Don't ramble and use excessively long sentences
- Don't submit page after page of long paragraphs
- Don't send a short response in the body of an email
- Don't make the executive or site selector search for the information
- Don't include links to information and expect the prospect to follow it to learn about a program
- Don't supply information that is not requested

Meeting the Deadline

With the continued utilization of technology, the time-frame allotted for responding to RFIs is becoming shorter, sometimes allowing only hours to compile and submit responses.

This is economic development in the electronic age and the expectation of turning information around quickly is the norm, not the exception.

Be prepared so that you can turn information around in hours. In most cases, if a deadline is not met, the company automatically cuts you from the list.

The GOED also has deadlines in place for each RFI that are important for you to meet. If your submission does not reach us by deadline, your information will not be included in the final packet submitted to the company as we can not jeopardize the state's opportunity with the prospect.

If you do submit your information past deadline, we will forward it to the company as is.

For electronic RFIs, community responses will be limited to 20 pages and will include size requirements for photos, maps, etc. Prepackaged materials (i.e. brochures) will not be included in the RFI response unless they are requested by the prospect.