I. Overview

The Community Economic Resilience Fund (CERF) Program is a State investment to support inclusive regional planning and the development of high-priority economic development projects that benefit disinvested communities, create high road jobs, and transition the region to a net-zero emission economy.

The CERF Program defines Disinvested Communities as: 1) Census tracts identified as ‘disadvantaged by the California Environmental Protection Agency; or 2) Census tracts with median household incomes at or below 80 percent of the statewide median income or with the median household incomes at or below the threshold designated as low-income by the Department of Housing and Community Development’s list of state income limits adopted pursuant to Section 50093 of the California Health and Safety Code; or 3) ‘High poverty area’ and ‘High unemployment area’ as designated by the California Governor’s Office of Business and Economic Development California Competes Tax Credit Program; or 4) California Native American tribes as defined by the list maintained by the Native American Heritage Commission.

The program’s objectives are to 1) promote equitable and sustainable economic development, 2) support inclusive economic planning that prioritizes equity, job quality, and sustainability, and 3) align and leverage federal and state funding to maximize economic resilience.

More information on the CERF Program can be found by reviewing Section 14531 of the Unemployment Insurance Code and the CERF grant solicitation.

The CERF Southern Border Coalition’s mission is to develop a comprehensive economic recovery and transition plan that, per Section 14531 of the Unemployment Insurance Code, addresses essential elements of a high road strategy, including economic diversification, industry planning, workforce development, career pathways for individuals with formal education totaling less than a two-year degree that lead to high road jobs, and the identification and integration of current or supplemental safety net programs. This plan shall include industry cluster and labor market analysis, with actionable research and consultation from the University of California or other expert institutions, and focus on economic recovery, growth, and resilience across multiple sectors. The plan shall prioritize the creation of high-quality jobs and equitable access to them, and emphasize where possible the development of sustainable and resilient industries, such as renewable energy, energy efficiency, carbon removal, and zero-emission vehicles, advanced manufacturing, agriculture and forestry, and climate restoration and resilience. The plan will support high-road jobs, an inclusive transition to a net-zero economy and empower and uplift disinvested communities by fostering equity and creating sustainable opportunities for growth. The plan will be co-developed with diverse stakeholders throughout the process. Analyses and plans must account for sub-regional and inter-regional dynamics. The plans must also build on existing regional and/or subregional economic development plans and strategies as appropriate.

San Diego State University Research Foundation (SDSURF), the Regional Convener and Fiscal Agent for the CERF Southern Border Coalition, is requesting proposals from research contractors qualified to
conduct analyses as outlined below for the San Diego and Imperial Valley County subregions in support of developing Part 1 of the Regional Plan.

The research contractors will summarize findings and explain how these findings may inform the planning process and how they correspond with the Coalition’s goals. Data produced is intended to be used in community engagement activities that result in strategy recommendations. Specifically, the Coalition aims to engage community members who have historically not been involved in land use and economic development policy creation.

1. Stakeholder Mapping
2. Regional Summary
3. Labor Market Analysis
4. Industry Cluster Analysis
5. SWOT Analysis
6. Data Collection and Consolidation: development of surveys to support analyses, collection of process data, and consolidation of all sections into a single cohesive product.

These components are open for bid via separate RFQs. **This RFQ is for section 5. SWOT Analysis only.**

II. **Scope of Work and Expected Outcomes**

II A. **Scope of Work and Specification of Services Required**

SWOT Analysis: An in-depth analysis of regional Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (i.e., SWOT), especially as it relates to equitable economic resilience and growth of sustainable industry clusters. The SWOT analysis will draw from data and components conducted through analyses in sections 1-4 above, current CEDS approved by local governments in the region, and other high-quality economic development plans and assessments undertaken within the region.

1. The contracted researcher will create an aggregate SWOT from current CEDS, community engagement support by the other contracted researchers and the Sector Leads to help community members and stakeholders respond and engage in this exercise.
2. After completion of the SWOT analysis, the selected researcher will survey community members to ensure alignment between community needs and completed analysis.
3. The contracted researcher must identify other ongoing planning processes or projects across the CERF Region to ensure the alignment between these processes and CERF and to ensure a coordinated response to reaching the state’s goals. Examples of such efforts include: CEDS, climate plans, High Road Training Partnerships, General Plans, Regional Transportation Plans, and other community-led initiatives.

II B. **Expected Outcomes and Deliverables**

Data developed during the contract will be provided via Excel documents, as well as any other format. Data shall be entirely sourced, with the data’s dates identified in writing. More than simply hyperlinking to a technical research page will be required but may be supplementation to a written description. Each data chart should be fully labeled and sourced. Definitions used for the data presented should be provided. When surveys, findings, and recommendations are used from a report or initiative, the sources need to be identified. Hyperlocal data, oral histories, and other research methodologies historically excluded from local planning processes shall be brought into the research and/or plan
The proposed development process. Relevant existing data and data drawn from prior studies, especially information related to disinvested communities, that is accurate will be identified and may be appropriate for inclusion. The Task Groups, made up of the 52 community-elected Sector Leads, will vet the study methodology to ensure misconceptions, inappropriate generalizations, and inaccurate collection models are not amplified and brought into the regional planning process.

The proposal must be for SWOT Analysis across both San Diego and Imperial Valley County subregions. Interested bidders who are only able to complete the scope of work in one subregion are encouraged to identify a collaborator to work with to complete the full scope of across both subregions; collaborating researchers should submit a single proposal for the full SWOT Analysis scope of work. Proposals for completing SWOT Analysis in one subregion only will not be considered.

The contracted researcher for section 4. SWOT Analysis will work with the contracted researcher for section 6. Data Collection and Consolidation who will develop surveys to support analysis, collect process data, consolidate all sections into a single cohesive product, and ensure all is usable by the community.

All researchers will provide 1) slide decks summarizing their research approach and key findings, 2) a 2-pager summarizing their research approach, key steps and research highlights and 3) video explaining their research approach and research highlights; SDSURF will support creation of the video. These materials will be used in the Coalition meetings and posted on the Coalition website in multiple languages.

All contracted researchers are expected to attend a Coalition Subregional Task Group meeting in each county (San Diego and Imperial) as well as a Coalition Regional Task Group meeting to engage with Coalition members and answer general questions related to research process and progress.

Data will be released on a rolling basis, allowing the Coalition to use the data in Community Engagement as soon as it is available. Researchers will attend listening sessions and provide updates to both Sector Leads and Co-conveners on a weekly basis. Researchers are expected to be available for at least three Zoom-based office hours where Coalition members can ask questions and provide feedback. Input from the Coalition will be incorporated into a final draft that is due by 11:59 PM PST on November 28, 2023.

SDSURF, on behalf of the Coalition, will be receiving all research and related materials from the contracted researchers in order to meet contractual deliverables to the State. Regional planning process data and research results, including planning documents, will be made publicly available and accessible for a minimum of five (5) years. Community members may use such data and research results for educational and research purposes and as necessary to seek private and public funds that will benefit the region. Community members, educational and non profit institutions may use such data and research results for educational and research purposes and to seek private and public funds that will benefit the region without a subscription, prior consent of the owners of data, or having to demonstrate the proposed use of the data.

II C. Terms of Agreement

The research agreement will continue through January 15, 2023. The contract term may be extended, upon mutual agreement of both parties, for additional research needs. Either party may terminate the agreement with a 30-day written notice.
II D. Cost Breakdown of Services

The maximum budget for the SWOT Analysis research contract is $67,500. Price proposals will be reviewed with special consideration given to quotes that are cost effective without compromising the quality and completion of the full scope of work.

III. Instructions to Prospective Candidates

III A. Proposal Narrative Structure

Responses to this RFQ shall include the following Section Headings. Each section must conform to the noted limitations. The proposal narrative should be submitted as a single PDF document.

Section Headings:

1) Organization / Individual - Qualifications and experience in working with disinvested communities.
   a) Section limit - 3,000 characters with spaces (~1 page)

2) Organization / Individual - Qualifications and experience in economic development engagement, analysis, and research
   a) Section limits - 3,000 characters with spaces (~1 page)

3) Research/analysis work plan and proposed technical approach
   a) Section limits - 3,000 characters with spaces (~1 page)

4) Samples of published reports from previous projects
   a) Section Limit - Up to 5 linked reports

5) Capacity to meet project deadline
   a) Section Limit - 250 characters with space (~2 sentences)

6) Statement confirming that proposed research will include both San Diego and Imperial County Subregions
   a) Section Limit - 250 characters with space (~2 sentences)

III B. Proposal Budget

The proposal budget should be submitted separately from the proposal narrative and should provide enough detail for SDSURF to understand how the funds will be spent to achieve Scope of Work. Budget items might the include -

1. Staff Salary Total
2. Staff Benefit Total
3. Staff Travel Total
4. Operating Expenses
5. Equipment / supplies
6. Subcontractors
7. Indirect / Admin Costs

III C. Questions About This RFQ
Questions regarding this RFQ or SDSURF can be directed to Purchasing Manager, Charla Mullen at cmullen@sdsu.edu or 619-594-3413.

III D. Proposal Submission and Deadline

Proposals must be submitted by 3:00 PM PST on Monday, October 30th, and should address each of the evaluation criteria below.

III E. Evaluation and Selection Process

Proposals will be reviewed by an SDSU designee(s) not directly involved with CERF, with recommendations provided to SDSURF and Coalition Co-conveners and awards made in the best interest of the Coalition and its goals.

*CERF Southern Border Coalition Co-conveners from organizations who submit proposals for research contracts will not participate in discussion and review of recommendations for awards for items bid on. Bids will not be accepted by faculty or staff from SDSU or any SDSU auxiliaries.

Proposals should highlight expertise relevant to specific research deliverables. Proposals will be reviewed and evaluated based on the following criteria:

Scored Sections
1. (Maximum points possible = 35) Qualifications of the organization/individual and experience in working with and doing research on disinvested communities.
2. (Maximum points possible = 20) Qualifications of the organization/individual and experience in economic development engagement, analysis, and research and demonstrated ability to collaborate with other economic development researchers.
3. (Maximum points possible = 20) Research/analysis work plan and proposed technical approach.
4. (Maximum points possible = 15) Samples or links to published reports from previous projects.
5. (Maximum points possible = 10) Price proposal.

Pass / No Pass Criteria
1. Capacity for contractor to meet project deadlines
2. Confirmation that contractor research will cover both San Diego and Imperial County Subregions

III F. Final Selection Date

Selections will be made, and the chosen researcher will be notified 3 days from submission deadline, with the selected candidate commencing service delivery within 3 days from notification of selection made.

III G. SDSURF Contracting Requirements

Upon selection of a Contractor, the terms set forth in this RFP are to be embodied in a definitive written Contract containing such additional covenants and other provisions as may be mutually acceptable.

SDSURF contemplates that, in addition to the terms described in this RFP, the final Contract between the SDSURF and the selected Contractor will include, without limitation, the following principal terms:
1. Term: The contract term will continue through January 15, 2023. Either party may terminate the agreement with a 30-day written notice.

iv. Warranties and Representations: Contractor will warrant and represent that Contractor and Contractor’s personnel possess such expertise, experience, and resources to provide the services required under the Contract in a diligent, timely and professional manner consistent with the highest standards of the industry.

iv. Equipment, Tools, Supplies: The Contractor will supply all equipment, tools, supplies, offices, personnel, instrumentalities, transportation, support services and insurance required to perform the Services under the Contract.

iv. Representation of Others: Contractor will advise SDSURF of any 3rd party engagements for services which may conflict with activities or objectives of this Contract and shall take precautions to ensure that such conflict does not impede the performance and delivery of services under this Contract. However, SDSURF will retain the right, in its sole discretion, to terminate the Contract upon written notice if, in SDSURF’s sole opinion, any potential or actual conflict cannot be immediately resolved or will in any way compromise or adversely affect the performance of contractual requirements.

iv. Independent Contractor Status: Contractor will be an independent contractor and shall perform as such.

iv. Compliance with Laws: Contractor will comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations as required for the services rendered.

iv. Conflict of Interest: Contractor will agree to comply with the provisions of SDSURF’s Conflict of Interest Code (“Code”) and file all reports required by the Code. A copy of the Code will be provided upon request.

iv. Indemnity Obligations Of Contractor: To the fullest extent permitted by law, the Contractor will agree to protect, indemnify, defend and hold SDSURF, its officers, employees, agents and representatives and each of their successors and assigns (the “Indemnities”) entirely harmless from and against any and all claims, actions, demands, proceedings, liabilities, damages, judgments, fines, penalties, settlements, costs and charges, including, without limitation, attorneys’ fees and expenses, arising directly or indirectly from or in connection with (a) any breach of the Contract (b) any actual or alleged negligent act, negligent error or omission, intentional misconduct of, or violation of any law by Contractor, the Contractor’s employees, subcontractors, agents, representatives or assigns (collectively, the “Contractor’s Agents”) in the performance or non-performance of the professional services required to be performed by the Contractor under the Contract; or (c) SDSURF’s enforcement of its rights under this indemnity provision. Contractor will agree that its obligations under this indemnity will survive the expiration or termination of this contract. In the event both SDSURF and the Contractor are named as defendants in the same civil action, and that a conflict of interest exists between the parties, Contractor will agree to provide, at its own cost, independent counsel for SDSURF. However, SDSURF may retain its own independent counsel at its option.
iv. Insurance Obligations of Contractor: The Contractor will agree to provide and keep in full force and effect during the term of the contract, at the Contractor’s own cost and expense, the following insurance policies for the joint benefit of the Contractor and SDSURF, with an insurer acceptable to SDSURF:

• Comprehensive automobile liability insurance covering owned, leased, hired and non-owned vehicles with at least One Million Dollars ($1,000,000) combined single limit.

• Commercial general liability insurance with a general aggregate limit (other than products/completed operations) of at least Two Million Dollars ($2,000,000); at least One Million Dollars ($1,000,000) personal and advertising injury limit; at least One Million Dollars ($1,000,000) premises and operations limit; at least One Million Dollars ($1,000,000) each occurrence limit.

• Professional liability insurance with a general aggregate limit of Two Million Dollars ($2,000,000); with a limit of at least One Million Dollars ($1,000,000 per claim).

• Excess insurance in the minimum amount of One Million Dollars ($1,000,000) over and above the limits set forth above.

• Workers’ compensation coverage as required by law, together with employer liability coverage with limits of not less than One Million Dollars ($1,000,000) per occurrence.

The Contractor will, upon request, provide SDSURF with certificates of insurance evidencing its compliance with the coverage requirements set forth above. Each such policy will be primary and non-contributing with respect to any other insurance maintained by or available to SDSURF.

10. Termination at Will: The Contract may be terminated by SDSURF upon thirty (30) days’ written notice to the Contractor. In addition, the Contract may be terminated:

   iv. Default by Contractor. The Contract may be terminated by SDSURF on seven (7) days’ written notice to the Contractor in the event the Contractor is in default under any of the provisions of the Contract

   ii. Automatic Termination. The Contract will automatically terminate on the occurrence of any of the following events:

• Bankruptcy or insolvency of either party
• Sale of the business of either party
• Failure to comply with federal, state, or local laws, regulations, or requirements with respect to services being rendered or
• Expiration of the Contract

11. Ownership of Documents: All work product and instruments of the Specifications (“Work Product”) and all rights thereto in the nature of copyright, trademark, patent, and rights to ideas will be assigned to, and will become the property of SDSURF whether or not the work is completed. In the event of termination of the Contract, or abandonment or suspension of work performed under the
Contract, all Work Product and all such rights thereto existing as of the date of such termination, suspension or abandonment will be assigned to, and will become the property of SDSURF as of such.

Regional planning process data and research results, including planning documents, will be made publicly available and accessible for a minimum of five (5) years. Community members may use such data and research results for educational and research purposes and as necessary to seek private and public funds that will benefit the region. Community members, educational and non profit institutions may use such data and research results for educational and research purposes and to seek private and public funds that will benefit the region without a subscription, prior consent of the owners of data, or having to demonstrate the proposed use of the data.

12. Confidentiality and Publicity: Contractor will retain all confidential information in the strictest confidence and will neither use it nor disclose it to anyone without the prior written consent of SDSURF. SDSURF will retain the right to enjoin any unauthorized disclosure in an appropriate court of law. Contractor will not issue any public announcements concerning SDSURF without the prior written consent of SDSURF.

13. Nondiscrimination: During the performance of this Contract, Contractor will not unlawfully discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, religion, color, national origin, ancestry, physical handicap, medical condition, marital status, age, sex, or sexual orientation. Contractor will comply with the provisions of the Fair Employment and Housing Act (Government Code section 12900 et seq.) and applicable regulations promulgated thereunder.

14. Assignment/Subcontracting: Assignment – The Contractor will not assign or transfer its interest, in whole or in part, under the Contract, without the written consent of SDSURF, which consent may be granted or withheld in the sole and absolute discretion of SDSURF. Subcontracting – The Contractor may subcontract with other qualified firms or individuals as required to complete all, or a portion of, the Services, subject to the approval of SDSURF.

15. Audit: SDSURF reserves the right to have an independent audit conducted of Contractor’s compliance with the terms of this Contract, if SDSURF believes that such an audit is necessary to ensure confidentiality, financial and/or program accountability or integrity. In addition, Contractor agrees to cooperate with auditors or investigators authorized to audit the activities of SDSURF. Contractor further agrees to cooperate with SDSURF and provide information that SDSURF may need to defend any legal challenges that may be made to the services engaged in by Contractor.

16. General Provisions:

i. Force Majeure. Neither party will be deemed in default of the Contract or any provision hereunder to the extent that any delay or failure in the performance of the obligations of such party (other than the payment of money) results from any significant and material causes beyond its reasonable control and without fault or negligence by such party. Examples of such causes include, but are not limited to:

- Acts of Nature or public enemy
- Acts of the government in either its sovereign or contractual capacity
- Fires
- Floods
• Epidemics
• Quarantine restrictions
• Strikes
• Embargoes
• Earthquakes
• Unusually severe weather

ii. Governing Law. The Contract will be governed by the laws of the State of California without giving effect to its principles of conflict of laws.

iii. Attorneys’ Fees. In the event either party institutes any action or proceeding against the other party relating to the Contract, the unsuccessful party in such action or proceeding will reimburse the successful party for its disbursements incurred in connection therewith and for its reasonable attorneys’ fees as fixed by the court. In addition to the foregoing award of attorneys’ fees to the successful party, the successful party in any lawsuit on the Contract shall be entitled to collect or enforce the judgment. This provision is separate and several and shall survive the merger of the Contract into any judgment on the Contract.

iv. Arbitration. Any question, claim or dispute arising out of or in connection with this Contract more than Five Thousand Dollars ($5,000.00) shall be referred to binding arbitration, except with respect to disputes regarding breaches of confidentiality. Such arbitration shall take place before a single arbitrator in the City and County of San Diego, and shall be conducted in accordance with Part III, Title 9 of the California Code of Civil Procedure. The arbitrator will be bound to apply legal principles in accordance with California law. By agreeing to this arbitration clause, neither party waives applicable defenses or immunities available to it under California law. Any arbitration demand made under this clause must be made no later than one year from the expiration or termination of the Contract. The cost of the arbitration shall be borne equally by the parties, each party to pay its own fees and costs. Disputes of Five Thousand Dollars ($5,000) or less shall be handled in Small Claims Court in the City and County of San Diego.

Questions regarding this RFQ or SDSURF can be directed to Purchasing Manager, Charla Mullen at cmullen@sdsu.edu or 619-594-3413.