

**Economic Development Authority of Western Nevada
Request for Proposal
Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Assessment and Strategy**

Summary:

EDAWN in partnership with the Governor's Office of Economic Development is conducting a comprehensive analysis of the statewide entrepreneurial landscape throughout Nevada with a specific focus on the Southern Nevada, Northern Nevada, and rural ecosystems. The goal of this analysis is to develop strategies which help Nevada strengthen and diversify its entrepreneurial ecosystems. This assessment will identify assets and gaps in each regional ecosystem, address barriers to new venture creation, access to capital for startups, and low participation amongst underrepresented or dis-advantaged populations.

EDAWN is seeking an experienced consultant to conduct this analysis and produce a report outlining the current assets and gaps in the ecosystems and produce a detailed plan with actionable strategic recommendations at the city, regional, and statewide level.

Background:

Nevada remains at the top of states severely impacted by the pandemic and the Northern and Southern Nevada regions have not recovered equally. The Reno/Sparks region in Northern Nevada, after the great recession, focused on diversifying its economy towards more high-tech and advanced manufacturing industries. Due to these efforts Northern Nevada recovered faster from the pandemic. Reno/Sparks currently has a 2.7% unemployment rate (April 2022) compared to the national average of 3.6%. Las Vegas (Southern Nevada) currently has an above average unemployment rate of 5.0% and an effort is underway to diversify its economy after being one of the worst hit regions in the nation. A recent report from LinkedIn ranked Las Vegas 6th in the nation in the largest growth in tech talent since 2019 at 32.6% growth.

Both regions realize that the boom-and-bust cycles related to tourism and gaming must be augmented by a well-diversified economy and are committed to growing their entrepreneurial and startup ecosystems. Within the regions and at the state level there is now a large group of stakeholders collaborating to focus on technology and startup based economic development. The last decade has been spent building alignment amongst regional partners including the university and k-12 school system by incorporating robotics programs, incubators and accelerator programs including the upcoming launch of the Gener8tor accelerator programs launching in both Reno/Tahoe and Las Vegas in September 2022.

Groundwork Completed:

EDAWN has engaged entrepreneurial ecosystem partners across Nevada, and they are committed to supporting and participating in this assessment and strategy development.

EDAWN hosts monthly entrepreneurial support organization (“ESO”) calls to drive alignment and outcomes for the Northern Nevada ecosystem and has built relationships with various Southern Nevada ESO’s. The member lists with organization name, address, contact information, and services/programs offered will be provided to the consultant. The consultant will also have access to all stakeholder meetings and discovery sessions with entrepreneurs, entrepreneurial support organizations (“ESOs”), university departments, local investors, and small business development centers.

Engagement with existing stakeholders led to the launch of the Nevada Entrepreneurial Network powered by Startup Space, a platform that connects entrepreneurs to resources, programs, and events throughout the state (www.nve.network). Regionally the Startup Reno website (www.startupreno.org) highlights the Northern Nevada ecosystem resources, and the Las Vegas Deal Room (<https://vegas.dealroom.co>) highlights Southern Nevada.

Currently a survey is being administered by the statewide Nevada Small Business Development Center in partnership with the Nevada Governor’s Office of Economic Development, and other government and non-profit organizations throughout the state that support for-profit small businesses (<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/XMRGNRX>). This survey is being conducted for two purposes:

1. To serve our state’s small businesses through Nevada’s forthcoming State Small Business Credit Initiative (SSBCI), which aims to improve small businesses’ access to loan or investment capital and/or technical assistance.
2. To identify the greatest challenges that small businesses in Nevada are currently facing so that public policy and services can be adapted to meet small businesses’ needs.

Scope of Services:

Primary Activities:

1. Review the current landscape in each regional ecosystem. Identify all organizations, programs, events, culture, and activities related to each regional entrepreneurial ecosystem. Identify conditions and trends. (*A majority of the assets have been identified and categorized on Startup Space and will be provided.)
2. Engage, survey, and gather feedback from entrepreneurs, investors, and resource providers ensuring traditionally underrepresented voices are heard.
3. Identify needs and gaps in each regional ecosystem and identify barriers that are structural, cultural, informational, or material. This would include barriers to new venture creation and growth, access to capital for startups and small businesses, lack of coordination or cooperation, and causes of low participation rates amongst underrepresented and disadvantaged populations.
4. Identify niche opportunities for each regional ecosystem.

5. Review national best practices of city, region, and state strategies for learning and replication. Identify policies that support or hinder entrepreneurial growth.
6. Identify potential synergies amongst regional ecosystems and opportunities for intra-state collaboration.
7. Facilitate a program design process alongside EDAWN, GOED and other partners to generate ideas and alignment amongst stakeholders.

Deliverables:

1. Produce a comprehensive report outlining the challenges facing entrepreneurs and the opportunities to develop a robust entrepreneurial ecosystem. Benchmark against similar cities, provide examples and case studies, and identify best practices. (Current Assessment)
2. Produce a plan with actionable recommendations including goals, KPIs, program designs, and long-term strategies for each region and at the state level. (Strategic Plan)
3. Create a detailed catalog of the entrepreneurial ecosystem assets of each region as well as those that exist statewide and put them in context of overarching strategic plan. (Contextualized Asset Map)

Key Qualifications:

- Experience working with cities and regions on entrepreneurial initiatives
- Clear understanding of the needs of entrepreneurs at all stages of business growth
- Experience with Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion or Environmental, Social, Governance initiatives
- A knowledge and understanding of entrepreneurial ecosystems in tier 2 and 3 cities

Proposal Structure:

Please include the following in your response:

1. Statement of qualifications
2. Samples and references of similar projects
3. Proposed Activities, Deliverable and Timeline
4. Proposed budget, including recommendations for subgrants to program design partners

Deadlines and Contacts:

Please deliver proposals by 12:00pm (PST) on September 15, 2022 to Katie Freeman (freeman@edawn.org). Please contact Katie Freeman with any questions of clarifications.

About the Partners:

The Economic Development Authority of Western Nevada (EDAWN), www.edawn.org, is a private/public partnership established in 1983, committed to adding quality jobs to the region

by recruiting new companies, supporting the success of existing companies, and assisting newly forming companies, to diversify the economy and have a positive impact on the quality of life in Greater Reno-Sparks.

In 2012 EDAWN created the Entrepreneurial Development team to help local startups find the resources they need to start, run, and grow. The team currently consists of SVP - Doug Erwin, VP - Bryan McArdle, and Manager - Katie Freeman. The team's entrepreneurial initiatives are 1) **Communicate** – Tell the stories of entrepreneurs in our community, 2) **Catalyze** – Support the creation of new programs and events which support entrepreneurs, 3) **Connect** – Remove friction in the ecosystem through thoughtful curated connections, and 4) **Covene** – Bring stakeholders together to break down barriers and create collaborative solutions. The Entrepreneurial teams Core Values are **Be Entrepreneur First, Raise the Bar, Make an Impact, Cultural Stewardship and Be of Service to Others.**

The Nevada Governor's Office of Economic Development (GOED), www.goed.nv.gov, was created during the 2011 Session of the Nevada Legislature through a collaboration of the Nevada Governor's Office and the Leadership of the Nevada State Senate and State Assembly (Authority: [NRS 231](#)).

VISION: A vibrant, innovative, and sustainable economy with high-paying jobs for Nevadans.

MISSION: High-quality jobs for Nevadans.

Objectives, as identified in the first State Plan for Economic Development are:

- Establish a cohesive economic development operating system.
- Increase opportunity through education and workforce development.
- Catalyze innovation in core and emerging industries:
 - Advanced Manufacturing
 - Technology
 - Energy (Including Lithium)
 - Health
 - Operations Logistics
 - Startup/Venture Capital
- Advance targeted sectors and opportunities in the region.
- Expand global engagement.