



Lake Erie West
REGIONAL COUNCIL

Lake Erie West Regional Council

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

**Community and Stakeholder Engagement for:
Building Access**

Aligning transportation, workforce, and housing

Issue Date: March 11, 2026

Proposal Due Date: April 13, 2026

March 11, 2026
NOTICE OF REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)
TO PROVIDE ENGAGEMENT SERVICES FOR MULTIFACTED STUDY
DUE: April 13, 2026

Lake Erie West Regional Council, formerly Toledo Metropolitan Area Council of Governments, invites written proposals to provide outreach and engagement services for a 6-county regional housing, transportation, and workforce study. This study will illustrate the relationship between housing, workforce and transportation. It will examine why residents live in one county and work in another, the factors influencing those decisions, and how transportation systems support or constrain workforce mobility.

Proposals must be submitted and marked: Lake Erie West Regional Council – RFP: Building Access: Aligning transportation, workforce, and housing community and stakeholder engagement “FIRM NAME”.

Proposals will be a signed digital copy, or a downloadable digital link, received by Lake Erie West electronically via email to hoelzle@lakeeriewest.org until 04/13/2026 at 1:00 p.m. EST. Any proposal received after this time and date will not be considered. Respondents are responsible for ensuring the proposal is received by the deadline.

INTRODUCTION:

Lake Erie West Regional Council (formerly Toledo Metropolitan Area Council of Governments) is seeking the services of a consultant/professional firm to provide outreach and engagement services for a 6-county regional housing, transportation, and workforce study. The 6 counties are: Lucas, Ottawa, Sandusky, Seneca, and Wood in Ohio and Monroe, in Michigan. This study will illustrate the relationship between housing workforce and transportation. It will examine why residents live in one county and work in another, the factors influencing those decisions, and how transportation systems support or constrain workforce mobility. The region functions as a single labor and housing market, yet planning, investment, and policy decisions are often made at the county or municipal level. This study will provide a framework to inform housing development, business location decisions, transportation investment priorities, and regional marketing efforts. Outcomes of the study include:

- Understand cross county commuting patterns
- Identify mismatches between housing supply, workforce, and jobs
- Evaluate transportation access and constraints
- Translate findings into clear opportunities for housing developers and employers

Lake Erie West anticipates the process will run from May 2026 to October 2026. The outcome will result in recommendations from a comprehensive engagement and outreach process. The successful bidder will be responsible for developing, implementing, and reporting on a comprehensive engagement strategy to provide insights into the final plan.

The community and stakeholder engagement process will be a key component to the study and planning work completed by Lake Erie West. The study will be project managed by Lake Erie West staff. Staff will conduct the following activities.

- Timeline and process management
- Data collection and analysis
- Oversee stakeholder steering committee meetings
- Final 30-day public comment period
- Development of the final study deliverables except for the community and stakeholder engagement report.

Lake Erie West staff will provide introductions and connections to existing businesses and regional stakeholders for the selected consultants.

Lake Erie West is a non-partisan regional planning partnership made up of voluntary governmental members in northwest Ohio and southeast Michigan. Lake Erie West has a 50-plus year history as a metropolitan planning organization and council of governments that advances regional cooperation in transportation, water quality, and

other economic development endeavors that affect quality of life. As of March 2026, Lake Erie West has 22 employees (combined full and part time).

1.0 Definitions

Consultant – the firm submitting a proposal

Organizational Review Team- Lake Erie West staff assigned to project

2.0 Services Requested

The services to be performed shall include but not be limited to the following beginning approximately on May 1, 2026 with completion no later than October 30, 2026.

Lake Erie West is seeking proposals that must encompass, at a minimum, the following elements.

1. Develop a public and stakeholder engagement plan and timeline for engagement aligned with overall project timeline
2. Design outreach materials and facilitate engagement activities, including:
 - a. Public workshops and open houses
 - b. Focus groups with employers, developers, residents, municipalities, etc.
 - c. Accompany staff at community pop-up events
 - d. Other activities as suggested
3. Engagement
 - a. Conduct regional commuter survey
 - b. Recommend and manage potential incentives for responses
 - c. Provide content recommendations for a webpage or website
4. Communications
 - a. Prepare plain language summaries, infographics, and social media content
5. Reporting
 - a. Document feedback and produce report after engagement is completed
 - b. Bi-weekly calls with Lake Erie West staff

3.0 Information required in the Request for Proposals

Lake Erie West reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, waive or not to waive any irregularities therein and to accept the proposal considered to be in the best interest of Lake Erie West.

All proposals must be typewritten. Clarity and completeness are essential. The proposal must be signed by the individual(s) legally authorized to bind the proposing Firm.

The proposal should contain, without limitation, the following information at a minimum:

1. A cover letter introducing the team that will be working on the project
2. A detailed description of the approach to the project
3. A detailed project timeline and schedule
4. A description of the consultants' qualifications, including relevant experience, education, and certifications
5. A list of three (3) references for similar projects completed within the past five (5) years
6. A detailed cost proposal, including a breakdown of all costs associated with the project.

4.0 Presentations by Consultants

Lake Erie West may ask any Consultant to make an oral presentation and/or demonstration, on April 20, 2026, without charge to Lake Erie West.

5.0 Contract

1. The content of this RFP, all addenda, and all provisions of the successful proposal deemed pertinent by Lake Erie West may be incorporated into the contract and become legally binding.
2. Lake Erie West reserves the right to cancel the contract without cause with a minimum of thirty (30) days written notice.

6.0 Right to Audit Records

In the performance of this Agreement, the Consultant shall keep books, records, and accounts of all activities related to the Agreement in compliance with record retention schedules of Lake Erie West. All documents, papers, books, records and accounts made or received by the Consultant in conjunction with the Agreement and the performance of this Agreement shall be open to inspection and shall be retained by the Consultant for a period of three (3) years after termination of this Agreement.

7.0 Evaluation Process

A Selection Committee will evaluate proposals based on the following criteria with a maximum number of points per criterion listed in parenthesis: compliance of requirements (10 points), approach and methodology (35 points), technical expertise (30 points), similar project work (5 points), and cost (20 points). The Selection Committee is made up of Lake Erie West Executive Director, Program Manager: Economic Development, Director of Transportation, Program Manager: Transportation Planning, and Program Manager: Data Resources. In addition to the materials provided

in the written responses to this RFP, the Selection Committee may request additional material, information, or references from the Consultant or from others.

8.0 Awards

Lake Erie West reserves the right to award the contract(s) to the Consultant(s) which Lake Erie West deems to offer the best overall proposal(s). Lake Erie West is therefore not bound to accept a proposal on the basis of lowest price and further, Lake Erie West has the sole discretion and reserves the right to cancel this RFP, and to reject any and all proposals, to waive any and all informalities and/or irregularities, or to re-advertise with either the identical or revised specifications, if it is deemed to be in Lake Erie West's best interests to do so. Lake Erie West shall receive and maintain ownership of all deliverables; Lake Erie West will be the owner of all intellectual property developed through this study.

9.0 Incurred Expenses

This RFP does not commit Lake Erie West to award a contract, nor shall it be responsible for any cost or expense which may be incurred by the Consultant in preparing and submitting the proposal called for in this RFP, or any cost or expenses incurred by the Consultant prior to the execution of a contract agreement.

10.0 Questions

Questions concerning any portion of this RFP shall be directed via email to Rosanna Hoelzle at hoelzle@lakeeriewest.org.

11.0 Proposal Closing Date and Time

The original proposal must be received by Lake Erie West no later than 1:00pm EST on April 13. The proposals will be opened at that time.

12.0 Delivery of Proposals

Respondents should deliver a signed digital copy via email, or a hand delivered hard copy with an electronic copy on a flash drive by 1:00 P.M. EST on April 13, to the following contact:

Rosanna Hoelzle, Chief of Staff
Lake Erie West Regional Council
300 Martin Luther King Jr Dr, Suite 300
Toledo, Ohio 43604
hoelzle@lakeeriewest.org

Responses should not be sent by facsimile or mail. Envelopes or email subject lines should be clearly marked with: Lake Erie West– RFP: Building Access: Aligning transportation, workforce, and housing community and stakeholder engagement "Firm Name"

13.0 Anticipated Project Timeline

RFP Released	March 11, 2026
Questions Due	March 19, 2026
Issuance of Responses to Questions	March 23, 2026
RFP Due Date	April 13, 2026
Presentations (if needed)	April 20, 2026
Selection of Proposer	April 22, 2026
Approval of Agreement	April 24, 2026
Final Deliverables	October 30, 2026