

Space Exploration and Aeronautics Research Fund (SEARF) Feasibility Study

West Central Texas Council of Governments
Community and Economic Development Department
3702 Loop 322
Abilene, TX 79602

Release Date:	August 5, 2025
Deadline for Questions:	August 15, 2025 – 5:00 PM CST Contact Terra Moreno, Community & Economic Department Director tmoreno@westcentraltexas.org
Proposal Submission:	August 22, 2025, 3:00PM (CST) Email proposals to tmoreno@westcentraltexas.org
Anticipated Negotiations/Award:	TBA Via email notification from tmoreno@westcentraltexas.org



SEARF Request for Proposals RFP00261-WCTCOG

Section 1 – Project Information

Purpose:

The West Central Texas Council of Governments (WCTCOG) is seeking proposals from qualified proposers to conduct a comprehensive feasibility study exploring the potential for space exploration and aeronautics development in the West Central Texas region. This Request for Proposals (RFP) outlines the scope of work and project timeline for the Space Exploration and Aeronautics Research Fund (SEARF) Feasibility Study, a strategic initiative designed to evaluate infrastructure, workforce, economic impact, and industry alignment to support future aerospace investment. This initiative aligns with the goals of the Texas Space Commission, created in 2023 by the 88th Texas Legislature to strengthen the state's leadership in civil, commercial, and military aerospace activity and to integrate space, aeronautics, and aviation industries into the Texas economy.

West Central Texas offers key advantages, including vast land availability, a central location, Dyess Air Force Base, and a network of local schools, colleges, and universities that can support future workforce development.

Background:

The West Central Texas Council of Governments (WCTCOG) is a regional planning organization serving 19 counties across West Central Texas. As an intergovernmental agency, WCTCOG brings together local governments, community leaders, and regional stakeholders to support collaborative solutions that strengthen infrastructure, workforce, and economic development throughout the region. With a focus on strategic planning and regional coordination, WCTCOG plays a vital role in advancing long-term prosperity and resilience for rural and mid-sized communities.

Geographic Area:

Brown, Callahan, Coleman, Comanche, Eastland, Fisher, Haskell, Jones, Kent, Knox, Mitchell, Nolan, Runnels, Scurry, Shackelford, Stephens, Stonewall, Taylor, and Throckmorton Counties.



SEARF Request for Proposals RFP00261-WCTCOG

Preferred Qualifications:

Respondents with the following experience and expertise will be prioritized during the evaluation process:

Space and Aerospace Expertise

- Demonstrated experience in space exploration and aeronautics research
- Knowledge of emerging space technologies and commercial spaceflight operations
- Understanding of spaceport development, operations, and infrastructure requirements
- Familiarity with FAA regulations for commercial space operations

Regional Economic Development Experience

- Track record in conducting feasibility studies for large-scale infrastructure projects
- Experience with economic impact analysis and workforce development assessments
- Understanding of regional economic development strategies and public-private partnerships

Infrastructure Assessment Capabilities

- Ability to evaluate existing transportation infrastructure (the application mentions proximity to existing infrastructure as an advantage)
- Experience with site selection and development for aerospace facilities
- Knowledge of utility requirements, environmental considerations, and zoning issues

Submission Closing Date

Proposals must be submitted no later than **3:00 PM Friday, August 22, 2025.**



SEARF Request for Proposals RFP00261-WCTCOG

Inquiries

WCTCOG is committed to providing all interested parties with accurate and consistent information to ensure that no submitting Firm obtains an undue competitive advantage. To this end, from the date of this RFP through award of contract, the WCTCOG contact is Terra Moreno, Community & Economic Development Director. All questions from Firms must be submitted in writing, electronically, to tmoreno@westcentraltexas.org by 5:00 p.m. local time on **Friday, August 15, 2025**. It will be the sole responsibility of the Firms to ensure questions are submitted on time. Any Addendums so issued are to be considered part of this RFP and therefore, receipt of all Addendums issued must be acknowledged by submitting Firms.

Section 2 – Scope of Services

WCTCOG seeks a qualified proposer to lead a feasibility study for the Space Exploration and Aeronautics Research Fund (SEARF). This project will serve as a discovery phase to assess the region's capacity and potential for supporting aerospace-related activities and investment. The selected consultant will conduct research, facilitate stakeholder engagement, and deliver a comprehensive feasibility report with actionable recommendations.

Given the discovery-focused nature of this study, the selected proposer may be asked to support the development of additional focus areas not currently outlined. The consultant should be prepared to identify emerging opportunities and provide strategic guidance beyond the initial scope, as requested by WCTCOG leadership.

Key Areas of Focus:

Stakeholders and Governance Engagement

Coordinate with regional leadership, educational institutions, and potential industry partners to guide and inform the study. Establish a collaborative governance model to support project alignment and communication.

Market and Industry Assessment

Analyze current aerospace and spaceport market trends, identify viable economic opportunities for the region, and benchmark West Central Texas against established aerospace hubs.

Site and Infrastructure Evaluation

Identify and evaluate suitable locations for aerospace activities; assess existing infrastructure and utilities; and determine land use, airspace, and environmental considerations.

Regulatory Readiness and Risk

Review FAA licensing, environmental permitting (NEPA), and state/local regulations. Assess potential risks and outline early mitigation strategies.



SEARF Request for Proposals RFP00261-WCTCOG

Workforce and Education Alignment

Evaluate current workforce capabilities and education pipelines. Identify gaps and recommend strategies for aerospace-related workforce and talent development.

Economic and Investment Modeling

Estimate potential job creation, economic impact, and required public/private investments. Recommend funding strategies and financing mechanisms.

Discovery and Opportunity Exploration

Explore additional opportunities such as research and demand (R&D) partnerships, aerospace-adjacent industries, and regional branding strategies to position West Central Texas as an emerging aerospace destination.

Final Deliverables

Provide a full feasibility study report, executive summary, and public-facing presentation of findings and recommendations.



SEARF Request for Proposals RFP00261-WCTCOG

Section 3 – Proposal Format and Contents Requirements

To ensure fair and consistent evaluation, each proposal must include the following components in the order listed below. Proposals should be concise and address each section.

1. Cover Letter
 - Include the name, title, phone number, and email address of the individual authorized to negotiate and contractually commit the proposer.
 - Summarize your interest in the project and the qualifications of your team.
 - Signed by an authorized representative.
2. Executive Summary
 - Provide a summary of the proposer's overall qualifications, relevant expertise, and approach to delivering the SEARF Feasibility Study.
 - Highlight key reasons this proposer is well-suited for this discovery-focused engagement.
3. Proposer Profile and Project Team
 - Provide a brief description of the proposer, including years in operation, core services, and relevant aerospace or infrastructure experience.
 - Identify the project team, including roles, brief bios, and relevant credentials. Include a resume for the team leader, if applicable.
 - Organizational structure or chart (if applicable).
3. Statement of Availability and Commitment
 - Clearly state your availability for the duration of the project term.
 - Outline any competing priorities or time constraints that may impact project delivery.
4. Relevant Experience and Qualifications
 - Summarize your experience with feasibility studies, aerospace or infrastructure planning, stakeholder engagement, and economic modeling.
 - Highlight projects similar in size or scope and note any experience with rural, regional, or government-led initiatives.
 - If available, you may include up to two examples of relevant work products (e.g., feasibility studies, site assessments, economic development reports) as attachments or web links.



SEARF Request for Proposals RFP00261-WCTCOG

5. Proposed Scope of Work

- Provide a detailed narrative that demonstrates your understanding of the project's goals and key focus areas.
- Outline your proposed methodology and approach for completing the feasibility study.
- Provide a high-level work plan describing the major tasks or phases of the project and how they will be sequenced.
- Include a general timeline for the project term, showing estimated durations for each phase or deliverable.

6. Estimated Project Cost

- Proposers must submit a clear and well-organized cost estimate for the project term. The estimate should include:
- A budget justification that clearly explains how the total project cost was determined. Daily or hourly consultant rate(s)
- Estimated costs for key tasks or deliverables
- Anticipated subcontractor or vendor fees (if applicable)
- Key assumptions used to determine the level of effort (e.g., number of stakeholder meetings, travel expectations, etc.)
- A summary of the rate structure and billing methodology (e.g., fixed fee, time and materials, blended rate).
- A formatted budget table or cost breakdown, showing how resources will be allocated across the project duration.

7. References

- References for three clients for whom the consultant has provided similar services, including entity name, address, service provided, contact person, and telephone number.



SEARF Request for Proposals RFP00261-WCTCOG

Section 4: Proposal Evaluation and Award

Proposals will be evaluated using a pre-determined point method to rank which proposers are most likely to meet or exceed the RFP requirements. In addition, WCTCOG reserves the right to contact any source regarding vendor reputation, product/service quality, work history, past performance, or any other factor needed to evaluate and award the proposal that best meets WCTCOG program needs and those of the communities served. Proposals will be reviewed for responsiveness and will be numerically rated by an evaluation team made up of staff, outside evaluators, committee members, and/or other subject matter experts, as deemed necessary.

Award Terms:

- WCTCOG reserves the right to ask questions and hold individual interviews with proposers at WCTCOG's sole discretion at any given time during the evaluation process to determine the proposal that best meets the procurement needs being sought to benefit WCTCOG and programs best served.
- WCTCOG reserves the right to request additional information or clarifications from proposers or to allow corrections of non-material errors or omissions at WCTCOG's sole discretion.
- WCTCOG reserves the right, should contract negotiations fail, to begin talks with the next highest ranked proposer and shall continue in like manner until successful negotiations have been reached with the most qualified proposer.
- WCTCOG reserves the right to negotiate the final terms of any potential agreement or contract because of this RFP with proposers, including but not limited to program requirements, proposer responsibilities, terms and conditions, signed pages, and essential clauses or certifications in the RFP and the successful proposer's submitted bid/proposal, both acting as binding documents to the contract or service agreement.
- Submission of a proposal indicates the proposer's acceptance of the evaluation and award process, and the proposer agrees that the evaluation team may make subjective judgments in evaluating the proposals to determine best value and best benefit to WCTCOG and programs served.