Developing Roadmap for BLocal Initiative

Request-for-Proposal

July 25, 2025

About Greater Baltimore Committee

The Greater Baltimore Committee (GBC) is the leading voice of the private sector for the seven-jurisdiction Baltimore Region, providing civic and economic leadership to drive collective impact. GBC is comprised of more than 300 organizations, including large, mid-size, and small companies, nonprofits, foundations, and educational and healthcare institutions.

In 2023, GBC released a Multi-Year Agenda to position the organization to create and lead an economic path for the Baltimore region, aggressively pursue game-changing opportunities, collaborate to transform the region's transportation, infrastructure, and public safety challenges, and foster a more equitable region. In May 2024, GBC released *All In 2035: A Ten-Year Economic Opportunity Plan for the Baltimore Region.* The plan identified the need for providing resources and support for skilled and flexible workers as a key strategic priority for ensuring the long-term prosperity of the region.

Project Overview

GBC is seeking a qualified consultant or firm to conduct a landscape study and develop a roadmap for standing up a "hire local" initiative to connect talent and workforce to employment opportunities across the Baltimore region. This work will guide the development of scalable hiring and training strategies aligned with employer needs and community assets. The consultant will help identify and refine the priority talent populations, deliver recommendations for program models, phased implementation strategies, and a sustainable operations plan.

About the Baltimore Region

The Baltimore region is home to more than 20,000 nonprofit and workforce development organizations and over 20 colleges and universities, encompassing one of the nation's largest pipelines for talent development. Over the last decade two local initiatives were established to support local hiring and procurement and foster a culture in which businesses actively support the region.

> **BLocal:** Following the death of Freddie Gray in 2015, 25 Baltimore-based organizations established BLocal, committing $69 million in total investment over an initial three years, including $53 million in local construction and $16 million for local companies. Johns Hopkins University offered operational support for BLocal, with the goal of stimulating economic growth in Baltimore by encouraging the growth of local businesses through increased spending, hiring, and investment within the city.

> **The Baltimore Integration Partnership (BIP):** Established in 2011, BIP was a collaborative partnership of anchor institutions, funders, nonprofits and public

organizations focused on establishing economic inclusion as the business culture of norm in the Baltimore region.

Both BLocal and BIP have been inactive since 2020, although many of the efforts and norms initiated through these programs continue among participating employers and organizations. However, growth and investment in the Baltimore Region has recently sparked renewed interest from the Baltimore-based business community in relaunching and expanding this work. To this end, GBC and Johns Hopkins—with support from GBC Partners—have agreed that GBC should explore the potential to assume responsibility for BLocal. As a neutral entity with over 300 employer members ("Partners"), GBC is well-positioned to reestablish BLocal as the umbrella brand for the Baltimore Region's collaborative initiatives to support local hiring and procurement.

Project Outcome

The initial goal of a newly constituted BLocal initiative will be to connect Baltimore's talent to employers through targeted hiring and skills training. GBC hopes to phase in three additional pillars- Buy Local, Invest Local, and Live Local-in subsequent years.

The consultant's work would help define the range of "hire local" programs that employers located in different parts of the region might establish. To this end, the study should include exploration of the varying geographies, populations, occupations, localized skills, and workforce training partners throughout the region that would inform program objectives and structures.

The study should also include an analysis of other regional collaborative models, including their goals, key operating characteristics, outcomes, and how they could be adapted to create the best model for the Baltimore region in the current economic environment.

Scope of Work

The selected consultant or firm will:

1. Examine the structure and outcomes of prior Baltimore initiatives (e.g., BLocal, BIP), as well as other relevant local workforce organizations and efforts to understand successes as well as gaps that BLocal would address.

2. Identify clear needs and goals for a relaunched BLocal, including (a) identifying the priority populations this program could potentially serve (being attentive to demographic characteristics and geography), and (b) high demand occupations/employers in the region with ongoing hiring needs.

3. Provide a strategic roadmap for standing up a new BLocal initiative, with an initial focus on local hiring. This roadmap should recommend:

a. A suggested program model/potential models based on prior programs and successful practices elsewhere around the country. This should include program models tailored to different sub-regions (e.g., neighborhoods with high concentrations of poverty) or populations (e.g., disengaged young adults).
b. How the initiative could be phased over time.
c. Potential partners (employers and workforce intermediaries) and implementation infrastructure.

4. Outline an operations plan and sustainable operating model, including staffing, operational costs associated with launching and sustaining the initiative, and revenue/monetization sources.

5. Recommend a governance/accountability structure and success metrics.

Submission Process

Submit proposals by email to Amber Woodruff amberw@gbc.org by: August 20, 2025 with the subject line "BLocal Proposal."

Proposals should include:

- A brief description of your approach to the project (not to exceed 3 pages).
- Overview of methodology and timeline (not to exceed 3 months).
- Short biography and resume of key team members and their role.

Relevant Experience

- A short description of up to 3 aligned projects that demonstrate your qualifications and fit for this scope.

Detailed Budget

- Include a detailed budget outlining anticipated costs associated with your proposed scope of work.

Proposals will be evaluated based on alignment with project goals, feasibility of the approach, relevant experience, and overall cost-effectiveness.