

What: RFQ for Clean Water Partners

Who: Issued by Northwest Regional Planning Commission as Clean Water Service Provider for the Lamoille and Missisquoi Basins

When: Issued October 10, 2023; Responses Received on Ongoing basis

Introduction

Northwest Regional Planning Commission (NRPC), a Clean Water Service Provider (CWSP) for two major watersheds in Vermont, is issuing this Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for CWSP-related services as described below. **The NRPC seeks to prequalify and subsequently contract with any additional qualifying Project Implementers not already prequalified by NRPC during previous prequalification processes.** (State Rule requires that Prequalification opportunities be offered annually. For purposes of this RFQ and subsequent contracting, Project Implementer means: Partner Organizations, Project Manager, Project Implementer project sponsors and other organizations in the basin as recognized in the Clean Water Service Provider Rule or guidance. This RFQ is issued in accord with the Procurement Guidance for Subgrants Policies adopted by the Basin Water Quality Councils.

The CWSP may choose to sole-source selected Prequalified Project Implementers in accordance with the Clean Water Service Provider Rule. Prequalified Project Implementers may provide services to the CWSP for a three-year period. Work will be funded using state funds primarily. All requirements associated with those funds and any other funding sources will be followed.

Project Implementer Tasks

The Project Implementer activities contemplated in this RFQ are limited to those associated with *non-regulatory water quality improvement projects*.

Types of projects to be completed by Project Implementers include:

- conservation easements (river corridor, wetland buffer, etc.)
- floodplain & stream restoration/reconnection,
- wetlands restoration,
- forestland and forest road best management practices (BMPs),
- riparian buffer restoration and tree plantings
- natural lakeshore stabilization/restoration projects.
- Additionally, traditional stormwater treatment and road project BMPs may also be applicable if treating runoff not required by a permit.
- Natural resource restoration projects on farm properties may be supported if not required by a permit and only if supported by the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Farms & Markets.

Project phases associated with eligible projects include:

- Assessment and identification;
- Development;
- Design;
- Construction/implementation;
- Operation & maintenance; and eventually
- Inspection, reporting & verification

Activities must be completed in accordance with the Department of Environmental Conservation's (DEC) CWIP funding policy (or any successor policy or policies) and include all applicable milestones and deliverables. Operation and Maintenance activities must be conducted in accordance with DEC guidance on Operations and Maintenances. Projects advanced by Project Implementers will contribute to and advance CWSP efforts to achieve DEC-identified Phosphorus reduction targets for the applicable basin(s).

Sole Sourcing

Consistent with NRPC's Procurement Policy, the services of Prequalified Project Implementers may be procured by Noncompetitive Proposals for projects and other work prioritized by a BWQC. Procurement by noncompetitive proposals may be used in accordance with the CWSP Rule and in recognition of a Prequalified Project Implementer's unique ability to provide a service in connection with a specific project or task.

Format

All potential Project Implementers are required to provide their pre-qualification proposal via email in Adobe Acrobat (PDF) format. The proposal shall not exceed 10 pages, excluding resumes and any sample project material. To be considered responsive to this RFQ, each proposal must provide all information requested below. Questions regarding this RFQ should be directed to dpierce@nrpcvt.com; please use "RFQ question" in the subject line. NRPC will maintain a generalized list of questions and answers linked to the NRPC RFP website (<https://www.nrpcvt.com/cwsp-policies-procurement>).

Qualification Proposal Requirements

The proposal should clearly demonstrate the partner understands the topic area, the character of the deliverables, the services required for their delivery, and the tasks that must be performed. NRPC is committed to furthering our understanding of the significant historical role land use policies and public investments have had in systemic racism and inequity and making sure that future public policy and capital investments encourage equity and provide increased opportunities and improved conditions for Black, Indigenous, people of color, and low-income residents. Successful contractors must be committed to working effectively with diverse community populations and expected to strengthen such capacity if selected.

The proposal must include the following information compiled in a single Adobe Acrobat (PDF) file, with numbered sections consistent with the following:

1. Name of Project Implementer
2. Preferred Acronym
3. Physical Address Street, Town, State, Zip code
4. Mailing Address if different from the physical address
5. Description and history of the Project Implementer
6. Name and email address of the Director or Chair of Organization/Manager/Implementer
7. Name, email address, tenure, and resume of key personnel
8. Basin(s) of Interest
9. Name, watershed database number (if applicable), and brief description of up to three relevant projects completed by Organization/Manager/Implementer, and name of relevant reference.
10. Sector Expertise/ sectors in which organization regularly performs or pursues work
11. Project Expertise/ project types organization regularly performs or pursues
12. Budgeting procedures, if any
13. Cost estimating procedures, if any
14. Fee Schedule for employee categories potentially billed for Fiscal Year 2023, and indicating proposed overhead cost rates and/or indirect cost rates
15. Quality control procedures, if any
16. Small and Disadvantaged Business Enterprise procedures, if any
17. Justice Equity Diversity Inclusion Policies, if any
18. Debarment Documentation, if any
19. Certificate of Good Standing
20. Technical Resources (e.g., Equipment, Access to Materials, Access to Contractors), if any
21. Names and contact information for three references familiar with your ability, experience, and reliability in the performance and management of projects similar to the ones you hope to pursue as a Project Implementer.

A recommended template to use for the proposal is attached. You are not required to use this template. However, you should review it for information that may guide how you respond to this RFQ.

Confidentiality

The successful response/proposal will become part of the contract file and will become a matter of public record, as will all other responses received. In case, a proposer includes any material that is considered to be proprietary and/or confidential under 1 VSA, Chapter 5, the proposer shall clearly designate the material as such, explaining why such material should be considered confidential. Under no circumstances can the entire response or cost proposal be marked confidential. If the Contractor marks portions of the proposal confidential, the Contractor shall provide a redacted version of the proposal for release to the public.

Project Implementer Selection Procedure

Qualifications for each topic area will be evaluated separately considering the criteria listed below by a selection committee consisting of members of NRPC staff. Selection of qualified Project Implementers will be determined based on the following criteria:

- Responsiveness to the RFQ (10 Points)
- Demonstration of overall understanding of the work (20 Points)
- Qualifications of the Project Implementer and available personnel (30 Points)
- Proven record of successfully completing similar projects (30 Points)
- Demonstrated partnerships with WBEs/DBEs, or experience/commitment to addressing racial equity (10 points)

Submittals will be discussed and scored. A minimum score of 50 shall be required to be considered for contracting. The NRPC reserves the right to seek clarification of any proposal submitted and to select contractors that best promote the public interest. The selection committee will make every effort to announce final decisions via email by 21 days of receipt.

NRPC engages Project Implementers via an initial Master Agreement. The NRPC in its role as CWSP will issue subgrant task awards authorizing specific project activities.

All proposals become the property of the NRPC upon submission. The cost of preparing and submitting a proposal is the sole expense of the Project Implementer.

The NRPC reserves the right to reject any and all proposals received as a result of this solicitation, to negotiate with any qualified source, to waive any formality and any technicalities or to cancel the RFQ in part or in its entirety if it is in the best interest of the NRPC. This solicitation of proposals in no way obligates NRPC to award a contract.

Deadline

As of October 2023, responses to this RFQ will be received on an ongoing basis.

Already Prequalified Partners

If an organization is already prequalified, no action is required at this time.

Through
December
2024

Basin of
Prequalification

Organization

| Basin | Cal NRCD | CCRPC | Fairfax | FC NRCD | FWC | Georgia | Jericho | LCCD | LCPC | O NRCD | VRC | Westfield | MRBA | FNLC | VT DF&W |
|---------|----------|-------|---------|---------|-----|---------|---------|------|------|--------|-----|-----------|------|------|---------|
| Basin 6 | | | | X | X | | | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| Basin 7 | X | X | X | X | | X | X | X | X | | X | | | X | X |

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| LCPC | Lamoille County Planning Commission |
| CCRPC | Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission |
| VRC | Vermont Rivers Conservancy |
| FC NRCD | Franklin County Natural Resources Conservation District |
| MRBA | Missisquoi River Basin Association |
| LCCD | Lamoille County Conservation District |
| Cal NRCD | Caledonia County Natural Resources Conservation District |
| O NRCD | Orleans County Natural Resources Conservation District |
| Fairfax | Town of Fairfax |
| FNLC | Friends of Northern Lake Champlain |
| FWC | Franklin Watershed Committee |
| Westfield | Town of Westfield |
| Georgia | Town of Georgia |
| Jericho | Town of Jericho |
| VTDF&W | Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife |