



Cowlitz-Wahkiakum
Council of Governments

Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments

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REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

U.S. EPA BROWNFIELDS ASSESSMENT GRANT APPLICATION

Proposals due by:

August 22, 2024, at 3 pm

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Cowlitz-Wahkiakum
Council of Governments

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments (CWCOG) is seeking a qualified environmental consultant or planning firm to assist with the development of an application for an EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant.

The location of the projects will be in Cowlitz and Wahkiakum Counties, located in rural Southwest Washington State.

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

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I. INTRODUCTION

Background

The Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments (CWCOG) is seeking a qualified environmental consultant or planning firm to complete an application for a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Brownfields Assessment Grant. The work would serve communities within Cowlitz and Wahkiakum Counties in Washington state.

Project Definition

Brownfields is a property whereby the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant. We are committed to sustainability and the utilization of existing infrastructure through grants from the EPA Brownfields and Land Revitalization Program. Through this Request for Proposal (“RFP”), the CWCOG is soliciting qualification statements from experienced qualified firms (“Respondent”) with documented experience in environmental assessments and related services for local governments. The Respondent should be able to assist in writing the grant application for an Assessment Coalition Grant. CWCOG intends to be the lead project manager of the intended grant award.

II. SCOPE OF WORK

The qualified consultant will be capable of successfully providing a Brownfields Grant Application to comply with all federal requirements and based on an identified scope of work. Below is a project description and key project tasks. The CWCOG supports participation of disadvantaged business enterprises in all activities. If the CWCOG is successful and is awarded an assessment grant, a formal process to select a consultant to implement the grant will be conducted.

Project Description

CWCOG is issuing this Request for Proposal with the intent of selecting a qualified consultant to assist with securing an EPA grant.

Project Key Tasks

Develop EPA Assessment Grant for submission by CWCOG.

- The consultant will lead the effort to complete an EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant application and lead the process in cooperation with CWCOG staff.
- Assist in the identification and development of projects and partners within the region.

III. SELECTION PROCESS

- A. **Process:** A two-phase process will be used for selecting the best qualified submission for the project. Phase 1 of the process is a “Submittal Review and Evaluation”, during which the CWCOG Project Manager determines whether a submitted submission meets all the requirements of the RFP. This will be followed by a review and ranking of the qualified submissions by the Selection Committee.

Phase 2 involves interviews and a final ranking by the Selection Committee.

Failure to meet the requirements of this RFP may be cause for rejection of the submittal. Similarly, the CWCOG may reject any submittal if it is conditional, incomplete, late, or contains irregularities.

The CWCOG may waive any immaterial deviation in a submission. However, the absence of information pertinent to the evaluation criteria will be evaluated accordingly. The waiver of an immaterial deviation shall in no way modify the RFP documents or excuse the selected consultant from full compliance with the contract terms and requirements.

- B. **Submittal Review:** The Selection Committee will consist of the CWCOG Project Manager, other CWCOG staff, and one or more local agency members.
- C. **Submittal Evaluation:** The evaluation of submittals will follow the guidelines set forth in Appendix 1.
- D. **Interviews:** The Selection Committee will conduct oral interviews with the top-ranked consultants for the project. The interview provides further opportunity for the CWCOG to evaluate the submission, credentials, and qualifications of the consultant, and for both parties to determine the potential to work together effectively on the project. The consultant’s project lead will play a key role in the interview. The interview will include a short (8 – 10 minute) overview of the consultant’s credentials and overall qualifications. The committee members will then question the consultant. The anticipated length of the interview is 45 to 60 minutes.

Notification of interview status will be communicated by September 5, 2024. Please ensure that the Project Manager and appropriate staff are available to attend the interview. Virtual interviews will be conducted September 10 or 11, 2024. You may request a preferred date and time (am or pm) with your submission.

- E. **Selection:** Any contract awarded shall be made to the best-qualified submission based on the selection process. The CWCOG will notify consultants of the submission selected by distributing a *Notice of Intent to Award*. The final Scope of Work will be negotiated to meet the CWCOG needs, comply with all EPA guidelines, and could include a scope of work modified from the identified one in Section II. CWCOG maintains the right to reject any or all submissions.
- F. **Bid Protest Selection:** A bid protest period shall commence immediately upon distribution of the *Notice of Intent to Award*. During this time any interested person, consultant, or firm may file a protest in accordance with the process outlined below with respect to the selected submission and/or with respect to the qualifications of the selected firm.

Firms who wish to lodge a protest as to the award of the contract must do so before 4:00 PM PDT of the fifth (5th) business day following the *Notice of Intent to Award* the contract. Protests must be received in writing (email is acceptable) to the CWCOG Executive Director, Bill Fashing. The protest must include the following: 1) the name of the person or consultant or firm making the protest; 2) a complete statement of all legal and factual grounds of the protest; 3) any documentation supporting the protestor’s grounds for the protest; and 4) the form of relief requested and the legal basis for such relief. If a valid protest is timely filed, the Executive Director shall investigate the protest. The selected

firm has three (3) business days to respond to the Executive Director and to provide any information requested by the Executive Director in response to any questions raised by the protest. The Executive Director shall respond to the protesting party stating his findings.

Failure to timely file a written protest shall constitute a waiver of the right to protest. Untimely protests will not be accepted or considered.

IV. SUBMITTAL INFORMATION AND REQUIREMENTS

- A. **Submittal Requirements:** Qualified consultants are invited to submit a single submission as described in this RFP. Submittals shall be thorough, concise, and are recommended to be delivered electronically and not more than 7 pages.
1. **Letter of Introduction and Availability:** Provide an introduction to the lead consultant or firm, including the year it was established, as well as a statement of interest in the project and an overall review of the firm’s understanding of the Scope of Work. Include complete contact information and signatures of any individuals authorized to make representations for the firm on this project. Also include a commitment to participate in an interview on September 10 or 11, 2024.
 2. **Outline of Qualifications and Experience:** Provide an overview of the lead consultant or firm’s background, relevant experience, credentials, and qualifications as they pertain to this project and the deliverables. Introduce and provide background information and related experience of the lead staff as well as others who will be involved in the project.
 3. **Examples of Similar Projects:** Provide examples of previous similar projects completed by the project team members with emphasis on the individuals to be assigned to this effort.
 4. **Methodology:** Outline the proposed approach to the project and describe the method for completing the grant application.
 5. **Timeline:** Include a statement confirming the firm or consultant team can complete the project as outlined in Attachment 2: RFP and Project Schedule.
 6. **Project Budget:** Include cost estimate to complete the grant application in conjunction with the CWCOC staff as well as an overview of current costs of employees or job types identified as resources for the completion of any work under a possible contract.
 7. **Professional References:** Provide contact information for a recent similar grant writing project work and three relevant professional references beyond the most current that are related to environmental services grant writing.
 8. **Conflict of Interest:** The firm shall disclose any financial, business, or other relationship that may impact by this work.
 9. **Signature:** The submission shall provide the following: names, titles, addresses, telephone numbers, and email addresses of individuals with the authority to negotiate and contractually bind the company.
 10. **Small and Minority Firms** are encouraged to apply.
 11. **Time and Place of Submission:** To be considered, all submissions should be received electronically at cwcog@cwco.org by August 22, 2024, by 3 pm.
 12. **Late Submittals:** Submittals received after the specified time will not be considered.

- B. **Modification or Withdrawal of Submittals:** Any submission received prior to the receipt date and time specified above may be withdrawn or modified by written request of the consultant prior to the submittal deadline. Any modifications shall follow the above guidelines when resubmitting.
- C. **Property Rights:** Submissions received become the property of the CWCOG and all rights to the contents therein become those of the CWCOG.
- D. **Amendments to Request for Proposal:** The CWCOG reserves the right to amend this RFP by addendum before the final submittal date. Any addendums to the RFP will be made public on the CWCOG website (www.cwcog.org). Firms responding to the RFP are responsible for checking for any amendments on the CWCOG website. Any amendment will be posted by August 4, 2024.
- E. **Inquiries:** Inquiries concerning this RFP should be directed in writing to the Project Manager (no phone calls will be accepted). Consultants shall be responsible for reviewing this RFP and any addenda issued by CWCOG prior to the due date, and for requesting written clarification or interpretation of any perceived discrepancy, deficiency, ambiguity, error, or omission contained therein, or if any provision which the consultant fails to understand. Failure of the consultant to so examine and inform itself shall be at its sole risk and no relief of error or omission will be provided by the CWCOG. CWCOG will respond to written requests for clarification in accordance with this Section. To the extent written responses are provided, they will be considered part of the Contract Documents and posted to the CWCOG website as stated in 'D' and sent to all invited consultants.

CWCOG will only consider comments or questions regarding this RFQ, including requests for clarification and requests to correct errors, if submitted by a consultant's authorized representative to the CWCOG's Project Manager by email or hard copy.

Such comments or questions may be submitted at any time prior to the applicable last date specified in Appendix 2 or such later date as may be specified in any addendum. Questions and comments, including requests for clarification or interpretation, shall be in written form either by mail or email to the following:

Project Manager: Bill Fashing
 Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments
 Email: cwcog@cwcog.org
 PO Box 128
 Kelso, WA 98626

VI. CONTRACT AWARD

- A. **Non-Commitment:** This RFP does not commit CWCOG to award a contract, to pay any costs incurred in preparation for this request, or to procure or contract for services. The CWCOG reserves the right to accept or reject any or all submittals received because of this request or to modify or cancel in part or in its entirety the RFP if it is in the best interest of the CWCOG and project to do so.
- B. **Recommendations, Approval and Execution:** The CWCOG Executive Director will make the final determination to award the contract to the selected consultant. Should this RFP result in the award of a contract, the contract will not be in force until it is fully executed by the CWCOG Executive Director and consultant.
- C. **Payment:** Any payment for services will be finalized in a contract for those services. Any expenses shall be detailed on invoices submitted by the consultant to CWCOG. Invoices shall be organized by contract task and detailed by type of service provided, name and job title of provider, hours per provider for each task, and provider's hourly rate. Subtotals shall be presented for each provider by task. The invoice shall state the total requested for reimbursement and the balance remaining on

the contract. Reimbursable expenses shall be itemized and supported with copies of all invoices and receipts for all non-travel and travel reimbursable expenses.

An original invoice, with supporting documentation, must be received by the fifth (5th) of the month to be paid by the last working day of the month. Invoices must be addressed as outlined in the approved contract.

A project report organized by task shall outline the work accomplished during the billing period and accompany each project payment request.

- D. **Performance of Work**: It is the intent of the CWCOG to have the selected consulting firm complete work by the EPA grant deadline, estimated Nov. 1, 2024. Consulting services shall be procured and performed in accordance with all federal statutes and regulations including 2 CFR 200.319.

VII. APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Evaluation Criteria

Submissions will be reviewed and assessed by a Selection Committee as described in this RFP. In assessing the submissions, the Selection Committee will evaluate the following criteria based on the narrative and previous project work summaries provided:

Evaluation Criteria	
Criteria	Maximum Points
1. Demonstrated project experience of key personnel to be assigned to the project and capacity to complete the work.	30 Points
2. Demonstrated successful experience by the firm/team in grant writing and the project team's commitment to teamwork and client services.	25 Points
3. Demonstrative expertise in environmental regulatory and scientific /technical knowledge.	15 Points
4. Reasonableness of costs/price proposals based on market	30 Points
Total Points Available:	100 Points

Superior Qualifications (90-100 Points): A Superior response will be a highly comprehensive, excellent reply that meets all the requirements of the areas within the specific criteria for this topic area. In addition, the response covers areas not originally addressed within the evaluation criteria and includes additional information and recommendations that would prove both valuable and beneficial to the CWCOG. The response demonstrates the Consultant's authoritative knowledge and understanding of the project.

Good Qualifications (80-89 Points): A good response will provide useful information while showing experience and knowledge within the evaluation criteria for this topic area. The response is well thought out and addresses all requirements set forth in the RFP. The consultant provides insight into its expertise, knowledge and understanding of the subject matter outlined in the criteria.

Fair Qualifications (70-79 Points): A fair response meets all the requirements of the RFP and has demonstrated in a clear and concise manner a thorough knowledge and understanding of the subject matter outlined in the criteria for this topic area. The response demonstrates an above-average performance with minimal deficiencies noted.

Poor Qualifications (60-69 Points): A poor response minimally meets most requirements of the RFP for this topic area. The consultant has demonstrated limited knowledge of the subject matter only as outlined in the criteria.

Inadequate Qualifications (0-59 Points): An inadequate response does not meet the requirements of the RFP for this topic area. The consultant has not demonstrated knowledge of the subject matter outlined in the RFP and its response is considered inadequate.

Appendix 2: RFP and Project Schedule

Task	Date	Time
RFP Issued	July 22, 2024	
Deadline for Consultant Proposals	August 22, 2024	3:00 p.m.
Evaluation Period Conclusion	August 28, 2024	4:00 p.m.
Notification of Interview Status	September 5, 2024	4:00 p.m.
Consultant Interviews	September 10 & 11, 2024	
Anticipated Notice of Intent to Award	September 13, 2024	4:00 p.m.
Anticipated End of Protest Period	September 24, 2024	4:00 p.m.
Contract Negotiations Completed	October 2, 2024	
EPA Brownfields Grant Due (anticipated)	November 1, 2024	

Note: This timeline is for the consultant’s planning and information. Project constraints or other variables may cause these dates to change. All times are Pacific Time.