



## REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

*Contract for Media Outreach and Communications Support for the Northeast Regional Office*

**PROPOSAL DEADLINE:** April 5, 2021

### OVERVIEW

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) seeks qualified Contractor(s) to assist in the development and/or implementation of media relations and communications support for the Northeast Regional Office and the programs within this region.

### BACKGROUND

NFWF administers competitive grant programs to support on-the-ground conservation projects that are implemented by local and regional nonprofits, local governments, state governments, academic institutions and others. The winning Contractor(s) will implement effective media outreach strategies for grant programs within the Northeast Regional Office, which may include any or all of the following existing programs, and may be expanded to include new programs that launch during the course of the contract term:

- [Bats for the Future Fund](#)
- [Central Appalachia Habitat Stewardship Program](#)
- [Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Fund](#)
- [Delaware River Program](#)
- [Hurricane Sandy Coastal Resiliency Program](#)
- [Long Island Sound Futures Fund](#)
- [New England Forest and Rivers Fund](#)

NFWF intends the services provided to increase the reach of Northeast Regional Office communications, announce important program and project milestones, share important local successes and showcase innovative projects.

### SCOPE OF WORK

The selected Contractor(s) will perform the following activities for programs under NFWF's Northeastern Regional Office, and in close coordination with NFWF Regional staff as well as NFWF's Communications Department.

- **Support press conferences/media events** to announce grants, project groundbreakings, ribbon cuttings and other grant-related project milestones. (Events may be virtual.)
  - Draft and post media advisories
  - Draft press releases, including securing quotes and coordinating approvals from multiple partners
  - Assist with securing participation of speakers
  - Conduct media outreach aimed at securing earned media from events, including digital, television, radio and print media
  - Coordinate on-site logistics working with event host
  - Coordinate day of flow of show
  - Manage media the day of event
  - Conduct media follow-up



Deliverables: final media advisories, press releases, media participant list, press events, compilation of media coverage

- **Develop print-ready stories** about grant-funded projects for placement with media outlets.
  - Coordinate story selection with NFWF staff
  - Interview grantees and grantee partners
  - Secure images from grantees or through site visits
  - Draft stories and coordinate review by grantees, NFWF Regional staff and Communications staff
  - Conduct media outreach to place stories with local media outlets

Deliverables: final story, digital image files, compilation of media coverage

- **Create compendia of success stories** for use in program annual/anniversary reports.
  - Coordinate selection of 5-10 stories with NFWF staff; stories may include multiple grant-funded projects that address the same issue or are in the same geography.
  - Review past media coverage and “print-ready stories” developed for projects
  - Interview grantees and grantee partners
  - Secure images from grantees
  - Draft stories and coordinate review by grantees, NFWF Regional staff and Communications staff
  - Coordinate with NFWF Communications Department on layout needs (e.g., word limits, image requirements) who will lead and/or manage graphic design and publication. (Note: graphic design and publication is not part of this scope of work.)

Deliverables: final stories, digital image files

NFWF anticipates the following deliverables in the coming year:

Program	Press Conferences/Events	Print-Ready Stories	Compendium of Stories
Bats for the Future	1 (July)	3 stories	5 stories
Central Appalachia Habitat Stewardship	1 (Nov)	4	5
Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Fund	4 (May, Nov)	12	
Delaware River Program	1 (Aug/Sept)	6	
Hurricane Sandy Coastal Resiliency	0		10+
Long Island Sound Futures Fund	2 (Nov/Dec)		
New England Forests and Rivers	1 (Aug/Sept)	4	5

This list above outlines the general scope of work to be addressed under this RFQ; however, it is subject to change in response to additional similar task orders as needed.

The period of performance will be one year from the date of the award to the selected Contractor with an option to extend for an additional year up to four years, to be exercised at NFWF’s discretion.

**REQUIRED EXPERTISE AND PROPOSED STAFF**

To assist the Northeast Regional Office in delivering effective media outreach strategies, as well as using media relations to support NFWF in fulfilling its mission, this RFQ is seeking a team of communication professionals with the following qualifications:



- Experience with a wide array of media outreach from micro-targeting local media outlets to working with national placements
- Proven record of writing in different styles for specific audiences AND experience in writing about nature or science-based subjects (examples beneficial)
- Flexibility and enthusiasm while dealing with feedback, edits, and potential re-working of media content and partnership management
- Variety in staffing levels within the Contractor team and competitive/cost-effective budgeting
- Have staff located within the NFWF Northeastern region and/or able/willing to travel for communication events *when NFWF travel resumes (not likely before mid-to-late 2021)*

#### CRITERIA FOR COMPETITIVE APPLICATIONS

Proposals will be evaluated and scored on the following criteria. Offerors should organize their Proposal Narrative based on these sections:

1. **Understanding of the Scope of Work.** The Scope of Work must demonstrate an understanding of the goals of the activities involved. This section should include a description of how you will communicate with NFWF and program stakeholders and report on progress, results, and deliverables. Weight: 20%
2. **Technical Approach.** The proposed technical approach for conducting the tasks should clearly describe the proposed methods necessary to conduct the project. The section must demonstrate that those methods are robust and appropriate for conducting the project and address any areas of complexity or uncertainty associated with conducting the project. Weight: 10%
3. **Qualifications of Proposed Personnel.** This section should clearly describe which tasks each member of the team will conduct and how their training and experience provide the requisite experience to do so successfully. Weight: 20%
4. **Contractor's Past Performance.** The proposal should include information on the primary investigator(s)'s past performance experience in communications and media outreach. List recent (last 2-5 years) accomplishments and previous services related to the technical expertise offered. If subcontractors are to be used, information should be provided that demonstrates their past performance as well. Describe how that past performance is applicable to this evaluation. Weight: 20%
5. **Budget.** The proposed budget should itemize work in sufficient detail to enable reviewers to evaluate the appropriateness of the entire funding request. You must use the [Contractor Budget Template](#). You may add columns to the template for additional tasks if needed, but should not make any other changes. If applicable, please include the proposed budget for equipment purchase in the proposal separate from the Contractor Budget Template. Weight: 30%

#### ELIGIBLE OFFERORS & CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

Eligible applicants include institutions of higher education, other nonprofits, commercial organizations, international organizations, and local, state, and Indian tribal governments.

By submitting a proposal in response to this solicitation, the offeror warrants and represents that it does not currently have any apparent or actual conflict of interest, as described herein. In the event an offeror currently has, will have during the life of the contemplated contract, or becomes aware of an apparent or actual conflict of interest, in the event an award is made, the offeror must notify NFWF in writing in the



Statement of Quotations, or in subsequent correspondence (if the issue becomes known after the submission of the Statement of Quotations) of such apparent or actual conflicts of interest, including organizational conflicts of interest. Conflicts of interest include any relationship or matter which might place the contractor, the contractor's employees, or the contractor's subcontractors in a position of conflict, real or apparent, between their responsibilities under the award and any other outside interests, or otherwise. Conflicts of interest may also include, but are not limited to, direct or indirect financial interests, close personal relationships, positions of trust in outside organizations, consideration of future employment arrangements with a different organization, or decision-making affecting the award that would cause a reasonable person with knowledge of the relevant facts to question the impartiality of the offeror, the offeror's employees, or the offeror's future subcontractors in the matter. Upon receipt of such a notice, the NFWF Contracting Officer will determine if a conflict of interest exists and, if so, if there are any possible actions to be taken by the offeror to reduce or resolve the conflict. Failure to resolve conflicts of interest in a manner that satisfies NFWF may result in the proposal not being selected for award.

By submitting a proposal in response to this solicitation, the Offeror warrants and represents that it is eligible for award of a Contract resulting from this solicitation and that it is not subject to any of the below circumstances:

Has any unpaid Federal tax liability that has been assessed, for which all judicial and administrative remedies have been exhausted or have lapsed, and that is not being paid in a timely manner pursuant to an Contract with the authority responsible for collecting the tax liability, where the awarding agency is aware of the unpaid tax liability, unless the agency has considered suspension or debarment of the corporation and made a determination that this further action is not necessary to protect the interests of the Government; or

Was convicted (or had an officer or agent of such corporation acting on behalf of the corporation convicted) of a felony criminal violation under any Federal or State law within the preceding 24 months, where the awarding agency is aware of the conviction, unless the agency has considered suspension or debarment of the corporation and made a determination that this further action is not necessary to protect the interests of the Government; or

Is listed on the General Services Administration's, government-wide System for Award Management Exclusions (SAM Exclusions), in accordance with the OMB guidelines at 2 C.F.R Part 180 that implement E.O.s 12549 (3 C.F.R., 1986 Comp., p. 189) and 12689 (3 C.F.R., 1989 Comp., p. 235), "Debarment and Suspension," or intends to enter into any subaward, contract or other Contract using funds provided by NFWF with any party listed on the SAM Exclusions in accordance with Executive Orders 12549 and 12689. The SAM Exclusions instructions can be found here: <https://www.sam.gov/SAM/>

## **SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS**

Proposals must be submitted under the same cover at the same time, in three distinctly labeled and separate documents: 1) Technical Proposal, 2) Budget, and 3) Evidence of Financial Stability. Interested parties should submit proposals electronically to NFWF (**Erin Lewis, [erin.lewis@nfwf.org](mailto:erin.lewis@nfwf.org)**) using the requirements below:

### **1. Technical Proposal**

- Format: Proposals must be provided in Word format or searchable PDF with a font size no smaller than 11 pt.
- Contact information: Primary contact person, company name, address, phone, email, website, DUNS number, and EIN/Taxpayer ID#.



# NFWF

- Narrative: Concise (5-page limit) description of the work plan and a summary of the applicant's expertise and experience, organized by the Criteria for Competitive Applications.
  - Biographies: Resumes and/or Vitae of key staff and their role in the proposed work area.
  - References: List three clients who have received services from the applicant that is similar in nature to the proposed work; include names, phone numbers, and email address.
2. **Budget:** The budget proposal must be submitted using the following [NFWF budget template](#).
  3. **Evidence of Financial Stability:** The applicant shall provide proof of financial stability in the form of financial statements, credit ratings, a line of credit, or other financial arrangements sufficient to demonstrate the applicant's capability to meet the requirements of this solicitation.

Applicants should submit questions regarding this RFP via e-mail to Erin Lewis ([erin.lewis@nfwf.org](mailto:erin.lewis@nfwf.org)). NFWF will respond to all Offerors at the same time and with the same answer. To provide equitable responses, all questions must be received by NFWF no later than March 25, 2021.

## SELECTION PROCEDURE

A panel of NFWF staff will review the proposals. The panel will assess each proposal according to the project description and evaluation criteria provided in this RFQ. Offerors may be asked to modify objectives, work plans, or budgets prior to final approval of the award. Only one award will be made for this project. Specific funding amounts will be negotiated with the Foundation and additional funding will be considered annually based upon the expressed needs of the programs. If multiple institutions are involved, they should be handled through subcontracts.

## SUBMISSION DEADLINES

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| <b>March 25, 2021</b> | Deadline for questions about the solicitation to NFWF. Offerors should submit questions regarding this solicitation via email to <b>Erin Lewis (<a href="mailto:erin.lewis@nfwf.org">erin.lewis@nfwf.org</a>)</b> . NFWF will post all the questions and responses to all questions so that all offerors have access to them at the same time. To provide equitable responses, all questions must be sent to NFWF <b>no later than 5:00 PM EST March 25, 2021</b> . |
| <b>March 26, 2021</b> | NFWF will post the questions submitted regarding the solicitation and responses on the NFWF website.  |
| <b>April 5, 2021</b>  | Deadline for receipt by NFWF of proposals. Proposals must be sent electronically as an email attachment to <b>Erin Lewis (<a href="mailto:erin.lewis@nfwf.org">erin.lewis@nfwf.org</a>)</b> by <b>5:00 PM EST April 5, 2021</b> . Proposals must be provided in Word format or searchable PDF.  |
| <b>May 1, 2021</b>    | Contract award to selected Offeror  |