



NFWF

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

NORTHEAST REGION GRANTEE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR FEDERAL COMPLIANCE

Proposal Deadline: **April 24, 2023**

OVERVIEW

The National Fish & Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) seeks a qualified contractor to provide technical guidance for Environmental Protection Agency/U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service compliance requirements for grantees from the Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Fund and Long Island Sound Futures Fund.

BACKGROUND

NFWF manages a variety of grant programs under the [Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Fund](#) (CBSF) and [Long Island Sound Futures Fund](#) (LISFF). Projects selected for funding through these programs often are subject to federal compliance requirements. NFWF is seeking a qualified contractor to provide technical assistance to grantees in meeting such compliance requirements, including the following:

- Documentation to support Federal assessments under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)
- Documentation of compliance with the Endangered Species Act (ESA) (state and federal)
- Consultations required under the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA)
- Development of Quality Assurance Project Plans (QAPPs) if a project involves monitoring, data collection or data use.

Over time, as the funding levels, projects, scope, reach and audience of programs under NFWF's Northeastern Region have grown, the need for effective technical guidance and support has grown as well. We are seeking a qualified professional environmental consultant or company to assist grantees with the necessary compliance documentation.

SCOPE OF WORK

The selected party will perform the following activities for select programs under NFWF's Northeastern Regional Office. Along with the CBSF and LISFF, support may also include the [New England Forests and Rivers Fund](#), the [Delaware River Restoration Fund](#) and the [Central Appalachia Habitat Stewardship Fund](#).

1. NEPA/ESA/NHPA related compliance:
 - a. Review, and characterize for NFWF, individual projects by compliance type informed by a formal understanding of NEPA/ESA/NHPA.
 - b. Provide a justification and rationale for project characterization to support compliance review by a federal agency.
 - c. Provide guidance and support of individual grantees to develop information and materials required for NEPA/ESA/NHPA and related consultations.
 - i. Prepare for grantees lists of materials needed to support compliance review by the federal agency, including the types of required information (e.g. project details/description of the action, design drawings, plan-views, maps, photos,

land-use history/environmental setting, existing surveys/database information, IPaC, etc.).

2. QAPP related compliance
 - a. Provide guidance to and support of individual grantees to organize and develop information needed to prepare QAPP templates for review by NFWF and EPA. See examples of QAPP templates are found on this [page](#) for LISFF or this page for [CBSF](#).
 - b. Assist grantees as needed to develop clarifying responses if questions arise or comments made during EPA quality assurance review.
 - c. In selected cases, mentor grantees in direct development of their QAPPs.
 - d. Management, maintenance and updating of a sharefile-based searchable database of educational resources about quality assurance quality control (QA/QC) for grantees. This would include examples of approved QAPPs associated with different types of data collection and environmental media.
3. Quality Management Plan compliance
 - a. Assist the Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Fund's contractor [The Commons](#) in creation of a QAPP for [FieldDoc](#) a program designed to aide grantees in calculating and reporting metrics related to water quality improvements.

NFWF anticipates the following project compliance needs in the coming year:

1. NEPA/ESA/NHPA related compliance:
 - a. Twenty-two (22) consultations or less for projects that include environmental planning, assessments and coordination where no on-the-ground activity will take place.
 - b. Fifteen (15) consultations or less for projects that include minimal or standard activities, and universally accepted Standard Operating Procedures and conservation measures are already incorporated into the project.
 - c. Five (5) consultations or less for projects likely to have a significant effect (either positive or negative) on an aspect of the environment; and which will require a complete compliance review. Projects might include on-the-ground work, ground-disturbing activities with potential Tribal consultation or State Historic Preservation Act review needed, or other potential effects to the human environment.
2. QAPP related compliance
 - a. Approximately 80 consultations as described above (about 60-70 for CBSF and about 15-20 for LISFF).

This list above outlines the general scope of work to be addressed under this RFP; 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 party with an option to extend for an additional four years, to be exercised at NFWF's discretion.

QUALIFICATIONS

This RFP is seeking qualified organizations or entities to serve as independent contractor(s) to NFWF with the following qualifications:

- Three to five years' experience working directly to support NEPA/ESA/NHPA and/or QAPP compliance.

- Experience working with a variety of organizations in the Northeast United States including non-profit organizations, community-based organizations, K-12 educational institutions, and federal, state, local, territorial, or Tribal government agencies.
- Understanding of federal grant requirements, including terms and conditions associated with federal funding sources.
- Strong project management skills, including the ability to flexibly manage and adapt to changing program needs.

ANTICIPATED DELIVERABLES

The contract deliverables will include:

- Ongoing consultation documentation
- Maintaining tracking spreadsheet
- Providing project updates when requested by NFWF Staff
- Monthly check-ins with NFWF staff
- Final report summarizing lessons learned at contract completion
- Maintenance and updating of the searchable database
- Other deliverables as called for by the proposed Scope of Work and contractor's proposed technical approach

These deliverables may be expanded or refined during the contract negotiation.

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Proposals must be submitted under the same cover at the same time, in six distinct and separate documents: 1) Understanding of the Scope of Work, 2) Technical Approach, 3) Qualifications of Proposed Personnel, 4) Record of Past Performance, 5) Corporate Capability, and 6) Cost Proposal. Email a Word or PDF version of your submission to NFWF (Joe Toolan, Manager of Chesapeake Bay Programs, Joe.Toolan@NFWF.org). In the subject line, please indicate *"Response to RFP for Technical Assistance for the Northeast Region Federal Compliance – [name of respondent]."*

Submissions must be single-spaced in Word format or a searchable PDF, with a minimum 11-point font, and not to exceed the indicated page or word limits. Offerors should organize their Statement based on these sections:

1. **Contact Information.** Primary Contact Person, Entity Name, Address, Phone, E-mail, Website, and EIN or SSN.
2. **Understanding of the Scope of Work.** A statement of **no more than one page** demonstrating an understanding of the challenges faced by the program(s) with which the offeror purports to work, including a comprehension of the NEPA/ESA/NHPA and QAPP requirements.
3. **Technical Approach.** A description of **no more than one page** of a proposed technical approach for facilitating the success of federal requirements.
4. **Qualifications of Proposed Personnel.** Resumes or CVs of the principal investigator(s), describing relevant professional experience to meet the qualifications in the section above.

There is **no page limit** associated with this element of the Proposal.

5. **Record of Past Performance/References.** The Proposal should identify at least three past engagements conducting similar work for NFWF or other organizations, identifying the offeror's quality of work, timeliness, and cost control. The cumulative statement of past performances **should not exceed 1 page**. The Statement should include names, email addresses, and telephone numbers of points of contact for the referenced engagements.
6. **Corporate Capability.** The applicant shall provide with the RFP response, 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 RFP.
7. **Cost Proposal.** The Cost Proposal includes the proposal budget and budget justification. The cost proposal must be submitted using the budget template located [here](#). The cost proposal budget should be cost-effective and should maximize the value for monies requested in the offeror's budget. Please break various tasks into separate line items. Profit/profit margin must be separately itemized in the budget.

SELECTION PROCESS AND CRITERIA

A panel of NFWF staff will review the full proposals. Offerors may be asked to modify objectives, work plans, or budgets prior to final approval of the award. One contract may be made for this project. If multiple institutions are involved in one application, they should be handled through sub-awards and sub-contracts.

Failure to include all materials outlined above may cause a submission to be deemed non-responsive. NFWF will give priority consideration to respondents that demonstrate the following in a fully responsive submission:

1. **Understanding of the Scope of Work.** The proposal must demonstrate a thorough understanding of federal compliance requirements (NEPA/ESA/NHPA, QAPP, etc.), and the processes for developing and compiling the materials grantees need to meet such requirements. *Weight: 20%*
2. **Technical Approach.** The proposed technical approach for fulfilling the scope of work must demonstrate familiarity and proficiency in federal compliance consultations. *Weight: 20%*
3. **Budget and Cost Effectiveness.** The budget should be cost effective and should maximize the value for monies requested in the applicant's budget. Proposal costs should be the minimum necessary to adequately achieve the stated scope of work. Profit/profit margin must be separately itemized in the budget. *Weight 20%*
4. **Qualifications.** Preference will be given to Offerors that bring a team with the training and experience detailed in the Qualifications section and the requisite experience necessary to successfully implement the Tasks detailed in the Scope of Work. Offeror must demonstrate relevant professional experience in the following areas: (a) experience working with federal,

state, and local governmental agencies, national and local NGOs involved with conservation; (b) any experience with Foundations and grants federal compliance requirements. *Weight: 20%*

5. **Contractor's Past Performance.** The proposal should include information about past performance related to the technical expertise offered. Specifically, the proposal should identify at least two past engagements conducting similar work for NFWF or other organizations, identifying the applicant's quality of work, timeliness, and cost control. *Weight: 20%*

ELIGIBLE OFFERORS

Eligible applicants are nonprofit organizations, for-profit businesses and individual consultants. Qualified, certified Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE) (small, minority and women-owned businesses) are strongly encouraged to apply.

SPECIAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS & CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

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 proposal, or in subsequent correspondence (if the issue becomes known after the submission of the proposal) 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/>

RFP DEADLINES (SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

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| 3/9/2023 | Request for Proposals (RFP) released. Q&A period begins. All questions of general interest will be answered publicly and must be received by March, 23 2023. |
| 3/23/2023 | Deadline for Questions. FAQ will be posted to this site within 24 hours. |
| 4/24/2023 | Proposals must be received electronically as an email attachment by Joe Toolan, Manager of Chesapeake Bay Programs, Joe.Toolan@NFWF.org by 11:00PM EDT . |
| 9/1/2023 | Contractors' anticipated start date. |

REQUESTING ORGANIZATION: National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, 1133 15th Street NW, Suite 1000, Washington, DC 20005.

CONTACT: Joe Toolan, Manager of Chesapeake Bay Programs, (202) 888-1677, Joe.Toolan@NFWF.org