

# Applicant Questions and Answers

## Related to the NFWF Technical Field Liaison Support Request for Quotations

July 23<sup>rd</sup> 2024

### Application Process and Contracting

*Q. What is the anticipated start date for the work?*

A. We are hoping to have a contractor selected and final contracting by October 2024, with a start date in that same time frame.

### Scope of Work

*Q. Is the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation looking for a firm that can support this effort on a national level where a team needs to be dedicated to building and guiding program participants, or are you looking for a regional liaison that will help guide established participants through the tasks outlined in the RFP?*

A. NFWF is looking for a firm that has the qualifications and expertise listed in the RFP and that can successfully implement the tasks and activities listed in the Scope of Work. Based upon review of the proposals received, this may involve contracting with one entity that can provide national-level support for the NCRF or two entities with more regional level expertise and relationships that can support NCRF at the regional level. NFWF will preference entities that have expertise and experience in the priority regions and issue areas listed in the RFP.

*Q. Do you have a list of potential applicants that will be assigned to the liaison? How will the contractor be connected to applicants requiring assistance?*

A. No, the contractor(s) will be asked to work with applicants on an as needed basis and based upon requests for assistance from applicants and other partners and stakeholders. The contractor(s) will be connected to applicants either through NFWF or by direct outreach from the applicants themselves.

*Q. National Coastal Resilience Fund (NCRF) is a National Program. Is National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) looking for liaisons at a regional or local level? Or are you looking for 2 firms that could support the entire national program, and if so to what capacity?*

A. Per the RFP, NFWF may contract with one or two organizations or entities to provide technical support as field liaisons for the NCRF. Depending on the proposals we receive, this may include one entity that can provide national coverage or multiple entities serving as field liaisons in different regions.

*Q. Can we assume that all deliverables will be submitted electronically?*

A. Yes.

*Q. What anticipated travel do you anticipate?*

A. Offerors should develop proposals that will successfully implement the Scope of Work included in the RFP. NFWF anticipates that some travel may be needed to successfully implement the Scope of Work, including traveling to in-person convenings and events. NFWF will work with selected contractor(s) to identify priority conferences and events. Any proposed travel expenses should be included and justified in the budget template. Offerors could also include some discussion of assumed travel needs and

estimated costs in their Technical Proposal. Please see other responses to questions about travel costs in the Questions and Answer document.

*Q. Can conferences and webinars be held virtually? If not, how many will involve travel?*

A. Where feasible participation in conferences and events can be held virtually, we would encourage contractors to participate in this manner. However, offerors should anticipate some travel to attend in-person conference and events, where needed to successfully engage potential applicants and stakeholders. Any proposed travel expenses should be included and justified in the budget template. Offerors could also include some discussion of assumed travel needs and estimated costs in their Technical Proposal that they think are necessary to successfully implement the RFP's Scope of Work. NFWF will work with selected contractors to ensure sufficient travel budget is allocated to cover the contractors travel and other costs associated with participating in in-person events and convenings. Please see other responses to questions about travel costs in the Questions and Answer document.

*Q. Does NFWF assume that the majority of this work will occur remotely with only select travel during the period? Or does NFWF assume the opposite? The travel expectation is not quite clear and could vary significantly so any guidance would be helpful.*

A. Offerors should develop proposals that will successfully implement the Scope of Work included in the RFP. However, offerors should anticipate some travel to attend in-person conference and events, where needed to successfully engage potential applicants and stakeholders. NFWF will work with selected contractor(s) to identify priority conferences and events. Any proposed travel expenses should be included and justified in the budget template. Offerors could also include some discussion of assumed travel needs and estimated costs in their Technical Proposal. Please see other responses to questions about travel costs in the Questions and Answer document.

*Q. How many webinars and/or conferences are anticipated per year?*

A. Offerors technical proposals should include tasks and activities that they think will successfully implement the Scope of Work included in the RFP. We don't have a hard and fast estimate on the number of webinars or trips. We anticipate the numbers will vary greatly based on the proposed scope of work; the geographies, communities, and groups offerors propose to engage in their technical approach; and the needs of those communities or groups. For example, some communities may have the technical capacity and resources needed to engage virtually, whereas other engagements may require in person meetings to ensure success. We would like qualified offerors tell us their proposed approach and what is needed based upon the communities and geographies they propose to engage.

*Q. On average, how many project sponsors request technical assistance at various stages of the process (pre-proposal, proposal, post-award)?*

A. The NCRF anticipates significant increased funding over the next several grant cycles as a result of funds appropriated through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. As a result, of this increased funding we have also made significant changes to our Request for Proposals governing the award of NCRF funds. As a result of increased funding and changes in the RFP, it is difficult to estimate the number of applicants and interested parties that will seek technical assistance at various stages in the grantmaking process. Offerors technical proposals should include tasks and activities that they think will successfully implement the Scope of Work included in the RFP. We anticipate the numbers will vary greatly based on the proposed scope of work; the geographies, communities, and groups offerors propose to engage in their technical approach; and the needs of those communities or groups. NFWF will work with selected contractors to develop work plan(s) to direct the work over the contract performance period in a way that meets NFWF needs and is within the budget for the contract.

*Q: The priority areas identified underserved communities as a general criterion. If the contractor has experience with underserved communities beyond the priority areas identified, is that sufficient for consideration, or are you looking only at those priority areas and the underserved communities within them?*

A. Offerors technical proposals should include tasks and activities that they think will successfully implement the Scope of Work and that meets the criteria and qualifications included in the RFP. We will give preference contractors that demonstrate experience and expertise working in the priority geographies, issue areas, and with priority groups listed in the RFP. Offerors that have experience in both engaging underserved communities and experience working in priority geographies should describe that experience, as both are of interest to NFWF in selecting contractors to support this work.

*Q: Are there priority areas within the NCFR landscape that the contractor is expected to have knowledge and expertise in?*

A. Yes, per the RFP, contractor(s) with experience, networks and expertise working in the NFWF priority regions for field liaison coverage in the Pacific Northwest, Alaska, Great Lakes, New England, U.S. territories, Tribes, underserved communities, and defense communities will be prioritized. **However**, the NCFR is a national program, and the contractor(s) should be prepared to provide support throughout the program footprint working on a variety of natural and nature-based features.

*Q: The RFP mentions supporting other programs beyond NCFR, what are those programs and what is the expected workload supporting programs other than NCFR?*

A. The NCFR is the primary program for this contract. Contractor(s) may be asked to provide support for the Emergency Coastal Resilience Fund (ECRF). The ECRF does not have a regular grant cycle and is only offered when emergency supplemental funding is directed to NFWF for specific federally declared disaster events. Therefore, it is unknown if a new ECRF grant cycle will occur within this contract period. Contractor(s) may also be asked to aid applicants in transferring their application from another NFWF program to the NCFR if they are found to be a better fit for the NCFR competition. This will be done on an as-needed basis and at the discretion of the NCFR staff.

## Qualifications

*Q: The RFP references three to five years experience as a criterion, but the tasks appear to require deeper technical experience. Could you please clarify if you're seeking a mid-level professional for the daily work?*

A. Offerors technical proposals should include staff with the experience and qualifications that they think will be needed to successfully implement the Scope of Work included in the RFP. NFWF anticipates that qualified offerors may include several different staff members as part of team tasked with delivering on the proposed Scope or Work and that those staff may have varying levels of experience and qualifications, including more senior level staff with specific subject matter expertise and more junior- or mid-level staff supporting the tasks and activities described by the Offeror in their technical proposal. NFWF will evaluate proposals, including resumes of key staff, based upon the desired qualifications and evaluation criteria listed in the RFP.

*Q: Are contractors allowed to submit proposals in partnership with other organizations? If so, must the partner organization be treated as subcontractors and are said subcontractors required to be selected through a bidding process compliant with federal regulation.*

A. Sub-contracts are appropriate and allowable if multiple institutions are involved in a single application. Since funding for this opportunity comes from federal sources contractors 1) shall abide by all required contracting procedures when subcontracting, including but not limited to those requirements of the [OMB Uniform Guidance](#); (2) shall ensure that all applicable federal, state and local requirements are properly flowed down to the subcontractor.

## Budget

*Q. For a corporation, what sorts of documentation will NFWF accept as evidence of financial stability? Would you like balance sheets, profit and loss statements, or something else?*

A. The RFP lists the types of documents that can be used to show financial stability, including financial statements, credit ratings, line of credits, or other financial arrangements sufficient to demonstrate the applicant's capability to meet the requirement of the RFP. For more information about what is accepted evidence of financial stability for purposes of grants and contract see: <https://www.nfwf.org/apply-grant/application-information/required-financial-documents>

*Q. Should the budget be outlined to reflect the efforts per community or the total effort each firm can dedicate toward a task?*

A. The budget should outline the total effort the offeror proposes to dedicate per task. In developing the budget, the offeror should consider the time required to successfully implement the tasks and activities included in the Scope of Work, including engaging with applicant communities and grantees. The proposed technical proposals can include any assumptions the offeror is making about the number of engagements and the time required to successfully complete each engagement.

*Q. Is the contract cost-reimbursable like a NFWF grant.*

A. Cost are reimbursable like a NFWF grant. However, the contractor must submit invoices to the NFWF portal before receiving funds.

*Q. Is there an anticipated monetary budget for the contract?*

A. NFWF cannot share information about the budget for this contract. Offerors should propose the level of effort they estimate is necessary to complete the tasks outlined in the Request for Proposals and as described in the Offeror's technical approach.

## Conflict of Interest Policies

*Q. If we apply to serve in this technical assistance/field liaison role, would we also be able to apply for and compete for project related funding? We have clients and projects that have utilized NFWF funding on coastal resilience projects in the past. Would this work conflict us out of working on NFWF funded projects during the contract period?*

A. There would be some limits in terms of the contractor's ability to apply for funding under NFWF's Conflict of Interest policies. While there is no expressed limitation in this Request for Quotations precluding a contractor organization from receiving funds under the NCRF, NFWF's Conflict of Interest policies would likely preclude the organization from applying for funding from this program for at least the region(s) in which they are serving under the contract due to unfair knowledge of other likely proposed projects or NFWF priorities beyond what may be available publicly. NFWF would also want the

contractor to represent and work with potential applicants without the perception of being a potential competitor for funding.

*Q. Are current NCFR grantees allowed to apply to the RFP?*

A. Yes, however please reach out the NCFR staff to ensure there is no conflict of interest, especially if you are interested in applying for a future NFWF grant.

*Q. Can we include NFWF as a reference? Are we limited to only two client references?*

A. References should be clients other than NFWF. Please limit yourself to two references.

*Q. Is there a conflict of interest if the liaisons firm is assigned to complete the projects for the communities, of which they were aiding, when they receive grant funding through the program?*

A. Our conflict of interest policy is listed at the end of the RFP. We will work with selected contractors to ensure compliance with this policy, including asking contractors to recuse themselves from activities that would pose a potential conflict of interest.

*Q. Is there a planned conflict avoidance process if potential conflicts arise during the course of the contract?*

A. Our conflict of interest policy is listed at the end of the RFP. We will work with selected contractors to ensure compliance with this policy, including asking contractors to recuse themselves from activities that would pose a potential conflict of interest.

#### Other

*Q. What is the anticipated level of funding available for grantees for the National Coastal Resilience Fund over the next two years?*

A. The availability of federal funds estimated in each year's solicitation is contingent upon the federal appropriations process; funding decisions will be made based on timing and level of funding. However, with additional funding received under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, we anticipate NCFR solicitations will have elevated funding levels over the next five grant cycles.

*Q. The RFP submission requires 11 point font, can we use smaller-sized font on the Organization Chart, Tables/Figures, and captions?*

A. Please use a font size no smaller than 11 pt in your submission.

*Q. Can additional documents be provided outside the 20-page technical proposal narrative?*

A. We ask you only provide the documents outlined in the RFP in your submission. If you would like to submit additional documents, please reach out to the NCFR staff to see if they are allowable (include a brief description of the additional documents and why that information can't be included in the 20-page technical proposal narrative).

*Q. What file format should we submit the proposal in?*

A. Word document is preferred; a searchable PDF is allowed.