



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

America the Beautiful Challenge Technical Field Liaison Support

PROPOSAL DEADLINE: September 17, 2024

OVERVIEW

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) seeks two or three qualified Contractors to provide technical assistance as “field liaisons” to support applicants and grantees of the America the Beautiful Challenge (ATBC) and other associated NFWF grant programs, including the Western Big Game Seasonal Habitat and Migration Corridors Fund (Big Game). This support will help to advance the goals of the ATBC, the Big Game and other associated NFWF grant programs, improve grantee and applicant experience, and increase the quality and scale of qualified proposals. The contractor will provide support for one-year (with the option to renew for an additional year) and report to Rachel Dawson, Program Director, National Programs.

BACKGROUND

The America the Beautiful Challenge is a partnership between NFWF and the U.S. Department of the Interior through the Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Department of Agriculture through the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Forest Service, the U.S. Department of Defense, and Native Americans in Philanthropy. The ATBC vision is to streamline grant funding opportunities for new voluntary conservation and restoration projects throughout the United States. This RFP consolidates funding from multiple federal agencies and the private sector to enable applicants to conceive and develop large-scale, locally led projects that address shared funder priorities spanning public, Tribal, and private lands. ATBC seeks to fund projects across the following themes:

1. Conserving and restoring rivers, coasts, wetlands and watersheds
2. Conserving and restoring forests, grasslands and other important ecosystems that serve as carbon sinks
3. Connecting and reconnecting wildlife corridors, large landscapes, watersheds and seascapes
4. Improving ecosystem and community resilience to flooding, drought and other climate-related threats
5. Expanding access to the outdoors, particularly in underserved communities

Collectively, these themes invite applicants to develop landscape-level ATBC proposals that address conservation and public access needs with: cumulative benefits to fish and wildlife, enhanced carbon sequestration and storage, benefits to and engagement with underserved communities, and protection of ecosystems through resilience-focused and nature-based solutions.



ATBC funds projects in five categories shaped largely by the primary funding partner of each category, the five categories are:

- Implementation Grants
- Planning Grants
- Sentinel Landscape Grants
- National Forest Grants
- Private Forests, Rangeland, and Farmland Grants

For more information about the Program, please visit our website and review the 2024 Request for Proposals at: www.nfwf.org/challenge.

The Western Big Game Seasonal Habitat and Migration Corridors Fund aims to conserve critical winter range and migration corridors to maintain healthy populations of pronghorn, elk and mule deer, and the phenomenon of big game migration. The western United States is home to some of the largest herds of wild native ungulates in North America. However, the seasonal migrations many of these populations rely on in response to weather conditions and resource availability face significant threats. This program aims to conserve critical winter range and migration corridors through:

1. Restoring degraded priority winter range, stopover areas and migration corridors by activities identified in the [State Action Plans](#) or Indigenous plans such as removing encroaching trees from sagebrush ecosystems, rehabilitating areas damaged by fire or treating exotic/invasive vegetation to improve the quality and value of these areas to big game and other wildlife.
2. Working cooperatively with private landowners and State highway departments to achieve permissive fencing measures including potentially modifying, removing, installing or seasonally adapting fencing if proven to impede movement of big game through priority migration corridors.
3. Conservation easements and management agreements, or other actions to protect bottlenecks within corridors and other areas within priority winter range, stopover areas threatened by fragmentation.
4. Utilizing other proven actions necessary to improve the habitat quality or restore priority big-game winter range, stopover areas or migration corridors across the West.

The Western Big Game Seasonal Habitat and Migration Corridors Fund is a result of [Interior Secretarial Order 3362](#) and a partnership between NFWF and the U.S. Department of Interior's Bureau of Land Management, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program, the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service, and ConocoPhillips.



For more information about the Program, please visit our website and review the 2023 Request for Proposals at: <https://www.nfwf.org/programs/rocky-mountain-rangelands/western-big-game-seasonal-habitat-and-migration-corridors-fund>.

NFWF seeks two or three contractors to serve as “field liaisons” for the ATBC, the Big Game, and other associated NFWF grant programs to: (1) assist applicants in developing high quality proposals that are aligned with NFWF’s priorities, (2) help applicants and grantees design and move towards large-scale implementation projects, (3) help troubleshoot grant implementation, and (4) facilitate communication and development of networks among grantees to encourage shared learning.

The ATBC is a national program, and a contractor should be prepared to provide support to practitioners throughout the program footprint working on a conservation restoration projects; however, Offerors should highlight if they have a particular expertise in certain regions of the larger ATBC footprint or on specific aspects of the program, particularly big game seasonal habitat, stopover areas, and migration corridors within Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming. NFWF is also interested in identifying projects that are informed by Indigenous Knowledge (IK), honor Tribal sovereignty, and support the priorities of Native Nations. Contractors with broad conservation and restoration experience, relationships and expertise working with U.S. territories, Native Nations, and underserved communities will be prioritized.

QUALIFICATIONS

To assist in the successful implementation of the ATBC, the Big Game, and other associated NFWF grant programs, this RFQ is seeking two or three 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 conservation and restoration related programs or initiatives, and particular expertise in planning, designing, implementing, or evaluating projects that improve habitat for fish and wildlife and migration corridors is preferred.
- Experience working in a variety of jurisdictions and advising federal, state, local, territorial, or Native Nation government agencies, and specific experience in priority regions and geographies is preferred.
- Specific experience working with or engaging diverse stakeholder groups, underserved communities, and/or Native Nation communities especially as it pertains to capacity building.
- Specific experience providing technical support to organizations to develop project ideas and troubleshoot implementation barriers
- Strong public speaking and meeting facilitation experience, including specific experience designing and implementing effective engagement and outreach approaches, convening practitioners, and translating complex information for a variety of audiences with different skill and competency levels.



- 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 project needs.

SCOPE OF WORK

NFWF seeks two or three qualified contractors to develop and implement a work plan designed to maximize the outcomes of the ATBC, the Big Game, and other associated NFWF programs and support its applicants and grantees in the pursuit of conservation and restoration projects. The following tasks constitute the Scope of Work for this Request for Quotations. The selected contractor will be expected to work on all tasks described and participate in check-in calls every month with NFWF staff throughout the duration of the project period of performance. Please provide time and cost quotes for each task using the [Contractor Budget Template](#) provided. NFWF anticipates level of effort not to exceed half-time, a not to exceed cost will be negotiated upon award with each selected contractor.

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- **Task 1: Identify and grow opportunities for new applicants** – Conduct outreach to key stakeholder groups and assist potential applicants in priority geographies to help them understand NFWF funding priorities, develop restoration project concepts, identify potential partnerships, and identify funding opportunities for matching funds. Present on the ATBC, Big Game, and other associated NFWF programs at selected events and conferences. Support outreach to existing grantees to help them advance next phases of pipeline projects for future grant cycles.
- **Task 2: Troubleshoot challenges with applicants and grantees** – Provide technical assistance to applicants and grantees to help them trouble-shoot potential challenges with project design and implementation (e.g., provide technical assistance and guidance on the develop of project ideas, partnerships, budgets, and application materials; support onboarding of new grantees to NFWF grant management systems and requirements, etc.).
- **Task 3: Support Proposal Review** – Assist in reviewing select grant proposals for annual funding opportunities. Written review is anticipated for approximately 150 pre-proposals (~2-3 page) and 50 full proposals (~10 pages, not including attachments, such as engineering and design documents) per year.
- **Task 4: Promote peer-learning and regional-scale collaboration** – Assist prospective applicants and current NFWF grantees in establishing, strengthening, and sustaining regional partnerships and collaborative approaches to advance NFWF’s goals. Facilitate peer-to-peer learning and collaborative initiatives among applicants, grantees and other partners through workshops, webinars and through other priority conferences and events. Support efforts to distill lessons learned and capture success stories from previous grants by reviewing project reports and assessments, engaging grantees, conducting site visits, and summarizing project case studies or other products, among other activities.



Deliverables –

- Quarterly written and ongoing verbal progress reports
- Monthly reports on outreach and engagement activities
- Final report summarizing lessons learned at contract completion
- Written reviews of grant proposals
- 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 INSTRUCTIONS

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. E-mail a Word or PDF version of your submission to NFWF (Blake Gardiner, blake.gardiner@nfwf.org and Sydney Godbey, sydney.godbey@nfwf.org). In the subject line, please indicate *Response to RFQ for Technical Field Liaisons for the ATBC – [name of respondent]*.

Submissions must meet the requirements below:

1. **Technical Proposal (twenty (20) pages total):**
 - a. **Format:** Proposals must be provided in Word format or searchable PDF with a font size no smaller than 11 pt.
 - b. **Narrative:** Address each item in the “Submission Outline” section, below. Limit your submission to a maximum of ten (10) pages (not including resumes). Please limit supplementary materials to only those requested below. (NFWF may contact respondents as necessary for any additional information.)
 - c. **Resumes:** Attach CVs or Resumes of key staff. Please limit attached resumes to no more than ten (10) one-page resumes, each a single-sided page. Licenses and other certifications should be noted as part of your submission, but copies are not required at this time.
2. **Budget:** Please provide a proposed budget with cost quotes for each Task for your proposed services, include hourly rates for proposed job classifications and, if available, audited overhead rates. 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 attached **Contractor Budget Template**. Please include the proposed budget for equipment purchase in the proposal. Please highlight any non-profit discounts on the services you provide. NFWF will not allow any markups for sub-contracts or other direct costs, although project management costs for staff to perform sub-contract management are allowable. NFWF anticipates awarding up to two contracts under this RFQ, not to exceed the simplified acquisition threshold.

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3. **Evidence of Financial Stability:** 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.

Submissions must be e-mailed no later than 11:00 p.m. EST on **September 17, 2024**.

SUBMISSION OUTLINE

Technical Proposal – Your description, in no more than twenty (20) pages (including resume attachments) of your and/or your organization's qualifications should include the following elements:

1. **Contact information.** Please provide a Primary Contact Person, Entity Name, Address, Phone, E-mail, Website, and EIN or SSN
2. **General Organization Description.** Please provide a general description of your organization including practice areas, geographic service areas, approximate number of clients, and length of time in business. If your application includes team members or sub-consultants, please provide the requested profile information for all key personnel and team members, and indicate the lead entity responsible for contract management and quality of deliverables.
3. **Technical Approach.** Provide a general description demonstrating your understanding of the goals and objectives of the ATBC and administrative challenge facing ATBC applicants and grantees, including any geographic differences in risks and approaches, key stakeholders and partners engaging initiatives, and the policy landscape. Describe the technical approach and overall strategy you would take for implementing the Tasks listed in the Scope of Work. Describe how you will communicate with NFWF and program stakeholders and report on progress, results, and deliverables.
4. **Expertise and Past Experience.** Please list the type(s) of services your organization provides relating to the specified Qualifications and your expertise in these areas. Please detail your experience in providing services similar to those called for in this RFQ. List recent (last five years) projects and previous services related to the expertise you are describing.
5. **Key staff.** Please provide names and brief biographies of key staff. Please describe key staff's training and experience to successfully implement the Tasks called for in the Scope of Work and relevant to those listed in the Qualifications section.
6. **Team management and quality assurance/ quality control.** Describe how the lead entity will manage the team (if applicable). Please describe quality assurance and control procedures that will be used to ensure your team's work meets professional standards and how invoicing will be performed to ensure contract compliance.



7. **References and past performance.** Please describe three past engagements conducting similar work for NFWF or other organizations, including the specific tasks and deliverables completed and how those engagements will prepare your team to ensure delivery of quality work, on time and on budget, if awarded this contract. Include contact information (names, emails addresses, and telephone numbers) for three client references relevant to the services described.
8. **Resumes.** Please attach resumes of key staff as appropriate. Please limit attached resumes to no more than 10 one-page resumes, each a single page. Licenses and other certifications should be noted as part of your submission, but copies are not required at this time.

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. Up to three contracts 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 or Work.** The proposed Technical Approach must demonstrate considerable experience working in a variety of settings and jurisdictions, with specific expertise supporting conservation and restoration initiatives to improve habitat for fish and wildlife. The proposed Technical Approach must demonstrate an understanding of the NFWF goals and objectives, and challenges facing NFWF applicants and grantees, including any geographic differences in risks and approaches, key stakeholders and partners engaging initiatives, and the policy landscape. Preference will be given to offerors with specific expertise working with U.S. territories, Native Nations, and underserved communities. *Weight: 20%*
2. **Technical Approach.** Offeror should clearly describe their proposed technical approach for successfully implementing the Scope of Work described in the RFQ and ensuring the success of NFWF grant investments and overall program strategy. *Weight: 20%*
3. **Budget and Cost Effectiveness.** Preference will be given to Offerors who can provide high quality services at an affordable cost. *Weight: 20%*
4. **Qualification of Proposed Personnel and Capacity to Deliver Services.** 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. Offerors must demonstrate they have sufficient staff and other resources, a degree of flexibility in how and where services are delivered, and an



ability to tailor content and delivery methods to meet the specific needs of the ATBC, the Big Game, and other associated NFWF programs and key stakeholder groups. *Weight: 20%*

5. **Contractor's Past Performance.** Offerors must demonstrate significant expertise and experience as exhibited by delivery of multiple directly relevant projects in areas described in this RFQ, in consideration of the quality of deliverables, timeliness, cost controls, and client references. *Weight: 20%*

RFP DEADLINES (SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

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| 8/19/2024 | Request for Proposals (RFP) released. Q&A period begins. All questions of general interest will be answered publicly and must be received by September 2, 2024 . |
| 9/2/2024 | Deadline for Questions. FAQ will be posted to this site within 48 hours. |
| 9/17/2024 | Proposals must be received electronically as an email attachment to Blake Gardiner, Blake.Gardiner@nfwf.org by 11:00 PM EDT . |
| October 2024 | Interviews with selected finalists as needed. |
| 2/1/2025 | Contractor anticipated start date. |

ELIGIBLE CONTRACTORS

Eligible offerors include institutions of higher education, other nonprofits, commercial organizations, international organizations, and local, state and Native Nations. Small and minority businesses, and women's business enterprises 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/>

REQUESTING ORGANIZATION: National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), 1625 Eye Street NW, Suite 300, Washington, DC 20006

CONTACTS: Blake Gardiner; Blake.Gardiner@nfwf.org