



NFWF

Contract to Provide Technical Liaison Support for NFWF's Great Lakes Programs

Answers to Questions in Response to the RFQ

APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY AND TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

Question: We assume that this current opportunity is not the first Technical Liaison Support contract NFWF has issued. Please advise. If so, is the firm or firms eligible to propose for this opportunity?

- NFWF Answer: NFWF awarded the first contract aligned with this RFQ in 2022 to Stantec after a competitive process. The firm is eligible to apply for this competitive opportunity.

Question: In the Scope of Work section of the RFP, it says "NFWF anticipates level of effort not to exceed half-time". Can you clarify what "half-time" means? Although there is likely to be some degree of variability from year to year, is there an average, or typical, number of hours that are expended over the course of the year.

- NFWF Answer: There is not a specific hour target for this contract, but we expect the approximate amount of work to be cumulatively equivalent to ½ time of a typical FTE annually.

Question: We currently work with some of NFWF's grantees as a contractor, are a NFWF grantee ourselves and/or have outstanding grant applications outstanding for more work through potential grantees. Would these pose a conflict of interest for this RFQ?

- NFWF Answer: Not necessarily. Conflicts of interest will be considered on a case by case basis. An Applicant will not be disqualified if they have existing contracts or grants with NFWF or our grantees. However, we do request you disclose these existing relationships in the application so that we can understand how you propose navigating these conflicts of interest and roughly how much of the RFQ scope could be impacted.

Question: Will meetings with NFWF and grantees and/or potential applicants will be virtual? What is the range of travel expected and how often?

- NFWF Answer: For the most part, we anticipate the meetings will be virtual. NFWF's Great Lakes team works remotely and we hope to award to a contractor that has expertise in the Great Lakes region, but does not have to be located in a specific area to conduct outreach to and assistance for applicants and grantees throughout the region. We do anticipate a relatively modest amount of travel to key grantee convenings, contractor or NFWF led grantee meetings, etc. to be within the scope of the contract, approximately 3-5 trips/year at most.

Question: What sort of technical requirements will be expected, such as word processing programs, excel, GIS, GPS, or Computer Aided Design?

- NFWF Answer: Basic technical proficiency in the Microsoft Office suite of programs, including Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Teams, etc. is desired. Additional technical capabilities, such as GIS, Tableau, etc. are not required. Contractors will be asked to keep detailed records of their outreach activities and measure progress and changes in grantee/applicant success as the result of outreach.

Question: The RFQ states that only one award will be made for this project, and that if multiple institutions are involved, they should be handled through subcontracts. Does NFWF encourage applicants to assemble a team of professionals to provide maximum coverage of the program geographies/focus areas?

- NFWF Answer: We do not necessarily encourage this. If you have the needed expertise and relationships across the region within the applicant organization, that is great. If you feel you need to supplement your team's skills with outside entities, you may include those as sub-contractors in your proposal.

Question: Can the Qualification of the Proposed Personnel section also include qualifications of the firm as a whole, and not just of the key staff?

- NFWF Answer: Yes, please include qualifications of the firm as a whole in addition to staff that will be engaging in the proposed contract.

Question: Can project references include those from NFWF?

- NFWF Answer: Yes, please include NFWF examples if they are relevant to this RFQ in addition to outside examples.

RFQ CLARIFICATIONS

Question: In the Scope of Work, it reads that "NFWF seeks a qualified Contractor to develop and implement a work plan...". Are there example work plans available for review?

- NFWF Answer: We do not have a plan for review, but suggest that the applicants should prepare a plan that includes key activities to be undertaken during the course of the contract, clear timelines for the activities proposed, and a discussion of the deliverables/goals of the contract in terms of outcomes and measures of progress. This plan should be concise and clear, likely no more than 2-3 pages at most.

Question: How many contracts does NFWF anticipate awarding in response to this RFQ?

- NFWF Answer: NFWF anticipates awarding one contract in response to the RFQ.

Question: Some parts of the RFP are written as if an award would be to an individual, but other parts of the RFP suggest NFWF is looking for a firm. Could you please clarify the expected level of effort (and/or role) for the individual or firm that would be selected?

- NFWF Answer: An individual could be considered under this RFQ, but based on the workload, we anticipate a firm with a small team contributing to this work would be better aligned with NFWF's needs.

Question: There are two contractor RFQs presently being considered for NFWF's Great Lakes programs. Does NFWF intend to award contracts (field liaison and regulatory compliance technical assistance) to two different firms? Or could one firm win both contracts?

- NFWF Answer: Either outcome is possible. The most competitive offeror will be selected in response to each RFQ.

Question: Could you provide an approximate scale for the available funding for this contract?

- NFWF Answer: NFWF does not initially set restrictions on funding requests in response to RFQs. We hope to see cost-effective proposals reflective of one-year of reasonable contractor activities aligned deliverables and the scope of the contract detailed in the RFQ.

SCOPE OF WORK

Question: Do you have any past examples of the deliverables that are specified in this SOW? For instance, an example of progress reports, lessons learned report, and written reviews of grant proposals. Examples would provide clarity regarding content and (typical) level of effort.

- NFWF Answer: We do not have examples to provide at this time, however we can share the following details: 1) for progress reports we expect 1 to 3 page summaries of the work completed as well as any summary data/statistics relevant to key observations or trends gathered during the course of the contract; 2) for proposal reviews (where requested by NFWF), we expect reviews to include a brief paragraph to summarize technical merits of the proposal and overview the pros/cons of the proposal as well as a numeric score. Other updates will be delivered to NFWF verbally during regular meetings (virtual).

Question: For outreach activities, will NFWF provide an initial list of contacts and/or will the liaison help to identify and recruit prospective applicants?

- NFWF Answer: NFWF has not pre-determined precisely who the contractor will engage with. Rather, we hope to work closely with the selected contractor to identify conservation strategies and geographies NFWF wants to for the contractor to focus on for their outreach, engagement and technical assistance – with the contractor and NFWF determining who to reach out to and how in depth those connections may be.

Question: Approximately how many individual applicants will the liaison provide support with developing restoration project concepts, identifying potential partnerships, and identifying funding opportunities for matching funds?

- NFWF Answer: The selected contractor, in coordination with NFWF, will conduct proactive outreach to potential applicants throughout the region. We do not know for sure how many applicants this will be, but likely between 20-40 annually (this is a rough estimate and may change depending on NFWF and contractor conversations). Additionally, the selected contractor will provide support to applicants when preparing proposals for consideration and provide assistance to some those not selected for funding under our grant programs. For this, we anticipate approximately 15-30 organizations per year will need at least some support from the contractor (likely a virtual conversation or two at minimum) following a declined grant proposal.

Question: For the liaison support, is the contractor helping to frame out project concepts generally, or are they providing technical services as well (e.g., landscape design, engineering, monitoring, troubleshooting for active projects etc.)?

- NFWF Answer: We are looking for contractors to support applicants in developing project concepts, navigating NFWF funding opportunities themselves, and on occasion developing proposal components, including metrics. We are not requesting support for engineering, formal project design (e.g. conceptual design or plans), monitoring, QA/QC, or active grant troubleshooting etc.

Question: Is this intended to be one-on-one support and/or provided to groups of similar grantees?

- NFWF Answer: Either approach is viable and we anticipate a mix of both engagement strategies to be relevant to the RFQ scope of work outlined. We hope to see a proposed plan from respondents to this RFP that outlines a clear engagement strategy that articulates what type of engagements they will conduct, how and why.

Question: How many site visits should we include per community?

- NFWF Answer: We don't anticipate the contractor needing to do site visits for project monitoring (aka troubleshooting) as it is not in the scope of this RFQ. However, we do anticipate the contractor may want to travel to a few focal geographies annually where several grantees are located to meet with them individually, as a group, or to co-facilitate grantee convenings with NFWF staff. Examples of note might be Buffalo, NY, Detroit, MI, Chicago, IL, Cleveland, OH, etc. (these are meant to provide examples not required travel locations).

Question: What cadence does NFWF anticipate grantee collaboration? E.g., on a month, bi-monthly, or quarterly basis?

- NFWF Answer: NFWF's Great Lakes programs offer RFP's several times throughout the year, for example Sustain Our Great Lakes releases RFP's in January, Chi-Cal Rivers Fund in May/June, Conservation Partners Program and Southeast Michigan Resilience Fund in July/August. We anticipate the level of engagement with applicants for this contractor will increase during these open RFP windows. However, we want contractors to be conducting outreach to potential applicants throughout the year in preparation for open RFPs and developing longer-term relationships and project ideas. We see this work as ongoing.

Question: Does NFWF anticipate their liaison contractors assisting with grant proposal reviews?

- NFWF Answer: We ask the contractor to provide technical reviews of proposals for NFWF's Great Lakes programs.