



REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS NORTHEASTERN REGION FIELD LIAISONS

Requesting Organization: National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, 1133 15th Street NW, Suite 1100, Washington, DC 20005. Contact: Stephanie Heidbreder, Manager of Chesapeake Programs, 202-595-2498 / Stephanie.Heidbreder@nfwf.org.

OVERVIEW

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) seeks several qualified contractors to submit proposals to provide field support for the Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Fund and Central Appalachia Habitat Stewardship Program within NFWF's Northeastern region. The contractor will provide support for one-year (with the option to renew for up to one additional year) and report to Amanda Bassow, Director of the Northeastern Regional Office, or to one of her direct reports.

PROGRAM BACKGROUND

NFWF manages a variety of grant programs throughout the Mid-Atlantic and northeastern United States including the Central Appalachia Habitat Stewardship Program and several programs under the Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Fund.

- The Central Appalachia Habitat Stewardship Program invests in on-the-ground restoration and planning to restore the quality of forest and freshwater habitats in the Central Appalachian-Allegheny Plateau landscape, including the Appalachian regions of New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Maryland, West Virginia, and Virginia. Funding priorities for this program include forest conservation, connectivity, and management and healthy river systems in support of the goals and outcomes outlined in NFWF's [Central Appalachia Business Plan](#).
- Annual programs under NFWF's Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Fund (CBSF) include the Small Watershed Grants Implementation; Small Watershed Grants Planning and Technical Assistance; Innovative Nutrient and Sediment Reduction; a new Pennsylvania Most Effective Basins Grants Program and various off-cycle awards. Collectively, these programs are dedicated to protecting and restoring the bay by helping local communities clean up and restore their polluted rivers and streams and aim to achieve the goals and outcomes outlined in NFWF's [Chesapeake Bay Business Plan](#). Over time, the funding levels, projects, scope, reach and audience of these programs have grown significantly. The need for effective field support has grown as well, to assist potential grantees in developing proposals that are aligned with NFWF's priorities, to troubleshoot grant implementation, and to help form networks among grantees to facilitate shared learning. NFWF awards between 50 and 75 individual grants through its annual Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Fund grants programs and maintains more than 250 active grants at any one time.

- NFWF anticipates the selected contractors will share field support activities and coordinate with NFWF professional staff to ensure completed coverage of NFWF's Central Appalachia and Chesapeake Bay grants portfolios.

SCOPE OF WORK

The purpose of the contemplated contract is to:

- Assist prospective applicants and current NFWF grantees in establishing, strengthening, and sustaining regional-scale partnerships and collaborative to advance NFWF's Chesapeake Bay Business Plan;
- Conduct outreach and offer assistance to potential grantees in targeted geographies to understand NFWF funding priorities, develop restoration project concepts, identify potential partnerships, and identify funding opportunities;
- Conduct post-award site visits to troubleshoot potential challenges with project implementation; conduct pre-project monitoring assessments; and collect photo documentation;
- Support NFWF staff in implementing grantee oversight activities, including site visits, to assist grantees who need additional guidance with reporting requirements or potential compliance issues;
- Conduct occasional site visits upon grant completion to perform post-project monitoring assessments; obtain lessons learned or NFWF program feedback; collect photo documentation; provide guidance regarding projects' long-term maintenance and stewardship plans; and, to scope potential next phases of projects with grantees;
- Assist NFWF Program staff in developing proposals to public and private funding partners for new projects and initiatives, consistent with NFWF's Chesapeake Bay and Central Appalachia Habitat program goals;
- Participate in team meetings with NFWF team and other field liaisons, generally on a bi-weekly schedule;
- Be able to provide accurate and detailed information about site visits, grantee contacts, outreach, etc. for NFWF funder reports;
- Facilitate peer-to-peer learning among grantees through field tours, site visits, workshops, and other venues; and
- Facilitate collaborative initiatives around NFWF priorities in the designated regions.

NFWF anticipates the selected contractors will share field support activities and coordinate with NFWF professional staff to ensure completed coverage of NFWF's Central Appalachia and Chesapeake Bay grants portfolios through the following tasks and levels of effort:

Annual Field Liaison capacity needs (shared across a team of liaisons) for the Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Fund:

	Hours	Percent
Project, Proposal, and Partnership Development	2500	50.0%

Ongoing Project Oversight, Evaluation, and Assessment	750	15.0%
Supporting NFWF and Partner Training, Education, and Networking	750	15.0%
"Ear to the ground" with EPA, CBP, and jurisdictions	500	10.0%
NFWF-Field Liaison Coordination	500	10.0%

TOTAL HRS 5000 100.0%

*Estimated capacity needs, subject to change prior to contracting

**Annual Field Liaison capacity needs (for one field liaison or shared across several field liaisons)
for the Central Appalachia Habitat Stewardship Program:**

	Hours	Percent
Project, Proposal, and Partnership Development	625	50.0%
Ongoing Project Oversight, Evaluation, and Assessment	187.5	15.0%
Supporting NFWF and Partner Training, Education, and Networking	187.5	15.0%
"Ear to the ground" with EPA, CBP, and jurisdictions	125	10.0%
NFWF-Field Liaison Coordination	125	10.0%

TOTAL HRS 1250 100.0%

*Estimated capacity needs, subject to change prior to contracting

ANTICIPATED DELIVERABLES

The contract deliverables will include:

- Quarterly written and ongoing verbal progress reports
- Final report summarizing lessons learned at contract completion
- Comprehensive written reviews of grant proposals

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/References, 5) Corporate Capability, and 6) Cost Proposal. Interested parties should submit proposals electronically to NFWF (Stephanie Heidbreder, Stephanie.Heidbreder@nfwf.org) as Word documents or PDF attachments following the requirements below:

CRITERIA FOR COMPETITIVE APPLICATIONS

Statements of Qualifications will be evaluated on the following criteria. Statements should 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. **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 geography, communities, partners and their dynamics.
2. **Technical Approach.** A description of **no more than one page** of a proposed technical approach for facilitating the success of grant investments and overall program strategy and improvement.
3. **Qualifications of Proposed Personnel.** Resumes and/or Vitae of the principal investigator(s), including any subcontractors, describing 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) development and management of regional-scale partnerships and collaboratives to advance conservation outcomes; (c) any experience with Foundations and grants management; and (d) watershed management, including relevant source sectors or areas of expertise. There is **no page limit** associated with this element of the Statement of Qualifications.
4. **Record of Past Performance/References.** The Statement of Qualifications 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 statement should also include communication experience writing reports, conducting webinars, and delivering presentations to different types of audiences. 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. If the offeror anticipates retaining subcontractors for this task, information should be provided that demonstrates their past performance as well.
5. **Corporate Capability.** The offeror shall provide proof of financial stability in the form of an income statement and balance sheet.
6. **Cost Proposal.** The Cost Proposal includes the proposal budget and budget justification. The cost proposal must be submitted using the attached [budget template](#). 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 PROCEDURE

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 seven 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.

ELIGIBLE OFFERORS/CONFLICT OF INTEREST

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 a 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/>

STATEMENT OF QUALIFICATIONS SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND RFQ/RFP DEADLINES (SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

1/11/2021	Request for Qualifications (RFQ) released. Q&A period begins. All questions of general interest will be answered publicly and must be received by January 20th.
1/20/2021	Deadline for Questions. FAQ will be posted to this site within 24 hours.
1/29/2021	Statements of Qualifications must be received electronically as an email attachment by Stephanie Heidbreder (Stephanie.Heidbreder@nfwf.org) by 11:00 PM EDT. Statements must be provided in Word format or searchable PDF with a font size no smaller than 11 pt.
2/12/2021	NFWF will notify all RFQ offerors of their status and successful offerors will be either invited to interview or to complete a scope of work and budget.
3/28/2021	Contractors' anticipated start date.