



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

NORTHEASTERN REGION FIELD LIAISONS

Proposal Deadline: March 1, 2023

OVERVIEW

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) seeks several qualified Contractors to provide technical assistance as “field liaisons” to support applicants and grantees for the Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Fund and Central Appalachia Habitat Stewardship Program within NFWF’s Northeastern region. This support will help to advance the goals of the Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Fund and Central Appalachia Habitat Stewardship Program, improve grantee and applicant experience, and increase the quality and scale of qualified proposals to the program. The contractor will provide support for one-year (with the option to renew for up to one additional year) and report to the Director of the Northeastern Regional Office, or to one of their direct reports.

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 (Central Appalachia) awards grants to restore and sustain healthy forests, rivers and streams that provide habitat for diverse native bird and aquatic species populations 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 restoration and management of forest blocks in focal geographies, forest and grassland management for wildlife, carbon and water, restoration of aquatic ecosystems and community impact and engagement 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 Innovative Nutrient and Sediment Reduction Grants Program; the Small Watershed Grants Implementation and Planning and Technical Assistance Programs; the and two new Chesapeake Watershed Investments for Landscape Defense (WILD) Implementation and Planning and Technical Assistance Grant Programs; and the Pennsylvania Most Effective Basins Grants Program; as well as various off-cycle awards and program support contracts related to networking and information sharing, environmental compliance, and tracking and reporting on-the-ground outcomes of CBSF grant projects. 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 100 and 130 individual grants through its annual Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Fund grants programs and maintains more than 300 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.

QUALIFICATIONS

To assist in the successful implementation of the Central Appalachia Program and CBSF Programs, this RFQ is seeking many 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 water quality, and habitat for fish and wildlife is preferred.
- For CBSF programs, specific expertise and demonstrated experience in the development and implementation of successful conservation and restoration projects, programs, and partnerships in the areas of watershed restoration, species and habitat conservation, climate resilience, and engagement of historically underserved communities in locally led environmental programming related to NFWF's Chesapeake Bay program goals.
- Experience working in a variety of jurisdictions in the Northeast United States and advising federal, state, local, territorial, or Tribal government agencies.
- Specific experience working with or engaging diverse stakeholder groups, underserved communities, and/or Tribal 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

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 efforts 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;
- **Support successful project implementation through regular coordination and field-based site visits** to troubleshoot potential challenges with project implementation; conduct pre-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;
- **Support NFWF staff** in implementing grantee oversight activities to assist grantees who need additional guidance with reporting requirements or potential compliance issues and developing

proposals to public and private funding partners for new projects and initiatives, consistent with NFWF’s Chesapeake Bay and Central Appalachia program goals;

- **Ongoing engagement and participation** in meetings and dialogues with EPA, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the federal-state Chesapeake Bay Program partnership, the Chesapeake Conservation Partnership, and other coordinating bodies advancing Bay restoration and conservation;
- **Participate in team meetings** with NFWF team and other field liaisons, generally on a bi-weekly schedule;
- **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 CBSF grants portfolios through the following tasks and levels of effort:

Annual Field Liaison capacity needs (shared across a team of liaisons) for CBSF:

	Hours	Percent
Project, Proposal, and Partnership Development	3500	50.0%
Ongoing Project Oversight, Evaluation, and Assessment	1750	15.0%
Supporting NFWF and Partner Training, Education, and Networking	1250	15.0%
Engagement with Coordinating Bodies	750	10.0%
NFWF-Field Liaison Coordination	750	10.0%

TOTAL HRS 8000 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
- 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/References, 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 RFQ for Technical Field Liaisons for the Northeast Region – [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.** Provide a 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 geography, communities, partners and their dynamics.
3. **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.
4. **Qualifications of Proposed Personnel.** Resumes or CVs 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. 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 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 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.
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. Up to nine 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 developing and managing regional-scale partnerships and collaboratives to advance conservation outcomes. The proposed technical approach must demonstrate an understanding of the Central Appalachia Program and CBSF goals and objectives, and challenges facing applicants and grantees, including any geographic differences in risks and approaches, engaging key stakeholders and partners initiatives, and the policy landscape. *Weight: 20%*
2. **Technical Approach.** Offeror should clearly describe their proposed technical approach for facilitating the success of grant investments and overall program strategy and improvement. *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. **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. 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 Central Appalachia and/or Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Fund 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%*

ELIGIBLE OFFERORS

Eligible applicants include institutions of higher education, other nonprofits, commercial organizations, international organizations, and local, state, and Tribal governments. 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/>

RFQ DEADLINES (SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| 2/2/2023 | Request for Proposals (RFP) released. Q&A period begins. All questions of general interest will be answered publicly and must be received by February 15 th , 2023. |
| 2/15/2023 | Deadline for Questions. FAQ will be posted to this site within 24 hours. |
| 3/1/2023 | Proposals must be received electronically as an email attachment by Joseph Toolan, Manager of Chesapeake Bay Programs, Joe.Toolan@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. |
| Week of 4/3/23 | 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. |
| 4/10/2023 | 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