



Request for Proposals

Benton Soil and Water Conservation District, on behalf of The Confluence collaborative partner organizations, is requesting proposals from qualified applicants for a contracted position of

Consultant

on

Equity Engagement and Strategy Process

for

The Confluence collaborative and its five member organizations.

Proposal due: 12 pm Monday, February 4, 2019
Submit to: Benton SWCD
Attn: Heath Keirstead
456 SW Monroe Ave., Suite 110
Corvallis, OR 97333
541-753-7208
heathk@bentonswcd.org

Project Overview

The Confluence, a Corvallis-based collaborative of five conservation organizations, is seeking proposals to aid their intensive equity, diversity, and inclusion assessment, education, and planning process. The Confluence’s five partner organizations include: Benton Soil & Water Conservation District (BSWCD), Cascade Pacific Resource Conservation and Development, Corvallis Environmental Center, Greenbelt Land Trust, and Institute for Applied Ecology. This work will include the communities served by The Confluence partners with a focus in Benton County and the mid-Willamette Valley.

Background

The need for a shared space center serving conservation organizations in the mid-Valley has driven four years of collaboration between project partners. Since 2016 the partners have been working steadily towards the establishment of a co-location office space in the Corvallis area, and have conducted extensive internal readiness assessments, feasibility study, and community outreach. In 2018 project partners identified a preferred governance structure, developed an initial Operational Model and Business Plan, completed a naming and initial branding process, drafted organizational guiding documents including bylaws and a tenant council charter; hosted the public launch and groundbreaking for the collaborative and building site, and secured a Meyer Memorial Trust Healthy Environments grant to support a 2-year collaborative Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) journey.

Partner organization size varies from 5 to 24 paid staff, with annual budgets ranging from several hundred thousand to several million dollars. Collectively, these partners carry out a wide range of activities, including the following: habitat enhancement and restoration, community building & public engagement, environmental education, land and water protection through real estate transactions, land management, stormwater management, community planning and outdoor recreation management.



The organizations derive revenue from a variety of sources, including individual contributions, grants from public agencies and private foundations, and payments associated with mitigation requirements for development impacts. The work of each organization has become increasingly collaborative over the last decade. Groups work with each other, with public agencies, and with other community organizations on individual projects and longer term programs. Each of the partners participates in larger collaborative efforts within the Willamette Basin, such as the Willamette River Initiative (Meyer Memorial Trust), and Focused Investment Partnership (Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board). Partners also participate in smaller collaborations based on geography or areas of interest, such as particular habitat types and conservation issues.

The Confluence partners believe that co-locating and sharing resources increases the social and environmental impact of our network beyond what we could accomplish as individual organizations. Working together to carry out our missions will lead to a greater number and diversity of current and future residents engaging with and valuing the natural world around us. Our collective impact will mean better environmental conservation of mid-Willamette Valley lands, waters, and wildlife. We embrace the change this journey creates within our individual organizations and collaborative network and acknowledge that such change strengthens our ability to accomplish our goals.

As a collaborative, The Confluence has prioritized equity, diversity, and inclusion into the values statements of the organization, and project partners have included statements of commitment to EDI within their own organizational strategic plans. The Confluence partners unanimously endorsed an application to MMT's Healthy Environment grant program to support EDI work, a demonstration of the partnership's commitment to building EDI into the framework of the collaborative. Additionally, two of The Confluence partners have participated in Meyer Memorial Trust's Willamette River Initiative Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Cohort with Center for Diversity and the Environment in 2017/18, and additional partners have been active in EDI workshops and trainings within their own organizations.

Scope of Work

The scope for this project shall include work tasks that assist BSWCD and The Confluence EDI Committee with:

- 1) assessing the demographics of our combined service region and organizational gaps (operational and programmatic) through an equity engagement and strategy process,
- 2) providing equity training and coaching for staff and board members, and
- 3) creation of strategic and tactical EDI plans for The Confluence and its member organizations.

The Consultant will confer on a regular basis (i.e., every 2-4 weeks depending on work progress) with The Confluence EDI Committee throughout the course of the contract and make a diligent effort to establish and maintain strong working relationships with EDI Committee members. It is anticipated that early in the project meetings with the Committee will occur more frequently (every 2 weeks) and become less frequent (monthly) as the project work progresses and working relationships mature.



Deliverables and Timeline

The Confluence seeks proposals to engage a consultant to work with the partners and develop the following deliverables:

1. **Equity Audit and Gap Assessment Report** (begin Winter 2019) (internal and external, community composition, needs, interests, barriers). The goal of the research and report is to highlight opportunities for partners to engage and work with communities not historically engaged by our respective organizations. Recommendations within the report will be tailored to each organization's geography and programs, and to the combined service area of the collaborative.
2. **Equity Statement and Strategic and Tactical Equity Action Plans** (begin winter 2020) for partner organizations and for The Confluence (timeline, accountability, performance measures, and progress report). The Consultant will work with the EDI Committee to develop equity statements for The Confluence and member organizations. Existing policies will be evaluated to identify any systemic barriers to EDI. The plans will include the development and/or revision of organizational equity policies to support EDI goals, and setting of EDI benchmarks and communications strategies.
3. **Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Training and Coaching** for The Confluence member organizations' staff and board. The goal for training is to establish a baseline of understanding to facilitate conversations, dismantle institutionalized barriers and create more equitable and inclusive programs, practices, and policies. Knowledge, awareness and experience with historical and current inequities and marginalization varies greatly from person to person within The Confluence, so a range of training and coaching options will be needed. At a minimum, a multi-pronged syllabus will be developed that includes a series of in-house conversations on key topics, a series of half-day equity trainings, and coaching for staff and board who are further along on the EDI journey.

Project work should commence in March, 2019 and all deliverables be completed by December 31, 2020.

Contractor Qualifications

- Experience in facilitating equity engagement and strategy processes that lead to the establishment of strategic and tactical equity plans.
- Suitable education and training in this field (equity, diversity and inclusion, environmental, nonprofit, facilitation toward collaborative solutions; natural resource management; etc.).
- Experience managing complex processes with multiple interests, groups, and partners.
- Exceptional communication skills, including written and verbal; attention to detail.
- Knowledge and awareness of The Confluence partners and conservation history and issues in the Willamette Valley is a plus.

Proposal Guidelines and Submission Deadlines

The purpose of this RFP is to solicit proposals from qualified candidates, conduct a fair and extensive evaluation based on criteria listed herein, and select the candidate who best represents the direction of the project and is best able to fulfill our needs. Proposals will be accepted until 5 pm PST February 8th, 2019. Any proposals received after this date and time will be deemed ineligible and returned to the sender. All proposals must be signed by an official agent or representative of the company submitting the proposal.

All work must be performed by the contractor and/or the contractor's organization. Contract



terms and conditions will be negotiated upon selection of the winning proposal for this RFP. All contractual terms and conditions will be subject to review by BSWCD and will include scope, budget, scope of work, schedule, and other necessary items pertaining to the project.

Proposal Evaluation Criteria

BSWCD and The Confluence EDI Committee will evaluate all proposals based on the following criteria:

- **Overall proposal suitability:** proposed solution(s) must meet the scope and needs included herein and be presented in a clear and organized manner;
- **Organizational Experience:** Proposals will be evaluated on consultant's experience as it pertains to the scope of this project;
- **Value and cost:** The proposed budget will be evaluated by total amount while giving consideration to the timeline and deliverables; and
- **Technical expertise and experience:** Key personnel must provide descriptions and documentation of relevant technical expertise and experience, with client references that can be contacted for follow-up questions.

Proposal Submission

Interested parties should submit one hard copy or one electronic copy of the following:

- Cover letter that includes an overview of your philosophy or approach to examining the concepts of equity, diversity, and inclusion within an environmental context;
- Resume(s) and references for all key personnel involved in the project;
- Proposal for completing the described work that includes:
 - Short description of the processes used
 - Timeline of benchmark activities
 - Qualifications and experience of key personnel to engage with this sensitive work
 - Description of products/outputs/outcomes
 - Detailed budget estimate (with itemized costs and fees) based on the tasks shown in the scope of work for the period covered. The contractor will provide a proposed course of action, with an accompanying budget that shows unit costs and a recommended number of units.
 - Summary of relevant project work completed in the last 5 years that includes statement of relevancy to this RFP, summary of work completed, project budget and timeline.
 - Names, phone numbers and contact information of three references or clients engaged during the last 24 months.



Cascade Pacific
Resource Conservation + Development



Institute
for Applied
Ecology
**Corvallis
Environmental
Center**



Send proposals to:

Benton SWCD

Attn: Heath Keirstead

456 SW Monroe Ave., Suite 110

Corvallis, OR 97333

541-753-7208

heathk@bentonswcd.org with *"RFP for Equity Initiative"* in the subject line.

Clarifying questions via email or phone to Heath are welcome at:

Email: heathk@bentonswcd.org

Phone: 541-753-7208

Proposal Review Schedule

- **Proposal Submittal Deadline:** 12:00 pm, February 4*, 2019
- Interviews (phone, Skype or in person) February 6-13*, 2019
- Select contractor preferably by February 19*, 2019
- *Note that these dates might be pushed out if necessary.