

RESILIENCE AUTHORITY

Annapolis and Anne Arundel County

Request for Qualifications

Program Development Services for Resilience Infrastructure Projects

Issue Date: July 18, 2024
Submission Deadline: August 19, 2024; 5:00PM EST
Email to: resilienceauthority@aacounty.org
Approval Period: Five Years ~ Reviewed Annually

1. Statement of Purpose

- 1.1. The purpose of this Request for Qualifications (RFQ) is for the Resilience Authority of Annapolis and Anne Arundel County, Inc. (the “Authority”) to obtain information from qualified companies and organizations (“Applicants”) to ensure proper qualifications exist to provide proper support to the Authority, to include, but not limited to, as-requested services to support local climate resilience and mitigation projects and programs.
- 1.2. This RFQ is issued solely for information and planning purposes and does not constitute a Request for Proposals (RFP) or a promise to issue an RFP in the future. Applicants are hereby advised that the Authority will not pay for any information or administrative costs incurred in response to this RFQ. All costs associated with responding to this RFQ will be solely at the Applicant’s expense.
- 1.3. The Authority is seeking Applicants with expertise in program development, project management, grant support, and stakeholder engagement through public events, meetings and marketing measures.

2. Background

- 2.1. In July 2021, Anne Arundel County (the “County”) and the City of Annapolis (the “City”), pursuant to Maryland Code, passed legislation to establish the County’s first multi-jurisdictional climate resilience financing Authority with the ability to finance, manage, and support resilience projects within the County and the City. The Authority’s investments and activities will support those projects that directly mitigate climate change including sea level rise, nuisance flooding, storm events, erosion, and rising temperatures.
- 2.2. Generally, Resilience Infrastructure means infrastructure that mitigates the effects of climate change for the general welfare or safety of the public. More specifically, and for this RFQ, Resilience Infrastructure includes projects that support flood control, ecosystem resilience, shoreline protection, structural resilience, energy resilience, and other community-based projects and programs.

3. Proposed Solution and Approach

- 3.1. The Authority is seeking a consulting partner to provide on-demand services as they relate to advancing Resilience Infrastructure projects within the County and the City in support of awarded state, federal, and local grants.
- 3.2. The successful Applicant must have experience, expertise, and financial capacity to simultaneously implement multiple projects under one or more programs including the management and administration of grant-based funding in the event multiple contracts are awarded.

4. Instructions for Responding

- 4.1. Applicants that are responding to this RFQ are requested to email their written responses by 5:00 pm on August 19, 2024, to Kristina Alexander, Resilience Associate of the Resilience Authority of Annapolis and Anne Arundel County at: resilienceauthority@aacounty.org.
- 4.2. Applicants are responsible for ensuring any proposal submissions are received timely by the Authority. The Authority will not be held responsible for any technology issues or power outages that may arise outside the Authority's control that may negatively impact an Applicant's proposal submission or delay the Authority's receipt of such submission.
- 4.3. Responses must include a cover page clearly marked with the Applicant's name, address, phone number, and email address.

5. Inquiries and Questions

- 5.1. All correspondence and questions related to the RFQ should be directed in writing to Kristina Alexander, Resilience Associate of the Resilience Authority at: resilienceauthority@aacounty.org. All questions must be submitted five (5) working days in advance of August 19, 2024 at 5:00 p.m. EST.

6. Review and Qualification

- 6.1. An Applicant's qualifications will be reviewed by the Authority's Staff and Board Members (the "Reviewers"). The Reviewers will verify responses against the selection criteria listed below. Any Applicants not meeting the selection criteria will not be considered. Applicants meeting the criteria

may be contacted for subsequent interview(s) and/or information prior to the Authority's final selection.

- 6.2. The goal of the Authority's contracting and procurement endeavors is to ensure the best use of public funds to serve the public purpose of fulfilling the Authority's mission while adhering to all professional and ethical standards.
- 6.3. The Authority is committed to ensuring that all funds entrusted to it are appropriately allocated using fair, ethical, equitable, responsible, and transparent practices. These values guide the Authority's conduct and decision-making practices related to procurements, bids, estimates, agreements, contracts, and other formal commitments.

7. Applicant Qualifications

- 7.1. The Authority shall take into account the below qualification review criteria when considering all of an Applicant's responses to this RFQ. Depending upon the volume of responses, and in the Authority's sole discretion, it may conduct subsequent interviews, as needed, prior to making a final selection.
- 7.2. An Applicant will be considered qualified provided the Applicant can perform the following tasks below (further provided funding becomes available, and subject to further details as set forth in subsequent written contract(s), as needed):
 - 7.2.1. Provide grant support services, including management, research, and writing, to include seeking out federal grant opportunities, such as the Inflation Reduction Act programs and other new sources of funding.
 - 7.2.2. Provide grant management services which includes seeking and documenting known funding opportunities, research new opportunities, stay abreast of deadlines, and support proposal development and grant reporting, as needed.
 - 7.2.3. Assess and align funding with opportunities for Resilience Infrastructure projects in underserved communities within the Authority's jurisdiction.
 - 7.2.4. Meet regularly to plan for, shape and discuss Resilience Infrastructure project development and funding opportunities, to include any proposal status updates.

- 7.2.5. Provide Resilience Infrastructure project management support to the Authority to ensure team members implement effective planning and execution.
- 7.2.6. Develop and implement a stakeholder engagement process for funded Resilience Infrastructure projects within designated project areas.
- 7.2.7. Identify diversity, equity, and inclusion opportunities associated with funded Resilience Infrastructure projects within designated project areas.
- 7.2.8. Work with partners and the community to prioritize potential Resilience Infrastructure projects and appropriate funding within designated project areas.
- 7.2.9. Provide marketing materials to stimulate interest in the Authority's purpose and impact of funded Resilience Infrastructure projects.
- 7.2.10. Develop impact metrics (environmental, economic, and social) and other tools that can be used to measure project success, share success stories with the community, and inform the prioritization of future Resilience Infrastructure projects.

8. Qualifications and Evaluation Criteria

- 8.1. Applicants must have demonstrated experience and expertise in program development, project management, grant support, and stakeholder engagement.
- 8.2. To pursue multiple projects of the type described above, Applicants must show proof of adequate insurance, assets, and/or bonding.
- 8.3. Applicants must demonstrate experience with state and federal funding applications and other agencies, including the Department of Natural Resources, Department of Environmental Protection, Department of Commerce, Department of Interior, Department of Defense, Department of Transportation, and Department of Energy.
- 8.4. Applicants must have the ability to accept payment on a reimbursement basis with financial flexibility to handle unpredictable timing of grant payments.

- 8.5. Applicants must avoid personnel and/or organization conflicts of interest prohibited under Federal, State, or Local law.

9. Submission Requirements

- 9.1. Applicants must include the following in their response:
 - 9.1.1. A narrative describing the qualifications of your firm or team based on the qualifications set forth in Section 7 above, and responding to the evaluation criteria listed in Section 8 above.
 - 9.1.2. Examples of similar past projects discussed in Section 8.1.
 - 9.1.3. Resumes of key team members and firm profiles.
 - 9.1.4. Explicit disclosure of any actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest (as set forth in Section 11 below).

10. Equal Opportunity

- 10.1. The Authority will not discriminate with regard to race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, marital status, age, disability or any other characteristic protected by law.
- 10.2. Minority Business Enterprise and Woman Business Enterprise (MBE/WBE) goals are established by individual grant and funding opportunities and the Authority pledges to comply with these requirements, as applicable.
- 10.3. The Authority reserves the right to select, from among a pool of qualified proposals, the Applicant that best compliments, and provides the opportunity for the Authority to further its mission and the goals of implementing Resilience Infrastructure projects/opportunities.

11. Conflict of Interest

- 11.1. It is not uncommon for firms and their leadership in this region to have personal or professional relationships with entities that may create an actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest. The

majority of such conflicts can be easily dealt with through proactive disclosure.

- 11.2. The Authority takes seriously its role to avoid actual, potential, and perceived conflicts of interest. The Applicant should disclose any such conflicts, in writing, when submitting their proposals in accordance with Section 9.1.4. of this RFQ. The Reviewers will consider the nature and degree of the Applicant's responsibilities with regard to the potential conflict when deciding the appropriate course of action, if any, that may be required to remedy the conflict.

12. Limitations

- 12.1. The Authority reserves the right to select the Applicant of its choosing, to reject all responses, or to terminate this RFQ at any time. The Authority may issue a new request, extend the deadline, or make other good-faith efforts to expand the applicant pool, as may be needed to effectuate the Authority's purposes.
- 12.2. The Authority reserves the right to choose another procurement vehicle for subsequent project phases in order to adhere to the rules required by the grantor. In the event that the selected Applicant fails to perform adequately during a grant application under contract, the Authority may disqualify the selected Applicant from the current RFQ qualification period and may choose another procurement vehicle for subsequent project phases.
- 12.3. In the event a selected Applicant is disqualified due to performance, the selected Applicant is eligible to apply during the subsequent annual renewal period.
- 12.4. Neither this RFQ, nor any proposals provided in response, constitute a contract between the Authority and the Applicant. An Applicant deemed qualification by the Authority (a "Qualified Applicant") does not guarantee that the Authority and the Qualified Applicant (the "Parties") will successfully execute a contract, and the final scope of any contract that may be executed by the Parties (to include fees) may vary.
- 12.5. Qualified Applicants will remain eligible for up to five (5) years from the date of qualification, pending the successful annual review of performance and eligibility by the Reviewers.
- 12.6. Qualified Applicants may be asked to submit fixed-price bids and proposals for any Resilience Infrastructure projects the Authority deems beneficial to have multiple bids.

- 12.7. Qualified Applicants who continue to successfully qualify for annual renewal will be provided a letter from the Authority confirming their eligibility and shall not reapply to the annual RFQ. However, notwithstanding the preceding, a Qualified Applicant will need to reapply for the annual RFQ after five (5) consecutive successful renewals.
- 12.8. All documents created or used for the Authority's selection process with regard to this RFQ are considered draft, pre-decisional internal materials, and all such internal materials will not be made available.

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