



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR  
ORGANIZATIONAL POLICY  
REVIEW & REVISIONS

#### PURPOSE

The Rural Community Assistance Partnership (RCAP) has initiated a Request for Proposal (RFP) process to identify a vendor qualified to facilitate a review of organizational policies and introducing new or amended policies as necessary to ensure alignment with best practices for non-profit operations.

#### WHO MAY RESPOND

RCAP requires a vendor who has demonstrated experience in successfully providing expertise in the process of a comprehensive policy review within the organization. The vendor will liaise with RCAP staff and board, non-profit sector and, if necessary, legal advisors to ensure that all RCAP policies are up-to-date, aligned with legal and expected norms and relevant to the current organizational priorities.

The vendor must not be barred from receiving federal funding. To be considered responsive, all submissions must include a statement indicating that the respondent is not on the US General Services Administration's System for Award Management's (SAM's) list of excluded entities.

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## **1. About the Organization**

Founded in 1973, the Rural Community Assistance Partnership, Inc. (RCAP) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit service delivery network comprised of a national office and six regional partners that provide technical assistance, training, and financial resources to community owned and operated water, wastewater and solid waste utilities in 2,000 small rural communities – including tribes – each year throughout the U.S. and its territories. Most communities RCAP assists are economically disadvantaged and have a population under 2,500, and many have significant minority populations. RCAP's approximately 200 field staff members include registered professional engineers, certified operators, utility finance and board management specialists, community planners, and people with other relevant backgrounds.

RCAP's work historically centered on achieving these outcomes in small rural communities:

- Improved environmental and community health
- Utilities that are in compliance with federal and state regulations
- Sustainable water and waste disposal systems
- Increased capability of local leaders to address current and future needs
- Improve coordination among federal, state and local agencies in the delivery of water and waste services

Each regional partner offers an array of services that directly respond to the needs of its area. These region-specific services include affordable housing development assistance; loans for water and wastewater infrastructure, as well as housing and business development; community and economic development; job training and placement; disaster recovery, community-based education programs; and special programming for underserved populations. RCAP field staff track performance data to enhance our capacity to fulfill our mission of “improving the quality of life in rural communities.”

The RCAP national office engages in program management, applied research, policy development, public education, communications and advocacy on rural issues, especially with respect to community infrastructure. It also supports the work of the network by obtaining financial support, sharing knowledge and best practices across the network, and promoting dialogue to help communities understand the relationship between the environment, public health, and economic viability. More information is available at <http://www.rcap.org>.

RCAP has grown significantly over the past two years, and needs to re-assess its policies for operations. This review may include, but is not limited to, the following policies: standard office policies and benefits, conflict of interest, procurement, and whistleblower.

## **2. Project Overview**

The Rural Community Assistance Partnership (RCAP) is a national network of nonprofit organizations that have historically focused on ensuring rural and small communities throughout the United States have access to safe drinking water and sanitary wastewater and solid waste disposal. The six regional RCAPs provide a variety of programs in their region of the United States to accomplish this goal, providing technical assistance to rural communities across the country. RCAP is growing, and its policies have not been updated in more than five years. With a change in leadership and the significant growth it has seen, the organization is looking for a consultant to work with RCAP to review and update policies as appropriate.

## **3. Scope of Work & Deliverables**

RCAP's intent is for the vendor to review the current Personnel Policy Manual and:

- a) Identify which policies are required by Federal and State law;
- b) Make specific recommendations to simplify the policies and ensure they are consistent and flexible;
- c) Make specific recommendations on which policies present conflicting information; and
- d) Compare the current Personnel Policy Manual to best practices found in other non-profits and provide recommendations for improvement.

RCAP expects the project to include the following:

- Project management;
- Review and design updated policies as appropriate; and
- Work with the Executive Director, Director of Finance and Board to identify and finalize all policies.

The project might also include:

- The bidder should describe its understanding of the work to be performed, estimated hours, and other pertinent information.
- The bidder should describe its organization, size (in relation to similar databases developed), and structure. Indicate whether the firm is a small or woman- or minority-owned business.
- The bidder should also describe the qualifications of all staff to be assigned to the project and specify the project manager.
- Include resumes of staff to be assigned to the project. Education, position in firm, years and type of experience, continuing professional education, etc., will be considered. Vendor is not able to sub-contract out any of the work without the pre-approval of the sub-contractor by RCAP.

**Expectations:**

- a) Vendor will meet with Human Resources staff and Executive Director to review project planning, coordination, and the current Personnel Policy Manual to be updated and studied, in order to clarify Scope of Services, issues, concerns, desired outcomes, and defined expectations.
- b) Vendor will prepare a draft written report describing the Personnel Policy Manual review process, methodology, findings, and recommendations.
- c) Vendor will prepare a draft update of the current Personnel Policy Manual to reflect best practices and recommended policies and to ensure legal compliance. Vendor shall make every reasonable effort to streamline the Personnel Policy Manual so that it is an easy-to-use guide for both RCAP employees and management, while ensuring the necessary professional outcomes and appropriate policy language are present to provide a best practice product that also protects the organization.
- d) Vendor will review the draft update to the Personnel Policy Manual with Human Resources staff, Executive Director, and appropriate board members.
- e) Vendor will prepare a final Personnel Policy Manual incorporating revisions resulting from such review
- f) Vendor will provide all deliverables in electronic format suitable for ongoing customization and revision, as from time to time requested or directed by RCAP.

**5. Ownership and Confidentiality**

All intellectual property will become the property of RCAP. All data remains the sole property of RCAP. The vendor shall further agree to keep information related to any and all contracts with RCAP in strict confidence, including, but not limited to, the terms of the contract(s) and any confidential business information or proprietary information learned through its dealings with RCAP.

**6. Proposal Format**

To best evaluate the ability of the vendor to meet our goals, please include the following in your proposal:

- Examples of similarly-complex projects
- Your approach to policy development
- A summary of policy development experience
- A summary of experience in non-profit industry
- Three client references
- Suggested project timeline with major tasks and milestones
- Project budget by line item
- Sample Project Plan
- Identify who will be involved on your project team, their role, and including their relevant experience.

## **7. Proposal – Must include the following:**

### **General Information**

RCAP understands that the scope of work requested may be conducted by a single consultant, a consultant group, or by a partnership of consultants. The proposal should provide the name, title, address, telephone number, and email address for each person engaged in the project. If a consultant group or partnership of consultants, the proposal should indicate who will serve as the “point” person.

### **Vendor Qualifications and Roles**

The proposal must describe the vendors’s qualifications to conduct the RFP scope of work activities, including his/her expertise, knowledge, and experience. Experience should include examples of conducting similar or related work, as well as experience working in non-profit human resources and/or policy.

To accomplish the scope requested, the consultant will need to possess the following qualifications:

- Experience at successfully developing human resources policies
- Strong organizational skills
- Knowledgeable of non-profit rules and issues
- Knowledgeable of budgeting
- Project management experience

If a consultant group or partnership of consultants is proposed to conduct the RFP scope of work, the proposal must indicate which activities each consultant will conduct as well as information about their level of expertise, knowledge and experience to conduct those specific activities.

### **Work Plan**

The proposal should contain a detailed description of the activities to be conducted by the consultant in order to complete the requested scope of work, including:

- the specific activities to be conducted at each stage,
- a timeline for the activities at each stage,
- milestones and deliverables tied to those activities, and
- a detailed budget for each stage, along with a proposed payment schedule tied to project milestones and/or deliverables.

## References

The proposal should include at least three references of individuals who can speak to their experience with the vendor in conducting projects of similar scope. Information regarding each reference should include the individual's name, address, telephone number and email address.

## Previous Work Product

The proposal should include at least two examples of written work similar to the scope of work requested within this RFP.

## 8. Scoring

Proposals will be reviewed and evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Qualifications – 30%
  - Consultant has the qualifications necessary to successfully complete the scope of work
  - The consultant has prior experience working on similar projects
  - The consultant has prior experience working with similar organizations
- Scope of Proposal – 30%
  - The proposal demonstrates an understanding of the project objectives and desired results
  - The proposal illustrates an approach to the scope of work that will likely lead to the successful development of policies
  - The proposal illustrates the vendor's ability to successfully execute the proposed approach
  - The proposal includes an appropriate process to interact with board members and staff
- Work Plan – 25%
  - The proposal adequately details project activities and milestones or deliverables associated with each stage of the scope of work
  - The proposal includes a detailed timeline for each stage
  - The work can be completed within the project timeline
- Budget – 15%
  - The proposal includes a detailed budget for each stage of the scope of work
  - Proposed costs are reasonable

## 9. Process for Proposal Submission and Evaluation

### Instructions for submission

#### a) Closing Submission Date

Proposals are due by 5:00 PM Eastern on Friday, February 8, 2018.

#### b) Inquiries

Inquiries concerning this RFP should be directed to Nathan Ohle (contact information below) no later than Friday, January 25, 2019.

Nathan Ohle, Executive Director  
nohle@rcap.org

#### c) Conditions of Proposal

All costs incurred in the preparation of a response to this RFP are the responsibility of the bidder and will not be reimbursed by RCAP.

#### d) Submission Instructions

Proposals should be submitted in PDF format via email to nohle@rcap.org before the closing submission date. If the file is too large for email, a link to the file should be provided.

Late arrivals will not be accepted. Mail submissions will not be accepted.

It is the responsibility of the bidder to ensure that the response is received by RCAP by the closing submission date. A response may be judged nonresponsive and excluded for further consideration if it is not received by the deadline or does not follow the specified format.

#### e) Right to Reject

RCAP reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to reject any and all responses received in response to this RFP. A contract for the accepted response will be based upon the factors described in this RFP.

#### f) Small Businesses, Minority-Owned Firms, and Women's Enterprises

RCAP will make efforts to utilize small businesses, women's business enterprises, and/or minority-owned firms. A bidder qualifies if it meets the definition established by the Small Business Administration.

#### g) Confidentiality

If the bidder deems any material submitted to be proprietary or confidential, that must be indicated in the relevant section(s) of the response.

#### h) Notification of Selection and Timeline

It is expected that a bidder will be selected within two to three weeks of the closing submission date, although this timeline is subject to change. RCAP



reserves the right to cancel this RFP at anytime. Upon conclusion of negotiations with the successful bidder, all bidders submitting responses to this RFP will be informed in writing of the name of the successful firm or individual.

RFP Released: January 11, 2019

Questions on RFP due: January 25, 2019

Proposals due: February 5, 2019

Interview vendors: February 11-14, 2019

Vendor selection made: February 15, 2019

Project begins: February 2019

**i) Criteria for Selection**

RCAP will select the proposal which it feels will deliver the highest quality deliverable at the best value. Proposals will be initially reviewed by the Executive Director and board committee. Interviews will be completed by the Executive Director and board committee, who will submit the best option to the RCAP Board for a final decision.

Price will be a significant, but not the only, criteria in evaluating the proposals. Consideration will also be given to the following:

- Ability of the bidder to provide all aspects of the proposal.
- Compliance of the vendor and proposal with the project requirements outlined above.
- The extent to which the proposed deliverable meets the scope and goals outlined below.
- Past experience with similar organizations and portfolio of work.

The award will be made to the qualified bidder whose proposal is most advantageous to RCAP with price and other factors considered. RCAP may, in its sole discretion, reject any and all proposals without providing a detailed explanation for decisions.

RCAP, in its sole discretion, may request proposal presentations by meeting with any or all bidders to clarify or negotiate modifications to proposals. However, RCAP reserves the right to make an award without further discussion of the proposals submitted. Therefore, proposals should be submitted initially on the most favorable terms, from both technical and price standpoints, that the bidder can propose.

RCAP contemplates award of the contract to the responsible Bidder with the most cost-effective solution and the capabilities to perform the contract services.

**j) CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

The Bidder must disclose, in an exhibit to the proposal, any possible conflicts of interest that may result from the award of the Contract or the services provided under the Contract. Except as otherwise disclosed in the proposal, the Bidder

affirms that to the best of its knowledge there exists no actual or potential conflict between the Bidder, the Bidder's project manager(s) or its family's business or financial interests ("Interests") and the services provided under the Contract. In the event of any change in either Interests or the services provided under the Contract, the Bidder will inform RCAP regarding possible conflicts of interest, which may arise as a result of such change and agrees that all conflicts shall be resolved to the RCAP's satisfaction or the Bidder may be disqualified from consideration under this RFP. As used in this Section, "conflict of interest" shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

1. Giving or offering a gratuity, kickback, money, gift, or anything of value to a RCAP official, officer, or employee with the intent of receiving a contract from RCAP or favorable treatment under a contract;
2. Having or acquiring at any point during the RFP process or during the term of the Contract, any contractual, financial, business or other interest, direct or indirect, that would conflict in any manner or degree with Bidder's performance of its duties and responsibilities to RCAP under the Contract or otherwise create the appearance of impropriety with respect to the award or performance of the Contract; or <sup>(1)</sup><sub>(SEP)</sub>
3. Currently in possession of or accepting during the RFP process or the term of the Contract anything of value based on an understanding that the actions of the Bidder or its affiliates or Interests on behalf of RCAP will be influenced.