

CALIFORNIA STATE COASTAL CONSERVANCY

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS:

Consultant to Assess Community Engagement & Benefits of Grant Program, “Advancing Nature-Based Adaptation Solutions in Marin County”

Led by the CA State Coastal Conservancy and the Marin Community Foundation

Thursday, June 10, 2021



Proposal Deadline: Friday, August 6, 2021, at 5:00pm

- Completed proposals should be submitted via email to shalini.kannan@scc.ca.gov
- Proposals must be received by Friday, August 6, 2021, at 5:00pm. Incomplete proposals or those received after the deadline will not be considered
- All applicants will be notified by September 3, 2021
- If you have any general questions, please email shalini.kannan@scc.ca.gov

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1. Introduction

The California State Coastal Conservancy (SCC) is seeking qualifications of potential Consultants to assess the community engagement and benefits provided by a three-year grant program conducted by SCC in partnership with the Marin Community Foundation (MCF), “Advancing Nature-Based Adaptation Solutions in Marin County”. The Consultant will review the grant program processes and 13 projects, conduct interviews, summarize and report on findings, and conduct a workshop sharing session for the program’s grantees to support them in furthering community benefits in their work. SCC is releasing this Request for Proposals to find a qualified **California certified Small Business (SB) or Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise (DVBE)*** contractor to provide these services as a Consultant, as described more fully below. SCC will negotiate and manage this contract.

SCC is a non-regulatory state agency that works to preserve, improve, and restore the natural resources, agricultural lands, watersheds, urban waterfronts, public access and recreation along the Pacific coast and the San Francisco Bay shoreline and its adjacent counties.

*** SCC is seeking to hire a Consultant from a certified California Small Business (SB), Micro Business or Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise (DVBE) to do this work** (GC §§ 14838.5; PCC §§ 10335.5(c)(6), 10340(b)(6)). SBs are those with 100 or fewer employees, and average annual gross receipts of \$15 million or less over the last three tax years. Micro businesses are a subset of SBs with gross annual receipts of \$5,000,000 or less, or fewer than 25 employees. DVBEs must be at least 51% owned by one or more disabled veterans, with daily business operations managed by one or more disabled veterans. For full eligibility requirements and to apply for these free certifications, visit: <https://www.dgs.ca.gov/PD/Services/Page-Content/Procurement-Division-Services-List-Folder/Certify-or-Re-apply-as-Small-Business-Disabled-Veteran-Business-Enterprise>

You can find further guidance on the certification process in [Attachment A](#), and a video detailing how to complete the online application here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xMAcwe4B9P8>

2. Background

A. “Advancing Nature-Based Adaptation Solutions in Marin County” Grant Program Overview

From 2017- 2020, SCC and MCF held three grant rounds together, which funded 13 projects as part of a collaborative small grant program to address the impacts of climate change on human and natural communities, “Advancing Nature-Based Adaptation Solutions in Marin County.” The projects range from one to three years in length, with some already complete (2018-2021) and others ongoing (2020-2023). This program piloted funding projects that 1) have a focus on sea level rise and nature-based adaptation, and 2) include outreach and engagement specifically to underserved communities. SCC and MCF were intentionally inclusive and broad in defining underserved communities, which can include communities of color, low-income communities, elderly, disabled, youth, and other groups that have had less access and resources to get involved in sea level rise planning and projects.

The grant program funded small-to-moderate sized, high-priority restoration projects in Marin County that:

- Advance regional coastal and baylands ecosystem habitat goals, particularly ‘living shoreline’ concepts, including restoring native oyster and eelgrass habitats, sand beaches and dunes, tidal marshes, and other shoreline habitats;
- Are within shoreline communities that are either directly on or closely adjacent to the shoreline, with a focus on reducing watershed flooding that is compounded by sea level rise;
- Include education and engagement of the public, especially underserved youth and communities more directly impacted by sea level rise, in restoration efforts, where possible;
- Build capacity among critical partners in order to translate scientific data and analysis into practical solutions for broader implementation of climate adaptation projects on the Marin shoreline.

Projects were selected for funding based on the following desired outcomes of the grant program:

- Pilot projects that demonstrate ecological design concepts and create scientific data through sufficient monitoring to advance the understanding of climate adaptation practices among local and regional experts.
- Local projects that advance more quickly than previously possible, increasing the chances that ecological health can be achieved in critical habitats in advance of significant sea level

rise, and potentially attracting other funding sources in order to further implement new techniques and restore shoreline habitats.

- Impacted communities and regional practitioners develop a deeper understanding of the value and need for resilient habitats in the face of climate change, and of the potential benefits to restoring them as part of building resilience to climate change.

B. Community Engagement and Benefits Evaluation

Midway through implementation of the small grant program which continues through 2024, SCC and MCF now seek to learn from and further leverage their joint effort by evaluating the community engagement and community benefits provided by the grant program. Results are intended to help SCC, MCF, and grantees be as effective as possible in providing community benefits in ongoing projects funded via the grant program, as well as future efforts.

Our goal is to learn from actions to date and share lessons learned and best practices for increasing effective community engagement in the nature-based climate adaptation realm. We hope the assessment will also inform future sea level rise and coastal adaptation projects more broadly being conducted in the San Francisco Bay region and in the state, and provide specific and helpful guidance to effectively involving and supporting underserved communities in local nature-based climate adaptation work.

In parallel but separate from this scope, SCC will assess the 13 projects' progress and efficacy in Capacity Building for Nature-Based design. This will include assessment of knowledge gained about new nature-based methods and approaches that have been developed through the projects, field studies and pilot data from demonstration projects, and technical outcomes and lessons learned from site-based design and monitoring to date. The selected Consultant will work closely with SCC staff to coordinate outreach efforts to grantees and community members to happen in tandem for both of these efforts.

Furthermore, SCC is reviewing its agency-wide grantmaking processes and community-focused grant programs to improve equity and environmental justice outcomes, in order to better serve all Californians. The process and results of the Consultant's assessment will provide a case study or model for future assessment efforts at SCC. The findings from this assessment may also help inform future environmental funding programs at MCF.

3. Request for Proposal and Services

The purpose of this Request for Proposals (RFP) is to evaluate applicants' approach and skills detailed in eligible proposals and select a suitable SB or DVBE Consultant to carry out the following work. SCC will enter into a contract for services with a successful applicant. Details on SB/DVBE certification can be found in the Introduction section above.

Please see [Attachment B](#) for SCC's Standard Contract Terms and Conditions that the Consultant will be required to comply with. SCC reserves the right to vary the contractual requirements and the parties may negotiate terms that are different from those contained in [Attachment B](#). The contract will be awarded without discrimination based on color, race, national origin, ethnic group identification, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, color, genetic information, or disability.

A. Consultant Scope

SCC is seeking a Consultant with strong experience in underserved community engagement and justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion work to assess the community engagement process and outcomes from the “Advancing Nature-Based Adaptation Solutions in Marin County” grant program and the 13 funded projects. The projects range from one to three years in length, with some already complete (2018-2021) and others ongoing (2020-2023). This scope of work includes assessing how effectively program goals were/are being achieved, summarizing lessons learned and recommendations to improve underserved community engagement in the future, and sharing this information back to the 13 project teams and others in the Bay Area to encourage effective and inclusive engagement in coastal adaptation and sea level rise awareness projects.

The assessment will examine the role of staff from implementation agency SCC and from funder MCF, grantees, and, to the extent possible, community members in the program to learn about what worked well, what did not work well, what barriers exist, and what additional approaches could be used to better serve the target underserved communities.

Tasks and Deliverables

SCC seeks Consultant proposals that include the following:

- Prepare and conduct an **assessment of community engagement and benefits** provided by Grant Rounds 1-3 of the “Advancing Nature-Based Adaptation Solutions in Marin County” grant program.
 - Assessment methods should include a desktop review of grant program materials as well as online surveys and/or interviews/ listening sessions with SCC staff, MCF staff, the 13 grantees, including the leads on community engagement, and their projects’ target audiences.
 - Consultant should work closely with SCC staff who are conducting a parallel assessment on the technical, “Capacity Building for Nature-Based Design” outcomes of the grant program to align evaluation efforts to grantees and community members, minimizing the time burden on them. Consultant will schedule interviews and design surveys to align with the parallel assessment effort in collaboration with SCC staff.
- Prepare and submit a **written summary of the assessment** of both the grant partnership and the 13 funded projects, including feedback from SCC, MCF, and the 13 grantees and their communities served, as well as lessons learned, and future recommendations to SCC and MCF staff.
- Design and facilitate an informational **2-4 hour workshop** for all 13 grantees, that shares the results of this evaluation and provides training on topics related to justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion that can help grantees in their future work with underserved communities.
 - There are six projects completed and seven in-progress. The workshop should be designed to support grantees in their current stage.

Detailed Elements of Scope

Below is a general outline of project elements, and all questions below are samples. We welcome and expect potential Consultants to help refine and finalize this list of evaluation metrics and questions with SCC and MCF staff as part of their proposal and selection process.

- A review and assessment of the grant program goals, outreach, and materials.
 - How effective and achievable are the goals of the grant program? Are there suggested changes to the basis of the grant program and outcomes sought by SCC and MCF? Was the grant RFP sufficiently shared with and accessible for underserved communities?
 - Were the grant applications received reflective of underserved community engagement goals that were targeted in the RFP? What aspects of outreach for the grant rounds were effective, and how could outreach be improved?
 - Which points in the SCC grantmaking process were challenging or limiting for grantees? Were SCC staff helpful and available for discussion and feedback?
 - Provide recommendations for potential revisions to grant application process and/or documents, including the Request for Proposals (RFP).
 - Did/are the projects helping the grantee and community achieve their desired goals (e.g., local community engagement, community involvement in on-the-ground project implementation, a more informed community If so, how? If not, why not?)
 - In hindsight, what do grantees wish they could have had the knowledge, capacity, or funding to do differently? Why?
 - Many projects were interrupted or adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly in their ability to gather and involve community members. What obstacles did grantees face; what project adjustments were needed, especially regarding remote engagement and electronic access; and are there any potential benefits and lessons learned and applied from this time?

- An assessment of the 13 funded projects to determine their efficacy at providing community benefits.
 - Review and assess the progress of funded projects with engaging underserved or underrepresented communities by consulting with the lead grantees, the community engagement lead (if different), as well as community members who participated. How did grantees interpret ‘underserved community’ – who did they engage and how did they do so?
 - Develop a list of possible metrics for evaluation for future initiatives, including recommended metrics from social and racial justice literature, community input, and unique new ideas.
 - Suggest and collect metrics for success of inclusive & effective community engagement in projects (e.g. racial demographics of participants, etc.)
 - Suggest and collect metrics for projects benefitting underserved communities (e.g. percentage of grant going directly to community, etc.)
 - Out of the various types of grantees funded – agencies, nonprofits, community-based organizations, and fiscal sponsors –which partnerships were best able to reach target communities? What are specific components and methods of their approach led to successful engagement?
 - Report on the successes, shortcomings, and potential improvements for future grant programs that aim to achieve similar community engagement benefits.

- An informational workshop, to share input and transfer knowledge from and between the 13 projects on lessons learned. The workshop should focus on increasing general awareness of justice, equity, diversity and inclusion considerations, and share specific best practices for effective and inclusive community engagement.

4. Timeline & Funding

A. Timeline

The term of the contract will be approximately September 2021 – May 2022. Project work should crosswalk timelines with the parallel SCC staff led “Capacity Building for Nature-Based Design Assessment” so that both efforts are requesting feedback from grantees and community members in tandem. The following is a draft timeline:

- September-October 2021: Develop Two Assessments (Consultant- Community Engagement and Benefits of Grant Program; SCC- Capacity Building for Nature-Based Adaptation Design)
- October - December 2021: Conduct interviews and surveys with SCC and MCF staff, and 13 projects
- January 2022 - February 2022: Assess feedback, meet with SCC and MCF staff to review. Prepare draft Community Engagement & Benefits Report and Executive Summary with SCC staff with introduction and context to both reports.
- March - April 2022: Draft Report Review and Workshop Preparation
- April 2022: Final Report
- May 2022: Workshop on Assessment Outcomes and JEDI Principles for 13 grantees

B. Funding

SCC anticipates the total cost of this contract to be in the \$20,000 - \$30,000 range, but we welcome applicants’ expertise in suggesting the ideal approach and will consider all proposals and budgets submitted.

The Consultant will be paid for their actual time and expenses up to the amount provided for each task in the final project budget. The Consultant should anticipate that ten percent (10%) will be withheld on each task, until all work for that task is completed to the satisfaction of SCC. SCC must also approve all interim work products before payment. No overhead or indirect expenses of the Consultant will be reimbursed, as SCC expects Consultants to charge rates that incorporate these costs.

We will consider applicant budgets that include payment of stipends for participants from community-based organizations associated with the 13 projects, to be administered by the Consultant. After the final Consultant is selected and before finalizing their contract, there will be an opportunity to negotiate stipend amounts.

5. Consultant Requirements and Proposal Process

A. Selection Criteria

A successful candidate will be selected based on the following selection criteria.

- The extent to which the proposal meets the stated objectives and clearly describes the scope of work
- Specific plans or methodology to be used to perform the services
- Qualifications and experience of Consultant with equity/community engagement metrics and evaluation
- Knowledge of and experience with underserved community engagement, sea level rise/ climate planning, environmental justice, funding equity, and equity in government programs
- Project cost
- Ability to comply with SCC contracting requirements and be qualified to do business in the State of California

B. Other Requirements

In addition to the Selection Criteria outlined above, the following requirements apply:

- SCC is seeking to hire a Consultant from a certified California Small Business (SB), Micro Business or Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise (DVBE) to do this work (GC §§ 14838.5; PCC §§ 10335.5(c)(6), 10340(b)(6)). SBs are those with 100 or fewer employees, and average annual gross receipts of \$15 million or less over the last three tax years. Micro businesses are a subset of SBs with gross annual receipts of \$5,000,000 or less, or fewer than 25 employees. DVBEs must be at least 51% owned by one or more disabled veterans, with daily business operations managed by one or more disabled veterans.
 - For full eligibility requirements and to apply for these free certifications, visit: <https://www.dgs.ca.gov/PD/Services/Page-Content/Procurement-Division-Services-List-Folder/Certify-or-Re-apply-as-Small-Business-Disabled-Veteran-Business-Enterprise>
 - You can find further guidance on the certification process in [Attachment A](#), and a video detailing how to complete the online application here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xMAcwe4B9P8>
- Project Office: The applicant should be located in California
- Contract Negotiations: A copy of SCC contract provisions is provided in [Attachment B](#). There are contract provisions that may affect the cost of the work. SCC will enter into contract negotiations with the highest ranked applicant following submittal of statement of qualification/statement of approach and interviews.
- 10% Withholding: The Consultant will be paid for its actual time and expenses up to the amount provided for each task in the final project budget. The Consultant should anticipate that ten percent (10%) will be withheld on each task, until all work for that task is completed to the satisfaction of the SCC. SCC must also approve all interim work products before payment.

C. Proposal Requirements

Applicants should submit a thoughtful, clear, well-organized proposal package that includes the components listed below. Expense incurred by the respondents in replying to the RFP or participating in virtual finalist interviews are at the respondents' own expense.

Proposals must be submitted electronically via email, with the elements required below:

- A. Provide an overview of your/ your organization's expertise and background. Include specific reference to your philosophy and experience evaluating equity and/or community engagement efforts and facilitating trainings.
- B. Describe your work on similar projects, particularly those that involve government agencies and/or philanthropy.
- C. Describe your approach to the work suggested in this scope of work and any modifications you would suggest.
 - a. Include whether you use a pre-existing methodology or an individualized approach for organizations
 - b. Include proposed timeline (work is expected to be complete by Summer 2022)
 - c. Include proposed budget
- D. A written statement indicating whether your firm's current or proposed employees are, or have not been, under investigation or review by any governmental authority or similar agency in the past five years;
- E. A statement concerning the firm's potential conflicts of interest with respect to performing the work under the contract
- F. Include as attachment(s) resume(s) of person(s) that will work on this project

The proposals will be reviewed by representatives of SCC and MCF. The Consultant will be hired under contract to SCC.

D. Submission Instructions

Submittals should be emailed to Shalini Kannan at shalini.kannan@scc.ca.gov. Please note that SCC staff are working remotely partial to full time due to the Covid-19 pandemic, so email is the primary way to contact staff.

Please convert your document to a single PDF file before emailing.

Point of Contact:

Shalini Kannan, Project Manager, SCC
State Coastal Conservancy
1515 Clay St, 10th Floor
Oakland CA 94612
shalini.kannan@scc.ca.gov

E. Proposal and Selection Timeline

The Conservancy anticipates that a decision on the best qualified applicant will be made according to the following schedule:

- Submission Deadline: **5:00pm on August 6, 2021**
- Zoom interviews with firms selected for further consideration: August 6 – August 20, 2021
- Final Selection Notification: September 3, 2021