

**Northwest Georgia Regional Commission**

**REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS**

**For Procurement and Implementation of U.S. EPA Brownfield**

**Assessment Grant RFQ Release Date: September 17, 2024**

**Proposal Due Date: October 4, 2024**

**1. General Information**

The Northwest Georgia Regional Commission (NWGRC), located in Rome, Georgia, through this Request for Qualifications (RFQ), is seeking a qualified environmental consulting firm to provide grant application assistance, project management, environmental inventory and assessment, and public information and outreach services related to the United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) Brownfield Assessment Grant, as part of the U.S. EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant Competition.

NWGRC is seeking a qualified firm to assist in grant application preparation and then implementation of the successful grant award to NWGRC.

The purpose of the U.S. EPA Brownfield Assessment Grant will be to conduct Phase I and Phase II environmental site assessments (ESAs) at brownfield sites located within the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission's 15-county Region (Selected Counties), as part of efforts to spur redevelopment and reuse of these sites. The assessment grant will allow for site-specific clean-up planning and other brownfield-eligible planning activities for eligible brownfield sites targeted for assessment. The successful consultant will bring experience and insight to a partnership with NWGRC to refine and implement the EPA grant proposal and explore other grants and brownfield initiatives as funds become available.

**Type of Contract and Contract Term**

NWGRC prefers to award a contract to one full-service firm to serve as a partner in achieving the goals of preparing a successful U.S. EPA grant application for brownfield assessment funding, followed by successful and effective implementation of the resulting grant, subject to the requirements of an approved U.S. EPA Cooperative Agreement (CA) and Work Plan to be completed following award. The contract period will extend from the beginning of the grant writing phase, through the end of the 4-year project period associated with the Assessment grant, and may be extended at the option of NWGRC if additional grant funds are obtained. The successful consultant will collaborate with NWGRC staff in preparing the grant application. The contract period will coincide with the grant application period.

If NWGRC is awarded a brownfield grant, a second contract will be awarded to the same firm to implement the resulting U.S. EPA Cooperative Agreement(s) (CA) and Work Plan(s), under the direction of NWGRC. The implementation contract will be consistent with the terms and conditions of the Work Plan and CA provided by the U.S. EPA after the grant award. The contract period will generally coincide with the grant implementation period. For the implementation of any successful grant, it is assumed that the work will be specified and completed in accordance with the budget

developed as part of the grant and subsequent Work Plan as approved by NWGRC and the U.S. EPA.

### **Payment Procedures**

Payments will be made no more than monthly, for work specified and completed and in accordance with the budget developed and approved by NWGRC and the U.S. EPA.

## **2. Technical Specifications**

### **Activities Funded Under this Request for Qualifications**

This RFQ is to solicit a qualified consultant who is expected to provide a wide range of services to NWGRC for the application and implementation of the U.S. EPA Brownfield Assessment Grant. The successful consultant is expected to perform many tasks including, but not limited to the following:

- Complete all necessary research and analysis required to submit a completed grant application for the U.S. EPA Brownfield Community Assessment Grant (\$500,000 - \$1,200,000), including assistance in writing the text for the grant application from information provided by NWGRC and obtained from other information sources.
- Assembling the final applications and submittal to U.S. EPA through NWGRC.
- Prepare and maintain schedules and budgets for assessment, remediation, and related activities.
- Conduct and oversee site assessment studies and prepare appropriate technical reports required by the U.S. EPA, and/or the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (GA EPD) in print and electronic format.
- Field investigations including sample collection and lab analysis.
- Interviews with neighboring property owners.
- Evaluation of clean-up options and risk assessment analysis and costs.
- Preparation of written Quality Assurance Project Plans (QAPPs) in compliance with U.S. EPA regulations.
- Delivery to NWGRC completed Phase I and Phase II ESA reports, site investigation reports, response action plans, and other environmental reports or plans required under the applicable state and federal environmental regulations.
- Project management, implementation, and/or technical oversight.
- Assisting NWGRC with ACRES reporting as required by the U.S. EPA for any grants funded under this RFQ.
- Professional advice regarding environmental issues associated with land reuse/redevelopment.
- Provide regulatory and financial information as needed.
- Attend meetings of NWGRC staff and advisory committees as requested.
- Prepare presentations to provide information about the project's progress as requested.
- Assist with the conducting of a community-wide inventory of brownfield sites.
- Develop and preliminary budget, financing options, and implementation plan for cleanup/reuse.

- Complete contaminant characterization and risk assessments as determined necessary following Phase II activities (as funds allow).
- Involve public and private opportunities for citizen participation throughout all phases of projects.
- Comprehensive community outreach program and public participation program.
- Implement site-specific clean-up and remediation.

### **Project Budget**

The total budget for the U.S. EPA Brownfield Assessment Grant will range between \$500,000 - \$1,200,000. NWGRC and the successful consultant will develop budgets for assessment activities at individual sites as the project progresses and as specific priority sites are identified for assessment. The budget for any future related grants executed under this contract will be negotiated with the consultant if and when such funding becomes available. It will be NWGRC's option whether or not to utilize this contract for future brownfield grants beyond the initial U.S. EPA assessment grant application and implementation projects.

### **Project Management**

The successful consultant, under the direction of NWGRC will:

- Work with NWGRC in preparing the assessment grant application and submit the grant application to the U.S. EPA through NWGRC.
- Refine Work Plan tasks in conjunction with NWGRC for the successful grant.
- Implement successful grant per approved Work Plan.
- Facilitate community outreach activities as needed to enhance the grant application.
- Coordinate project activities with U.S. EPA Region 4 staff for U.S. EPA grant.
- Assist with any grant reporting requirements.

### **Preparation of QAPPs**

Consultant's work will be governed by NWGRC.

- Upon award and updated throughout the project as appropriate, the Consultant shall refine the scope of work and provide a project QAPP arranged in logical work tasks, including subcontractors to be used by the Consultant and identification of their project roles.
- A detailed project budget for each major task and subtask, including estimates of a time-phased project schedule listing major tasks, target dates, and delivery of work products must be approved by NWGRC prior to implementation.

### **Reporting Requirements**

The following reports shall be prepared by the contractor and submitted to NWGRC for approval:

- Quarterly and annual financial and progress reports required under the U.S. EPA grant.
- Submittal and updating of information on assessed sites on the U.S. EPA ACRES reporting system.

- Draft and final QAPPs (as applicable by work assignment).
- Technical memoranda.
- Any and all grant reports as required by the U.S. EPA and other deliverables as may be required by other Federal and/or State agencies, and NWGRC.

### 3. Proposal Requirements

#### General Expectations

Consultants are asked to submit proposals describing their capacity to manage projects and their experience with similar projects. The proposals should include a clear outline of how the firm would help NWGRC in preparing a successful grant application and meeting the requirements of the U.S. EPA Brownfield Assessment Grant, should NWGRC be awarded. Samples of a U.S. EPA-approved Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP), Phase I and Phase II environmental site assessments, and reports are expected as part of the proposal. Consideration should be given to the tasks, budget details, community outreach, and participation.

#### Proposals

Proposals should be prepared on standard-size paper and limited to twenty (20) single-sided pages, including every printed page except the front and back cover and transmittal letter.

Example documents will not count towards the 20-page limit and should be provided electronically.

Standard advertising brochures should not be included in the proposal. The proposal shall include the following information in the order presented below:

**Business Organization:** This section shall include the firm's name, areas of expertise, a brief history of the firm, size, office locations, and business addresses. The name, address, and telephone number of a contact person and/or prospective project manager regarding the proposal shall be included. If sub-consultants are being utilized, similar information should be included for all subcontracted firms.

**Management Outline and Project Approach:** A description of the project and how the consulting firm will first prepare a successful application on behalf of NWGRC, and then manage and implement the resulting U.S. EPA Brownfield Assessment Grant and any related activities shall be provided. This section shall include the applicant's approach to community outreach activities, planning, organization, and management. Based on past experience, an estimate as to the number of Phase I and Phase II reports that would be completed as part of the grant should be included. Each consulting firm shall provide a list of proposed key personnel and their relevant expertise related to brownfield consultation and assessment.

**Experience and Capabilities:** The relevant management and technical experience and capabilities of the consulting firm shall be defined with respect to the following activities:

#### A. Project Experience of Key Personnel:

- a. Provide information on your firm's specific abilities and qualifications to provide professional services for EPA Brownfield Assessment grant writing and grant implementation.
  - b. Number of EPA grant applications written for Georgia communities.
  - c. Conducting brownfield inventories, Phase I and Phase II ESAs in Georgia.
  - d. Conducting environmental investigations and cleanups in Georgia.
  - e. EPA project experience with Georgia communities.
  - f. Redevelopment planning and community involvement activities related to brownfield properties.
  - g. Designing and managing cost-effective brownfield remediation strategies.
  - h. Other areas of expertise relevant or unique experience related to U.S. EPA grant implementation. (optional)
  - i. The primary project manager assigned to this project and if for any reason that individual is unable to complete the project, the secondary project manager would then be assigned the project.
- B. Regulatory and Scientific/Technical Knowledge:
- a. Knowledge and expertise pertaining to EPA grant writing and implementation of successful grants in Georgia.
  - b. Individual staff knowledge and technical expertise relative to ESAs, brownfield projects, and contaminated site remediation.
  - c. Knowledge and expertise pertaining to OSHA and other health and safety rules or requirements related to environmental assessments.

All representative project descriptions provided shall include the location of the project, the name and phone number of a knowledgeable contact person, and other pertinent information. NWGRC may contact said persons to check on past performance records. The selected Consultant will be required to assume responsibility for all services offered in the proposal, including any services provided by subcontractors. Further, NWGRC will consider the Consultant to be the sole point of contact with regard to contractual matters, including payment of any and all charges resulting from the contract. The Consultant is responsible for adherence by the subcontractor to all provisions of the contract. If the Consultant is using subcontractors, previous projects on which the two firms have worked together should be noted.

### **General Process**

NWGRC will review the proposals with the following criteria in mind: expertise (in particular, expertise in successfully securing funds for Georgia communities), brownfields experience, project approach, familiarity with local communities, ability to facilitate public outreach activities, the ability to provide comprehensive and creative environmental services, proposed cost, or range of associated cost.

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|---|-----|
| • Experience in successfully securing funding | 10% |
| • Brownfield experience                       | 30% |
| • Familiarity w/ local communities            | 10% |
| • Ability to facilitate public outreach       | 10% |

- Ability to provide comp/creative environmental service 20%
- Proposed cost/range of associated costs 20%

NWGRC reserves the right to accept or reject proposals on any basis it deems appropriate. Questions must be submitted in writing via email no later than **Friday, September 25, 2024, at 3:00 pm** and responses will be posted on the NWGRC website within five business days. Submit questions to Boyd Austin at [baustin@nwgrc.org](mailto:baustin@nwgrc.org).

### **Terms and Conditions**

The process of selecting organizations to provide consultation services for NWGRC requires the accumulation of comprehensive and accurate information to ensure that a knowledgeable, objective decision can be made.

NWGRC reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals or portions thereof without stated cause. NWGRC reserves the right to re-issue any RFQ, and whether or not to utilize the contract for this grant for future projects funded by U.S. EPA or other brownfield grants.

Upon selection of a finalist, NWGRC by its proper officials shall attempt to negotiate and reach a final agreement with the finalist. If NWGRC, for any reason, is unable to reach a final agreement with the finalist, NWGRC then reserves the right to reject such finalist and negotiate a final agreement with another finalist who has the next most viable proposal. NWGRC may also elect to reject all proposals and re-issue a new RFQ.

NWGRC reserves the right to waive any formalities, defects, or irregularities, in any proposal, response, and/or submittal where the acceptance, rejection, or waiving of such is in the best interest of NWGRC.

### **Public Information**

Information supplied by the proposer to NWGRC shall become public unless it falls within an exception, such as security information, trade secret information, or labor relations information. If the proposer believes any information that is not public will be supplied in response to this RFQ, the vendor shall take reasonable steps to identify for NWGRC what data, if any, it believes falls within the exceptions. If the proposal data is not marked in such a way as to identify non-public data, NWGRC will treat the information as public and release it upon request. In addition, NWGRC reserves the right to make the final determination of whether data identified by the proposer as not public falls within the exceptions within the statute.

#### **a. RFQ Time Schedule**

The tentative timeline for completion of this request for qualifications is outlined below.

- September 17, 2024: Formal announcement date and release to the public RFQ.
- September 25, 2024, by 3:00 pm: Deadline for submittal of any questions/clarification relative to RFQ.
- September 30, 2024, by 3:00 pm: Response to all proposers for any questions received.
- October 4, 2024, by 3:00 pm: Deadline for submissions.
- October 14, 2024: Selection Committee meets
- October 15, 2024: Notification of intent to award and award approval

Grant application shall be completed and submitted to NWGRC for review at least five (5) business days prior to the U.S. EPA Assessment grant deadline and submittal to the U.S. EPA.

Grant implementation is subject to the grant application approved by U.S. EPA.

Proposals are due and must be received in the NWGRC office on or before **Monday, October 4, 2024, by 3:00 pm (ET)** at the following address:

**Northwest Georgia Regional Commission  
Attention: Boyd Austin  
P.O. Box 1798  
Rome, Georgia 30162-1798  
OR BY EMAIL  
baustin@nwgrc.org**

Proposals will be reviewed following a qualifications-based selection process with the firm's proposals being evaluated from a qualifications standpoint. NWGRC will then negotiate the services of completing the grant application and the scope of services for implementation if the grant is awarded to the top-qualified firm following the evaluation process.

If NWGRC, for any reason, is unable to reach a final agreement with the finalist, NWGRC then reserves the right to reject such finalist and negotiate a final agreement with another finalist who has the next most viable proposal and so on until an agreement can be reached with the finalist.

Proposals are to be sealed in an envelope/box or emailed and labeled as: **Brownfield Grant Writing & Implementation Services, U.S. EPA Brownfield Grant Application Project – RFQ.**

#### **Notification of Award**

NWGRC plans to select a consultant by approximately October 16, 2024.

#### **Number of Proposals to Submit; Deadline, Mail, and Hand Delivery Addresses**

In the case of mail or hand delivery:

One (1) original and one (1) electronic copy (USB flash drive) of the proposal must be submitted by 3:00 pm ET on Friday October 4, 2024. The USB flash drive should include the example EPA-approved QAPP, one Phase I ESA Report, and one Phase II ESA report.

The mailing and hand delivery addresses is:

**Northwest Georgia Regional Commission  
Attention: Boyd Austin  
1 Jackson Hill Drive  
Rome, GA 30161**

#### **Late Proposals**

Proposals received after the deadline will not be considered.

#### **4. General Terms and Conditions**

There are no expressed or implied obligations for the NWGRC to reimburse responding companies for any expenses incurred in preparing proposals in response to this RFQ.

NWGRC reserves the right to request clarifications regarding information submitted as well as request additional information from one or more companies submitting qualifications.

By submitting qualifications, a company certifies that it has fully read and understands this RFP and has full knowledge of the nature, scope, quantity, and quality of the work to be performed; the detailed requirements of the services to be provided and the conditions under which the services are to be performed. Failure to do so will not relieve the successful proposing company of its obligation to enter into a contract and to completely perform the contract in strict accordance with this RFP.

Any proposal submitted shall constitute an irrevocable offer for a period of 120 calendar days.

Ownership of all data, materials, and documentation prepared for and submitted in response to this RFQ shall belong exclusively to the NWGRC and will be considered a public record and subject to public inspection in accordance with the Georgia Open Record Act, O.C.G.A. 50-18-70 et. seq. unless otherwise provided by law.

NWGRC reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, extend the deadline for submission of proposals, call for new proposals, to waive any informalities in a proposal, or to award a contract to the next most qualified company if the selected company does not execute a contract within 30 days after notification of the award. NWGRC reserves the right to accept, reject and/or negotiate any and all proposals or parts of proposals deemed by the NWGRC Council to be in the best interest of the citizens of Northwest Georgia.

The contract between the NWGRC and the successful proposing firm will be on the form approved by the NWGRC Council.

This RFQ and any resulting contract shall be governed in all respects by the laws of the State of Georgia and the successful proposing company shall comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations.

By submitting their qualifications, all proposing companies certify that their proposals are made without collusion or fraud that they have not offered or received any kickbacks or inducements from any other person or party in connection with their proposals and that they have not conferred with any NWGRC employee having official responsibility for this procurement transaction of any payment, loan, subscription, advance, deposit of money, services, or anything of value of more than nominal value, present or promise unless consideration of substantially equal or greater value was exchanged.

The proposing companies specifically certify that by submitting their qualifications they are not in violation of O.C.G.A. §§ 16-10-2 and 16-10-22 for acts of bribery, and/ or conspiracy in restraint of free and open competition in transactions with state or political subdivisions.

By submitting their qualifications, all proposing companies certify that they are not currently debarred from submitting bids or proposals on contracts by any agency of the State of Georgia and the federal government, nor are they an agent of any person or entity that is currently debarred from submitting bids on contracts by any agency of the State of Georgia or the federal government.



## **Inquiries About This RFQ**

All inquiries and questions regarding this RFP shall be in writing and directed to:

**Boyd Austin, Executive Director**

[baustin@nwgrc.org](mailto:baustin@nwgrc.org)

The deadline for submission of any questions shall be **September 25, 2024, at 3:00 p.m.** Do not call or email any employee or elected official seeking answers to questions. If a person or entity violates the prohibition against calling or emailing with questions, the NWGRC reserves the right to immediately remove said person or entity from consideration. Questions and answers will be distributed to all interested parties through a formal written addendum to the RFQ prior to the submittal deadline. All addendums will be posted on NWGRC's website, [www.nwgrc.org](http://www.nwgrc.org)

## **Qualifications Submittal**

Qualifications are due no later than **3:00 p.m. on Friday, October 4, 2024**. An original and four (4) copies of the proposal must be enclosed in a sealed envelope clearly marked, "**Brownfield Grant Writing & Implementation Services, U.S. EPA Brownfield Grant Application Project – RFQ**". All proposals must be delivered to Northwest Georgia Regional Commission, Attn: Boyd Austin, Executive Director, P.O. Box 1798, Rome, Georgia, 30162-1798 by the deadline date and time. Any proposals received after the deadline date and time will be returned unopened. Incomplete proposals may not be considered if the omissions are determined to be significant.

## **Other Information**

NWGRC also abides by the following laws as they pertain to Federally Assisted Projects: Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; Section 109 of the HCD Act of 1974, Title 1; Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968 (Fair Housing Act); Section 104(b)(2) of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended; Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA); and the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968, and all other applicable rules and requirements.