

## **South Alabama Regional Planning Commission**

### **REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS**

#### **For Procurement and Implementation of U.S. EPA Brownfields Grant**

**RFQ Release Date: May 1, 2022**

**Proposal Due Date: July 8, 2022, at 3:00 pm**

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## **1. GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **1.1 Purpose of this Request for Qualifications**

The South Alabama Regional Planning Commission (SARPC), located in Mobile Alabama, 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 a United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) Brownfield Assessment Grant, as part of the U.S. EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant Competition expected to be announced later this year. SARPC is seeking a qualified firm to assist in grant application preparation and then implementation of the successful grant awarded to SARPC.

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 South Alabama Regional Planning Commission Three County Region, as part of efforts to spur redevelopment and reuse of these sites. The assessment grant will also allow for site-specific cleanup 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 SARPC to refine and implement the EPA grant proposal and explore other grants and brownfields initiatives as funds become available.

### **1.2 Type of Contract and Contract Term**

SARPC prefers to award a contract to one full-service firm to serve as a partner in achieving the goals of preparing a successful US 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 3-year project period associated with the Assessment grant, and may be extended at the option of SARPC if additional grant funds are obtained. The successful consultant will collaborate with SARPC staff in preparing the grant application. The contract period will coincide with the grant application period.

If SARPC is awarded a brownfield grant, a second contract will be awarded to the same firm to implement the resulting US EPA Cooperative Agreement(s) (CA) and Work Plan(s), under the direction of SARPC. The implementation contract will be consistent with the terms and

conditions of the Work Plan and CA provided by the US 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 SARPC and the US EPA.

### **1.3 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 SARPC and the EPA.

## **2. TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS**

### **2.1 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 SARPC for the application and implementation of the US 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 U.S. EPA Brownfield Community-wide Assessment Grant (\$300,000-\$500,000), including assistance in writing the text for the grant application from information provided by SARPC and obtained from other information sources.
- Assembling the final applications and submittal to U.S. EPA through SARPC.
- 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 Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) in print and electronic format.
- Field investigations including sample collection and lab analysis.
- Interviews with neighboring property owners.
- Evaluation of cleanup options and risk assessment analysis and costs.
- Preparation of written Quality Assurance Project Plans (QAPPs) in compliance with U.S. EPA regulations.
- Delivery to SARPC 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 SARPC with ACRES reporting as required by the 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 SARPC 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 a 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 cleanup or remediation.

## **2.2 Project Budget**

The total budget for the U.S. EPA brownfield assessment grant will range between \$300,000-\$500,000, depending upon EPA grant proposal guidance expected to be published later this year. SARPC 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 SARPC's option whether or not to utilize this contract for future brownfields grants beyond the initial U.S. EPA assessment grant application and implementation projects.

## **2.3 Project Management**

The successful consultant, under the direction from SARPC, will:

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

## **2.4 Preparation of QAPPs**

Consultant's work will be governed by SARPC.

1. 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.
2. A detailed project budget for each major task and subtask, to include estimates of a time-phased project schedule listing major tasks, target dates, and delivery of work products must be approved by SARPC prior to implementation.

## **2.5 Reporting Requirements**

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

1. Quarterly and annual financial and progress reports required under the U.S. EPA grant.

2. Submittal and updating of information on assessed sites on the U.S. EPA ACRES reporting system.
3. Draft and final QAPPs (as applicable by work assignment).
4. Technical memoranda.
5. 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 SARPC.

### **3. PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS**

#### **3.1 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 SARPC in preparing a successful grant application and meeting the requirements of the U.S. EPA Brownfields Assessment grant, should SARPC 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 your proposal. Consideration should be given to the tasks, budget details, community outreach, and participation.

#### **3.2 Proposals**

Proposals should be prepared on standard size paper and limited to twenty (20) single-sided pages, including every printed page except 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 SARPC, and then manage and implement the resulting U.S. EPA Brownfields 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:**

- Provide information on your firm's specific abilities and qualifications to provide professional services for EPA Brownfield Assessment grant writing and grant implementation.
- Number of EPA grants applications written for Alabama communities.
- Conducting brownfields inventories, Phase I and Phase II ESAs in Alabama.
- Conducting environmental investigations and cleanups in Alabama.
- EPA project experience with Alabama communities.
- Redevelopment planning and community involvement activities related to brownfields properties.
- Designing and managing cost-effective brownfields remediation strategies.
- Other areas of expertise relevant or unique experience related to US EPA grant implementation (optional).
- The primary project manager assigned to this project and if for any reason that individual is unable to complete the project, whom the secondary project manager would then be assigned to the project.

**B. Regulatory and Scientific/Technical Knowledge:**

- Knowledge and expertise pertaining to EPA grant writing and implementation of successful grants in Alabama.
- Individual staff knowledge and technical experience relative to ESAs, brownfield projects, and contaminated site remediation.
- 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. SARPC 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, SARPC 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 subcontractors 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.

**3.3 General Process**

SARPC will review the proposals with the following criteria in mind: expertise (in particular, expertise in successfully securing funding for Alabama communities), brownfields experience, project approach, familiarity with local communities, ability to facilitate public outreach activities, and the ability to provide comprehensive and creative environmental services. SARPC reserves the right to accept or reject proposals on any basis it deems appropriate.

Questions must be submitted in writing via mail or email no later than Friday, June 3, 2022 at 3:00 pm and responses will be provided to all proposers within five business days.

### **3.4 Terms and Conditions**

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

SARPC reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals or portions thereof without stated cause. SARPC 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 brownfields grants.

Upon selection of a finalist, SARPC by its proper officials shall attempt to negotiate and reach a final agreement with the finalist. If SARPC, for any reason, is unable to reach a final agreement with this finalist, SARPC then reserves the right to reject such finalist and negotiate a final agreement with another finalist who has the next most viable proposal. SARPC may also elect to reject all proposals and re-issue a new RFQ. Clarification of proposals: SARPC reserves the right to obtain clarification of any point in a proposer's proposal or obtain additional information. Any request for clarification or other correspondence related to the RFQ shall be in writing or email, and a response shall be provided within two business days.

SARPC 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 interests of SARPC.

### **3.5 Public Information**

Information supplied by the proposer to SARPC 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 which is not public will be supplied in response to this RFQ, the vendor shall take reasonable steps to identify for SARPC 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, SARPC will treat the information as public and release it upon request. In addition, SARPC 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.

### **3.6 RFQ Time Schedule**

Tentative timeline for completion of this request for qualifications is outlined below.

1. May 1, 2022: Formal announcement date and release to the public of RFQ.
2. June 3, 2022 by 3:00 p.m.: Deadline for submittal of any questions/clarification relative to RFQ.
3. June 10, 2022 by 3:00 p.m.: Response to all proposers for any questions received.
4. July 8, 2022 by 3:00 p.m.: Deadline for submittal of proposals.
5. July 15, 2022: Notification of intent to award.
6. July 22, 2022: Award approval.

7. Grant application shall be completed and submitted to SARPC for review at least five (5) business days prior to US EPA Assessment grant deadline and submittal to US EPA.
8. Grant implementation subject to the grant application approved by the US EPA.

Proposals are due and must be received in SARPC office on or before Friday, July 8, 2022, by 3:00 PM (CT) at the following address:

**South Alabama Regional Planning Commission**  
**Attention: Nicole Taylor**  
**110 Beauregard Street, Suite 207**  
**P.O. Box 1665**  
**Mobile, Alabama 36633**

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

If SARPC, for any reason, is unable to reach a final agreement with the finalist, SARPC 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, US EPA Brownfield Grant Application Project – RFQ.**

### **3.7 Notification of Award**

SARPC plans to select a consultant by approximately July 22, 2022.

### **3.8 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 (disc or USB flash drive)** of the proposal must be submitted by **3:00 p.m. CST on Friday, July 8, 2022.** The disc or 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 address is:

**South Alabama Regional Planning Commission**  
**Attention: Nicole Taylor**  
**110 Beauregard Street, Suite 207**  
**P.O. Box 1665**  
**Mobile, Alabama 36633**

### **3.9 Late Proposals**

Proposals received after the deadline will not be considered.

## **4. VENDOR REQUIREMENTS**

### **4.1 Contracting With Disadvantaged Business Enterprises**

It is U.S. EPA policy to award a fair share of contracts to disadvantaged business firms. Accordingly, affirmative steps must be taken to ensure that disadvantaged businesses are utilized when possible as sources of supplies, equipment, and services. SARPC will ensure, to the fullest extent possible, that at least the U.S. EPA “fair share” objectives for prime contracts and subcontracts are made available to organizations owned or controlled by socially and economically disadvantaged individuals, women, and historically black colleges and universities. The consultant shall agree to support the U.S. EPA’s disadvantaged business enterprise contract procurement program ensuring those businesses’ participation in subcontracts.

Affirmative steps include the following as a minimum:

1. Including qualified disadvantaged businesses on solicitation lists;
2. Ensuring that disadvantaged businesses are solicited whenever they are potential sources;
3. When economically feasible, dividing total requirements into smaller tasks or quantities so as to permit disadvantaged business participation;
4. Where the requirement permits, establishing delivery schedules which will encourage participation by disadvantaged businesses;
5. Using the services and assistance of the Small Business Administration, the Office of Minority Business Enterprise of the Department of Commerce, and the Community Services Administration as required;
6. Consultants are encouraged to procure goods and services from disadvantaged businesses.

### **4.2 Equal Employment Opportunity**

The proposer agrees to comply with all federal, state, and local laws, resolutions, ordinances, rules, regulations, and executive orders pertaining to unlawful discrimination on account of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, sexual preference, disability, or age. When required by law or requested by SARPC, the proposer shall furnish a written affirmative action plan.

More information about this funding opportunity can be found at:

<https://www.epa.gov/brownfields/solicitations-brownfield-grants>