



REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

for

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Consultant

Issued: May 28, 2020

Due: 5:00 PM Eastern, July 1, 2020

Contact:

Jason Frenzel

Volunteer & Stewardship Coordinator

jfrenzel@hrwc.org

Background & Purpose

Five Southeast Michigan watershed organizations, [Clinton River Watershed Council \(CRWC\)](#), [Huron River Watershed Council \(HRWC\)](#), [Friends of the Rouge \(FOTR\)](#), [Friends of the Detroit River \(FDR\)](#) and [River Raisin Watershed Council \(RRWC\)](#) have long histories of serving their communities through environmental stewardship, education, and change-making. These organizations desire to examine themselves through an equity lens to improve accessibility and advance their service to the diversity (race and ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, belief, and ability) present in Southeast Michigan.

Collectively, these organizations wish to take meaningful steps to identify how to build the core values of anti-racism, justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion into their policies, operations and programs and model those values in the advancement of their missions. In embracing diversity, equity, and inclusion as organizational values, these organizations aim to meet their visions – to recruit and retain membership, supporters, participants, leadership, and staff who reflect the diversity of the communities they serve.

Each of the five organizations has a different history, structure, size, culture, and level of progress on DEI work. As a result, each has a different need on this topic as indicated below in by the differing degrees of involvement in the project. Some organizations are in the beginning stages of their work on this topic and are only participating in the training elements of the project. Others, including CRWC, HRWC, and FOTR, would like to take additional steps in their DEI journey and to involve the consultant in further work to better understand their organizations' challenges as well as areas of progress and opportunity on DEI. Summarized histories of organizational DEI advancement and anticipated project involvement are provided below. More in-depth organizational DEI histories are included in Appendix A.

Clinton River Watershed Council

Our service area encompasses some of the densest residential and commercial development in the state, but also includes rural and farming communities in the northern and western portions of the watershed. The economic prosperity of the communities in our service area ranges from some of the most challenged to some of the wealthiest in our state.

Our population is predominately white (80% in Macomb, 75% in Oakland). Approximately 13% are African American and the balance represents a wide range of racial/ethnic and religious backgrounds.

We currently do not have specific policies related to diversity, equity and inclusion beyond a *Policy Prohibiting Harassment and Discrimination*, which was originally adopted in 2000 and updated in 2010. It is primarily focused on workplace behaviors, not how we approach the different audiences we serve.

CRWC's participation in the project will be as follows:

- We will participate in the cross-watershed DEI Steering Committee, following the lead from HRWC as the main point-of-contact.
- CRWC will participate in trainings and the audit process with the consultant.

Huron River Watershed Council

Since the early 2010s, HRWC has been advancing DEI internally while also taking small, incremental steps to advance DEI externally. HRWC's efforts up to this point include the formation of a DEI Committee, a handful of all-staff trainings, equity analyses of projects and marketing, and internal policy updates to promote inclusion. HRWC has also made efforts to promote diversity on its Board of Directors and provide opportunities to underrepresented young professionals.

HRWC's involvement in the project will be as follows:

- HRWC will be the main point-of-contact between the consultant and the five organizations, leading the RFP and contract process.
- HRWC will participate in trainings and the audit process with the consultant.

Friends of the Rouge

Since the beginning of FOTR in 1986, the organization's programmatic offerings have touched a geographic area in Southeast Michigan home to an incredibly diverse population. Situated around the City of Detroit and many of the inner ring suburbs of metro-Detroit, FOTR works with communities of extreme social, economic, ethnic and racial variances. While many of our members, program participants and volunteers represent the communities we serve, FOTR has often lacked representation from these groups on the board of directors or staff.

During FOTR's Strategic Planning process in 2018-19, FOTR formalized seven core values that reflect the desire of the organization to take steps toward a renewed vision for their work. One of these values is Diversity-Equity-Involvement. The value states:

We strive to recruit and retain membership, leadership and staff who reflect the diversity of the communities in which we serve. We believe that the entire community benefits when everyone has equal access to information, programs, services and activities.

FOTR's involvement in the project will be as follows:

- FOTR will participate in the cross-watershed DEI Steering Committee, following the lead from HRWC as the main point-of-contact.
- FOTR will participate in trainings and the audit process with the consultant.

Friends of the Detroit River

FDR have had little opportunity for formal DEI work or training. They look forward to being involved in this project.

River Raisin Watershed Council

RRWC have had little opportunity for formal DEI work or training. They look forward to being involved in this project.

Objectives and Scope of Work

These organizations seek a qualified consultant to:

- Design and run a series of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) trainings totaling 15-20 hours for the staff, key board members, and key volunteers (~80 people total) of the five Southeast Michigan watershed organizations (HRWC, CRWC, FOTR, FDR, RRWC).
- Develop internal audits and metrics to identify progress towards, and areas of improvement on, DEI for three watershed organizations (HRWC, CRWC, FOTR).
- Provide final report related to first two points.
- Lead a collaborative process between five organizations to increase regional cohesion on DEI among the organizations.

Deliverables

DEI Trainings

The consultant will design and lead the five participating watershed organizations, including their staff, key board members and key volunteers (~ 80 people), through 15-20 hours of in-person (or virtual) DEI trainings to increase understanding of DEI issues and learn actionable solutions. The content, structure, and quantity of trainings will be determined in partnership between lead organization (HRWC) and consultant. Prior to trainings, the consultant will conduct interviews with select staff, and survey all staff as well as 3-5 key board members and volunteers. This data will inform the design and implementation of trainings. Trainings will be designed to offer meaningful actions trainees and their organizations can take to advance DEI at their organizations.

Organizational Audits

The consultant will complete individual internal DEI audits for HRWC, CRWC and FOTR. The audits will explore all aspects of the organization including, human resources, operations, marketing and communications, board and volunteers, and organizational culture. The interviews and surveys conducted by consultant (mentioned above) will provide data for the audit as well as a review of policies, procedures, and communications assets (e.g. website, social media channels, key print materials). This audit will provide a benchmark for future evaluations allowing the organizations to track progress over time. A final report will be produced that captures the audit process, results, and recommendations for action.

Project work should commence in early June 2020 and all deliverables should be completed by March 1, 2021. The project deliverables may be completed in any order the consultant sees appropriate.

Budget

Proposals are not to exceed \$56,000 for completion of the project. Participating watershed organizations have funding for staff time and involvement.

Consultant Selection and Project Schedule

<u>Activity/Event</u>	<u>Anticipated Date</u>
Pre-Bid Virtual Question & Answer Session	June 16, 2020, 9:00-12:00 Eastern
Proposal Due Date	July 1, 2020 by 5:00 PM Eastern
Tentative Interviews	Week of July 13, 2020
Selection/Negotiation	Week of July 27, 2020
Project Completed	March 1, 2021
Grant Period Ends	April 1, 2021

These dates are subject to change if necessary.

[To register for the Pre-Bid Virtual Question & Answer Session, click here.](#)

Proposal Format

- **Cover Letter:** Provide a cover letter including an overview of the proposal and your approach as well as your interest in working on this project.
- **Resumes:** Qualifications and experience for all individuals involved in the project.
- **Work History and References:** Provide descriptions of past relevant projects and experience, with three past client references.
- **Proposal:** A full proposal for completing the work described above including:
 - Bidder company overview, structure, brief history, mission statement and contact information (name, title, address, email, phone number).
 - Proposed strategy, methodology, and work plan, including associated staff and timeline of activities. Workplan and timeline will include key deadlines for each deliverable.
 - Description of products and outcomes.
 - Budget estimate, including itemized expenses and fees broken down by task with justifications.
 - Expectations of the five organizations, including materials and estimated time needed to commit to the process.
 - COVID-19 implementation plan, including anticipated delivery under socially distanced and non-social distanced scenarios.

Evaluation Criteria

The five organizations seek consultants who have, or whose proposals have, the following attributes:

- **Suitability:** Proposed strategy meets the scope and needs outlined in the RFP.
- **Experience:** Preference will be given to those with proven experience working with clients of similar size, scope, and/or mission on diversity, equity, and inclusion projects.
- **Geography:** Preference for consultants who are located within Southeast Michigan.
- **Value and Cost:** Proposed budget will be evaluated compared to timeline and deliverables.
- **Connection to Partners:** While not a requirement, knowledge and awareness of the five watershed organizations and environmental issues in Southeast Michigan is a plus.
- **Advice & Ideas:** While not a requirement, additional advice and ideas brought forward that highlight experience and leadership will be considered.
- **Diversity:** consultancies owned and/or operated by people of color and/or women are encouraged to apply.

Proposal Submission

All proposals must be sent virtually as a single PDF via email to Jason Frenzel at jfrenzel@hrwc.org by 5:00 PM Eastern Time on July 1, 2020 with the subject line "DEI Proposal Submission." Contract terms and conditions will be based on this RFP and the submitted proposal and will be negotiated upon selection of the winning proposal. All contractual terms and conditions will be subject to review.

Questions

All questions or clarifications concerning the RFP and proposal are welcome via email or phone to Jason Frenzel of the Huron River Watershed Council at jfrenzel@hrwc.org or (734) 769-5123 ext. 610. HRWC is leading the RFP and project administration process on behalf of the five organizations.

Appendix A – Organizational DEI Histories

Huron River Watershed Council

- Staff have been attending diversity trainings periodically since 2013.
- Formation of a DEI Committee in 2015 to advance DEI initiatives and areas of interest. The committee is comprised of 4 staff members and meets monthly.
- In 2015, brought in an external facilitator to conduct an all-staff training to advance staff competency on DEI.
- Full review of all policies and procedures through DEI lens in 2015.
- Since 2015, monthly staff meetings have standing DEI standing agenda item for sharing information, challenges, and successes.
- Internal (staff only) evaluation of diversity and DEI priorities in 2015 and 2017.
- Staff attended a series of cultural humility trainings in 2018.
- Staff conducted a series of DEI trainings in early 2020 to continue advancing staff competency on DEI issues. Topics included white fragility, allyship, and equity analyses.
- Annually receives interns from the University of Michigan Doris Duke Conservation Scholars Program and the UM Environmental Fellows Program, which provide opportunities in conservation organizations to students from marginalized communities or underrepresented backgrounds.
- Evaluated accessibility and safety of field work from a DEI lens in 2018. Implemented field safety procedures to promote inclusion, safety, and accessibility.
- Assessed marketing and communication tools to improve accessibility for visual and hearing-impaired individuals.
- Includes a diversity and inclusion/non-discrimination statement on jobs webpage as well as with job, internship, and volunteer postings.
- Analyzed and implemented Ban the Box for hiring processes.
- Mapping demographics in the watershed so we can create strategies to support and engage at risk, under-served, and economically challenged communities.
- Improved text size and color contrast on communication materials to promote accessibility for visually impaired.
- Within Norton Creek project, consulted with Native American sources for messaging on signage.

- Within the Ypsilanti Pen Dam project, changed the outreach strategy after getting feedback from residents.
- On top level website pages, we use a readability score to help us maintain content that can be understood by a wider range of educated readers.
- Include pictures of people on our site and print materials with diversity (gender, ages, ethnicity, abilities) – with an awareness of not "tokenizing" people, especially POCs.
- Translate signage into other languages (PFAS and Catch and Release signs). Signs are placed at heights that people who use mobility devices can read.
- Installation of universal access kayak launches throughout the Huron River watershed.

Friends of the Rouge

- Utilize images of people on our site and print material to include diversity (gender, ages, ethnicity, abilities) to represent the communities we serve and those who participate in our programs.
- Ensure the text size and color contrast on our website make it readable for visually impaired.
- Designing and translating signage and print material for our Lower Rouge River Water Trail and Land + Water Works Rain Gardens into other languages (Arabic and Spanish).
- Designing entire Lower Rouge River Water Trail with universal access kayak launches.
- Seek to circulate our job and internship openings through venues more likely to attract applicants from diverse communities
- Created a sit-down activity at one Rouge Rescue site to accommodate those with limited mobility.
- Had our storm drain stencil and doorhanger translated into Arabic and worked with a volunteer group to use these in a predominantly Arab-American neighborhood near the Ford Rouge plant.
- Prioritize underserved populations for incorporation into our school-based education program. Teachers work with diverse groups of students from many different ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds. Strive to bring diverse groups of students together at an annual Student Symposium to meet each other, share results, and discuss.
- Provide income-based scholarships or sliding scale purchase options for most fee-based activities (rain garden classes, consultations, rain barrels, some fundraisers, etc)
- Our Restoration Manager participated in a three-day conference with DEI focused trainings and workshops in 2013. She also participated in DEI workshops in 2016.
- Rain Gardens to the Rescue program organizers regularly check in with, and seek guidance from, a select group of participants from the Detroit community in which the program serves.