

Request for Qualifications: Technical Specialist

Overview

On behalf of the Mid-Valley River Connections (MVRC) network of watershed councils (WCs), the Luckiamute Watershed Council (LWC) seeks an independent contractor (entity or individual) to serve as a “Technical Specialist” (TS) for regional restoration project development coordination and grant writing. The MVRC partnership is seeking to contract with a TS to assist in developing restoration projects in the five basins that make up the MVRC network. The TS will provide technical assistance and project development capacity to scope project details and refine project budgets in order to craft a high-quality restoration proposal. Specifically, the TS will lead preparation and submission of a response to the Request For Proposals (RFP) from the NOAA Community-based Habitat Restoration Program (CHRP).

Scope of Work

The TS will essentially fill the role of Project Coordinator with the various WC Project Managers and will work collaboratively with each of the PMs and other WC staff to produce a regional-level proposal. For contracting purposes, the LWC’s Project Manager (PM) will be the primary point of contact for the TS. The TS will also communicate with staff from each of the WCs as needed for project development. Where public and private landowner cooperation agreements are not already secured or pledged, WC staff will be the primary point on landowner outreach efforts for access and project development.

Primary Tasks / Deliverables

The TS will elevate the existing functional cooperation of the five individual WCs. Each WC has staff devoted to this project but coordinating interactions and facilitating correspondence between WCs adds additional workload, which the TS will manage. Site photos, maps, and landowner access will be addressed by each council’s respective PM. As needed, the TS may visit priority or complex project sites to ensure sufficient familiarity for proposal development.

- Develop or advise on a data management system in order to coordinate and compile project materials for CHRP submission.
- Collate project and budget information into a cohesive narrative for proposal.
- Coordinate timelines and priorities for compiling project proposal components in response to the CHRP RFP or other funding opportunities.
- Ensure a timely and complete preparation of a proposal in response to the CHRP RFP

Qualifications Sought

Qualified applicants will demonstrate a track record of successfully facilitating watershed and salmonid recovery planning processes. The ideal applicant will also be familiar with the CHRP guidelines and over-all grant program, as well as state and federal natural resource agencies’ planning processes and grant programs.

- Experience developing successful grant proposals, especially with multiple partners; priority consideration will be given to those with successful federal grant submissions, particularly any NOAA experience.
- Demonstrated technical competence in salmonid-based restoration design and project development.
- Ability to coordinate meetings in person and online.
- Ability to coordinate with five separate Watershed Council PMs in order for their projects to fit into a cohesive plan/grant application.
- Strong writing skills.
- Experience navigating complex issues with multiple groups and partners in the natural resources field.
- Experience with data management and file sharing.
- Ability to be flexible and responsive with time management, possibly weighted late toward grant submission timeline.
- Experience in creating budgets for complex restoration projects with multiple partners.
- Knowledge of and experience with the MVRC's watersheds and primary stakeholders.
- Demonstrated commitment to advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Competence in ArcGIS and spatial analysis.
- Experience with incorporating climate change considerations into restoration grant proposals.

Background

The Mid-Valley River Connections (MVRC) network includes the Luckiamute (LWC), Marys River (MRWC), Calapooia (CWC), South Santiam (SSWC), and North Santiam (NSWC) watershed councils. MVRC secured a Technical Assistance (TA) grant from the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) to support development and scoping of high priority restoration projects in preparation to apply for implementation funding such as the CHRP. Part of the TA grant from OWEB includes funds for this TS position.

The 2021 passage of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and other new state and federal investments present a historic opportunity to conduct a significant amount of work within the mid-Willamette service areas. As a result of the infrastructure funding, the CHRP is raising its minimum threshold for project proposals to \$1 million. Together, the mid-Willamette councils will craft a project portfolio that encompasses regional habitat benefits for ESA-listed Chinook salmon and winter steelhead and demonstrate a compelling need for this scale of investment. By leveraging the existing partnership of the MVRC, the WCs can seize this opportunity, diversify their project funding sources, and bring larger scale implementation funding to the mid-Willamette than has previously been possible.

The MVRC network councils include parts of Benton, Lane, Lincoln, Linn, Marion, and Polk Counties. Combined, the service areas encompass more than 30 percent of the Willamette basin. Historical practices such as splash dams, log drives, logging to the water's edge, log removal, and berm development in the floodplain, as well as regulated flow regimes, have impacted aquatic and floodplain habitats in the mid-Willamette basins and mainstem Willamette. The WCs of the MVRC have used the TA grant funding, along with previous survey work and preexisting restoration projects, for various tasks in preparation to survey and develop priority restoration projects in their basins.

We provide equal opportunity to those who belong to groups that have been marginalized within our society (BIPOC, LGBTQ+, etc.), and we highly encourage submissions from individuals who identify with, or are members of, historically excluded and underrepresented communities.

In addition, we acknowledge that the land, water, and fruits of the region in which we work are not ours; they are the hereditary birthrights of the region's indigenous nations since time immemorial. We strive to provide a platform for the region's indigenous nations to have their voices heard and valued in conservation discussions.

Compensation

Compensation will be hourly. Please submit an hourly rate. The current budget scoped for this role is \$15,000.

Process and Timeline

The NOAA CHRP RFP is anticipated to be released in late summer or early fall, and proposals will be due 60 days after release of the RFP. Other funding sources (e.g. OWEB or another) may be pursued in addition to, or in lieu of, the CHRP pending the timing of their RFP processes and the time investment for responding to the RFP. Until the RFP is released, the TS will become familiar with the WCs' priority projects, establish file management systems, and assist with project development as appropriate (e.g. scoping, budgeting, resource assessment). Exact timing of RFP release is unknown; anticipated release is late summer, with a 60-day application period once the RFP is released.

Please submit the following as qualifications in the order listed, in one PDF. Submission deadline is May 1, 2023, by 5:00 p.m. Pacific Time. Email as an attachment to restoration@luckiamutelwc.org with the subject: *Technical Specialist RFQ*.

- 1) A detailed resume (5 pages maximum) documenting the qualifications listed above. Please be sure to include the following within the resume:
 - (A) relevant experience in technical coordination of salmonid-based restoration and/or other related watershed restoration experience;
 - (B) a list of recent, relevant grants written that includes: award status, total amounts, and all of the persons and co-principal investigators (Co-PIs) that assisted in writing the grant. If you were the sole PI, please specify this as well.
- 2) A list detailing your roles in projects analogous to the restoration work being done in the MVRC watersheds (1 page).
- 3) Writing samples from one or more grant applications that were awarded for restoration and/or fish and wildlife related projects, and in particular, any federal grants. Please only submit materials in which you have served as a principal investigator and main proposal writer.

A panel of MVRC representatives will review submissions in early May and follow up as needed with questions or requests for follow-up conversations. The LWC will negotiate contract terms upon selection of TS. Anticipated contract start date will be late May or early June.