CMF-DNR SPARK GRANTS PROGRAM TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS: BIDDER QUESTIONS

This document provides information intended to assist bidders in developing their request for qualification (RFQ) submissions and planning their engagement in the RFQ process. The following list includes both anticipated bidder questions and bidder questions that have been formally submitted to the project team. If bidders have any questions that are not addressed in this document, they should email the solicitation manager at spark@michiganfoundations.org.

1. **Can a bidder bid on multiple types of technical assistance (TA)?** Yes, provided they have capacity and expertise in each type.

2. **Can a bidder subcontract out portions of work?** Yes. Subcontractor information must be provided as part of the RFQ submission.

3. **Can a bidder bid to work in more than one geographic area?** Yes, provided they have staff capacity to cover multiple regions.

4. **Can a bidder work with more than one community?** Yes, provided they have sufficient staff capacity.

5. **Does becoming a qualified bidder guarantee that you will get a contract to perform work?** No, but it is a necessary step to be able to bid.

6. **Do I have to become a qualified bidder to bid on subsequent Task Orders?** Yes.

7. **Do I need to be registered with the Small Business Administration (SBA) to qualify for the small business set aside?** Businesses are not required to formally register with the SBA. However, businesses can self-certify as a small business concern using definitions set forth by the SBA. See pages five and six of the RFQ for more information.

8. **How much do you anticipate contracts to be for?** Contract amounts will vary but will likely be between $30,000 and $200,000.

9. **What will be the timeline for the work?** Depending on the type of TA the bidder provides, the performance period will vary. Most will begin in October 2023 and last until the required services are provided. It is likely most supports will conclude by December 31, 2024.
10. When will respondents be notified that they qualify? Notice will be released in early September.

11. When will qualified contractors be able to bid on Task Orders? Mid-September.

12. Will Task Orders consist of a defined scope of work, or will they be time and materials with a not-to-exceed cap? Task Orders will be on a case-by-case basis but likely many will be time and materials with a cap due to the lack of definition for many of the projects at this time.

13. What is the payment schedule for work performed? Invoicing and payments will occur monthly.

14. Do bidders need to be registered with the State of Michigan? Winning bidders for the various Task Orders may need to register in the Department of Natural Resources’ MiGrants reporting system to submit quarterly progress reports on their work.

15. How is equity being prioritized in this RFQ? CMF is setting aside at least half of the qualified contractor slots for those who are certified small businesses (see question seven above for information about self-certification), including those who meet the requirements for the following:
   a. Small business
   b. 8(a) participant—firm owned by socially and economically disadvantaged U.S. citizens
   c. Women-owned small business
   d. Veteran-owned small business
   e. Service-disabled veteran-owned small business
   f. HUBZone certified
   g. Other, not named above

16. How will winning bidders for the Task Orders be determined? Qualified contractors with the lowest bid (either flat fee or blended billable rate) will be selected with input from the community foundation and the opportunity community (OC) on the alignment of the proposed scope of work to the community’s need.

17. If bidders have an existing working relationship with an opportunity community, do they still have to participate in the RFQ process if they want to provide TA to that community for their CMF-DNR Spark project? Opportunity communities may use whatever TA providers they want. However, TA providers must become qualified contractors and then bid on projects through the Task Order process to access CMF Spark Grant TA funds.

18. If bidders provide TA to opportunity communities through this process, does that disqualify them from bidding on other types of services that are not TA (e.g., engineering and design,
**construction, surveying, etc.**? No. Contractors that become qualified through the RFQ process may still provide services other than technical assistance to communities.

19. Can funding be used to provide TA support to communities that are adjacent to but outside of the opportunity community? CMF-DNR Spark Grants must be to opportunity communities. While TA providers may work with other communities using other funding, this RFQ is only applicable to work in opportunity communities.

20. Can the opportunity communities choose anyone they want to help with awarded project components (e.g., design, bidding, construction, administration, etc.) or will they only be able to use vendors selected by the RFQ? For the actual awarded projects, opportunity communities will need to conduct a separate competitive bid process, with CMF support, to select the vendors to design and build the project.

21. Are you able to share a list of the TA providers from the nine opportunity communities that already received Spark Grant funding so that we might contact them to be on our team? TA providers for those communities have not yet been identified. They will need to be qualified through this RFQ process and then selected via the Task Order process.

22. Do qualified consultants respond to the Task Orders or are we assigned them? Qualified consultants will need to respond to the Task Order requests to be able to do the work.

23. If a bidder qualifies to provide TA, can they also respond to a request for proposals (RFP) released by the community to be a vendor? Yes. Being a qualified TA provider does not preclude bidders from responding to RFPs released by a community for project work.

24. Can you explain the specific numbers of small business set asides identified by region on page 23 of the RFQ? Are those set asides in addition to the number of total awardees or part of the overall total? Why are they called out separately? They are part of the overall awards. Per federal compliance requirements, CMF must provide the number of small business set asides during the bidding process because qualified small businesses will be in a separate bidding pool for the Task Orders from the other bidders.

25. How do contracts and payments work for selected TA providers? Does the community pay the qualified consultant directly or does payment run through CMF or DNR? Payments under the TA process will be processed by CMF.
26. For the eight communities that already applied but did not receive funding, will they need to reapply, or are they already in the pool for this funding? Those communities will need to submit a new proposal under the CMF-DNR Spark Grants partnership pathway.

27. Once the list of approved TA providers is established, can opportunity communities choose which TA to do the work, or will CMF bid out on behalf of the OC and select which TA will work with the OC? CMF will bid out on behalf of the opportunity community but opportunity communities will be involved in the selection process.

28. How many personnel should be listed under Key Personnel? What about staff that may not fill a key role but may provide part of the TA? Bidders are encouraged to provide the names of any staff members who may be working on a TA scope of work.

29. For the eight opportunity communities that applied for funding but were not selected, are the reasons why they were not selected or any feedback on their applications publicly available? Feedback is not publicly available, but it has been shared directly with those opportunity communities.

30. Does “Scope Item E (Vendor Selection)” refer to selecting the design services vendor after the opportunity community receives a Spark Grant, or does it mean something else? It means something else. As a community is holding original concept conversations, they may need some support related to preparing vendor scopes of work and identifying the types of vendors needed for design, engineering, or other services.

31. Will the TA providers need to submit updates, paperwork, and record keeping to CMF throughout the process? TA providers will need to submit monthly invoices to CMF. Additionally, TA providers may be required to submit quarterly progress reports to the DNR’s MiGrants reporting system.