

COVER PAGE

Council of Michigan Foundations (CMF)

Request for Qualifications (RFQ) No. 20231116

Prequalification for Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR)

Spark Grant Technical Assistance Consulting Services

Solicitation Manager Name: Tammie TenBroeke

Phone: 616-850-2135

Email: spark@michiganfoundations.org

The Request for Qualifications submission process is open until
December 31, 2024.

PROPOSAL INSTRUCTIONS

1. Proposal Preparation

The Council of Michigan Foundations recommends reading **all** RFQ materials prior to preparing a proposal, particularly these Proposal Instructions and the Vendor Questions Worksheet. Bidders must follow these Proposal Instructions and provide a complete response to the items indicated in the table below. References and links to websites or external sources may not be used in lieu of providing the information requested in the RFQ within the proposal. Include the bidder’s organization name in the header of all documents submitted with your proposal.

RFQ Structure and Documentation

Document	Description	Bidder Response Instructions
Cover Page	Provides RFQ title and number, important dates, and contact information for the Solicitation Manager	Informational
Proposal Instructions	Provides RFQ instructions to bidders	Informational
Vendor Questions Worksheet	Questions to bidders on background and experience	Bidder to complete and submit
General Requirements	General Requirements for bids; each General Requirement will be scored in evaluating each bidder	Bidder to complete and submit
Blanket Purchase Agreement	Provides legal terms for an agreement awarded through this RFQ	Bidder to accept or note exceptions
Federal Provisions Addendum	Federal Provisions Addendum	Bidder to accept or note exceptions

2. Background

Program Development

Through an innovative public/private partnership, CMF is working with the DNR to equitably guide resources that expand access to public recreation opportunities through the Michigan Spark Grants program. The partnership with Michigan philanthropy makes a new pathway for nearly 40 opportunity communities to participate in a \$25 million grants distribution process. The

partnership will help limit the barriers to participation in public recreation grants by simplifying the grant review process, relying on community partners, providing equity-focused technical assistance, and ensuring opportunity communities' capacity to be competitive, to implement their work with success, and to provide quality maintenance over time.

Background: Round One Funding

- Michigan Spark Grant applications, administered by the DNR, first opened in October 2022 and received 460 applications seeking more than \$280 million in funding.
 - A total of \$14.2 million was awarded to 21 communities in February 2023.
 - This record response highlighted a need for a more equitable approach to administering grant dollars and supporting grantees—which led to a groundbreaking partnership between the DNR and CMF in April 2023.
-

Partnership: An Additional Path for Opportunity Communities

- CMF is working with the DNR through this innovative public/private partnership to equitably guide resources that expand access to healthy indoor and outdoor recreation programs.
 - The partnership with Michigan philanthropy is available to nearly 40 designated communities identified as opportunity communities, which have been historically under-resourced and underrepresented and lack accessible public recreation.
 - Other DNR recreation-based grant options, including the Land and Water Conservation Fund, the Recreation Passport and the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund, are available at Michigan.gov/DNRGrants.
-

Shared Goals

- Simplify the grant review process and put trust and resources in the hands of community partners closest to the work and the people served.
- Infuse community input and provide equity-focused technical assistance that reflects the values and desires of the underserved residents in project designs.
- Support under-resourced communities to ensure the capacity to be competitive, to implement their work with success, and to provide quality maintenance over time.

3. Scope

The purpose of this RFQ is to develop a prequalified list of contractors who can deliver technical assistance to local communities to meet the goals of the Michigan Spark Grant program in partnership with local community foundations (Regional Community Leads) based on the needs identified by the referenced communities, with technical assistance broadly categorized as the following:

- A. Community engagement and outreach to identify community priorities
- B. Project scoping and budget development
- C. Grantwriting/application submission
- D. Grant administration/compliance
- E. Vendor selection and management (engineering and design, construction, etc.)

Selected bidders for this RFQ should be available to work on multiple projects.

4. Contact Information for the Council of Michigan Foundations

The sole point of contact for the CMF concerning this RFQ is listed on the Cover Page. Contacting any other CMF personnel, agent, consultant, or representative about this RFQ may result in bidder disqualification.

5. Modifications

The CMF may modify this RFQ at any time. Modifications will be posted on <https://www.michiganfoundations.org/policy/dnr-spark-grants-program-partnership>
This is the only method by which the RFQ may be modified.

6. Questions

Bidder questions about this RFQ must be emailed to the Solicitation Manager specified on the Cover Page. In the interest of transparency, only written questions are accepted. Answers to questions will be posted on <https://www.michiganfoundations.org/policy/dnr-spark-grants-program-partnership>
Submit questions using the format below; a Microsoft Excel format or similar is suggested.

Question Number	Document and Section	Page Number	Bidder Question

7. Delivery of Proposal

Electronic—Bidders must submit their proposal, all attachments, and any modifications electronically to the form on the Michigan Foundations website at this URL:

<https://www.michiganfoundations.org/policy/dnr-spark-grants-program-partnership>

Attachment file size is limited to 6 MB per document. A bidder’s failure to submit a proposal as required may result in disqualification. The proposal and attachments must be fully submitted prior to the proposal deadline.

8. Evaluation Process

CMF will evaluate each proposal for acceptability based on Technical Evaluation Criteria using a scorecard similar to the table below.

		TECHNICAL EVALUATION CRITERIA			
		Organizational Capacity	Qualifications of Staff	Approach to Technical Assistance Delivery	Experience in Providing Technical Assistance
SERVICES OFFERED	A. Community engagement and outreach to identify community priorities				
	B. Project scoping and budget development				
	C. Grantwriting/Application submission				
	D. Grant administration and compliance services				
	E. Vendor selection and management services				

All proposals will be assessed as to whether and to what degree they demonstrate or describe how they meet or exceed minimal performance measures for each of the Technical Evaluation Criteria defined as:

- **Organizational capacity:** Bidder demonstrates sufficient internal or contracted capacity and/or resources to perform the services offered and to accomplish future defined tasks.
- **Qualifications of staff:** Bidder staff proposed for assignment to projects have relevant experience and qualifications to perform the tasks they are assigned to perform among the services offered.

- **Approach to technical assistance delivery:** Within the areas for which the bidder is seeking qualification, their approach as outlined below is an effective, efficient method in which to provide the needed services.
- **Experience in providing technical assistance:** Bidder has at minimum one example of delivering this type of technical assistance within the past three years. Additional examples are encouraged.

Each bidder will be assessed by the following adjectival ratings based on their submitted proposals with respect to the services offered by bidder:

- **No response (NR):** Did not provide a response for this area
- **Unacceptable (UA):** Did not meet minimum performance measures
- **Acceptable (AC):** Met minimum performance measures
- **Exceptional (EX):** Exceeded minimum performance measures

At time of Task Order awards, CMF may utilize all bidder information, without regard to a bidder's technical score, to determine fair market value for goods or services sought. Task Orders will consist of a scope of work for a community or communities along with pricing information, either for a defined scope or on a time-and-materials basis with a predetermined cap.

Bidders need to accept the attached Blanket Purchase Agreement (BPA) to be selected under this RFQ. CMF reserves the right to deem a bid nonresponsive for failure to list all exception(s) in the space below the BPA document. General statements, such as that the bidder reserves the right to negotiate the terms and conditions, may be considered nonresponsive. Failure to respond timely to requests for proposed changes to the BPA during ongoing negotiations may be cause for disqualification.

CMF may, but is not required to, conduct an on-site visit to tour and inspect the bidder's facilities, require an oral presentation of the bidder's proposal, or conduct interviews, research, reference checks, or background checks.

CMF expects to award up to 24 BPAs per region but reserves the right to make greater or fewer awards based on the quantity and quality of proposals received. The objective is to assemble a high-quality pool of pre-screened resources that can compete for Task Orders. Of the BPA awards made, a number will be set aside for small business concerns, as such term is defined by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA). Bidders seeking to be considered for a small business set-aside award must self-certify as a "small business concern" under a relevant NAICS Code as defined by the SBA, defined here: <https://www.sba.gov/document/support-table-size-standards>. Bidders may also identify whether they are certified or approved as participants in the SBA HUBZone, 8(a), women-owned small business and/or service-disabled veteran-owned small

business programs, OR are certified by state or local minority or disadvantaged business programs. Bidders may refer to their registration in SAM.gov as a method of self-certification. A failure to self-certify as a small business concern shall disqualify a bidder from a small business set-aside BPA award.

9. Notice of Deficiency

CMF reserves the right to issue a **Notice of Deficiency** to bidders if CMF determines after the proposal deadline that a portion of the RFQ was deficient, unclear, or ambiguous. Failure to respond to a **Notice of Deficiency** timely may be cause for disqualification.

10. Reservations

CMF reserves the right to:

- A. Disqualify a bidder for failure to follow these instructions.
- B. Disqualify a bidder if listed on the System of Awards Management (SAM) Exclusions database or any equivalent State of Michigan database or if any of a bidder's workforce members are included on the listings.
- C. Discontinue the RFQ process at any time for any or no reason. The issuance of an RFQ, your preparation and submission of a proposal, and the CMF's subsequent receipt and evaluation of your proposal does not commit CMF to award an agreement or contract to you or anyone, even if all the requirements in the RFQ are met.
- D. Consider late proposals if: (i) no other proposals are received; (ii) no complete proposals are received; (iii) CMF received complete proposals, but the proposals did not meet mandatory minimum requirements or technical criteria; or (iv) the award process fails to result in an award.
- E. Consider an otherwise disqualified proposal if no other proposals are received.
- F. Disqualify a proposal based on: (i) information provided by the bidder in response to this RFQ; (2) if it is determined that a bidder purposely or willfully submitted false or misleading information in response to the RFQ.
- G. Consider prior performance with CMF in making its award decision.
- H. Enter into negotiations with one or more bidders on terms, technical requirements, or other deliverables.
- I. Award multiple optional-use agreements.
- J. Evaluate the proposal outside the scope identified in the Evaluation Process section of this document if CMF receives only one proposal.

- K. CMF may, at its sole discretion, remove Blanket Award Agreement recipients from the pool of qualified bidders for insufficient participation in bidding for future Task Orders.
- L. CMF may, at its sole discretion, elect to award a new Blanket Award Agreement to the next most qualified bidder to replace any awardee that CMF elected to off-ramp.

11. Award Recommendation

Addition to the CMF's prequalified contractor list will be awarded to the responsive and responsible bidder(s) who offers the best value to CMF, as determined by CMF. Best value will be determined by the bidder meeting or exceeding the minimum qualifications stated in the Evaluation Process section of this document, as demonstrated by the proposal. CMF will post award recommendations on <https://www.michiganfoundations.org/policy/dnr-spark-grants-program-partnership> or in the manner it was originally published.

12. General Conditions

CMF will not be liable for any costs, expenses, or damages incurred by a bidder participating in this solicitation. The bidder agrees that its proposal will be considered an offer to do business with CMF in accordance with its proposal, including the BPA, and that its proposal will be irrevocable and binding for a period of **200** calendar days from date of submission. This RFQ is not an offer to enter into a contract. This RFQ may not provide a complete statement of CMF's requirements or contain all matters upon which agreement must be reached. The bidder understands that their proposal may become public record. Other than verified trade secrets, proposals submitted via <https://www.michiganfoundations.org/policy/dnr-spark-grants-program-partnership> become property of CMF.