

Environmental Research: Information Dissemination
Request for Proposal (RFP) 3062
\$500,000 Available

Proposals Due: April 6, 2015 by 5:00 PM Eastern Time*

The New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSEERDA) seeks proposals from knowledgeable and objective individuals or organizations interested in providing assistance to the Outreach and Science–Policy Communication component of the Environmental Research Program. One of the principal goals of the Environmental Research Program is to provide policymakers with scientifically credible and objective information on the environmental effects of energy production and use to aid in the development of cost-effective and equitable policies to protect public health and the environment in New York.

This RFP makes up to \$500,000 available for this effort. NYSEERDA anticipates selecting one or more contractors to translate scientific information into layperson's terms and to develop and implement strategies to cost-effectively disseminate information resulting from Environmental Research efforts to policymakers, researchers, and the public.

Experience with environmental science and policy issues is strongly encouraged. A total of up to \$500,000 is anticipated for task work order contracts resulting from this RFP. A single award is anticipated, although multiple awards are possible.

Proposal Submission: Electronic submission is preferable. NYSEERDA will also accept proposals by mail or hand-delivery. If submitting electronically, proposers must submit the proposal in either PDF or MS Word format with a completed and signed Proposal Checklist and Disclosure of Prior Findings of Non-Responsibility, in PDF format. Proposal PDFs should be searchable and should be created by direct conversion from MS Word, or other conversion utility, rather than scanning. For ease of identification, all electronic files must be named using the proposer's entity name in the title of the document. Proposals may be submitted electronically by following the link for electronic submissions found on this RFP's webpage, which is located in the "Current Opportunities" section of NYSEERDA's website (<http://www.nyserda.ny.gov/Funding-Opportunities/Current-Funding-Opportunities.aspx>). Instructions for submitting electronically are located on the RFP's webpage and as Attachment E to this RFP.

If mailing or hand-delivering, proposers must submit two (2) paper copies of their proposal with a completed and signed Proposal Checklist, along with one (1) CD or DVD containing a PDF or MS Word digital copy of the proposal, following the above guidelines. Mailed or hand-delivered proposals must be clearly labeled and submitted to:

Roseanne Viscusi, RFP 3062
NYS Energy Research and Development Authority
17 Columbia Circle
Albany, NY 12203-6399

If you have technical questions concerning this solicitation, contact Amanda Stevens at (518) 862-1090, ext. 3325 or Amanda.stevens@nyserda.ny.gov. If you have contractual questions concerning this solicitation, contact Nancy Marucci at (518) 862-1090, ext. 3335 or nancy.marucci@nyserda.ny.gov.

No communication intended to influence this procurement is permitted except by contacting Amanda Stevens (Designated Contact) at (518) 862-1090, ext. 3325 or Amanda.stevens@nyserda.ny.gov. Contacting anyone other than this Designated Contact (either directly by the proposer or indirectly through a lobbyist or other person acting on the proposer's behalf) in an attempt to influence the procurement: (1) may result in a proposer being deemed a non-responsible offerer, and (2) may result in the proposer not being awarded a contract.

* Late proposals will be returned. Incomplete proposals may be subject to disqualification. It is the proposer's responsibility to ensure that all pages have been included in the proposal. Faxed or e-mailed proposals will not be accepted. Proposals will not be accepted at any other NYSERDA location other than the address above. If changes are made to this solicitation, notification will be posted on NYSERDA's web site at www.nyserda.ny.gov.

I. INTRODUCTION

NYSERDA's Environmental Research Program monitors and assesses environmental conditions and fosters technological innovation, providing objective, science-based information to help address immediate and long-term energy-related environmental challenges across New York State. Translating environmental research so that it is useful and meaningful to decision-makers and the public is vital to the success of the Environmental Research Program. The diverse nature of the Program and its target audiences requires an aggressive, multifaceted approach to information dissemination in order to effectively interpret and communicate research findings. For more information on the Program, visit <http://www.nyserda.ny.gov/Cleantech-and-Innovation/Environment/Research-Crosscutting-Topics/Environmental-Research#>.

The Environmental Research Program is seeking assistance with interpreting and delivering program findings and other pertinent information in the appropriate form to policymakers, scientists, resource managers, the industrial and agricultural sectors, and the public. The Program is seeking this type of assistance with the following research areas and other topics that may arise as the program evolves:

- Air quality and related health research
- Acid and mercury deposition
- Biomass resources and heating
- Climate change mitigation and adaptation
- Municipal water and wastewater

II. PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

This RFP is designed to solicit effective and innovative approaches that can maximize the communication of Environmental Research Program findings to diverse audiences. The overarching goal is to provide objective information resulting from Environmental Research projects to decision-makers and the public in a cost-effective way to help ensure that policy decisions are made in a scientifically informed manner. Specific goals include:

- Generate awareness and increase understanding of particular environmental issues by decision-makers at all levels of government (e.g., law-makers, regulators, resource managers), as well as the general public; and
- Foster collaboration among researchers working on topics relevant to the Environmental Research Program.

This effort will require extensive knowledge of existing opportunities and outlets for disseminating energy-related environmental knowledge in New York State, as well as how environmental policy is made or administered at different levels of government. Proposers selected through this RFP will be asked to develop and implement ideas, approaches, and strategies for cost-effectively disseminating scientific information resulting from Environmental Research projects. Building on and integrating into existing activities to disseminate the information would be encouraged. Examples of strategies that could be considered and implemented by the contractor include, *but are not limited to*:

- Incorporation of information into materials read or seen by policymakers or the public (e.g., research syntheses, magazines, newsletters, websites, blogs);
- Dissemination of written and electronically available program materials;
- Coordinating and/or providing briefings to key individuals;
- Integration with ongoing or development of seminar and/or webinar series;
- Providing support to workshops and conferences;
- Leveraging partnerships with environmental associations and institutions;
- Integration with other NYS, regional, and national efforts; and
- Supporting other related third-party activities.

This effort will also require the ability to translate highly technical scientific information across various topics into language easily understood by the target audiences. The contractor may be asked to develop lay-language summaries of technical reports, create text for web content, and provide social media content relevant to the Environmental Program.

A single award is anticipated to provide these services (although multiple awards are possible). The selected contractor will be required to work with other NYSERDA departments (e.g., Marketing, Communications) to ensure consistency across NYSERDA programs.

III. PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

Proposals should be **no more than 10 pages**. Unnecessary attachments beyond those sufficient to present a complete, comprehensive, and effective response will not influence the evaluation of the proposal. Each page of the proposal should state the name of the proposer, "RFP 3062," and the page number. The proposal must be in the following format and provide clear and succinct information. The criteria that will be used to evaluate the proposals are described in Section IV, Proposal Evaluation. Do not use a font smaller than 11 point. Proposers may contact Amanda Stevens at 518-862-1090, ext. 3325 before preparing a proposal to discuss program goals and proposal requirements.

A. Proposal Checklist Cover Sheet *(not included in page count)*

In compliance with §139-j and §139-k of the State Finance Law (see Section VIII General Conditions below for additional information), additional forms must be completed and filed with proposals: (1) a signed copy of the Proposal Checklist (Attachment A) including required certifications under the State Finance Law and (2) a completed Disclosure of Prior Findings of Non-Responsibility form (Attachment B). Failure to include a signed copy of the Proposal Checklist referenced in this solicitation may disqualify your proposal.

B. Summary *(no more than 1 page)*

Proposers must briefly describe their proposed outreach components, include a brief summary of teaming and partnering arrangements, and highlight any unique qualifications.

C. Proposed Outreach Components

Proposers must describe their vision for disseminating information from the Environmental Research Program. Proposers should include specific examples of outreach components that they believe would be appropriate and effective. This is not a request for an actual campaign, just a preliminary strategy. The final strategy to be implemented by the selected contractor will be determined in consultation with Environmental Research Program staff.

D. Evaluation Plan

The contractor will be required to track, monitor, and report outreach results. Proposers must describe how this could be accomplished, including examples of metrics that would be helpful for tracking the impact of particular outreach strategies.

E. Experience, Qualifications, and Personnel

- **Experience** – Proposers should describe examples of their expertise and ability to deliver intended services described in Section II. Include client contact information for specific projects; NYSERDA may contact listed clients. Identify any specific areas of topic expertise the proposer has, especially as it relates to the Environmental Research Program's mission and research areas.
- **New York Experience** – List any prior/existing or proposed contracts or other relationships with NYSERDA or any other New York State agency or authority.

- **Qualifications** – Each proposer must provide adequate information to effectively demonstrate their capability in performing all the work and services required. Proposers should address their overall staffing situation and their ability to assign staff or acquire subcontractors as needed to support specific task work orders.
- **Team & Organizational Chart** – Proposers should indicate whether they will provide services directly or subcontract with other firms. Proposers must identify all project team member organizations (name, address, phone number), including any subcontractors involved in the project, and their qualifications to undertake the proposed work. Proposers must provide an organizational chart listing all key personnel, including subcontractors, showing their roles and responsibilities.

If applicable, proposers must provide a letter of commitment to participate from each subcontractor in an appendix. *(letters of commitment not included in page count)*

- **Resumes** – Submit relevant portions of resumes of all key project personnel, including those of proposed subcontractors. Include education and experience that are relevant to the proposed work. *(not included in page count)*

F. Rate Schedule *(not included in page count)*

Proposers must include a rate schedule (Exhibit E of the Attachment F Sample Agreement) for the services proposed under this RFP. Rate schedules for proposers and all subcontractors shall include: direct labor costs for project managers and all key personnel presented by name, title, and hourly rate; overhead rates (basis rate and items included in overhead rate); general and administrative costs and basis for application; and other costs. If applicable, escalation fees must be identified. In most instances, printing fees will not be included in Task Order Agreements with contractors and are not expected to be included in rate schedules.

Attach supporting documentation to support indirect cost (overhead) rate(s) included in your proposal as follows:

- Describe the basis for the rates proposed (i.e., based on prior period actual results; based on projections; based on federal government or other independently approved rates).
- If rate(s) is approved by an independent organization such as the federal government, provide a copy of such approval.
- If rate(s) is based on estimated costs or prior period actual results, include calculations to support proposed rate(s). Calculations should provide enough information for NYSERDA to evaluate and confirm that the rate(s) are consistent with generally accepted accounting principles for indirect costs.

NYSERDA reserves the right to audit any indirect rate presented in the proposal and to make adjustment for such difference. Requests for financial statements or other needed financial information may be made if deemed necessary.

IV. PROPOSAL EVALUATION

Proposals that meet proposal requirements will be reviewed by a Technical Evaluation Panel (TEP). NYSERDA, through its TEP, will review each proposal using the evaluation criteria listed below. Past performance on any previous NYSERDA contracts may be considered in the evaluation. Selected references may be contacted to determine whether a proposer has the necessary resources to provide outreach services.

Proposers will be awarded contracts based on their experience, ability, and qualifications to perform the services outlined in this RFP.

A single contract is preferred, but the number of proposers selected for contracts will be determined by the number of contractors required to efficiently and effectively provide the sought technical services over the range of potential topics listed in Section I. This number cannot be determined until all proposals are received and reviewed. The following factors will also be considered during the evaluation:

- Creativity, relevance, and feasibility of the proposed outreach components;
- Qualifications and expertise in environmental science and policy issues, particularly in the areas listed in Section I;
- Quality and relevance of previous work;
- Reasonableness of labor rates, associated fees, and overhead;
- Ability to complete projects on schedule;
- The ease of measuring project success in quantifiable ways;
- Responsiveness to NYSERDA's request as specified in this RFP;
- Clear identification of staff who will be assigned to various project types;
- If applicable, the responsiveness of the proposer in conducting other NYSERDA-funded work;
- Other factors deemed appropriate by NYSERDA.

V. CONTRACTING, FUNDING, AND SCHEDULE

As a result of this RFP, NYSERDA plans to retain one or more qualified contractors to provide outreach services.

Task Order Agreements will be negotiated after review of the proposals has been completed. The initial agreement(s) will be in place for two years, with a provision for two 2-year renewals at NYSERDA's option, for a total of six years. The Task Order Agreement approach will be used as no firm estimate can be made in advance as to the type, amount, or complexity of the work the contractor(s) will be required to perform. A total of up to \$500,000 is anticipated for these contracts. NYSERDA reserves the right to adjust funding based on program participation and to incorporate programmatic changes as needed.

The Task Order Agreement will not guarantee any specific amount of work but will contain a maximum dollar amount. The amount of work assigned to each contractor will be determined by NYSERDA and will depend on the contractor's technical expertise, past performance, current workload, deadline requirements, and the ability of the contractor to provide high-quality, cost-effective, and timely services. NYSERDA reserves the right to reallocate funding among the contractors selected at the end of the first year and any subsequent contract year. NYSERDA also reserves the right to negotiate among finalists to ensure access to specific technical expertise sought through this RFP.

Once a contractor enters into a Task Order Agreement, project assignments will be initiated through written Task Work Order Plans, which will become binding agreements for all parties. The Task Order Agreement will describe the overall Outreach Services strategy and goals; the Task Work Order Plan(s) will describe the specific tasks associated with achieving those goals. Each Task Work Order Plan will be prepared by the contractor in cooperation with NYSERDA and will include the following specific project activities:

- Goals and objectives of the project;
- Approach that will be taken, outlined by tasks;
- Defined deliverables;
- Project timeframe;
- Names or titles of individuals to work on the project;
- The total not-to-exceed cost of the project, including a breakout by task and by title, hourly rate, hours, and non-labor costs;
- Identification of metrics and ability to track project success.

Each Task Work Order Plan is expected to be 2-5 pages, depending on the complexity.

VI. CONTRACTOR RESPONSIBILITIES

For each project, the contractor shall be required to:

- Prepare a Task Work Order Plan, including budget, for review and approval by NYSERDA;
- Negotiate the scope and cost of the project with NYSERDA and any relevant subcontractors;
- In accordance with the Task Work Order Plan, provide the required assistance within the required time frame;
- Submit any deliverables to NYSERDA for review and approval; NYSERDA's review will ensure that the deliverable conforms to the Task Work Order Plan;
- Provide required documentation of expenditures by task based on the Task Work Order Plan when seeking reimbursement from NYSERDA, and;
- Assist NYSERDA in the collection of metrics data for purposes of program evaluation and database analysis.

Annual Metrics Reports – If awarded, the proposer may be required to submit to NYSERDA's Project Manager on an annual basis a prepared analysis and summary of metrics addressing the anticipated energy, environmental, and economic benefits that are realized by the project. All estimates shall reference credible sources and estimating procedures, and all assumptions shall be documented. Reporting shall commence the first calendar year after the contract is executed. Reports shall be submitted by January 31st for the previous calendar years activities (i.e. reporting period). Please see Attachment C: Sample Metrics Reporting Guides for the metrics that you will be expected to provide and the reporting duration. NYSERDA may decline to contract with awardees that are delinquent with respect to metrics reporting for any previous or active NYSERDA agreement.

VII. COMPENSATION

Compensation for each service will be based on the contractor's direct and indirect personnel services costs plus allowable expenses. Fees for services will be based on the contractor's hourly rates for the appropriate level of staff. Contract payments will be tied to satisfactory completion and acceptance of the specified deliverables from the Task Work Orders, as determined by the NYSERDA Project Manager. The Task Work Order Plan will also place a not-to-exceed amount on each project. Contractors who accrue billable hours beyond this amount in the Task Work Order Plan, without approval in writing by NYSERDA and all other parties to the technical assistance, will do so at their own risk.

VIII. GENERAL CONDITIONS

Proprietary Information - Careful consideration should be given before confidential information is submitted to NYSERDA as part of your proposal. Review should include whether it is critical for evaluating a proposal, and whether general, non-confidential information, may be adequate for review purposes. The NYS Freedom of Information Law, Public Officers law, Article 6, provides for public access to information NYSERDA possesses. Public Officers Law, Section 87(2)(d) provides for exceptions to disclosure for records or portions thereof that "are trade secrets or are submitted to an agency by a commercial enterprise or derived from information obtained from a commercial enterprise and which if disclosed would cause substantial injury to the competitive position of the subject enterprise." Information submitted to NYSERDA that the proposer wishes to have treated as proprietary, and confidential trade secret information, should be identified and labeled "Confidential" or "Proprietary" on each page at the time of disclosure. This information should include a written request to except it from disclosure, including a written statement of the reasons why the information should be excepted. See Public Officers Law,

Section 89(5) and the procedures set forth in 21 NYCRR Part 501 <http://www.nyserda.ny.gov/About/-/media/Files/About/Contact/NYSERDA-Regulations.ashx>. However, NYSERDA cannot guarantee the confidentiality of any information submitted.

Omnibus Procurement Act of 1992 - It is the policy of New York State to maximize opportunities for the participation of New York State business enterprises, including minority- and women-owned business enterprises, as bidders, subcontractors, and suppliers on its procurement Agreements.

Information on the availability of New York subcontractors and suppliers is available from:

Empire State Development
Division For Small Business
625 Broadway
Albany, NY 12207

A directory of certified minority- and women-owned business enterprises is available from:

Empire State Development
Minority and Women's Business Development Division
625 Broadway
Albany, NY 12207

State Finance Law sections 139-j and 139-k - NYSERDA is required to comply with State Finance Law sections 139-j and 139-k. These provisions contain procurement lobbying requirements which can be found at <http://www.ogs.ny.gov/aboutogs/regulations/advisoryCouncil/StatutoryReferences.html>. The Attachment A Proposal Checklist and Attachment A-1 Acceptance of Standard Terms and Conditions calls for a signature certifying that the proposer will comply with State Finance Law sections 139-j and 139-k and the Disclosure of Prior Findings of Non-responsibility form (Attachment B) includes a disclosure statement regarding whether the proposer has been found non-responsible under section 139-j of the State Finance Law within the previous four (4) years.

Tax Law Section 5-a - NYSERDA is required to comply with the provisions of Tax Law Section 5-a, which requires a prospective contractor, prior to entering an agreement with NYSERDA having a value in excess of \$100,000, to certify to the Department of Taxation and Finance (the "Department") whether the contractor, its affiliates, its subcontractors and the affiliates of its subcontractors have registered with the Department to collect New York State and local sales and compensating use taxes. The Department has created a form to allow a prospective contractor to readily make such certification. See, ST-220-TD (available at http://www.tax.ny.gov/pdf/current_forms/st/st220td_fill_in.pdf).

Prior to contracting with NYSERDA, the prospective contractor must also certify to NYSERDA whether it has filed such certification with the Department. The Department has created a second form that must be completed by a prospective contractor prior to contacting and filed with NYSERDA. See, ST-220-CA (available at http://www.tax.ny.gov/pdf/current_forms/st/st220ca_fill_in.pdf). The Department has developed guidance for contractors which is available at <http://www.tax.ny.gov/pdf/publications/sales/pub223.pdf>.

Contract Award - NYSERDA anticipates making one (1) award under this solicitation, although multiple awards are possible. It may award a contract based on initial applications without discussion, or following limited discussion or negotiations pertaining to the Statement of Work. Each offer should be submitted using the most favorable cost and technical terms. NYSERDA may request additional data or material to support applications. NYSERDA will use the Sample Agreement to contract successful proposals. NYSERDA reserves the right to limit any negotiations to exceptions to standard terms and conditions in the Attachment F Sample Agreement to those specifically identified in the submitted proposal (see Attachment A Proposal Checklist and Attachment A-1

Acceptance of Standard Terms and Conditions). Proposers should keep in mind that acceptance of all standard terms and conditions will generally result in a more expedited contracting process. NYSERDA expects to notify proposers in approximately 6-8 weeks from the proposal due date whether your proposal has been selected to receive an award. NYSERDA may decline to contract with awardees that are delinquent with respect to any obligation under any previous or active NYSERDA agreement.

Limitation - This solicitation does not commit NYSERDA to award a contract, pay any costs incurred in preparing a proposal, or to procure or contract for services or supplies. NYSERDA reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals received, to negotiate with all qualified sources, or to cancel in part or in its entirety the solicitation when it is in NYSERDA's best interest. NYSERDA reserves the right to reject proposals based on the nature and number of any exceptions taken to the standard terms and conditions of the Sample Agreement.

Disclosure Requirement - The proposer shall disclose any indictment for any alleged felony, or any conviction for a felony within the past five (5) years, under the laws of the United States or any state or territory of the United States, and shall describe circumstances for each. When a proposer is an association, partnership, corporation, or other organization, this disclosure requirement includes the organization and its officers, partners, and directors or members of any similarly governing body. If an indictment or conviction should come to the attention of NYSERDA after the award of a contract, NYSERDA may exercise its stop-work right pending further investigation, or terminate the agreement; the contractor may be subject to penalties for violation of any law which may apply in the particular circumstances. Proposers must also disclose if they have ever been debarred or suspended by any agency of the U.S. Government or the New York State Department of Labor.

Marketing Questionnaire - NYSERDA's Marketing Department requests that you include the Solicitation Marketing Questionnaire (Attachment D) with your proposal submission. This is not a requirement

IX. Attachments:

Attachment A: Proposal Checklist

Attachment A-1: Acceptance of Standard Terms and Conditions

Attachment B: Disclosure of Prior Findings of Non-Responsibility Form

Attachment C: Sample Metrics Reporting Guide

Attachment D: Solicitation Marketing Questionnaire

Attachment E: Electronic Submission Instructions

Attachment F: Sample Agreement