

## REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL – Development of NACWA Compendium on Utility Environmental Justice and Community Benefits Practices

RFP ISSUE DATE: July 5, 2016

PROPOSAL DUE DATE: July 27, 2016

### BACKGROUND

The concept of environmental justice – which EPA defines as the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies – is gaining significant attention in discussions over clean water. This has in large part been driven by the crisis in Flint, where a predominantly poor, minority population was subject to the most significant drinking water disaster in the United States in recent decades. The EPA Administrator herself has raised [environmental justice concerns](#) over what happened in Flint.

At the same time, separate and apart from Flint, many NACWA utility members are increasingly focused on community benefits and addressing the needs of environmental justice populations within their service area. This has led to the formation within the Association of a new Environmental Justice (EJ) Workgroup to explore what role municipal clean water utilities can play in better addressing environmental justice concerns. One key issue the EJ Workgroup has examined is how the definition of EJ from a municipal clean water perspective may be different and broader than how EPA has traditionally defined the term.

### PROJECT OVERVIEW

Given the growing relevance of EJ in national clean water policy discussions, NACWA seeks to develop a compendium document to highlight the work NACWA member utilities are doing to provide holistic community benefits and address EJ issues in their communities. The document will include ten to fifteen case studies of Association members focusing on the community outreach, community service, environmental justice initiatives, and similar work of these utilities to ensure that EJ considerations are part of their operational and capital investment programs, as well as part of their ratemaking process.

The purpose of the compendium is twofold. First, the document will serve as an excellent source of information for other clean water utilities looking for guidance on how to address EJ concerns in their own communities and incorporate EJ and community benefit considerations into their business and strategic plans. The case studies can serve as models for other clean water agencies. Additionally, the case studies will be tied together in a way that can help make the business case for utilities engaging in EJ initiatives. While some utilities may pursue EJ because they believe it is the “right thing to do,” there is also a strong business case based on benefits of partnership with the community and better relationships with regulators.

Second, the compendium will help inform EPA, as well as the broader EJ and community service advocacy community, about the vital work clean water utilities are already doing to address EJ issues and how NACWA and its members can help advance EJ priorities going forward. It will also suggest a broader definition of what qualifies as EJ from the municipal clean water perspective, going beyond how EPA has traditionally viewed the concept.

The educational and definitional piece is especially important as NACWA seeks to make the case at a national policy level that EJ considerations should also include affordability concerns. NACWA has been engaged with EPA for some time in urging the Agency to include affordability within its EJ construct. This is also an issue that is gaining increasing national attention, with some suggesting that water affordability is becoming a new [national civil rights](#) issue.

While some progress has been made in moving EPA to include affordability in its EJ discussion, EPA and the EJ community have been slow to see NACWA and the municipal clean water community in general as potential allies or partners in the EJ movement. NACWA's EJ Workgroup believes part of the reason for this is that NACWA – and the municipal clean water utility community more broadly – have not traditionally been seen as participants in EJ initiatives. The Workgroup believes that development of this compendium will not only help showcase all the excellent community service and EJ work that many NACWA members are doing, but can also help establish a better working relationship between NACWA, EJ advocates, and EPA's EJ office. This in turn could provide profound benefits in making affordability a larger part of the EJ discussion and recognizing that the very same EJ communities we seek to help with new water infrastructure investments are the same communities that can least afford the resulting higher water and sewer rates.

### CONTRACTOR TASKS

- Convene and conduct project kick-off call with NACWA staff and select members of the NACWA EJ Workgroup, who will jointly serve as the Project Review Team.
- Work with Project Review Team to identify and solicit NACWA member utilities to submit case studies.
- Work with identified NACWA member utilities to craft and complete case studies.
- Combine the case studies into an overarching document, including providing an overall narrative that will help link the case studies together and present a comprehensive, compelling discussion of the excellent EJ and community benefits work that the municipal clean water community is already doing around the country, why EJ should be defined more broadly than EPA has traditionally viewed it, the business case for EJ and community benefits work, and highlight why affordability must be a part of EPA's EJ priorities.
- Complete draft compendium and deliver to Project Review Team for review and comment.
- Deliver final compendium to NACWA by mid-to-late October 2016.

### PROJECT DURATION

The project will be awarded to the selected contractor in early August 2016. The final compendium must be delivered to NACWA by mid-to-late October 2016. Exact timeline for deliverables will be worked out between the selected contractor and NACWA during contract negotiations.

### PROPOSAL SUBMITTAL INSTRUCTIONS

Please conform to the following instructions for submitting proposals. Proposals not conforming to these instructions will be rejected without further consideration. Any costs incurred by the contractor in preparing or submitting proposals are the contractor's sole responsibility.

*Contractor Provided Information:*

All interested contractors must provide the following requested information as part of their response to this proposal:

- Name and address of company.
- A single point of contact for contract negotiation and oversight.
- Information on the proposed project team, including resumes or curriculum vitae.

*Content:*

Proposals shall be prepared simply and succinctly providing a straightforward, concise description of contractor's abilities to satisfy the requirements of this request. Proposals should discuss the contractor's experience with projects of similar magnitude. Emphasis shall be on completeness and clarity of content.

NACWA is particularly interested in proposals that include, as a part of the project team, individuals who are familiar with EJ issues and are known to the EJ advocacy community. Having such individuals as part of the contractor project team can help to provide important perspective to the compendium project and increase credibility of the final product with EJ advocates.

Joint proposals involving multiple firms/entities are acceptable.

*Page Limit:*

Proposals, inclusive of project description, tasks and proposed schedule, must contain no more than five (5) type-written pages (full page, single column), in Times New Roman, minimum of 12 point font. Additional information on the proposed project team, including resumes or curriculum vitae, may be attached but should not exceed ten (10) pages.

*Questions:*

Any questions regarding this RFP may be submitted via e-mail by 12:00 NOON Eastern Time on Wednesday, July 13, 2016. No telephone inquiries will be accepted. Written responses to all questions will be posted at

<http://www.nacwa.org/rfp> by July 18. Questions should be directed to Nathan Gardner-Andrews at [ngardner-andrews@nacwa.org](mailto:ngardner-andrews@nacwa.org).

*Deadline & Delivery:*

**Proposals will be accepted until 11:59 PM Eastern Time on July 27, 2016.** Late proposals will not be accepted and will be returned to the contractor.

Proposals should be submitted electronically via PDF to [ngardner-andrews@nacwa.org](mailto:ngardner-andrews@nacwa.org). Proposals submitted via other means will not be accepted.

**PROPOSAL REVIEW & AWARD**

All proposals will be reviewed to verify that interested contractors have met the minimum requirements. Proposals that do not meet minimum requirements will be eliminated from further consideration.

Proposals will be reviewed by an evaluation committee comprised of NACWA staff and member utility representatives. The top-ranked contractor will be contacted to enter into contract negotiations, at which time the proposals from other contractors will be held in abeyance until successful contract negotiations have been completed.

The technical criteria for evaluation of proposals will be as follows:

- **Qualifications/Experience**  
This category will consider the qualifications of the contractor's experience, other work in the water sector, and knowledge/experience related to EJ issues.
- **Personnel**  
This category will consider the experience and qualifications of the project manager and other personnel assigned to this project, including familiarity with EJ issues and the EJ advocacy community as discussed in the "Content" section above. **PLEASE NOTE** – NACWA plans to use the resulting compendium document in its advocacy on this issue. It is essential that proposals include named experts, with supporting qualifications, who will be working on the contractor's project team.
- **Proposal**  
This category will consider the quality of the proposal submitted by the bidder. Maximum ranking will be awarded for clear, concise, complete and compelling proposals.
- **Cost**  
This project has a not-to-exceed budget of \$30,000.

Interested vendors/contractors are cautioned that this is a Request for Proposal, not a request to contract, and that any proposals submitted in response to the Request for Proposal shall not be considered contract offers. All qualified proposals will be evaluated and an award may be made to the selected contractor whose proposal is deemed to be in the best interest of NACWA. No contract discussions shall begin between NACWA and any potential contractors until such time as an award is made by NACWA and any award made is subject to a signed contract. If a contract between the selected contractor and NACWA cannot be negotiated and agreed to in a timely fashion and to the Association's satisfaction, the award may be withdrawn. NACWA reserves the right to withdraw the award at any time for any reason during the contract negotiation process. In the event the selected contractor does not execute the contract as required, the award of the contract may then be offered to another contractor or NACWA may decide to solicit new proposals.

All responses, inquiries, or correspondence relating to or in reference to this RFP, and all other reports, charts, displays, schedules, exhibits, and other documentation submitted by contractor will become the property of NACWA when received.