

Request for Proposals (RFP)

Hawaiian Islands Environmental Finance Center (HIEFC)



Grant Writing & Training

PROPOSAL DUE DATE: May 31, 2023 at 5:00 pm HST

SUMMARY

Two-year contract to assist Hawai'i Community Foundation (HCF) with capacity building and training to community organizations and local government agencies through HCF's Hawaiian Islands Environmental Finance Center (HIEFC).

Primary focus will be supporting HIEFC partners with federal funding opportunities, grant application processes, grant writing support, federal registrations, application submissions, and award management for projects that support water infrastructure and management needs across Hawai'i.

At the end of two years, this contract may be renewed on an annual basis for up to three additional years pending continued federal funding and satisfactory performance is achieved.

CONTRACT BUDGET

Successful bids will be between \$50,000 to \$85,000 per year, inclusive of Hawai'i general excise tax.

CONTRACT CONTINGENCY

[This contract is contingent on HCF receiving formal notification of a 5-year federal grant award from the Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\).](#) If award notification is not received from EPA by June 1, 2023, awarding of this contract may be delayed, deferred, or cancelled. HCF will notify RFP applicants if this occurs. HCF is not liable for any work, expenses, loss of profits, or any damages whatsoever incurred by RFP applicants prior to the awarding of this contract.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

Hawaii Community Foundation (HCF), Fresh Water Initiative (FWI), sought to establish the Hawaiian Islands Environmental Finance Center (HIEFC) as a Category 2 Regional Water Infrastructure EFC with Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) Funding to address water infrastructure needs across the Hawaiian Islands, EPA Region 9.

The 2019 Hawaii Infrastructure Report Card identified nearly \$6 billion in infrastructure needs over the next 20 years across the state's counties. However, the Natural Resources Defense Council reports barriers to obtaining federal funding, citing findings in an EPA report on Drinking Water State Revolving Funds in five states including Hawaii that between 2010 and 2013, these states' DWSRFs left \$2.6 billion on the table. This is largely due to a lack of federal grant management capacity among otherwise qualified entities, challenges in recruiting and retaining qualified environmental staff, and underexposure of these opportunities to communities who are most in need.

HIEFC will use its unique position as a community convener for systems change, and leader of the state's Fresh Water Initiative for the last nine years, to support community groups and government agencies that are made up of or

serve communities that are disadvantaged or vulnerable within the context of the Hawaiian Islands, including ALICE households, Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders, and other underserved groups. Overall, HIEFC will aim to build core competencies for these entities focused on (1) Funding Resources – helping entities to apply for various streams of funding for water infrastructure needs, and (2) Water Workforce – workforce development in the water sector to ensure labor needed to design, implement and maintain water infrastructure in the long-term, including labor force assessment and the establishment of a program to place fellows at water agencies.

A robust collaboration of community partners to assist HIEFC in carrying out these aims include the University of Hawaii Water Resources Research Center to assist with workforce activities, the Urban Sustainability Directors Network to help design and run the fellowship program, state and local water-related agencies to participate as fellowship host entities, experienced consultants to conduct funding-related technical assistance and technical project management, and community-based organizations to assist with other components of the HIEFC’s activities or serve as recipients of assistance.

The HIEFC will operate in alignment with EPA strategic goals and emphasize innovative projects that also have elements of sustainability and resilience in water conservation, recharge, and reuse and that have actionable plans to work toward equity in disadvantaged communities. Success would be defined as funding transformational change projects that would make significant progress toward the stated HIEFC goals, as well as address climate change and equity needs, in ways that extend impact beyond the five-year EFC funding period.

This RFP seeks to find a contractor skilled in providing capacity building and training to community organizations and government agencies to apply for and manage federal funding streams, one of the two primary objectives of the HIEFC. This contractor should be experienced in developing training programs and curriculum in this subject and tracking program metrics and progress.

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Hawai'i Community Foundation (HCF) has been leading Hawaii’s Fresh Water Initiative for almost a decade, funding various projects in support of the initiative’s goals, which primarily focuses on restoring long-term water security through the creation of 100 million gallons per day (mgd) in additional reliable fresh water capacity for the Hawaiian Islands by 2030 through conservation, recharge, and reuse (see diagram below).

Through this project, HCF will establish the Hawaiian Islands Environmental Finance Center (HIEFC). HCF will be the contracting authority responsible for issuing this contract, verifying deliverables and products, and making payments. The selected contractor will report to Dana Okano, HCF Program Director and HIEFC Director.



Hawaiian Islands Environmental Finance Center (HIEFC), established by HCF, will function as an EPA Environmental Finance Center dedicated to addressing water infrastructure needs across the Hawaiian Islands. HIEFC will focus its efforts on federal resources capacity building with community groups and government agencies,

as well as water workforce development in the water sector to ensure long-term labor forces in this field. See Project Background for more details.

Selected Contractor: The contractor selected for this project will be responsible for providing Training and Technical Assistance to community organizations and government agencies in federal grant funding processes and opportunities, project development, grant writing, grant application preparation and submission, and post-award management. Under the advisement of HCF, the contractor will develop, establish, and operate a training program across the state of Hawaii to build organizational capacity at this level, and will work with HCF to capture and measure growth and progress as a result of training received. The training program must be flexible, so it can be tailored to organizations at any level of experience with federal funding.

It will be extremely important that this contractor operates in a manner consistent with HCF's and HIEFC's priority to provide technical assistance to support community groups and government agencies that are made up of or serve communities that are disadvantaged or vulnerable within the context of the Hawaiian Islands, including ALICE households, Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders, and other underserved groups. Activities completed under this contract will require a hands-on, one-on-one, and thorough approach with all HIEFC partner organizations and agencies, especially small community groups.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) strives to provide **direct** Water Technical Assistance (TA) to support community capacity building. The BIL has greatly expanded those efforts. EPA reinforces this approach to WaterTA with the following principles:

1. Principle #1 – Provide “Direct” Water Technical Assistance to Communities
2. Principle #2 – Support Communities to Take Concrete Steps Towards Accessing Water Infrastructure Funding
3. Principle #3 – Coordinate and Collaborate to Support Effective Delivery of WaterTA

HCF and HIEFC have adopted the same principles. We meet communities where they are, they lead, and we support however is needed.

All contract activities will be completed under the coordination and direction of Dana Okano, HCF Program Director and HIEFC Director. Other contractors will also be working on different aspects of this project. The selected contractor must be willing to collaborate with other contractors to complete this work.

CONTRACT OBJECTIVES

The objectives listed below reflect the types of responsibilities that are directly related to this contract. Duties may also include providing support and assistance to HCF and other contractors with technical program activities as needed.

1. **Provide organizational capacity building to HIEFC partners (community organizations and local government agencies) working in the water sector who serve NHPI and/or ALICE populations.**
 - a. Develop a flexible training program and curriculum on federal grant funding processes and deliver trainings across the state of Hawai'i.
 - o Topics shall include:
 - Locating funding opportunities,
 - Steps in federal registration processes,
 - Submissions of applications,
 - No cost extensions and reprogramming requests,
 - Grant and fiscal management,
 - Progress reporting, and other topics.
 - o Provide in-person or virtual group/individual training sessions or coaching. Contractor is primarily responsible for logistics and coordination required to facilitate these sessions.
 - o Note: training program should be flexible so partners at any level of experience with federal funding applications can benefit and participate.

- b. Regularly track postings for federal funding opportunities and relay information to HIEFC and partners.
 - o Provide printable training material to HIEFC partners that includes a tailored grants prospecting document highlighting federal, foundation and corporate sources of funding, providing a potential roadmap of funding opportunities for HIEFC partners.
 - o Regularly post funding opportunities on the HIEFC webpage, providing direct outreach to partners when new opportunities are available that fit project or organizational needs.
- c. Assist with grant pre-application development and coordination for infrastructure project delivery.
 - o Draft funding applications and assist with registration and application processes (e.g., SAM.gov, Grants.gov).
 - o Design and implement community outreach and engagement services.
 - o Provide additional technical assistance to HIEFC partners when requested.
- d. Provide grant writing support to HIEFC partners.
 - o Provide expert grant writing assistance and advice to guide partners through the earliest stages of grant application preparation.
 - o Review proposals for competitive edge and likelihood of long-term program success, offer suggestions when applicable.
 - o Proofread and edit draft proposals.
 - o Provide research assistance when requested (e.g., direct partners to helpful databases, lists, articles, etc. regarding project proposal).
- e. Assist organizations and agencies with grant application submission.
- f. Guide organization and agencies through post-award activities and project delivery (if/when applicable).
 - o Assist with access to project management services to help with implementing capital funding.
 - o Assist with establishing post-award fiscal management process or reporting requirements.
- g. Sample technical assistance process workflow:



- o Technical assistance should be prioritized as follows:
 - Priority 1 – Projects that further water conservation, reuse and recharge.
 - Priority 2 – Projects that build core competencies of applicants regardless of whether it is meeting an FWI goal.
 - Priority 3 – The applicant has capacity but still seeks help (e.g., requires consulting services such as grant writing or editing, partner outreach or engagement, technical component assistance, etc.)

2. Assist HCF and other contractors with developing, launching and managing an outreach and intake process for the HIEFC program.

- a. Identify potential HIEFC program partners.
- b. Develop outreach plan and timeline.
- c. Contribute to the creation and maintenance of online and in-person intake information.
- d. Process intake information and enroll partners in appropriate stage of training or technical assistance workflow.

3. **Collaborate with HCF and other contractors to develop and finalize overall tracking procedures and progress metrics for HIEFC activities.**
 - a. This will include tracking of overall HIEFC program progress, as well as partner organizational capacity building training progress.
 - b. Provide training program progress information to HCF as needed and for quarterly and final reporting to EPA.
4. **Coordinate activities with Hawai'i State Department of Health (DOH) when required.**
5. **Assist HCF in achieving goals and objectives related to the HIEFC.**
6. **Provide other assistance as required to support the HIEFC program.**
 - a. Commit to being an active partner in designing and implementing the HIEFC program.
 - b. Assist HCF and other contractors with any program tasks or activities as needed and within the parameters of the final contract.

CONTRACT DELIVERABLES

1. Completed organizational capacity building training program, including relevant curriculum and training workflow.
2. Completed outreach to community and agency partners each year.
3. Conducted partner trainings on federal funding each year.
4. Conducted regular tracking and notifications of federal funding opportunities.
5. Delivered all applicable trainings and technical assistance to HIEFC partners.
6. Assisted with design and production of program tracking system and metrics to gauge progress of grant writing and training aspects of HIEFC activities.
7. Produced quarterly progress reports to HCF.
8. Tracked relevant training participation and capacity building metrics.
9. Assisted community organization and government agency HIEFC partners with submitting federal funding applications by end of two-year contract.

EVALUATION OF PROPOSALS

The following will be taken into consideration in the final proposal selection process.

- Previous experience, including capability and proficiency, in developing and implementing federal funding and organizational training programs (from individual through large-scale) and providing Technical Assistance on federal funding applications.
- Has knowledge and prior direct or indirect experience with HCF's Fresh Water Initiative.
- Possesses high level knowledge and experience with federal funding (application and management), including State Revolving Fund (SRF) funds.
- Has experience working with community groups/organizations/nonprofits and government agencies on water issues.
- Proposal indicates TA will be provided in a culturally competent manner.
- Approach and strategy in terms of how you will support the HIEFC and its partners/partners.
- Proposal incorporates advancement of the FWI's goals and support to the HIEFC.
- Previously completed trainings, plans or reports related to federal grants processes.
- Proposal budget.
- No company or individual with suspension and debarment by the government will be awarded this contract. Please provide a written statement indicating whether your company and/or the proposed research team on the project are or have been on suspension, proposals for debarment, and debarment by the federal, state, or local government.
- Note: These are the minimum qualifications required for consideration of this contract. Additional desired qualifications are included in the following section.

DESIRED QUALIFICATIONS

- Understanding of local water issues or needs in Hawai'i.
- Based in or significant work experience in Hawai'i.

- Demonstrated ability to collaborate with others to achieve project objectives.
- Must be flexible and possess ability to adapt to any situation at hand.
- In accordance with EPA regulations at 40 CFR Part 33, "Participation by Disadvantaged Business Enterprises in U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Programs," Minority Business Enterprises and Women's Business Enterprises are strongly encouraged to submit a proposal.

PROJECT TIMELINE

HCF anticipates project duration to be June 2023 to May 2028, this contract represents two (2) years of that time.

PROPOSAL SUBMITTAL INSTRUCTIONS

Complete proposals must be emailed to environment@hcf-hawaii.org no later than **5:00 pm HST on May 31, 2023.**

For proposal submittal questions, please contact Dana Okano at DOkano@hcf-hawaii.org no later than May 19, 2023.

Proposals must be submitted as one PDF file limited to 12 pages (not including resumes and samples of previous work).

Proposals must include the following components:

1. *Organization Information:*
 - Name and Address
 - Phone Number and Email Address of Lead Contact
2. *Experience and Capabilities:* Including examples of prior work projects related to this RFP.
3. *Project Timeline:* Including tasks and deliverables, costs and anticipated timing. This proposed project schedule will be revisited and finalized together with HCF upon contract award. A simple sample project timeline is shown below.

Task/Deliverable	Cost	March 2023	April 2023	May 2023	...

4. *Scope of Work Narrative:* Discuss your strategy and timeline to formulate the deliverables discussed in this RFP. Include what you are going to do as outlined in the contract objectives and deliverables and how you will accomplish it. Detail how you will develop and conduct a flexible training program, who on your team will be responsible for what objective/deliverable, how many community and agency partners you plan to conduct outreach to each year, how you plan to track progress metrics, the number of trainings you project to conduct per year, the number of federal funding applications you aim to assist with submission by end of contract, etc. What is realistic and manageable given your past experience with community organizations and/or government agencies?
5. *Budget Narrative:* Discuss your budget.
6. *Project Team:* Introduce your project team, their responsibilities under this proposal, and their experience and qualifications. Include any subcontracts that you may require to complete this project.
7. *Client List:* Provide a client list including references we may contact.

APPENDIX I: Useful Resources/ References for Proposal Teams

1. 2019 Hawai'i Infrastructure Report Card
<https://infrastructurereportcard.org/state-item/hawaii/>
2. NRDC: Go Back to the Well: States and the Federal Government are Neglecting a Key Funding Source for Water Infrastructure
<https://www.nrdc.org/sites/default/files/state-revolving-fund-water-infrastructure-ip.pdf>
3. Fresh Water Security for Hawai'i
<https://www.hawaiicommunityfoundation.org/strengthening/fresh-water#:~:text=The%20Fresh%20Water%20Initiative%20is%20designed%20to%20pro-actively,to%20convene%20as%20a%20Fresh%20Water%20Council%20%28Council%29.>
4. Blueprint for Action – 2016-2030
<https://www.hawaiicommunityfoundation.org/file/2021/Blueprint-for-Action-2016-2030-2.pdf>
5. United for ALICE 2020 Report
<https://www.unitedforalice.org/state-overview/Hawai%E2%80%98i>
6. USDN Equity Diversity Inclusion Fellowship
<https://www.usdn.org/employment-opportunities/usdn-equity-diversity-inclusion-fellowship.html>
7. Aloha Challenge: By 2030, increase fresh water capacity by 100 million gallons per day using a baseline capacity of January 1, 2016.
<https://alohachallenge.hawaii.gov/pages/nrm-01-increase-fresh-water-capacity>