



Request for Proposals

Knoxville MSA
Climate Pollution Reduction Grant
Regional Outreach Consultant

Notice

Knoxville-Knox County Planning is soliciting proposals to conduct outreach throughout the Knoxville MSA in association with a Climate Pollution Reduction Grant issued by the United States Environmental Protection Agency.

Proposals are due March 15, 2024 by 4:30 p.m. EST and can be submitted electronically. More detailed instructions are outlined in a later section of this document.

Knoxville-Knox County Planning retains the right to reject any and all proposals and may re-advertise, waive formalities in the request for proposals, or abandon the project.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Ally Ketron
Strategic Planning and Communications Manager
Knoxville-Knox County Planning
865-215-3234
ally.ketron@knoxplanning.org

Project Background and Description

Knoxville-Knox County Planning (Planning) is soliciting proposals from qualified firms and organizations for assistance in engaging communities within the Knoxville Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) related to the Knoxville MSA's Climate Pollution Reduction Grant Program (CPRG) called **Breathe**.

The Knoxville, TN MSA is comprised of Anderson, Blount, Campbell, Grainger, Knox, Loudon, Morgan, Roane, and Union Counties and has a population of 932,245. The principal city within the MSA is Knoxville, with a population of 189,339. The main emphasis of this outreach will be within the City of Knoxville, City of Alcoa, City of Maryville, and City of Oak Ridge. Additional efforts will also be broadly applied to the remaining areas in the MSA.

PROJECT GOALS

The major goals of the outreach and engagement strategy are:

- To provide opportunities for communities within the Knoxville MSA to better and more fully understand greenhouse gas emissions and related pollutant drivers throughout the region and within their specific municipalities.
- To provide resources that aid in a shared understanding of the issues.
- To provide opportunities for meaningful input.

STRATEGY

Within the CPRG, there is a Priority Climate Action Plan (PCAP) and a Comprehensive Climate Action Plan (CCAP).

Phase I

The Priority Climate Action Plan (PCAP) must be completed by March 2024 and makes up the first phase of the overall project. As the lead organization for this grant, the City of Knoxville will be responsible for the final list of GHG reduction measures included in the PCAP, but the intent is to engage participating municipalities and communities in the prioritization of measures. This plan requires thorough reporting on planned and/or ongoing engagement with representatives and residents. Stakeholder engagement and the creation of a Low Income/Disadvantaged Communities Engagement Plan will be the focus of this round and may be completed before a consultant team is hired.

Phase II

The Comprehensive Climate Action Plan (CCAP) must be completed by mid-2025 and makes up the second phase of the overall project. It should include an update on engagement activities, a summary of the engagement conducted, and a summary of input received. Building off the first phase, the CCAP also requires thorough reporting on the proportion of benefits expected to accrue in the identified communities as compared to the total benefits, where possible.

The engagement consultant will be responsible for the facilitation of meetings, producing and distributing communications and outreach materials, creating surveys, overseeing marketing of the project, and documentation and reporting.

Scope of Work

Following the consultant selection process, a scoping meeting will be held to determine and negotiate the final scope of work and a contract for services. Therefore, the following list represents the major tasks and associated activities that are envisioned, but it is preliminary and as such Planning reserves the right to make revisions as deemed necessary. Once a consultant has been selected further refinement of the project scope will occur.

Tasks to be included in the scope of work:

- 1** Development of communications tools and content. A crucial component of this regional approach will be the identification of shared beliefs and values that will inform strategic storytelling used to reach participating communities. Respondents should address their method for identifying shared beliefs and values, as well as potential communication tools that may be used to share information and stories.
- 2** Identification of trusted community groups within the Knoxville MSA. These groups will be identified in consultation with Planning staff and should be resources that can help tailor outreach strategies within their specific communities.
- 3** Development of surveys. Multiple surveys may be used throughout the project. The initial survey should be designed to solicit input from target populations to help the project team determine the current level of understanding of greenhouse gas emissions and pollutant drivers, areas of interest, and barriers to engaging with local communities on these topics. Respondents should outline a proposed survey tool and approach for distributing and/or administering the survey.
- 4** Development of outreach plan. Respondents should address their method for presenting information in communities. The proposal should address methods for making target populations aware of outreach events, the respondent's role in facilitating those events, and event formats. Outreach may include:

- Large-scale community events,
- Guest attendance at smaller, existing meetings (neighborhood associations, special interest groups, organizations, etc.),
- Stakeholder committee meetings,
- Partner meetings,

- Regional Mayor’s Caucus (to be reconvened), and
- Listening and engagement sessions for businesses, community leaders, and regional colleges and universities.

DOCUMENTATION

The consultant will develop and produce any necessary documentation that is required by the EPA. A summary report that summarizes the process, major findings, and any recommendations should be produced. Monthly progress reports will also be required. Further refinement of this deliverable will be determined in the final scope.

PROJECT TIMEFRAME

The desired timeline for this project would be to start in spring 2024 and conclude mid-year 2025 to align with the CCAP.

Submission Requirements

To be eligible for consideration, an electronic (PDF) proposal shall be received by Knoxville-Knox County Planning no later than 4:30 p.m. EST on March 15, 2024. Late submittals will not be considered.

The proposal should be submitted to:

Amy Brooks at amy.brooks@knoxplanning.org

Or sent to:

Amy Brooks, AICP

Knoxville-Knox County Planning

Suite 403, 400 Main St.

Knoxville, TN 37902

Proposals should be fully self-contained and display clearly and accurately the capabilities, knowledge, experience, and capacity of the respondent to meet the requirements of the project and the RFP. Respondents are encouraged to utilize methods they consider appropriate in communicating the required

information. The proposal shall be organized in the following format and shall include the information in the below outline:

Cover Letter

The cover letter must be signed by an officer of the firm authorized to execute a contract with Knoxville-Knox County Planning. The primary contact should be identified with name, telephone number, email and mailing address.

General Qualifications

Provide a summary of the consultant's/team's qualifications, general information about the firm(s), location of office(s), years in business and areas of expertise.

Key Staff & Sub-Consultants

Identify key staff and include a description of their abilities, qualifications and experience. Attach resumes of key staff that will be assigned to this project. Include a proposed project management structure, organizational chart, and confirmation of team's ability to adhere to the proposed schedule.

Identify any portion of the scope of work that would be subcontracted. Include firm qualifications (brief) and key personnel and contact information for all subcontractors. It shall be the responsibility of the prime consultant to include a signed statement from each sub-consultant on their own letterhead confirming that they have the staff available and agree to provide the necessary services for the specific item/project listed in the proposal. Failure to meet these requirements will void the submittal. Planning reserves the right to approve or reject all consultants, internal staff performing consulting services, or subconsultants proposed by the consultant.

Previous Experience

Provide documentation of relevant experience with up to four (4) examples of similar projects identifying which team members worked on the project and their roles. An emphasis and priority in evaluation will be placed on firms with qualifications and experience that have resulted in successful implementation of comparable projects.

Provide the names, addresses, email addresses and telephone numbers of the clients for the projects included in this section. Projects and references for both the prime consultant as well as any proposed

sub-consultants should be provided. Each project example shall include information on the dates that work was performed and the contract amount.

Proposed Project Approach

It is understood that there are multiple approaches, methods and platforms available to complete the proposed tasks outlined within the scope of work. The proposer should clearly indicate these types of decision points for specific approaches and provide their recommendation based on past experience on successful projects. The consultant team may provide suggestions for additional items or approaches which might enhance the results or usefulness of the project.

Time Schedule

Proposals should provide a schedule for accomplishing all tasks for Phase II related to the CCAP. An estimate of time required to complete each identified task should be included. Completion times for tasks will be determined based on the agreed upon project schedule.

Budget

Respondents should provide a budget for accomplishment of the project to include total project cost as well as costs assigned to each major task. A proposed schedule of payment must be included.

Consultant Selection Process

Planning shall designate a Consultant Evaluation Committee (CEC) comprised of staff members and other key project stakeholders. The basic elements of the selection process are outlined below.

EVALUATION OF SUBMITTALS

The proposals submitted by each Consultant/Team will be evaluated by the CEC and scored according to the following criteria (relative weight):

- **Qualifications (30 points):**
Staff qualifications, credentials, overall firm experience and time availability of the staff assigned to manage and conduct the study.
- **Experience (25 points):**
Past experience with projects that have similar or related subject matter and/or reporting requirements.

- Approach (25 points):
Demonstrated understanding of the project scope and the proposal’s overall completeness, organization, innovation and strength of approach to the project tasks.
- Project Management (15 points):
Documentation of project schedule, major milestones and approach to management of the project along with a demonstrated ability to meet schedules and budgets without compromising final products of the project.
- Local Knowledge (5 points):
Demonstrated understanding of the Knoxville MSA and awareness of opportunities and constraints of the project.

Following the evaluation process, the CEC will make a final ranking of the consultant team(s) in order of preference. Based on the outcome of the initial proposal evaluation, the CEC reserves the right to request interviews from shortlisted firms. Knoxville-Knox County Planning will negotiate with the most highly qualified firms in rank order until successful execution of a contract for the project is completed.

SELECTION SCHEDULE

The process for selecting a consultant team, including the commencement of contract and notice to proceed, are tentatively scheduled as follows:

Proposal Submittal Deadline	March 15, 2024
Consultant Selected	April 1, 2024
Contract Commencement	April 26, 2024
Kickoff Meeting	May 3, 2024

REJECTION RIGHTS AND COST OF PROPOSAL PREPARATION

A selected consulting firm shall provide professional services in full accordance with federal, state and local regulations, policies and/or standards specific to the project’s funding source, where applicable. Knoxville-Knox County Planning reserves the right to reject any or all proposals submitted, to advertise for new proposals, or to accept any submitted proposal deemed to be in the best interest of Knoxville-Knox County Planning. Further, all costs incurred by consulting teams in the preparation and submittal of proposals, including interview travel if held, are not reimbursable by Knoxville-Knox County Planning.

Additionally, any costs incurred by a selected consultant prior to a notice to proceed are not reimbursable by Knoxville-Knox County Planning.

COMPLIANCE WITH LAWS

The consulting firm(s) shall conduct all operations under this contract in compliance with all applicable laws. The consulting firm(s) shall comply with all state and federal regulations pertaining to minimum wage and fair labor standards. The consulting firm(s) shall not discriminate in hiring or any other practice with respect to gender, race, age, creed, religion, or nationality. Knoxville-Knox County Planning and its officers, officials, agents, and employees shall be indemnified and held harmless for any failure by the consulting firm(s) to comply with any applicable laws, rules and/or regulations.

ADDENDA AND SUPPLEMENTS TO RFP

In the event that it becomes necessary to revise any part of this RFP or if additional information is necessary to enable the proposer to make adequate interpretation of the provisions of this Request for Proposal, a supplement to the RFP will be posted on the Knoxville-Knox County Planning website.

PROPOSALS TO BE IN EFFECT

Each proposal shall state it is valid for a period of not less than ninety (90) days from the date of receipt. All proposals shall become the property of Knoxville-Knox County Planning and will not be returned.

INQUIRIES

Questions or inquiries about the proposal are to be made in writing (email) prior to March 4, 2024 and answers may be posted to the website. Origin of the questions will not be identified.

Please direct questions via email to Ally Ketron, Strategic Planning and Communications Manager at ally.ketron@knoxplanning.org.