Release Date: August 17, 2021

**Lake Champlain Basin Program Announcement**

**Request for Proposals**

***Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Strategic Consultant***

The Lake Champlain Basin Program (LCBP) is seeking proposals from qualified consultants to advance our planning and programming in diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). Key objectives envisioned for this work include conducting an organizational assessment, supporting the creation of a DEI strategic plan, and assisting LCBP with integrating DEI principles into our existing programming.

Up to **$15,000** is available for completion of the work outlined in this Request for Proposals (RFP). LCBP anticipates issuing one award from this RFP.

This RFP is available on the Lake Champlain Basin Program website at [lcbp.org/grants](http://lcbp.org/grants).

**Applicants must submit proposals in electronic format.** Please see the RFP for complete details.

**DEADLINE NOTICE:**

Electronic versions of proposals must be RECEIVED by the Lake Champlain Basin Program office no later than:

**October 8th, 2021**

Late or incomplete proposals will not be considered.

Successful applicants will be notified by November 2021 for project initiation by January 2022.

**Lake Champlain Basin Program Request for Proposals**

***Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Strategic Consultant***

**I. Overview of LCBP and NEIWPCC**

The U.S. Congress designated Lake Champlain as a resource of national significance with the Lake Champlain Special Designation Act of 1990. The Special Designation Act also established the LCBP and authorized it to receive direct support from the U.S. EPA under the Clean Water Act. The LCBP coordinates and funds efforts that benefit the Lake Champlain Basin’s water quality, fisheries, economy, wetlands, wildlife, recreation, and cultural resources, and works in partnership with government agencies, private organizations, local communities, and individuals from New York, Vermont, and Québec. These efforts are guided by the comprehensive management plan [*Opportunities for Action: An Evolving Plan for the Future of the Lake Champlain Basin*](https://www.lcbp.org/about-us/how-we-work/opportunities-for-action/).

Since 1992, [NEIWPCC](https://neiwpcc.org/) has served as the primary program administrator of LCBP at the request of the Lake Champlain Steering Committee, and administers the program’s personnel and finances. NEIWPCC is a regional commission that helps the states of the Northeast preserve and advance water quality. NEIWPCC engages and convenes water quality professionals and other interested parties from New England and New York to collaborate on water, wastewater, and environmental science challenges across shared regions, ecosystems, and areas of expertise.

**II. Background**

LCBP employs 14 full-time and several part-time and seasonal staff members, working across focus areas that include cultural heritage, education and outreach, and scientific research. The overall work of the LCBP is guided by the Lake Champlain Steering Committee. LCBP also convenes several advisory committees focused on specific programmatic topics. More information about the structure and operations of LCBP is available [on our website](https://www.lcbp.org/about-us/how-we-work/).

LCBP is currently engaging in several initiatives to educate staff around DEI topics and to move our outreach and programming efforts in a more inclusive direction. LCBP staff participate in quarterly DEI-focused training sessions, and have participated in a focused workshop to define DEI mission, vision, and value statements for our organization. LCBP convenes an internal DEI working group, and an LCBP staff member participates in the NEIWPCC JDEI task force.

**III. Objectives**

LCBP has identified the following priorities and next steps for which we are seeking consultant services:

* Conduct an organizational assessment to identify opportunities, strengths, and gaps that need addressing
* Assist with the creation of a DEI strategic plan for LCBP, including:
  + Identify and prioritize further DEI-related initiatives for LCBP to support
  + Assisting LCBP advisory committees in evaluating their membership and recruitment practices
* Evaluate LCBP’s competitive grant process, including integration of DEI principles into the application and evaluation process
* Provision of tailored trainings to LCBP staff based on the findings of the internal assessment

**IV. Preferred Qualifications**

* Experience working with environmental organizations
* Experience conducting organizational assessments
* Prior work with underserved communities
* Knowledge of the communities in the Lake Champlain Basin
* Ability to work closely with LCBP’s small team
* Interest in forming a long-term, collaborative, advising relationship with LCBP

**V. Eligibility**

Eligible organizations include colleges, universities, nonprofit organizations, for-profit companies, and non-federal/non-state government agencies. The selected contractor will be responsible for the completion of all project tasks. Individuals and representatives from organizations that participated in the development or review of this RFP and its contents are ineligible to apply.

**VI. Proposal Evaluation and Selection Criteria**

Proposals will be evaluated by the LCBP Executive Committee, in consultation with staff at LCBP and NEIWPCC. Evaluation criteria will include:

* Demonstrated ability of the applicant to meet the objectives outlined above
* The degree to which the applicant meets the preferred qualifications outlined above
* The quality and value of the proposal submitted

**VIII. Timeframe and Budget**

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| Proposals due to LCBP | October 8th, 2021 |
| Applicants notified of funding decisions | November 2021 |
| Detailed project workplan due | December 13th, 2021 |
| Project start | January 2022 |
| Project deliverables and final report due on or before | Within 12 months from project start date |

LCBP will award up to $15,000 for the completion of the work identified in this request for proposals. We are interested in developing a relationship with a consultant to continue working on these issues into the future.

**IX. Appropriate Use of Funds**

1. LCBP grant funds **cannot be used** to produce for-profit products or to cover costs associated with regulatory compliance or direct fundraising efforts. LCBP grant funds also cannot be used for land purchases, endowment funds, or lobbying or legislative advocacy of any kind.
2. Grant applicants are required to follow the small purchase method which is a relatively simple and informal method (procurement procedure) for purchasing supplies, equipment, and services that cost more than $10,000 and less than $250,000. This procurement procedure is applicable to proposals submitted in response to this RFP if the primary applicant is not a for-profit organization. The purpose is to ensure fair and open competition for purchases supported by LCBP/federal funding. If the applicant plans to use LCBP funding to obtain supplies, equipment or contractual services to complete its proposed workplan, then it must follow federal procurement regulations:

• Procurement of supplies and services that do not exceed $10,000 may be made without soliciting competitive quotes if the price is considered reasonable.

• Procurement of supplies, equipment and services that are greater than $10,000 and do not cost more than $250,000 require that the recipient obtain multiple price quotes through a documented competitive process. Good faith efforts to obtain services from disadvantaged business enterprises should also be made, including contacting the small business administration and minority business development agency to inform them about the opportunity for businesses to submit price quotes as part of the competitive process. At least three price quotes for professional services or subcontracted work must be secured. The selected item or service does not need to be the lowest cost if it does not meet your requirements or you can otherwise demonstrate that the higher price offers the “best value.” Justification must be provided for the outcome of the bid process. This process may take place prior to the submission of a proposal for LCBP funds.

1. Grant award funding may not be used for the purchase of food or beverage.

**Direct and Indirect Costs:**

LCBP and NEIWPCC encourage groups to budget costs that are associated with the project as direct expenses, including personnel costs, travel, project supplies, mailings, phone costs, office supplies, etc. Use of some grant funds for indirect costs is also allowable, subject to both the provisions of OMB Circular A-87 and LCBP approval. If you need further guidance, contact the LCBP or refer to [OMB Circular A-87 (Revised)](https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/omb/circulars_a087_2004/#atta). **For projects in response to this RFP, the indirect budget should not exceed 10% of the direct project budget, and indirect offered as match should similarly not exceed 10% of direct match contributed, unless a higher federally negotiated indirect rate is in place, and proof of that negotiated rate is provided.** The LCBP Indirect Policy can be found here: http://www.lcbp.org/about-us/grants-rfps/grant-toolkit/

**X. Notification of Awards**

Award notification to applicants is expected in November 2021. The award recipient may be asked to submit a revised workplan, timeline, and budget at this time. Project work cannot begin until a contract is signed by both parties. LCBP and NEIWPCC will not pay for expenses incurred prior to the contract start date. Payment for costs incurred will be on a reimbursement basis per the contract payment schedule and contingent upon completion of quarterly progress reports and project deliverables.

**XI. Period of Performance**

Work is expected to begin in **January 2022** and is to be completed no later than **12 months** after the project start date (see specific deliverable deadlines in Section VIII above).

**XII. Schedule and Requirements for Proposal Submission**

Responses to this request for proposals should include the following materials:

* A cover letter introducing the consultant or firm that provides an overview of previous work and experience and interest in working with LCBP on this project
* A more detailed proposal (up to 3 pages in length) that addresses an approach to all objectives listed above, including a proposed timeframe and costs associated with each objective
* Resumes or CVs from all individuals who would be working with the LCBP team
* References or testimonials from previous clients

Word-compatible electronic submissions ONLY will be accepted and must be received via email no later than **October 8th, 2021** to [mkcampbell@lcbp.org](mailto:mkcampbell@lcbp.org). **Please include “DEI Consultant Proposal” in your subject header.**

**XII. Contact Information**

Direct all electronic proposals (via email) to:

*Mae Kate Campbell*

*Lake Champlain Basin Program Technical Associate*

802-372-0220

[mkcampbell@lcbp.org](mailto:mkcampbell@lcbp.org)

We welcome questions about this request for proposals and/or our organizational operations at the same address by October 1st. All questions and LCBP responses will be posted on the LCBP website at this link: <https://www.lcbp.org/about-us/grants-rfps/request-for-proposals-rfps/pre-proposal-faqs/>