



## **RFE: Writer, Environmental Justice Community Engagement Plan & Report**

**August 2021**

Center for Whole Communities and Rights and Democracy Institute seek a highly competent, organized, creative and engaged writer to convey the strategy, outcomes and recommendations of a targeted community outreach and engagement effort. The writer will act as a subcontractor for a current, active contract with the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (VT DEC). We are interested in working collaboratively and equitably with partners to deliver robust EJ policy in Vermont.

The subcontractor will take part in selected elements of an Environmental Justice-focused community engagement process, to meet the RFE goal: to lead the drafting of two contracted work products.

Product 1: Targeted Community Engagement Plan (due December 1, 2021)

Product 2: Final Project Report and Recommendations (due January 1, 2023)

We seek a writer who can creatively convey complex ideas clearly and accessibly. The subcontractor should have a strong working knowledge of Environmental Justice (EJ) principles and history, whether through training and education, lived experience or both. When responding to this call for collaboration, please share your experience of deep listening to, synthesizing and reporting on community-centered processes, and working collaboratively with diverse teams. The successful subcontractor will be deeply accountable to frontline and impacted communities in Vermont. Ability to occasionally travel to attend some project engagement meetings in the state is strongly preferred.

### **Who we are**

Center for Whole Communities (CWC) is a nonprofit dedicated to weaving together movements for justice and the environment. We have 18 years of experience in leadership development and building relationships across differences in order to foster healthy, whole communities. We work on the individual, organizational and community level to create structural changes in institutional systems. We strive to create the conditions that allow us to take risks, to stretch and evolve a culture from one that is competitive, taxing, and toxic, to one that is collaborative and life-giving.

Rights & Democracy (RAD) is a member-led, people's organization in New Hampshire and Vermont. Our mission is to shift the political landscape through electoral and community organizing to ensure that the values and needs of our communities guide the policies of our government. We are doing this by building a popular movement to advance human rights, dismantle economic inequality, racism, and sexism, and to build a real democracy.

### **Timeline of work**

LOI review begins 15 August, 2021 and closes on September 6, 2021 or when a subcontractor is hired (see <http://www.wholecommunities.org/join-our-team> for updates).

Drafts of component elements of each work product will be due at agreed-upon intervals, beginning in late September 2021, to facilitate team and community partner input, review and feedback. Final work products are due on **December 1, 2021** (Engagement Plan) and **January 1, 2023** (Final Report).

## Role Description

The EJ Community Engagement Plan & Report Writer must know how to listen, synthesize and work collaboratively to present clear, specific, creative community engagement strategy and policy documents that can reach new audiences and advance equitable policy solutions.

For the purposes of this RFE, 'frontline and impacted communities' identifies those who:

- Are highly exposed to climate risks, such as flooding, extreme temperatures, and health risks;
- Experience oppression and racism, are excluded from opportunities, or have less resources to adapt to climate and economic change;
- Bear the brunt of pollution and negative effects from today's fossil fuel and extractive economies; and
- Are more likely to experience a job transition as Vermont addresses climate change.

These criteria are not intended to be exhaustive, nor do they take into consideration the intersectionality of people's lives and the multiple vulnerabilities that one may experience.

## Scope of Services

- Lead the design, writing, and editing of a one-year, multi-phased, **Targeted Environmental Justice Community Outreach and Engagement Plan** for 3 to 5 overburdened Vermont communities. The clear, well-written plan will translate readily into community-specific work plans. These will be created by the CWC-RDI team contracted to lead these engagements on behalf of the Vermont DEC during 2022.
- Lead the design, writing and editing of the collaboratively produced **Final Report** of the resulting, year-long community engagement initiative. The report will document data, process and learning, and provide strong, empirically-grounded policy and practice recommendations to the DEC.
- Participate in up to an estimated 50 hours of key planning, engagement and synthesis meetings with members of the core team and key collaborators, during the term of the 16-month contract.
- Some statewide travel in Vermont. (Meetings may be remote or in person; mileage compensation available.)

## Evaluation Criteria

The successful candidate will have:

- Demonstrated experience in writing plans, work plans and reports on community engagement, particularly in communities affected by environmental injustice
- Established ties and deep accountability to the BIPOC community in Vermont.
- Content knowledge of, understanding, and commitment to EJ
- Familiarity with process design, and approaches to community outreach and engagement
- Experience working with diverse teams, community-based organizations, and community members
- Degree or relevant lived experience in environmental or public policy or related work

- Familiarity with issues of language access desired
- Experience creating effective graphics and formatting to accompany text strongly desired

### Elements of proposal

Please send us a brief (1-2 page) initial letter of interest, so we can see if it makes sense to continue the conversation. We would like to hear about your skills, interest, alignment, approach and relevant experience. Please don't spend too much time preparing these materials: we want to make this process as equitable as possible.

Send (1) the letter, (2) a resumé, and (3) a writing sample, to [HiringCWC@wholecommunities.org](mailto:HiringCWC@wholecommunities.org) with "LOI for EJ Plan & Report Writer" in the subject line, and attachment(s) formatted as Lastname\_Doc\_Title. The contractor may be based anywhere in or near Vermont. RFE is open until filled.

### Budget

Total subcontract compensation (excluding mileage reimbursement) of up to \$10,000, payable in installments upon successful delivery of draft and final elements of each product, and divided between the two products of work.

*CWC is an Equal Employment Opportunity employer and actively recruits people of color, women, individuals with disabilities and members of the LGBTQ community.*

*CWC and RAD believe that one of the greatest strengths of a community is a rich diversity of perspectives. Candidates who are Black, Indigenous, people of color, queer, trans, non-binary, parents, persons with disabilities, immigrants, and anyone who has experienced systemic oppression and/or gender-based violence are highly encouraged to apply.*

Questions: please contact Susannah McCandless, [susannah@wholecommunities.org](mailto:susannah@wholecommunities.org)

### Appendix A: Detail of elements of work (from DEC contract)

#### *Product 1. Draft Community Engagement Plan/Strategy*

a. Contractor [here, CWC and partners] will meet with interested parties to gather input on Targeted Community Engagement Plan. This includes staff identified by the State and members of the Just Transitions Subcommittee of the Climate Council to understand how further community engagement can inform decision making. It also includes outreach to community-based organizations, local leaders, community liaisons, nonprofits working on environmental justice initiatives and advocacy groups.

b. The Contractor will draft a multi-phased **Targeted Community Engagement Plan** to engage with three to five overburdened Vermont communities. Final communities selected for targeted outreach will be determined in consultation with the State using but not limited to the following tools and resources:

Vermont Social Vulnerability Index, EPA's EJ Screen Tool and Vermont Environmental Disparity Index. In addition, we will take into consideration products of previous research and engagement by the Contractor and collaborators, and potential communities' interest in engagement, among other factors.

c. As part of the Targeted Community Engagement Plan, the Contractor [here, CWC and partners, not the subcontractor] will also develop a workplan for each selected community ('community work plans') for executing the Targeted Community Engagement Plan, that shall include a timeline and budget for outreach and engagement activities under this contract. The Contractor will collaborate with State representatives and local stakeholders to design the appropriate outreach for each selected community, taking into consideration other initiatives underway in the state, and will submit the plan to the State for approval.

### *Product 2. Final Report*

The **Final Report** will be provided by the Contractor to the State before the end of this contract term.

The final report must include, but not be limited to:

- Key findings, next steps, additional actions needed.
- Recommendations for public outreach strategies and practices to include in State's Public Engagement Plan/EJ Policy.
- Recommendations on improvements for the Agency of Natural Resources Interim Limited English Access Plan.
- Written summaries, de-identified raw data, with participant consent, and compiled data analysis from community events and surveys, including number of participants in each community and summaries/ aggregate data on any non-identifying demographic information collected.
- Summary of community leaders and/or organizational contact information (for contacts who give consent for their information to be shared with DEC), and recommendations that contractor has collected under this effort.
- Recommendations on how DEC can partner with them in the future and strategies for support of these community partnerships, including appropriate compensation for participants.