



Department of
Environmental
Conservation

Hudson River
Estuary Program



NEIW PCC

&

NYS DEC Hudson River Estuary Program

REQUEST FOR QUOTES

September 2024

NEIW PCC, in cooperation with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation's (DEC) Hudson River Estuary Management Program (Estuary Program), is inviting bids for staff training in Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice (DEIJ) and development of an internal 5-year DEIJ action plan.

I. Overview

NEIW PCC

NEIW PCC is a regional commission that helps the states of the Northeast preserve and advance water quality. We engage and convene 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.

Hudson River Estuary Management Program

The Hudson River Estuary Management Program helps people conserve, restore, and enjoy the Hudson River estuary. Created in 1987 through the Hudson River Estuary Management Act (ECL 11-0306), the program focuses on the tidal Hudson and its surrounding watershed from the federal dam at Troy to the Verrazano Narrows in New York City (a 12 -county area). A description of the Estuary Program and links to the *Hudson River Estuary Action Agenda* and other background information are available at <https://dec.ny.gov/nature/waterbodies/oceans-estuaries/hudson-river-estuary-program>.

Background: Diversity Equity, Inclusion and Justice (DEIJ) Training/Facilitation

NEIW PCC and the Estuary Program staff have completed training in what might be called "DEIJ 101" and have worked on increasing our understanding of the intersection of DEIJ with our programmatic work (a list of trainings completed is pasted in as Addendum to this solicitation).

In addition, the Estuary Program developed an internal DEIJ "Road Map" action plan for 2021-2025 and has been tracking progress toward implementation. We seek proposals for developing an updated 5-year DEIJ action plan that will engage all levels of staff and provide strategic direction for internal work to improve our program's learning environment, staff skills, policies, practices, and goals to be more inclusive; as well as for our external work to build trust, collaboration, and equitable partnerships with community partners representing the diversity of the Hudson Valley's population and geography.

With a few exceptions, most of our staff and team leaders are on consulting contracts working for the Hudson River Estuary Management Program through agreements with two partners, NEIWPCC and Cornell University. Staff work in three locations, within offices of the NYS Department of Conservation (Albany, New Paltz) and at Norrie Point Environmental Center (Staatsburg). Our program is carried out by 40 such staff working in 7 teams on the following topics:

- management of migratory fisheries,
- conservation of river habitats,
- management of water quality and aquatic habitat in the Hudson and its tributaries,
- helping communities in the Hudson Valley adapt to climate change,
- helping communities in the Hudson valley conserve natural resources through land use and local laws,
- providing public access to the Hudson River for recreation, and
- educating people about the river.

Our current 5-year *Action Agenda 2021-2025* includes DEIJ as an over-arching priority, and the draft 2026-2030 Action Agenda carries this priority forward including specific strategies and measures of success. Since 2020, an internal working group with representation from each of our 7 programmatic teams has collaborated to advance this work. We have made progress in areas such as recruitment practices, advisory board development, and inclusive community engagement practices. In addition to this recent work, over the last two decades, we have delivered many programs to students in under-served Hudson Valley schools, and we have used our grant program to invest in 262 projects in potential environmental justice areas (as defined by NYS DEC).

We seek to continue to advance our understanding of DEIJ as it relates to our program work and increase the pace of our progress through training, consultant facilitation, and development of an updated DEIJ action plan.

This request for bids includes information on:

- I. Project Goal**
- II. Scope of Work**
- III. General Guidelines for Applicants**
- IV. Submission Process**
- V. Bid Evaluation Process**
- VI. Notification of Awards**
- VII. Contacts**

Addenda:

- **Staff training to date**
- **Definitions**

Project Goals and Desired outcome

1. Training

The first goal of this project is to develop and deliver training to Estuary Program staff, including but not limited to:

- Microaggression training for all program staff with the goal that all staff will understand what microaggressions are, their impact, and best practices when experiencing or witnessing a microaggression. Training may include related topics such as implicit bias, cultural competence, allyship, and bystander/upstander interventions.
- Social safety training for staff that conduct fieldwork with public interactions (approximately 20-25 staff) with the goal to prepare staff for how to respond in the event they encounter discrimination, bias, or harassment by the public when conducting fieldwork. Topics covered may include situational awareness and de-escalation strategies. This training shall include a review of field safety protocols and development of new social safety and incident reporting protocols for field staff including teams working on fisheries management, culvert assessment, water quality monitoring, stream buffer restoration, and delivering environmental education programs.

2. 2026-2030 DEIJ Action Plan

The second goal of this project will be to facilitate and develop an updated DEIJ Action Plan for 2026-2030, building on the Estuary Program's 2021-2025 DEIJ Road Map. The consultant will work together with the Estuary Program DEIJ Working Group (including representatives of the seven teams) to draft the updated plan. The goal is to establish updated implementation strategies, actions, and measures of progress. The updated plan will align with DEC's DEI Strategic Plan and include strategies for how to continue engaging all levels of program staff with DEIJ objectives. The plan will also build on environmental justice-related measures of success and strategies in the 2026-2030 Hudson River Estuary Action Agenda and include more detailed implementation strategies and actions to effectively engage, build trust, and develop equitable partnerships with BIPOC, disadvantaged, and environmental justice communities in the Hudson Valley region. The consultant will review current environmental justice metrics and assist with developing new metrics to evaluate equity in program successes.

II. Scope of Work

The project will provide training, facilitation, and plan development to the achieve the stated goals and outcomes. Bids should describe the approach to be taken including:

- methods
- duration and timing of training modules
- type and amount of self-guided learning, interactive learning, audio/visual, etc. for the training
- evaluation and success factors that demonstrate effectiveness during and after the training
- DEIJ action plan development process and timeline

Project Tasks & Deliverables

The applicant should present their own approach and specify the related tasks and specific deliverables to achieve deliver the stated goal and outcome. The overall deliverables for this project will be the following:

1. **Training** delivered to approximately 40 staff people from Hudson River Estuary Program and NEIWPC staff. Trainings will be conducted in-person (with a possible hybrid attendee option) at the Norrie Point Environmental Education Center location in Hyde Park, NY in January or February 2025. At least one virtual meeting will be held with the DEIJ Working Group to plan each training. Draft training materials will be shared with the DEIJ Working Group for review and input.

2. **2026-2030 DEIJ Action Plan** facilitation and development. Plan development will include at least four facilitated meetings with the DEIJ Working Group and one facilitated meeting with Estuary Program Team Leads and may be led virtually. Plan development will include at least two rounds of review and revisions.
3. **Quarterly reports** delivered to the NEIWPC project manager no later than the 10th day of January, April, and July during the duration of the project.
4. **Final Progress Report** to be submitted for review by the project manager (See Contact Information in Section IX) as draft in Microsoft Word before being delivered in Adobe .pdf format as final. Applicants should be prepared to provide digital and paper copies to the Estuary Program.

See Bid Format below for further detail.

III. General Guidelines for Applicants

Funding

Awarded funds may be used for expenses specifically related to the proposed project, including wages and consultant fees. Expendable and non-expendable equipment directly related to the proposed project may qualify for funding but requires pre-approval (prior to proposal submission) by NEIWPC and must be justified in the proposal.

Schedule

The project should take no more than **10** months, with all final reports and paperwork received by **September 1, 2025**. However, **it is desirable for projects to be completed earlier**. Please note, some of our staff do extensive field work from March-October. Staff also work out of several office locations (Albany, New Paltz, and Staatsburg, NY). Fitting training/facilitation into staff schedules will take careful planning.

Indirect Cost Policy

NEIWPC recognizes that in some instances, applicants may have costs that are not directly attributable to projects or activities being funded but that the recovery of those indirect costs is necessary in order to effectively implement the respective projects or activities. In those situations, the following indirect cost policy applies:

- Applicants that do not have a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement may charge a maximum indirect rate of 10 percent of direct costs (de minimus rate).
- Applicants (including academic institutions) with a valid Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) with their cognizant federal agency can charge indirect costs to projects based on their negotiated indirect cost rate, but not to exceed 25% of the direct project cost, whichever is less.
 - A valid NICRA is one in which the effective period has not expired. Applicants must provide a copy of their valid NICRA with their application in order for indirect costs reimbursement to be considered. If the effective period of the NICRA has expired but the grantee has documented evidence (via an indirect cost rate proposal) that they have reapplied for a new rate, the expired rate may be accepted.
 - Where an applicant has a NICRA higher than 25%, the difference may be applied to match if allowable under NEIWPC's prime agreement with the funding entity.

Deliverables, Ownership, and Credit Due

All materials, software, maps, studies, reports, and other products or data, regardless of physical form or characteristics, produced as a result of this solicitation and funded, in whole or in part, under an agreement with NEIWPC shall be made available to NEIWPC and the Hudson River Estuary Program in the formats in which it is stored or maintained. NEIWPC and the Hudson River Estuary Management Program shall have an unrestricted right to use any materials, software, maps, studies, reports, and other products or data generated using assistance funds or specified to be delivered. The contractor shall not obtain, attempt to obtain, or file for a patent, copyright, trademark, or any other interest in any such materials, software, maps, reports, and other products or data without the express, written consent of NEIWPC and subject to any other approvals required by state or federal law. Reports and other deliverables will credit NEIWPC and the Hudson River Estuary Management Program for any work completed under the grant award.

Insurance Requirements

NEIWPC requires its contractors (including sole proprietors) to maintain workers compensation and liability insurance. More details will be provided to applicants selected for funding. If you cannot provide proof of insurance, please do not apply for this funding opportunity.

Compliance Reporting Requirements

In addition to the quarterly reporting described above, the successful applicant must submit NYS DEC's "MBE Workforce Employment Utilization Report (Form EO162)" on a quarterly basis. The MBE Workforce Employment Utilization Report shall be submitted by the 6th day after the end of each calendar quarter. NEIWPC will provide copies of forms and instructions with the fully executed contract.

Format

Quotes must be submitted in Adobe Acrobat .pdf format and must include:

- **Company/firm name,**
- **Project name,**
- **Name of project leader with contact information,** and
- **A description of proposed work,** including.
 - Objectives: Outline how the project will achieve the goal of this Request For Bids.
 - Methodology: Outline the project's design and describe the methods and techniques that will be used to meet the project's goal and tasks as well as the roles and responsibilities of all project participants
 - Expected outputs and outcomes: Describe the project's expected outputs and outcomes, and list and describe each of the specific tasks, deliverables, and end-products.
 - Success factors/evaluation process to be used to evaluate the effectiveness and success of the project.
- **Budget**: Provide a detailed budget describing the scope and anticipated cost of each component of the training (e.g., a two-hour training for all staff would cost \$____) as well as a recommended suite of services (using the menu of options) that would achieve the outcome that you describe in the bid document. Please provide a full budget in two formats for your recommended suite of services. The first should show the cost in a task-based format. This is the format that will be used as a basis for an agreement if you are selected for the work. The second format should show the cost of the work, broken down by expense type, including personnel expenses, travel, supplies, contractual services, and indirect expenses. For your convenience, an electronic version of the two budget forms has been provided with this request.
- **Timeline** for meeting identified tasks and completing deliverables, with a completion date no later than September 1, 2025.

Qualifications

The applicant chosen for this project should possess the academic and/or professional expertise in relevant subject areas and have a strong track record in delivering projects of this nature. Description of qualifications will not be counted as part of the 4-page maximum.

Letters of Recommendation

Applications including letters from former clients or partners, describing projects of a similar nature, that provide compelling testimonials as to the applicant's ability to provide a useful product and follow a useful approach can be included with the bid and will not be counted as part of the 4-page maximum.

IV. Submission Process

Bids must be submitted by **October 15, 2024**. No late submissions will be considered. Applicants **must submit their proposals electronically, in Adobe Acrobat .pdf format** via email to the NEIWPC project manager, Emily Bialowas at ebialowas@neiwpc.org.

V. Quote Evaluation Process

All quotes will be screened to ensure that they meet all requirements of this request. If requirements are met, quotes will be evaluated based on bidder qualifications and overall cost effectiveness. Follow up interviews or questions/answer may be used to select among finalists.

VI. Notification of Award

Bidders will be notified of the award decision approximately within one month of the bid submission deadline.

VII. Contacts

NEIWPC Environmental Analyst, Project Manager, Emily Bialowas, ebialowas@neiwpc.org. Hudson River Estuary Program, Ingrid Haeckel, ingrid.haeckel@dec.ny.gov.

Addendum 1: Staff training to date

Below is a list of mandatory trainings that have been provided to our staff through DEC, Cornell or NEIWPC since 2020.

All program staff receive mandatory NYSDEC trainings:

- Annually - Preventing Discrimination & Harassment: (all NYS Employees)
- 2020 - DEIJ 101 (all program employees):
 - Part 1- Power & Difference: creating a climate for sharing personal and group experiences between and across groups to promote courage, compassion and connection
 - Part 2-Creating conditions for change—Identity, Cross Racial Dialogue, Conventional Groups vs Partnership Groups
 - Part 3- Racism & anti-racism –the Wheel of Change
- 2021 - Implicit Bias Training (all DEC employees)
- 2023 - DEIJ Systems Thinking Training (all program employees)
 - Part 1- learn tools for diagnosing the system, identifying roles and mental models supporting the current structure, how to design interventions, and how to implement and evaluate interventions
 - Part 2: community of practice. Small teams co-design interventions, implement and evaluate results.

All Cornell partner staff have received additional training:

- Cultivating Cornell's Inclusive Working Environment
- Developing a Culture of Belonging and Respect
- Understanding ourselves and our Ability to Create Change
- Engaging with Different Perspectives
- Speaking up and Responding
- Your Commitment to Advancing Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

All NEIWPC partner staff have received additional training:

- Religion, Spirituality and Beliefs: Employees
- Creating a Positive Work Environment
- Bystander Intervention V3
- Diversity, Inclusion, & Sensitivity V3.2

Addendum 2: DEIJ Definitions

Definitions: Applicants should refer to NYSDEC's websites and definitions of diversity, equity, inclusion, and environmental justice at:

- [Workforce Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan](#)
- [Office of Environmental Justice](#)
- [Diversity Resources in the Outdoors, Science, & Environmental Justice](#)