



Request for Proposals

Recruiting a Diverse Water Workforce: Toolbox

Issue date: April 12, 2021

Submission Deadline: **May 27, 2021 by 5:00PM Eastern Time Zone.**

Issued by:

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Overview

The Value of Water Campaign, staffed by the US Water Alliance, is issuing this Request for Proposal (RFP). Established in 2008, the Alliance is a nationally recognized nonprofit organization that educates the nation on the true value of water, accelerates the adoption of One Water policies and programs, and celebrates innovation in water management. For more information: www.uswateralliance.org.

The Value of Water Campaign educates and inspires the nation about how water is essential, invaluable, and in need of investment. Spearheaded by top leaders in the water industry, and coordinated by the US Water Alliance, the Value of Water Campaign is building public and political will for investment in the United States' water and wastewater infrastructure through best-in-class communication tools, high-impact events, media activities, and robust research and publications. For more information: www.thevalueofwater.org

Project Background

The water sector faces serious challenges recruiting, retaining, and developing a prepared workforce to deliver the critical services that protect public health and help our communities, natural environment, and economy thrive. In 2019, The US Water Alliance partnered with the Water Agency Leaders Alliance (WALA) and the National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA) to commission market research to inform a communications campaign to attract and retain diverse candidates in the water sector. This research provided important insights about the brand impression of the water sector as a potential employer, and the messages that are most effective at attracting and retaining new employees. **A key outcome of this market research was a better understanding of the messages that are most effective for attracting and retaining under-represented workers, so that the utility workforce better reflects the diverse communities that they serve.** This research was completed in 2019, and a summary of the findings can be accessed upon request (email khenderson@uswateralliance.org).

This project aims to translate the research findings from the Alliance/WALA market research study into a toolbox of resources, collateral, and guidance, that water sector organizations can use in their recruitment activities.

Objective

To translate the key findings from Phase 1 into a communication toolbox for water organizations, including private and public water utilities, to target and recruit people into the workforce, especially from under-represented groups. This toolbox could include:

- Video and other digital collateral that humanizes and de-mystifies what work looks like in the water sector, sized for multiple digital platforms and other visual collateral sized for print
- Scripts that water organizations can use to create their own recruitment video or audio products
- Template language for recruiters to include in recruitment emails and phone calls
- Talking points for job interviews
- Language that can be included in job descriptions
- Short guidance documents on how to run a digital recruitment campaign, how to do targeted outreach, or other needs

Proposals are encouraged to describe additional ideas for the toolbox that would be helpful for water sector organizations in their recruitment activities.

The selected team will work closely with Alliance staff and volunteers from the Value of Water Campaign steering committee who will provide feedback and suggestions along the way.

Proposal and Contract Process

Proposal Submittal Deadline

Proposals must be submitted electronically on or before 5:00 PM Eastern Time on May 20, 2021. Please submit them to khenderson@uswateralliance.org.

Project Schedule

The tentative schedule below includes important activities and dates. Proposals should include a more detailed schedule for tasks and deliverables described in their proposed scope.

Activity	Date
RFP Publish Date	April 12, 2021
Period for Proposer(s) Clarification Questions	April 12-May 20, 2021
Proposal Due Date	May 27, 2021
Review, Interviews, and Selection	Before June 15, 2021
Start of Work/Kickoff call with Alliance Staff and VOW volunteer committee	July 1, 2021
Progress Update + call with Alliance Staff and VOW volunteer committee	August 15, 2021
Draft Toolbox presentation with Alliance Staff and VOW volunteer committee	October 1, 2021
Final Toolbox Due	December 1, 2021

Scope of Work

Project Scope

We are seeking proposals for a scope of work not to exceed \$75,000. The selected consultant will be creating the collateral, templates, and guidance documents for the toolbox.

We anticipate that developing the draft toolbox will take approximately three (3) months after the Start of Work begins. The consultant must present the draft toolbox to the VOW volunteer committee in a video conference call, after which they will have one (1) additional month to incorporate any feedback from the committee into the final toolbox.

Key Deliverables

- Progress Update (written update mid-way through the project)
- Draft toolbox
- Final toolbox
- Slide presentation that summarizes the resources in the toolbox
- Three phone or video calls with Alliance staff and the VOW volunteer committee:
 - Kickoff Call at the start of the project
 - Progress Update Call mid-way through the project
 - Draft Toolbox presentation

Proposal Requirements and Process

All submitted proposals should be ten (10) pages or less and include the following information.

- 1) Executive Summary
- 2) Company Background and Project Team Qualifications
 - In addition to standard background information about your firm, include relevant or similar work you've completed (resumes of team members can be submitted as addendums if you wish).
 - If utilizing any subcontractors, describe their qualifications working on similar, relevant, or related projects. The prime contractor shall be wholly responsible for the work of the subcontractors.
- 3) Technical Approach and Work Plan
 - Describe your approach to completing the scope of work outlined in this RFP. Identify deliverables and key decision points. Describe how the project team will fulfill the Scope. Please explain your rationale and what tools you'll use.
 - Pricing Information: Cost/pricing is a factor in the selection. It is your responsibility to include all necessary pricing and/or costs in your proposal. Submitted budgets should include ALL potential fees, not just a cost of service. **The all-in budget for this research is not to exceed \$75,000. Please include hard costs, external contractors you may need to engage, travel, incentives for research participants, etc. in your proposal.**
- 4) Client References
 - Provide a list of up to three (3) former clients and projects which demonstrate experience relevant to this RFP, and describe the work done for the client. For each reference, provide the contact person's name, title, address, phone number, and email address and their relation to the project.

General Requirements

Proposal Submittal

Proposals must be submitted on or before: May 27, 2021 at 5:00pm ET. **Submit electronic responses to Katie Henderson: khenderson@uswateralliance.org.**

Phone Interviews

The US Water Alliance will conduct interviews with select proposers before making a final decision. Proposers may be requested to make a presentation of their Proposals to the Alliance to demonstrate project understanding, plan, and approach. After the Interview process, we will select a winning firm and inform them of their selection.

Change in Representatives

The Alliance reserves the right to require a change in contractor representative(s) if the assigned representative(s) are not, in the opinion of the US Water Alliance, meeting its needs adequately. Contractor personnel considered essential to the successful completion of the Project must be available for its duration unless the Alliance approves substitutions.

Right to Publish

Throughout the duration of this procurement process and contract term, all potential contractors must secure written approval from the US Water Alliance prior to the release of any information that pertains to the potential work or activities covered by this procurement or the subsequent contract.

Confidentiality

All information submitted to the Alliance under this RFP process becomes the exclusive property of the US Water Alliance. Parties who wish to use this research to inform other work, must obtain permission.