



Rural Economic Development Initiative (REDI) Request for Qualifications

Purpose: The Vermont Housing & Conservation Board seeks skilled grant writers and other technical assistance consultants to provide individualized support for rural economic development projects in Vermont.

Timeline: Responses are due by **Friday, Oct. 6, 2023** and will be reviewed on a rolling basis.

About the Rural Economic Development Initiative:

The [Rural Economic Development Initiative](#) (REDI) at the [Vermont Housing & Conservation Board](#) (VHCB) helps rural communities access funding for community and economic development. REDI is housed within [VHCB's Vermont Farm & Forest Viability Program](#).

REDI provides grant writing and technical assistance to rural communities and working lands businesses that lack capacity to access federal and other complex funding sources.

REDI funds may be used to hire a consultant to support grant writing, fundraising planning/strategy, or other technical assistance critical to a funding application (ex: business plan, feasibility study, architectural renderings, engineering report).

- Eligible applicants include: non-profits, municipalities, community-based organizations, and working lands businesses based in/serving small Vermont communities **under 5,000 in population**.
- REDI funding is focused on the following priority project areas:
 - **Working lands sector development** (incl. farm and forest business, dairy processing, value-added food, meat processing, phosphorus removal, and composting)
 - **Community-based economic development** (incl. downtown revitalization, community infrastructure, childcare centers, historic preservation projects, and business accelerators)
 - **Outdoor recreation** (incl. recreation infrastructure development, wayfinding, and trail building)
- REDI funds do not have a match requirement, however, cost-sharing may be required based on the particular project size/scope.

The REDI program selects projects for funding based on: readiness, alignment with the focus areas above, and alignment with the VHCB's mission to foster sustainable communities that support affordable housing, a viable working landscape, natural and recreational assets, and quality employment for every generation of Vermonters.



Request for Qualifications:

The purpose of this RFQ is to identify skilled consultants with a strong background in community-based economic development who will provide grant writing support and/or other technical assistance to REDI clients in Vermont.

Typical grant writing/fundraising projects are 1-12 months in duration with scopes of work ranging from ~\$1,000 to \$7,500 per project. REDI staff conduct outreach and match clients with contractors that have skills relevant to client needs. Contractors may also refer eligible clients to REDI.

For Fiscal Year 2024, we expect to make ~\$150,000 in contracts and select at least five qualified contractors to deliver these services. There is no limit on the size of a contract we will consider and contractors will be selected based on their skills and experience, the needs of clients, geographic location of projects, and other factors as appropriate.

Contracts are made in two formats:

- **Single-Project Contracts:** Contractor submits a scope of work for a single project that is reviewed/approved by REDI staff. Funding available will not exceed the cost specified in the scope of work.
- **Multi-Project Contracts:** Contractors with relevant skills and experience may seek a multi-project contract. Additional funding may be requested beyond the submitted scope/s of work for yet to be determined projects. All scope/s of work are reviewed/approved by REDI staff.

We are particularly seeking the following skills, experience, and approach:

- An understanding of working lands, community development, **and/or** outdoor recreation fields
- Ability to navigate complex funding sources, online application systems, and keep up to date on relevant opportunities in field of expertise
- Experience and desire to work with volunteer groups, BIPOC Vermonters, and low-income communities
- Ability to manage projects/client communications independently
- Strong communication and collaboration skills
- Evidence of high success rate with federal and state grants **and/or** private/donor fundraising
- Grant management/reporting and project management expertise
- A focus on education and skill building, in addition to completing high-quality deliverables

RFQ Contact: Please reach out to Mariah Noth, mariah@vhcb.org or 802-828-1098, with any questions.

RFQ Process:

1. **Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis. [Use this link to apply.](#)**

You will be asked to provide:

- Contact information and qualifications



- Details about your experience providing services to municipalities, community groups, working lands businesses, and/or outdoor recreation groups
 - Description of services proposed under a contract with VHCB
Respondents may provide one of the following:
 - Proposal including types of services, anticipated number of clients, anticipated average cost per client, and total budget, **OR**
 - Respondents may describe what services they are able to provide to REDI clients and capacity over the next 6-12 months (# clients, hours, etc.)
 - Typical process when working with clients
 - Hourly rate or typical project fee for most common project types
 - *Experience and success rate with federal and state grant applications (**if applicable*)
 - Resume or CV
 - References
 - Work product examples are strongly encouraged
- 2. Responses will be reviewed by VHCB REDI staff. Staff will reach out to those whose skills best fit the program's needs to schedule follow up conversations and interviews.**
- 3. While this process will not guarantee a contract, respondents with relevant skills will be added to a qualified list and may be contacted for future projects through REDI or other statewide partner organizations.**