



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 to community-based economic development projects in rural areas of Vermont.

Timeline: Responses are due by August 1, 2022 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 small businesses to access federal and other complex funding sources. REDI funds may be used to hire a grant writer, and in some cases, to develop a fundraising strategy for a project, or complete a necessary step to make a grant application more competitive (business plan, engineering, etc.).

- Eligible applicants include non-profits, towns, and 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 (including farm and forest businesses, dairy processors, value-added food enterprises, meat processing, phosphorus removal technology, and composting facilities)
 - Outdoor recreation (including infrastructure development, wayfinding, and trail building)
 - Community-based economic development (such as downtown revitalization, childcare centers, historic preservation projects, and business accelerators)

The REDI program selects projects 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.

Typical grant writing/fundraising projects contracted for through the REDI program are one to twelve months in duration with scopes of work ranging from ~\$1,000 to \$7,000 per project. For Fiscal Year 2023, we expect to make \$100,000-\$150,000 in contracts, and expect to 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.

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

- An understanding of working lands, outdoor recreation, or community development fields
- Strong communication and collaboration skills
- A focus on education and skill building, in addition to completing high-quality deliverables
- Evidence of high success rate with federal and state grants and familiarity with private/donor fundraising (if applicable)
- Ability to navigate complex funding sources, application systems, and keep up to date on relevant opportunities in field of expertise

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
 - History and experience providing services to community groups, towns, 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, number of clients, anticipated average cost per client, and total budget, OR
 - For respondents who do not yet have a specific proposal for services, please describe what services you 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 staff and we will reach out to those whose skills best fit the program's needs to schedule follow up conversations or interviews.
3. While this process will not guarantee a contract or project, applicants who may be a good fit for this work will be added to a qualified list and may be contacted for future projects through REDI or other statewide partners.