

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

Creating a Strategic Technical Assistance Delivery Program

Proposals must be received by: December 3, 2010 at 4:00 PM CT

STATEMENT OF PROJECT PURPOSE

The America's Byways Resource Center has determined that the service of a consultant is required to develop and implement a Strategic Technical Assistance delivery program. This project will consist of three elements: Data Collection; development of Byway Organizational/Leadership Benchmarks; and development of a Strategic Technical Assistance Plan.

A contract will be awarded to a consultant / company that meet all requirements of this Request. The successful consultant must show an understanding of the Scope of Services and must provide a detailed plan showing how they will implement the work required. This project will begin upon selection of successful applicant in January 2011, and will be completed October 2011.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The America's Byways Resource Center plans to improve the delivery of technical assistance.

Technical assistance has been a vital part of the services offered by the America's Byways Resource Center. Technical assistance refers to the specific and customized service provided to the Resource Center's primary customers:

- o America's Byways organizations (volunteers, leaders, staff, directors, partners and board members)
- o State Byway Program Coordinators
- o Tribal Byway Program Coordinators

Additionally, technical assistance is provided to the Resource Center's secondary customers including emerging byways, tourism contacts, and Federal agencies through the State and Tribal coordinators.

Technical assistance requests include a range of service needs:

- o Daily inquiries and questions
- o Requests to present and speak at specific byway functions
- o Requests to deliver customized training/educational workshops on a range of byway related topics
- o Requests to facilitate organizational and strategic planning sessions for individual byways

Given the growth of the America's Byways collection and the increasingly complex issues for technical assistance requests, a more integrated and strategic approach to the delivery of technical assistance is recommended. A Strategic Technical Assistance Plan will establish criteria to determine priorities and clear methods to request assistance, enhance internal operating procedures and evaluate services. This effort will also help to maximize outside resources in the delivery of technical assistance.

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) administers the National Scenic Byways Program (NSBP). The NSBP was created in 1991 by the passage of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA). The Program was reauthorized in 1998 and again in 2005. The America's Byways® collection

currently includes 150 designated America's Byways. The U.S. Secretary of Transportation designated the first national roads in 1996.

The America's Byways Resource Center (Resource Center) was created in 1998 under the Transportation Equity Act of the 21st Century (TEA-21). The Resource Center opened in January of 1999 as an initiative of the FHWA and the Arrowhead Regional Development Commission (ARDC). The Resource Center operates under a Cooperative Agreement signed by FHWA and ARDC. Its primary purpose is to assist in building successful nationally designated byways through positive, proactive, hands-on assistance in planning, preserving, promoting and managing scenic byways. Technical assistance is a major delivery mechanism in providing these services. The Resource Center delivers education and training to grassroots byway organizations. Additionally, the Resource Center supports the National Scenic Byways Program through conferences, networking, publications and partnership development.

SCOPE OF SERVICES

This project will consist of three elements:

1. Data collection
2. Development and measurement of current and recommended knowledge, skills and abilities (KSA) benchmarks
3. A Strategic Technical Assistance Plan

1. Data Collection

The Strategic Technical Assistance Plan will be based on detailed information about the organizational structure(s) and individual leadership of each of the organizations that support America's Byways, such as:

1. Non-Profit / Corporate Status
2. Relationships (formal or informal) with governmental entities
3. Numbers and status of volunteers
4. Current formal partnerships
5. Others as identified

Information to be collected on State and Tribal Programs include:

1. Agency location of coordinator position
2. Percentage of time spent on byway administration as a job responsibility
3. State or Tribal policies for managing the program
4. Others as identified

Survey(s) will be used to gather the organizational information necessary to gather and analyze this information relating to America's Byways.

Specific deliverables include:

- o Review of historical information/data available on National Scenic Byways Program and the America's Byways collection
- o Determination of survey objectives, survey type and survey methodology
- o Determination of survey questions and format
- o Survey implementation
- o Summary aggregate report of survey results

- o Summary reports of appropriate information relating to individual byway organizations

2. Byway Organizational / Leadership Baseline and Benchmark goals

The Resource Center provides a training and educational program to its customer base. As part of its training and educational program the Resource Center utilizes a 'KSA' (Knowledge, Skills, Abilities) approach in development of the training program. The current KSA level in several subject areas (Visitor Experience, Finances, Corridor Management, and Organizational Development) for the following groups of customers will be measured: America's Byways organizations, byway leaders, State Coordinators, and Indian Tribe Coordinators. Concurrently, KSA benchmarks will be created.

Surveys, focus groups or other mechanisms may be used to determine the *baseline* and recommended *benchmark* levels of byway organizations and leaders. The *baseline* levels and *benchmark* goals will ultimately be used to enhance the delivery of Technical Assistance. The consultant, with the assistance of Resource Center staff, will develop the baseline levels and benchmark goals.

Specific Deliverables include:

- o Develop a 'Baseline Assessment Tool'
- o Estimate current baseline KSA levels of Byway organizations and leaders
- o Summary Report on current baseline levels of byway organizations
- o Develop benchmark levels for byways, States and Tribes to use in setting of organizational and educational goals

3. Delivery of a Strategic Technical Assistance Plan

Given the growth of the America's Byways collection and the increasingly complex issues for technical assistance requests, a more integrated and strategic approach to the delivery of technical assistance is recommended.

The culmination of this project will include the delivery of a Strategic Technical Assistance Plan for America's Byways Resource Center. A Strategic Technical Assistance Plan will provide clear methods to request assistance, criteria to determine priorities, enhanced internal operating procedures, and evaluation of services. This effort will also help to maximize outside resources in the delivery of technical assistance.

The Technical Assistance Plan will synthesize the organizational data collection and the benchmark elements into an internal summary report which will include:

- o Research other technical assistance delivery models
- o Review of current technical assistance protocols
- o Develop recommendations for enhanced operating procedures for those who deliver technical assistance, which may include:
 - Decision-making and prioritization of Technical Assistance requests
 - Updated job descriptions
 - Recommended mechanisms to measure the effectiveness of Technical Assistance

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

The successful applicant must:

- Demonstrate a proven understanding of 508-compliance regulations, as set forth by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)

- Have proven experience in working with and understanding of byway organizational structures
- Be able to confer with the Resource Center offices in Duluth, Minnesota, as determined by the Resource Center
- Allow all deliverables prepared for the Resource Center to become the sole property of the Resource Center and the Arrowhead Regional Development Commission
- Comply with Subpart C of 49 CFR Part 29, Government Debarment and Suspension (Non-procurement). Further, the successful applicant shall flow down this requirement to applicable sub-awards by including a similar term or condition in lower-tier covered transactions. See 49 CFR Part 29 for details of this requirement (<http://www.dot.gov/ost/m60/grant/regs.htm>)
- Comply with Subpart B of 49 CFR Part 32, Government-wide Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace (Financial Assistance). See 49 CFR Part 32 for details of the requirement (<http://www.dot.gov/ost/m60/grant/regs.htm>)
- Comply with 49 CFR Part 18, Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments (<http://www.dot.gov/ost/m60/grant/regs.htm>)

PROPOSAL FORMAT

Interested respondents to this Request should follow the proposal format below.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES: The successful applicant shall discuss their process, how they will work and communicate with the Resource Center to provide professional advice and recommendations with respect to the tasks identified in the Scope of Work outlined above, and how they will ensure completion of all tasks on time and within budget. Applicants should describe their ability to meet the requirements of this Request.

EXPERIENCE AND PERSONNEL: The successful applicant shall include in the proposal evidence of its ability to provide sufficient experienced personnel that have successfully completed work similar to what is being asked in this Request. An understanding of the America's Byways Resource Center's work and that of the National Scenic Byway Program should also be addressed.

AGENCY/COMPANY INFORMATION: The successful applicant shall include the following, at minimum.

1. Agency/Company name, address, and telephone number, and the same information for any sub-contractor or consultants.
2. Name, title and contact information of Project Manager, as well as a listing of all team members to be assigned to the tasks outlined above, with a brief resume of each.
3. A detailed description of previous relevant experience in developing survey(s) and associated data collection efforts.
4. A detailed description of previous relevant experience and understanding of KSA development and benchmarking.
5. A detailed description of relevant experience and understanding of the delivery of technical assistance.
6. A client list, including references and appropriate contact information.

BUDGET: The successful applicant shall include the hourly rates and fringe rates for all key personnel who will perform the tasks outlined above, as well as the agency's indirect rate. The total budget for this project has been set at forty five thousand dollars (\$45,000).

SUBMISSION

Electronic submittal of the complete proposal, including any supporting documents, must be received by: Friday December 3, 2010, at 4:00 PM CST.

Proposals shall be submitted electronically, and the total submittal shall not exceed 30 pages.

Send proposals to:

Michelle Johnson

America's Byways Resource Center

394 Lake Avenue South, Suite 600

Duluth, MN 55802

All questions and proposals must be directed by e-mail to: mjohnson@byways.org

EVALUATION AND SELECTION

All proposals will be reviewed by America's Byways Resource Center staff and the Arrowhead Regional Development Commission. Finalists will be selected based on the completeness and understanding of the proposal, experience with the Resource Center's customers and understanding of the tasks outlined in the request. An interview may be required for final selection and will be at the sole expense of the applicant. Upon selection, a written contract will be prepared containing the finalized scope of services, payment schedule and product delivery schedule.

All proposals will be rated on the ability to demonstrate the following:

1. Understanding of National Scenic Byways Program, the America's Byways Resource Center and the America's Byways Resource Center's customer base, specifically regarding the challenges and opportunities these organizations face in creating sustainability
(30 points)
2. Relevant work experience and understanding toward the delivery of the Data Collection element
(20 Points)
3. Relevant work experience and understanding toward the delivery of the Byway Organizational and Leadership Benchmarks element
(20 Points)
4. Relevant work experience and understanding toward the delivery of a Strategic Technical Assistance Plan
(20 Points)
5. Completeness of proposal
(10 points)