



REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS FOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROVIDERS

About Us:

The Southwestern Pennsylvania Municipal Project Hub (SWPA Hub) was established in February 2024 to provide critical adaptive capacity and wraparound support to local municipalities, public entities, and nonprofits to access and leverage historic federal funding and create new jobs across sectors and industries. By sharing resources and expertise, we connect the dots and the people that bring to life the exciting and impactful projects that will benefit our communities for generations.

Purpose and Background:

Southwestern Pennsylvania has a uniquely high concentration of federally identified focus areas and sustainability/equity challenges that stand to benefit from the historic clean energy and infrastructure federal funding available through the Inflation Reduction Act and Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (Bipartisan Infrastructure Law) bills.

The SWPA Hub serves the 10-county Southwestern Pennsylvania region (Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Butler, Fayette, Greene, Indiana, Lawrence, Washington, and Westmoreland) to develop collaborative and competitive applications to ensure our region is fully accessing the once-in-a-generation federal investment in community-based local and regional infrastructure. These investments can transform opportunities to rebuild main streets, create good-paying jobs in clean industries, and reduce energy bills.

Our team acknowledges that the Justice 40, Energy, and Environmental Justice communities with the greatest need often lack the capacity, resources and support necessary to access and leverage this historic funding. The Hub is seeking to expand our team of diverse technical assistance experts and multi-disciplinary team members to better serve the local leaders and communities seeking to develop and implement transformative, large-scale, cross-sector projects.

SWPA Hub Project Priorities:

Our team knows your work is important and we seek to support individuals and teams that understand the many challenges our region's communities face. We expect our team of technical assistance providers to understand how federal investments of past generations – in some cases by design – have often missed the mark on supporting communities in greatest need. That's why we consider every project team seriously as we evaluate how to best help guide our decisions about how we can best support projects and communities. Please see how

the SWPA Hub prioritizes the projects we support to better inform how you can showcase your experience.

Improved Environmental Health & Public Safety:

- Projects that reduce pollution and protect, rehabilitate, or enhance the natural environment.
- Projects that help transition communities toward renewable energy, increase energy efficiency and eliminate toxins and hazards in the built environment.
- Projects that aim to support under-resourced and overburdened communities. This includes projects located in or serving Justice 40 communities, Energy communities, and PA DEP EJ Communities.

Sustainable Economic Development Centered on Local Workers and Families:

- Projects that (re)invest in meaningful, quality jobs that would be a good fit for local community members.
- Projects with long-lasting impacts that will equitably benefit a wide range of community members and expand economic opportunities.

Community Self-Determination and Public Accountability:

- Project design, implementation, and management are led by or done in partnership with local governments and actively engaged community-based organizations.
- Project development includes a real and accessible process for community input.

Long-term Sustainability and Scalability:

- Projects that increase the collective understanding of emerging policy solutions to challenges faced across communities.
- Projects that can serve as a model and learning opportunity for other communities to replicate or draw inspiration from.
- Projects that will improve the quality of life and wellbeing of people and communities who have been historically left behind by large-scale investments across sectors.

SWPA Hub Engagement Principles:

Our team works across sectors, industries, and geographies to help support high-impact community-based projects. The following principles and values guide us as we seek to engage with partners in this work.

Justice and Leveling the Playing Field:

Partners are committed to addressing SWPA's systemic environmental, economic, and social issues. Our team knows that an individual project alone will not undo all the deeply ingrained inequities people face, but we prioritize partnerships that collectively recognize and value regenerative and reparative projects.

Trust and Transformative Relationships:

Partners are committed to establishing and maintaining healthy, non-extractive community relationships. Partners should seek these relationships not just to develop formal buy-in from community stakeholders (i.e., check a box) but rather to include communities as legitimate

co-collaborators in developing projects. This requires time, transparency, honesty, and an ongoing commitment to open and frequent dialogue.

Adaptivity and Responsiveness:

Partners are willing to listen and adjust their work to better align with shared community visions. The SWPA Hub wants to work *with* you in identifying aspects of your project that can be enhanced by connecting you to other people and opportunities.

Description of Services

Since our launch, our team has met with municipal managers and elected officials, school board members and administrators, and non-profit partners to learn about the priorities, concerns, and how best the SWPA Hub can support the work needed in their communities. Our team is seeking technical assistance providers who have exceptional subject matter expertise; ability to communicate across urban, suburban, and rural issues; working knowledge of new approaches and technologies within their area of expertise; examples of project success when applying their subject matter expertise to the their selected sector; documented processes for evaluation of their own work; sound judgment; and a track record of conscientious and timely communication with clients.

The following have been identified as the critical technical assistance needs that the SWPA Hub is seeking through this RFQ and the detailed expertise we seek within each focus area:

Grant writing:

The SWPA Hub seeks grant writers with a proven track record for the following:

- Federal grants with a primary focus on DOE, DOT, EPA, and USDA applications
- State grants primarily within DCED and DCNR

Specific services may include:

- Providing grant speculation and preparing summary documents for potential applicants
- Preparing full applications and support documents on behalf of projects and collaborations seeking federal funding

Architecture, Landscape Architecture and Planning expertise:

The SWPA Hub seeks architects, landscape architects and other multi-disciplinary technical experts with experience related to the following:

- Stormwater design with a key focus on green infrastructure
- Public realm projects with an emphasis on land use and environmental planning
- Urban planning and complete streets design
- Environmental conservation and restoration
- Resilience and sustainable design and planning
- Preliminary or master plan project level site assessments
- Site analysis and feasibility studies

Specific services may include:

- Preliminary planning and design of public parks, playgrounds, sports fields, and other recreational areas.
- Wetland restoration, habitat enhancement, and ecological rehabilitation plans

- Conducting comprehensive site analysis to understand the existing conditions, including topography, vegetation, soil, infrastructure, and cultural context.
- Developing master plans for development and comprehensive land use strategies
- Designing streetscapes that prioritize pedestrian safety, accessibility, and comfort while accommodating various modes of transportation, such as walking, cycling, and public transit
- Provide sustainable design strategies, material selection, and building certification expertise based on project goals
- Environmental assessment and development impact analysis and development of ecosystems, natural resources, and biodiversity mitigation strategies
- Conduct risk assessments, vulnerability analyses, and mitigation planning to improve building performance and enhance resilience against potential disasters

Civil and Ecological Engineering services:

The SWPA Hub seeks civil and ecological engineers with the following expertise:

- Both stormwater and wastewater system design
- Clean energy planning and feasibility analysis
- Climate resilience and risk management planning
- Geotechnical and survey

Specific services may include:

- Preliminary site assessment and analysis for buildings, water resources, and wastewater supply systems
- Grid Planning and energy load calculations with an emphasis on renewable energy solutions such as solar, geothermal, and microgrids.
- Modeling support
- Provide insight on the materials, technologies, and construction methods to improve the performance, sustainability, and resilience of infrastructure systems.
- Wetland restoration, habitat enhancement, and ecological rehabilitation plans
- Conducting comprehensive site analysis to understand the existing conditions, including topography, vegetation, soil, infrastructure, and cultural context

Building Sciences:

The SWPA Hub seeks building science specialists with the following expertise:

- Building envelope analysis
- Energy modeling and analysis
- Indoor environmental quality assessment
- Sustainability consultants
- Building commissioning support
- Disaster resilience and risk assessment

Specific services may include:

- Conducting energy audits, life cycle assessments, and providing implementation recommendations
- Perform detailed inspections, diagnostic testing, and thermal imaging to detect air leakage, water intrusion, and thermal bridging issues
- Energy modeling
- Provide sustainable design strategies, material selection, and building certification expertise based on project goals

- Conduct risk assessments, vulnerability analyses, and mitigation planning to improve building performance and enhance resilience against potential disasters

Project Management and Implementation Support:

The SWPA Hub seeks project management support with the following expertise:

- Building renovation projects
- Infrastructure implementation
- Municipal-level coordination
- Grant management and compliance support
- Data tracking and reporting

Specific services may include:

- Collaboration with engineers, contractors, and developers during the implementation phase to ensure that design intent is realized effectively
- Serve as the primary point of contact for multi-municipal collaboration projects that may be focused on development and infrastructure
- Ensure projects are in compliance with zoning regulations, building codes, environmental laws, and other regulatory requirements governing the project
- Grant administration and compliance support with a specific focus on state and federal grants
- Data analysis, impact tracking, and evaluation

Community Facilitation, Placemaking, and Engagement Services:

The SWPA Hub seeks facilitation and engagement support with the following expertise:

- Community workshops
- Charrettes
- Meeting facilitation
- Outreach and engagement strategy

Specific services may include:

- Coordination and facilitation of community meetings or workshops that gather input, feedback and community aspirations
- Survey development, deployment and analysis
- Work with communities to develop strategies to increase social interaction and civic engagement that are reflective of their culture and history

Public Tax and Financial Services:

The SWPA Hub seeks public tax and financial support services primarily for municipalities and school districts with the following expertise:

- Financial tax incentive and direct pay compliance filings
- Capital financing strategies specifically for bonds or alternative financing
- Public private partnership funding strategies through cooperative agreements or state tax credit programs
- Pension investment strategies
- Federal grant audit compliance

Specific services may include:

- Preparing direct pay tax credit, deductions, or incentive paperwork in compliance with federal and state regulations

- Provide informational sessions on alternative financing structures outlining risks, ROI, and compliance regulations
- Prepare cooperative agreements for shared services for municipalities undergoing multi-municipal planning and implementation strategies
- Work with organizations and municipalities to ensure compliance in federal audits for grant awards.

Please note: If you or your company have technical expertise, knowledge, and a general passion for this work, but your specific skills are not listed above, please still respond to this RFQ with how your experience and services can be an asset to this region!

Submission Requirements:

Each response to this RFQ shall include the information described in this section and should not exceed a 20-page maximum proposal limit.

EXPERTISE:

Describe the specialized knowledge, skill sets, competencies, and professional services that you or your organization brings to support southwestern PA. Please list the specific technical skills, technologies, frameworks, or methodologies that your organization has expertise in. Please highlight your specific proficiencies in working in urban, suburban, and rural communities with an emphasis in working with Justice 40 communities in building consensus and developing scaled, multi-disciplinary, and impactful projects.

PROJECT TEAM:

Provide a list of all key employees and specialists that you feel bring unique qualifications and experience to the team. Please list any certifications, trainings, and frameworks regularly utilized to inform your work.

REFERENCES:

Please submit three (3) references from previous clients or projects that can attest to you/your team's work, technical expertise, and project delivery capabilities. All references should be for projects that have occurred within the last seven (7) years. Each reference should include the point of contact, email, and phone number.

BUDGET:

Please provide a staffing structure based upon the typical role and responsibilities for each team member you anticipate working on SWPA Hub projects with their associated hourly rate.

To Apply:

This is a rolling RFQ process to best accommodate the diverse and evolving needs of the communities we support; the RFQ will remain open to ensure that everyone interested is able

to respond as we continue to grow our network of projects and partners. Please complete [this form](#) indicating the services and areas of expertise you would like to provide to the municipalities, school districts, and community partners of Southwestern Pennsylvania. Submissions in PDF format are preferred and should be uploaded to the form. Please ensure that contact name(s) along with email addresses and phone numbers are provided with all submissions.

SWPA Hub staff will follow up with interested parties within 15 business days with any additional questions or to participate in a short interview as needed. As new project opportunities arise, SWPA Hub staff will reach out directly to technical assistance providers to support grant applications and projects, or to request further information on specific areas of expertise or qualifications that may be needed, or processes based on specific projects we are supporting.