



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP) **WTR Hub Communications and Marketing Support Services**

Project: WTR Hub Communications and Marketing Support Services

Date Posted: January 13, 2025

Due Date: Proposals must be received by 12:00PM Eastern US time on February 5, 2025

The Water Tower Institute Contact: Courtney Lee, Courtney@theh2otower.org

Project Background

The Water Tower Institute (TWTI) is requesting proposals from firms to perform communications and marketing services to support TWTI's implementation of the US Environmental Protection Agency's awarded Cooperative Agreement titled "Water Workforce Training and Recruitment Hub (WTR Hub)." This project is focused on developing innovative recruitment tools tailored for nontraditional communities identified and represented by social nonprofit partners working with key demographics. Multiple nonprofit partners have developed white papers describing specific community segments that have high potential for recruitment into water careers. The information presented in these guidance documents will be used to develop tailored messaging and marketing materials to effectively engage each community.

TWTI is seeking a firm or team of firms with experience in public relations, social media marketing, video production, K-12 educational programming, and program measurement to support development of the marketing strategy and collateral for each demographic.

Project Budget and Duration

TWTI intends to enter into one agreement with the selected firm for eleven (11) months with an option to extend provided that each party has fully complied with its obligations under the agreement, the parties have maintained a performance standard acceptable to the other party during the prior term, and the agreement has not been terminated.

TWTI intends to award the contract to begin on February 21, 2025 with an estimated total budget of \$75,000 USD for the first 11-month term, which does not include media buys. The budget and scope for future work will be determined at a later date. The successful consultant or team of consultants should be prepared to begin work immediately. If deemed beneficial to the project outcome, TWTI reserves the right to award all or part of the available funds in one or multiple contracts for this project.

Proposal Preparation Instructions



Proposals should be a minimum of 11-point font, single spaced, with standard 1-inch margins, and should include information as outlined below. Items 3-8 are limited to ten (10) pages.

1. Cover page including the following:
 - Name of the lead firm and sub-consultants, if applicable
 - Project Manager (name, title, email address, and phone number)
2. Table of Contents
3. Qualifications and technical competence
4. Description of similar experience on projects related to the Scope of Work
5. Three references with current contact information (name, title, email address, and phone number)
6. Identification of specific personnel committed to work on the project and a description of their education and experience directly related to the Scope of Work.
7. Proposed approach to accomplishing the work described in Exhibit A.
8. Any other pertinent information including potential additional services beyond the scope of work.
9. Proposed project cost proposal in the format of Exhibit B. The proposing team shall determine the level of effort for each task of the Scope of Work, which must be clearly provided in the proposal. This level of effort is to be presented in a format which includes the cost for each task.
10. Resumes for up to 5 key personnel (limited to 2 pages per person).

Proposal Evaluation

TWTI will convene an evaluation committee composed of members of TWTI staff. The evaluation committee will review all proposals and make a consultant selection recommendation to the Treasurer of TWTI's Board.

Based on the responses to this request, ae. TWTI reserves the right to award this contract based on submittals received without interviews.

The contract will be awarded to the consultant determined to be the most qualified to perform the work based on the following evaluation criteria:

1. Qualifications and experience related to the scope of work of the firm (or team of firms) and individuals in the firm directly assigned to the project. (50%)
2. Proposed approach to address the Scope of Work. (40%)
3. Consultant's proposed cost structure. The cost structure shall follow the format outlined in Exhibit B. (10%)



Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE) shall have equal opportunity to participate in the performance of TWTI's contracts. Such DBEs are encouraged to compete, as prime consultant, consultant team members or sub-consultants and should be so identified in responses to this RFP.

Questions Regarding this RFP

Questions shall be received no later than **January 17, 2025** and should be submitted in writing to Courtney Lee (courtney@theh2otower.org). A virtual preproposal meeting is scheduled for **January 23 at 3pm EST** to provide an overview of the total project and this solicitation. To register for the preproposal meeting, please email Courtney Lee at courtney@theh2otower.org.

Pertinent information, including questions and responses from written questions will be provided to prospective bidders by **January 24, 2025**. No other direct contact related to this Request for Proposals between prospective consultants and TWTI staff or Board members is permitted.

Application Procedure and Deadline

Proposals shall be emailed to courtney@theh2otower.org with the subject line "WTR Hub Marketing Support Services Proposal." TWTI must receive one emailed digital pdf copy of the proposal **no later than 12:00 p.m. U.S. Eastern time on February 6, 2025**. Responses received after this date and time will not be eligible for consideration. Proposing organizations will receive confirmation of delivery upon receipt.



EXHIBIT A SCOPE OF WORK

Introduction

The primary objective of this EPA-funded project is to develop a Water Workforce Training and Recruitment Hub (WTR Hub) with a diverse national utility, academic, and nonprofit network focused on expanding internships and post-secondary bridge programs that will result in an increase in number of certified water operators in the drinking water, wastewater, water recycling, and stormwater fields. This program will build upon The Water Tower Institute's (TWTI) nationally recognized skilled trade water industry training facility, programming, and partnerships to benefit a wider audience across the U.S.

Emphasis will be placed on creating and distributing recruiting and training resources tailored for underserved communities, minority groups, and women to ensure an ethnically and gender diverse future for water utilities. The project will establish a nationwide collaborative of water utilities, public school districts, and nonprofit organizations, with guidance from the Minority Serving Institution Georgia Gwinnett College, **to develop and implement innovative and highly portable recruitment and training tools based on culturally competent approaches that fit community-specific needs.**

Anticipated outputs include **recruitment tools** and training for utilities enabling them to reach specific community groups who have not traditionally been engaged in water utility and stormwater management positions, with a specific focus on the Latinx community, first-time, nonviolent first time offenders, and high school students enrolled in Academy and Technical Career programs. Outputs also include hands-on and virtual training tools in English and Spanish for water-related internships and post-secondary bridge programs leading to required certifications, a **water workforce recruitment toolbox with sociology-based guidance for recruitment** tailored for specific minority communities with associated training strategies, as well as a Trainer Certification and Train-the-Trainer program for water, wastewater and stormwater management, including green infrastructure, that includes cultural sensitivity and climate resilience modules and a nationally developed and tested communication and recruitment toolbox, including a recruitment training program for our partner water utilities. Output metrics include 60 newly certified operators from underserved communities who understand the complexities of our ever-changing environment due to global climate change, a national network of 30 certified trainers with specific cultural understanding and hands-on teaching expertise.

Expected outcomes include **informing utilities throughout the US on culturally sensitive recruitment**, training, and job placement strategies for augmenting our water workforce and a framework for increasing diversity in professional water operations and management positions.

Key WTR Hub Messaging

As part of this program, nonprofits have been engaged to help develop guidance for potential recruitment in these segments: the Latinx community, first-time, nonviolent offenders,



unsupervised minors, and women. Each of these populations has unique cultural and socioeconomic drivers and sensitivities which have contributed to underrepresentation as potential recruits and ineffective engagement by traditional recruitment models. TWTI seeks to promote its training opportunities and develop deeper engagement with these community segments in four locations across the US, including Metro Atlanta, GA, Greenville, SC, Jackson, MS, and Richmond, CA.

The WTR Hub's messaging is:

- Water-related careers offer a fulfilling pathway with competitive pay, flexible schedules, and transferable skills that open doors across industries.
- Water careers can be lifelong professions, providing job security due to the essential nature of water services.
- As green jobs, water careers contribute to environmental sustainability and play a crucial role in maintaining essential water services.
- Water-related careers often come with comprehensive benefits, including retirement plans and health insurance, ensuring stability and support for employees throughout their careers and into retirement.

Target Audiences

The Communications and Marketing Support Services contract will target multiple audiences within these regions and population segments described above. TWTI will use its existing meta campaign strategies and on-the-ground engagement to disseminate developed materials. To assist with dissemination and recruitment, the materials may be distributed to businesses and organizations, elected officials, government agencies, school systems and teachers, students of all ages, single and multi-family residents, trade organizations, potential new community partners, and other professional organizations.

RFP Scope of Work

Task 1 – WTR Hub Communications and Marketing Support

The consultant will provide ongoing communications and marketing support to TWTI to build awareness of water careers in certain population segments. This support may include the following services:

- Participating in communications and marketing strategy sessions and WTR Hub team monthly meetings
- Performing project management services
- Drafting written materials including newspaper articles, blog posts, website language, video storylines and scripts, speaking points, and social media posts
- Developing visual materials and graphics for external communication including infographics, brochures, slide presentations, web banners and icons, infographics, social media marketing materials, and video



Task 2 – Utility Communications Guidance Document

The consultant will consolidate segment white papers, developed marketing materials, and communications strategies into a single guidance document for water utilities to use as a guide in developing recruitment strategies.

Please note: Social media management is not included as part of this Scope of Work. TWTI staff will continue to manage its social media accounts including [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [YouTube](#).



Schedule

The following schedule is anticipated for this project:

Project Progression	Target Dates
Contract Awarded	February 21, 2025
Task 1	
Marketing Support	March – April 2025
Work Completed	May 2025 (option to extend)
Task 2	
Utility Guidance Development	May – December 2025
Work Completed	January 2026 (option to extend)

TWTI reserves the right to execute multiple contracts for the scope of work and may modify the contract award date to fit TWTI's schedule.



EXHIBIT B
PROPOSED PROJECT BUDGET

Task 1 –Marketing Support (Budget \$50,000)

1 Direct Labor					
	Billing Category (including sub-contractors)	Estimated % of Project Hours (must equal 100%)	Rate/ Hour	Estimated Number of Project Hours	Total Cost
2 Overhead Percentage Rate					
	Percentage Rate				Total Cost
3 Other Direct Costs					
	Item Description (list items such as printing, etc.)				Total Cost
Task 1 Marketing Support Total Cost:					SUM TOTAL

Task 2 – Guidance Document (Budget \$25,000)

1 Direct Labor					
	Billing Category (including sub-contractors)	Estimated % of Project Hours (must equal 100%)	Rate/ Hour	Estimated Number of Project Hours	Total Cost
2 Overhead Percentage Rate					
	Percentage Rate				Total Cost
3 Other Direct Costs					
	Item Description (list items such as printing, etc.)				Total Cost
Task 2 Guidance Document Total Cost:					SUM TOTAL