

Environmental Priorities Coalition

Request for Proposals:

Facilitation of Coalition Evolution Process

Introduction

The Environmental Priorities Coalition seeks a consultant or consultant team to facilitate a two-year process to help Coalition members reestablish trust and create a multi-year plan on how the Coalition will evolve to center racial and intersectional equity, operate to accomplish shared goals, and ensure it has robust capacity and protocols for making decisions, resolving conflict, and addressing other needs. The successful candidate will demonstrate experience with facilitation, effective coalition processes, conflict resolution, racial justice, Tribal sovereignty, and core aspects of this Coalition's work like campaigning and legislative advocacy.

About the Coalition

Washington State's Environmental Priorities Coalition is made up of 28 statewide environmental organizations working to safeguard our environment and the health of our communities through policy and budget advocacy at the Washington State Legislature. Coalition members are listed at <https://waconservationaction.org/our-work/areas-of-work/environmental-priorities-coalition/>. Every year, the Coalition comes together to select priorities to advance during the legislative session.

Washington Conservation Action (WCA) and The Nature Conservancy (TNC) will supervise the consultant and manage the contract and payments on behalf of the Coalition and consult with Coalition members on substantive matters.

Context for this evolution process: Why now?

For over 20 years, Washington's Environmental Priorities Coalition has been effective at strengthening the power of the environmental community by advocating for shared priorities during the state legislative session.

An evolution report with recommendations was created and submitted to the Coalition in 2017. While some areas of progress were made, the recommendations included developing a multi-year plan for the Coalition, which was never completed.

The Coalition sees value in continuing its legislative purpose and evolving to center racial equity, as the space has been dominated by current and historically white-led organizations. Member organizations are in various stages of understanding environmental racism and injustice, and it is our shared responsibility to rethink systemic change and the role we play in our processes and substantive approaches to uphold tribal sovereignty and center environmental and racial justice.

For roughly 8 years, the Coalition has not had dedicated capacity to support its operations. The work of the Coalition has been integrated into the work of members who step up to help lead it

(e.g., one person organizing general meetings, others organizing calls for member organizations' executive directors during session, another person organizing meetings in Olympia, etc.). It's an appropriate time to reevaluate this model and determine if other approaches could help the Coalition operate more efficiently and effectively.

The collaborative work of advocating in Olympia has expanded to a wider range of partners, and now is the time to establish an operational standard that helps the Coalition achieve its mission. And with many political changes pending at the state level (Governor, Commissioner of Public Lands, in the legislature), it makes sense to reflect and shape our next chapter and a new political landscape.

Requested Scope of Work

Deliverable: A multi-year evolution plan for the EPC, approved through consensus of EPC members, that has clear goals, is implementable with action items and associated timeframes, and identifies what is feasible in the near term versus what will require more time/capacity/resources.

The plan should include:

- An agreed goal/purpose of the Coalition.
- How to structure EPC to ensure all members are represented and engaged in the coalition, including management of meetings, sharing of resources, and improving decision-making processes along the dimensions of equity, inclusion, and transparency.
- Agreed steps to improve the process for new membership, ensuring Coalition membership is inclusive of the full diversity of our communities and responsive to their needs and perspectives.
- How Coalition members will organize ourselves during the legislative session, including roles, expectations, and partnerships.
- Agreed steps for strengthening collaboration across EPC member organizations on environmental issues outside the legislative session.
- Guidelines for decision-making processes, the role of Executive Directors, conflict resolution.
- Guidelines for how EPC members intentionally include justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion as focal points when selecting priorities and doing Coalition work.
- Guidelines for how EPC members select and work on priorities collectively and work collegially on non-priority issues.
- Whether the Coalition needs independent staff to help manage it, and if so, potential funding options and structures that might make that possible.

To develop this plan, we expect consultant tasks to include the following:

- Conduct confidential one-on-one interviews (estimated to last up to one hour each) with the designated representatives of each of the 28 member organizations of the EPC to understand coalition history, member concerns, and issues or topics that members feel are important to address through this process. Also revisit pending recommendations that have not yet happened (from 2017 and 2022 efforts) but that still have interest from EPC members.

- Conduct interviews and/or survey(s) with partners, legislators, and allies, including BIPOC-led organizations, to help inform our shared work, future direction, and understanding of the perceived impacts EPC has had and lessons learned over the years (which could build off an existing [2015 report](#)).
- Develop a list of topics, including those identified in this RFP as well as ones that emerge from the interviews and survey(s).
- Facilitate conversations on those identified topics with the full Coalition or with subsets of organizations, as appropriate, and facilitate additional conversations with subsets Coalition members as needed to improve working relationships and build trust.
- Work with the Coalition to develop recommendations on the identified topics, including Coalition structure, decision-making processes, and other changes to improve the effectiveness of the Coalition in accomplishing our goals. Meaningfully engage all Coalition members and lead us through a process to come to consensus on which of those recommendations will become goals and action items in the multi-year plan.
- Draft the plan; incorporate consolidated feedback from Coalition members to finalize the plan. The focus of the plan should be on the key decisions made in this process and the action items and associated timeframes. It should also include a concise summary of anonymized findings from the external interviews or surveys, which could be in an appendix.
- *Dependent on experience of selected consultant:*
 - Provide guidance on how the Coalition can evolve in light of where different organizations are on the journey toward antiracism.
 - Develop a Coalition Racial Equity Plan for the EPC.

We welcome additional ideas in the consultant’s proposal about how any aspects of this work could be most effectively completed and best utilize the consultant’s expertise.

Project timeline

Early fall 2023 through end of 2025

When the work begins in fall 2023, the initial focus will be on identifying any urgent needs for improved practices prior to the 2024 legislative session and agreeing on a timeline for finalization of all contemplated work. Most urgent needs should, ideally, be identified after the one-on-one interviews, so we don’t miss key topics that members raise in that confidential setting.

Budget

We have a target budget of **\$50,000-\$75,000** as an initial estimate for this work. The final contract amount will be determined once funding has been fully confirmed and the final Scope of Work has been agreed upon.

The consultant can be compensated for professional services on an hourly rate or by-task basis. Any travel costs will be reimbursed at the current government rates in effect at the time of travel. Any contract awarded as a result of this procurement is contingent upon the availability of funding.

Proposal requirements

Please include the following in your proposal (maximum 8 pages):

- An overview of your company, including your mission, vision, staff composition, and any other information you would like to share.
- Project understanding and approach. Please describe how you understand what we are trying to accomplish through this process, and an overview of how you will approach the project to ensure success.
- A summary of your qualifications. Provide examples of similar projects you have done that could help EPC understand your capabilities, experience, level of expertise, and approach, related to:
 - Facilitation
 - Effective coalition structures and processes
 - Conflict resolution
 - Competency/knowledge of legislative advocacy approaches and/or politics
 - Racial justice
 - Tribal sovereignty
 - Campaigning
- Resumes for lead consultant and any other key project team members.
- Pricing quote/fee structure. Provide a total cost quote with a description of services you will provide for that budget, including all associated expenses and hourly rates and any discounts offered to nonprofits.
- A list of 3 references from similar projects.

Please submit your proposal as a single PDF via the Google form.

Final candidates will be invited to an interview before a decision is made.

Selection determination

WCA and TNC will work with other Coalition members to evaluate the proposals based on the following criteria:

- Responsiveness to the requirements outlined in this RFP.
- Demonstrated relevant expertise and experience.
- Proposed approach.
- Quoted cost and what can be done for that amount.

Proposal timeline

Proposal review date: September 13, 2023. Applications submitted after that date may be considered.

Shortlisted candidates will be interviewed before a consultant or consultant team is selected.

Questions regarding this RFP should be directed to:

David Mendoza, TNC (david.mendoza@TNC.org)

People of color, people with disabilities, formerly incarcerated people, and people of all sexual orientations and gender identities are especially encouraged to submit proposals.

We know research shows that society has conditioned communities of color, trans and gender non-conforming people, immigrants, people with disabilities, and other marginalized candidates to more frequently not apply to a job because they don't feel that they meet all of the qualifications listed even if they are qualified. If you meet some of the requirements and you are interested in this project, we encourage you to apply and look forward to learning more about you.