



Request for Proposals HRAMBI Business Plan Development for Emerald Cities Collaborative (ECC)

Introduction

Emerald Cities Collaborative (ECC) is a national nonprofit network of organizations working together to advance a sustainable environment while creating sustainable, just, and inclusive economies with "high-road" opportunities that pay family-sustaining wages and provide safe working conditions. ECC connects individuals and businesses to projects that contribute to the resilience of our metropolitan regions and ensures an equity stake for climate justice communities of color in the clean energy economy. This includes developing the economic infrastructure for family-supporting wages and career paths for residents living in communities, as well as contracting opportunities for women, BIPOCs, and other disadvantaged businesses.

ECC has over 14 years of experience collaborating with community organizations, government agencies, the private sector, and directly with small, minority, and women-owned firms to ensure they benefit from major investments in clean energy. ECC provides technical assistance to improve procurement systems, organizes multi-stakeholder coalitions, and delivers business development services to contractors. These efforts are to advance a high-road agenda that is inclusive, accountable, and equitable.

Reimagining the Clean Economy and Minority Contracting

The transition to clean energy is happening now. The economy is transitioning away from fossil fuels and toward renewable energy. Cities are using building upgrades to reach climate goals. This has local economic benefits. Most upgrades increase the demand for contractors who can deliver construction projects that meet building performance standards, enhanced building codes, and building decarbonization and electrification goals. This urgent push for greener, smarter, and more resource-efficient buildings carries risks and opportunities for climate justice communities. In the absence of intentional development of small, minority, and women-owned firms that can pursue business opportunities in clean energy, there is the risk of duplicating and accelerating current disparities. If an intentional, equity-centered approach to business development is applied, this moment holds the opportunity to create more just, sustainable, and inclusive opportunities for communities that have been historically left out of the existing energy economy.

Emerald Cities Collaborative (ECC) collaborates with government, utilities, third-party trade groups, non-profits, labor, and prime contractors at the local level to:

- Develop a national capacity building hub to support MWBDEs in the clean energy sector.
- Increase awareness of business opportunities for MWBDEs in the new energy economy;
- Support MWBDEs contractors in gaining access to project pipelines;
- Connect MWBDEs contractors to upskilling and certification opportunities.

The ECC E-Contractor Academy has successfully offered this suite of services since 2013. Emerald Cities' E- Contractor Academy Model was created in 2013 in Los Angeles to connect contractors to energy efficiency projects and projects for the Metropolitan Transportation Authority. The Academy program has been implemented in five other cities, including San Francisco, Seattle, New Orleans, Cleveland, and Boston. ECC Offices in Southern California (Los Angeles and surrounding areas); the Bay Area in California (San Francisco and Oakland), the Pacific Northwest (Seattle and Tacoma), and the Northeast (Boston and other cities in New England) are currently implementing innovations to strengthen the position of minority contractors as leaders of the clean economy within their respective regions. ECC seeks to deepen its understanding of what it takes to build the capacity of MWBDEs contracting businesses and expand its suite of services through national and local partnerships.

Consultant Scope of Work

ECC is looking to partner with a consultant(s) or organizational partner(s) to complete the following scopes of work:

Collaboration

Collaborate with ECC's Contractor Development Working Group to develop a national strategy and business plan for a national MWDBE support program and platform that promotes high-road minority contracting in the clean energy retrofit spaces. The national business plan will guide ECC's national office on strategies for serving multiple geographic areas across the United States. In addition, the business plan will identify key partners, develop advisory and capacity-building services, and identify entry points into new market opportunities. Ideally, this business plan will build upon promising innovations being developed at the regional level.

Research and Development

- Evaluate the current landscape of existing contractor development programming and platforms that align with HRAMBI's core values, vision and goals.
- Developing guidance documents that will help local early-stage contractor development initiatives establish partnerships with labor unions, community-based organizations (CBOs), community action agencies, and neighborhood services organizations (NSOs), as well as small business development centers (SBDCs) and community development financing institutions (CDFIs). ECC is particularly interested in expanding its efforts in the following regions of the United States: Southeast, Southwest, Midwest, and Mid-Atlantic.
- Providing an inventory of potential national partners for group purchasing of clean energy equipment, materials, and medical insurance
- Completing an in-depth review of clean energy procurement matchmaking methods, websites, tools, and services nationally
- Developing national key performance indicators for contractor development program implementation
- Designing a funding strategy for contractor development program components. This will include a description of discrete products and development costs for potential funders and investors such as ESCOs, federal, regional, and local governments, and foundations.
- Develop a framework for determining the costs associated with implementing the contractor development model in new areas.

- Providing an organizational structure for implementing a national contractor development program
- Develop marketing plans and materials for different audiences, such as BIPOC contractors, ESCOs, federal, regional, and local governments, and foundations.

ECC is seeking consulting firms that can complete each task within this scope. ECC intends to publish these findings and use them to develop a strategy and funding plan to develop a national support center for BIPOC contractors as well as other public and private sector stakeholders.

To achieve these outcomes, ECC seek to partner with a consultant or organization with the following background:

- Demonstrated commitment to fostering high-road (socially and environmentally responsible) economic opportunities
- Established connections to BIPOC contractor networks, organized labor, business support organizations, and technical assistance organizations, and BIPOC communities across the country
- Experience working with clients as collaborators during the research and planning process.
- Capacity to develop and evaluate programs that support BIPOC businesses
- Expertise in collecting and analyzing qualitative and quantitative data
- Strong communicator who can share insights through clear, compelling materials and presentations
- Knowledge in the following key areas is preferred:
 - Understanding the unique challenges that MWBDEs businesses face in strengthen their capacity bidding and securing clean energy contracts
 - Federal, State and Local Procurement practices
 - Market opportunities in energy efficiency and clean energy

Proposal Submissions

ECC is looking for individuals and firms to complete one or more of the above scopes of work. We urge consultants to consider which scope(s) match their expertise.

If you are open to exploring the opportunity described above, ECC invites you to submit a short proposal of no more than 10 pages with a cost proposal. Successful respondents will answer the questions below. In addition, you should submit additional documents, which should include a sample of research such as scans or market analyses (for scopes 1 and 3), two completed business plans (for scope 2), along with 2-3 references from former clients, and staff resumes, to Tabaris Smith at tdsmith@emeraldcities.org by June 15, 2023.

Questions for Consultant Proposals Due: April 15, 2023

- What reactions do you have to our initial concept – both our goals and this approach to driving change?

- Which scope or score(s) are you interested in performing? What is your overall approach? Please outline proposed methodology for each scope of work you are seeking and the preferred cadence of meetings with ECC staff.
- What are tasks, sub-tasks and interim milestones/deliverables that you are proposing
- What is your firm's experience with the minority contractor community? Please list all the experiences that may apply to completing this work.
- Why are you the best partner for us in this work? How would you help us achieve our goals?
- Please describe full project team, including any subconsultants, and bio of key contacts
- Please provide a detailed budget that includes budget justification for each line item
- What open questions do you have for us? What else would you need to know to decide if we are a good fit for you and the way you work?