



## Request for Proposals for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Consultant Services

*Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado is seeking the engagement of consultant services to guide its commitment to undertake a comprehensive process to become a more diverse and inclusive organization. Proposals are due by COB on February 19, 2021.*

### BACKGROUND

Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado (VOC) is a 36-year old 501 (c) (3) stewardship organization, working to connect people to Colorado's outdoors in ways that inspire them to become caretakers of the state's natural resources. Please refer to [www.voc.org](http://www.voc.org) for a more complete overview of our work.

In 2019, VOC laid the groundwork for a revised strategic plan to guide work in response to greater impacts from climate change while also addressing effective expansion of early stage diversity, inclusion, and equity (DEI) efforts throughout the entire organization – among its board, staff, and volunteers in addition to more fully examining VOC's stewardship partnerships and where we engage our volunteers on stewardship projects. 2020, however, brought a new set of challenges that altered VOC's 2019 initial strategic planning efforts - a pandemic that has impacted VOC's operating environment; social upheaval that has increased the urgency of VOC to identify and formally activate the organization's commitment to antiracism and DEI initiatives; and 2021 executive level leadership changes that will impact the organization.

VOC's Board and staff acknowledge that this work necessitates an unequivocal commitment to enter and go through a comprehensive process to become a more diverse and inclusive organization, complete in the examination of all aspects of VOC's decades-long organizational culture, mission, vision, and values. We recognize that this examination will also involve a more comprehensive understanding of the importance of integrating our values within the broad scope of our operations, particularly as we identify the range of experiences and relationships that exist throughout VOC's leadership volunteer cadre, its extensive network of volunteers, and land management, community-based, and funding partners.

Lastly, in October 2020, VOC's longtime CEO announced her retirement to be effective April 2021. The VOC Board of Directors will be engaging with an external consultant to assist the organization in filling the position. The CEO search, along with the work outlined in this Request for Proposals (RFP), will happen concurrently, with the distinct possibility that this process may strategically inform the CEO search process.

To learn more about VOC's current programs, history, and approach to public engagement, please visit [www.voc.org](http://www.voc.org).

### BIDDERS CALL

It is highly recommended that those interested in submitting a proposal attend the Bidders call scheduled for February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2021 at 12:00 MST. Interested bidders should call this conference line: [253-215-8782](tel:253-215-8782), Meeting ID: [83609449638#](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84802420161). The call will also be recorded with the recording link available upon request. For those wanting to connect through computer, please use this link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84802420161>. Please contact [taylor@voc.org](mailto:taylor@voc.org) with any questions related to the Bidder Call.

### CONTRACT TIMELINE AND COMPENSATION

We anticipate the contract period to commence in April 2021 with a recommended engagement period of 12 months, subject to renewal based on how the process unfolds. The initial 12-month contract may not exceed \$25,000 with the independent contractor responsible for travel, taxes, and related material costs. We anticipate the process to initially require virtual engagement based on continuing progression of COVID 19, with additional in-person opportunities as allowed during the contract period.

### PURPOSE

We recognize that VOC is not alone in this journey and are seeking the partnership of expert consultants to help us translate DEI values and principles into our daily practice. Accordingly, this RFP process will assist in identifying a qualified vendor to help us:

1. ***Complete an initial board and staff assessment.*** We want to undertake an honest and thorough self-assessment of board and staff members as the first step in centering the DEI process within VOC's governance and programmatic practice. This initial assessment will be critical in helping us contextualize the intended DEI work within the collective vast array of experiences, cultures, perspectives, and backgrounds as we begin this journey together.
2. ***Create a common language.*** When it comes to actualizing this transformative work, we know that there are different definitions and degrees of understanding of DEI throughout our organization. Establishing clarity in our terminology will be an immediate imperative, such as developing vocabulary which reflects the organization's commitment to DEI values. Further, we desire to create a public-facing statement of these expressed values and principles so that we are held accountable by our various constituencies.
3. ***Transform our organizational culture.*** VOC has a rich and well-accomplished history of statewide volunteer engagement. Yet, we remain a largely white organization in the

composition of our staff, board, and within VOC's volunteer leadership ranks. We acknowledge that within the environmental conservation movement there is a need for expanded inclusivity and equitable access to and use of our public lands. We need to expand our understandings of inclusivity, racism, and equitability within VOC's operationalized administrative processes, programs, and partnerships. We desire to intentionally build spaces for formal and informal conversations and organizational work models that proactively address DEI not as "organizational add on" but as core to VOC's mission and expressed values.

4. ***Develop short- and long-term operational strategies.*** We are an organization that readily embraces new ideas and learning opportunities as we pro-actively adapt to changing stewardship needs and as we incorporate new volunteer engagement strategies. We acknowledge, however, that a genuine commitment to DEI values is a continuing process and we need guidance in the development of realistic objectives implemented in a judicious manner within VOC's internal operations and externally to tangibly operationalize and assess progress in these efforts.

#### WHO MAY RESPOND

VOC seeks a diversity of vendors with demonstrated expertise in:

- Advancing DEI principles and practices within for-profit and non-profit organizations within the environmental conservation area including the outdoor recreation industry;
- Experience with in-person and virtual trainings that accommodate people with differing learning styles; and
- Offering an inclusive, welcoming, and expansive definition of diversity that addresses and acknowledges intersectionality.

#### STATEMENT OF PROPOSED WORK

1. **Methodology.** Detail what the approach will be for gathering data on the current state of VOC and how you will continue to gather data through contract term to measure progress.
2. **Work Plan.** Propose how you envision the phases of the VOC project, including a timeline, within the preferred length of one year of engagement (commencing in April 2021), and how many hours may be needed to complete the proposed efforts.
3. **Budget and Deliverables.** Provide a detailed budget not to exceed \$25,000 with specific deliverables that will be produced and their estimated delivery dates.

Minimal deliverables VOC anticipates:

- Conduct organizational assessment(s), initially with Board and staff, realizing VOC's DEI work to date and the desired purposes of this engagement period.

- Design and facilitate discussions across the organization to create a DEI framework, as well as common language, that clearly articulates the values, principles and definitions that will guide VOC's work internally and externally.
- Design and facilitate organization-wide continuous learning opportunities for all staff, board and volunteer leaders that reflect a broad range of self-awareness ranging from introductory to advanced DEI trainings and train-the-trainer models designed to build leadership within all levels of our organization.
- Provide resources and tools to measure our progress in regular intervals so we can hold ourselves accountable for ongoing learning, training, and programmatic engagement.
- An assessment, one year following the contract commencement, of how well VOC is meeting its DEI goals and recommendations for any course corrections.

The vendor may not subcontract any of the work without the explicit, written pre-approval of VOC.

#### PROPOSAL EVALUATION CRITERIA AND TIMELINE FOR RFP

Responses will be evaluated based on several factors:

- Vendor qualifications and experience
- Understanding, expertise, and practice of DEI
- Work plan and methodology
- Budget
- Professional References

VOC may request a phone and/or video conference interview with VOC's DEI committee for a limited number of semi-finalists. We will invite finalists to make a virtual presentation during the week of March 1-5, 2021; scheduled appointments to be determined. Contracts will be awarded in April 2021. An initial meeting with the Board of Directors is scheduled for April 22, 2021.

#### PROPOSAL SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

All proposals are due by 5 pm MST on Friday, February 19, 2021. Proposal must be in a single PDF document, no longer than 10 pages, and the file name must include your organization's name. Email the proposals to [voc@voc.org](mailto:voc@voc.org). Hard copy submissions will NOT be accepted.

Please direct all questions pertaining to this RFP to [taylor@voc.org](mailto:taylor@voc.org).

All costs associated in the preparation of a response to this RFP are the sole responsibility of the bidder and will not be reimbursed by VOC.