

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS  
TO IMPLEMENT A FACILITATOR SKILLS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM FOR  
THE NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**

**Issued by:**

State of New Jersey  
Department of Environmental Protection  
Office of Environmental Justice

**ISSUE DATE: MAY 11, 2023**

**DUE DATE: JUNE 29, 2023**

## **1.0 PURPOSE AND INTENT**

This Request for Proposals (RFP) is issued by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (Department or NJDEP). The Department is soliciting interest from potential partners to develop and implement a skills development program to train staff and build a core group of facilitators within the Department to be called upon as needed.

Interested parties are invited to submit proposals describing their capabilities and approach to implementing such a program via email by 5:00 p.m. (EST) on JUNE 29, 2023, to [Rehanna.Azimi@dep.nj.gov](mailto:Rehanna.Azimi@dep.nj.gov) with the subject line: **NJDEP Facilitator Skills Development Program**.

## **2.0 BACKGROUND**

Formal facilitation provided by DEP staff has been identified as a need for DEP to meet our priorities more efficiently and effectively.

DEP's Priorities include:

### ***Reduce and Respond to Climate Change***

From threats to its coastline to rising temperatures, New Jersey has an urgent need to lead the way in addressing climate change.

### ***Protect New Jersey's Water***

Safe, clean water is vital to New Jersey's health, quality of life and economy. The DEP protects this precious resource by preventing pollution, cleaning up contamination, ensuring ample supply and investing in strong infrastructure.

### ***Revitalize Our Communities and Protect Public Health***

Cleaner environments promote stronger communities. The DEP plays a major role in strengthening communities by reducing environmental burdens, working with partners to support new economic opportunities and improving the day-to-day life for all, especially vulnerable populations.

### ***Manage and Promote Thriving Natural & Historic Resources***

From the Atlantic Ocean to its forests, New Jersey is a diverse and inclusive place rich in history, wildlife, and open space. The DEP encourages all New Jersey residents and visitors to experience the state first-hand.

### ***Strengthen DEP***

The DEP's ability to achieve its goals and operate effectively depends on its staff and resources. Together, we will help New Jersey protect its environment, promote the health of its citizens and lead the way for the nation.

As part of reaching its goals, DEP has been and continues to increase public participation opportunities and develop effective community engagement strategies. To better connect with our partners and communities, especially those that are overburdened, DEP has a need for improving staff skills and thus increasing overall agency capacity to be able to better facilitate engagement opportunities, such as:

- Stakeholder engagement
  - A defined group of participants selected to provide targeted feedback that may be considered in future decision-making on a certain policy, issue, or program
  - Open dialogue between all participants and the Department
  - Usually, a one-time or limited time ask for feedback that may take the form of a small, informal meeting

- Community engagement
  - Information sharing sessions or events
  - The public is primarily in “listening” mode
- Public meetings
  - Direct involvement with local representatives from impacted communities
  - Department is primarily in “listening” mode
- Public hearings
  - Information sharing designed to collect comments and feedback in a structured manner
  - No Departmental dialogue in response
- Working group meetings
  - A group designed to engage in facilitated problem-solving around a specific project or issue usually on an ongoing basis
  - Iterative dialogue between all participants and the Department
- Internal Department meetings
  - Meetings within and across DEP Program Areas
- Interagency meetings
  - Meetings with other state, federal, or regional entities

Through this RFP, we are seeking a partner to create a **Facilitator Development Program** with the goal of helping DEP to effectively communicate complex environmental issues, solicit and interpret stakeholder feedback, and demonstrate our commitment to make use of that feedback in future decision-making.

Facilitation in environmental, public health and natural resource management issues is one of the most important components for DEP’s success. Running effective meetings to engage the public on said issues, and managing both inter-agency (e.g., climate resilience, environmental justice) and intra-agency (cross-program) coordination is important for DEP staff to achieve their goals.

Upon successful completion of the program, trained DEP participants will become part of a core facilitating team at the Department. Skills that participants are expected to learn include:

- increased capacity to navigate challenges and diffuse tension,
- increased cultural competency required to be inclusive of the needs of various communities, stakeholders, and participants,
- an ability to identify the ideal meeting format for various situations,
- building effective agendas and managing time,
- ability to translate complex, technical information to easier-to-understand formats
- encouraging widespread participation, and
- steering discussions towards actionable solutions

### 3.0 BASIC TIMELINE

Target program launch is Fall 2023.

Respondents should include a minimum of two in-person sessions and at least one follow-up session to receive feedback from participants, answer questions, and provide an opportunity to roleplay and practice skills. If respondents propose a different number or type of session(s), justification for those modifications should be included.

Participants will be required to identify a meeting or public participation project requiring facilitation to

apply their skills with Respondent. Respondent-led follow-up sessions should also include discussion of participants' experiences, challenges, and outcomes during the application of their facilitation skills.

Respondents will describe the number and type(s) of sessions (in-person, virtual, and/or hybrid) as well as the session format. Respondents will justify their recommendations for a given program plan, including follow up and transfer of program materials.

In addition, respondents are encouraged to include factors not accounted for in the RFP that support the respondent's submission.

#### 4.0 REQUIRED INFORMATION

The written proposal shall include all the following information required under this RFP:

**1. Title of Proposed Program**

**2. Instructor(s) name(s) and institution(s)**

**3. Objective (Description)**

**4. Proposed Program**

Respondents should include a minimum of two in-person sessions, and at least one follow-up session to receive feedback from participants, answer questions, and provide an opportunity for practice of skills.

The proposed program should cover a variety of communication and facilitation methods; how to determine the best type of facilitation for varying objectives; and provide feedback to participants during practice activities.

**5. Budget**

Respondents must include an itemized budget and associated justification. The budget must be itemized as shown below and associated justification provided. Respondents should use one personnel rate for entire team.

Budget Object Class Categories	Cost
a. Personnel (hourly rate x hours OR % of time)	\$
b. Fringe Benefits (Personnel x%)	\$
c. Travel	\$
d. Equipment	\$
e. Supplies	\$
f. Other Direct Costs	\$
g. Direct Costs Total (a+b+c+d+e+f)	\$
h. Indirect Costs (maximum 10% of Direct Costs)	\$
<b>TOTAL</b>	

**6. Expertise**

The Project Manager and all key personnel should be identified, and abridged resume(s) provided for all key personnel to demonstrate expertise in their project responsibilities.

## 7. Resources

Interested parties must demonstrate possession of or access to sufficient resources to successfully complete the proposed work.

## 5.0 EVALUATION CRITERIA

### Proposed Program:

- **Plan:** Is the plan for conducting the proposed program clearly presented and well-reasoned? How comprehensive, realistic, and explicit is the proposal with respect to the desired program objectives and proposal requirements?
- **Suitability & Relevance:** Does the Program seem reasonable based on best practices? Is there a clear plan for implementation? How suitable is the proposed Program and overall plan for meeting the desired objectives and yielding expected results? Is the plan outlined in detail and clearly designed to meet the defined objectives?
- **Schedule of activities:** what are the elements/major program milestones of this plan, in what sequence will they occur and approximately how long will they take?
- **Expected Outcomes:** What are the expected outcomes of the proposed program? Does the plan include a mechanism for evaluating the success of the proposed program? Are specific measurable targets of success provided where applicable?

### Expertise:

- Is/are the respondents well qualified to undertake the proposed program? The respondent
- should include any relevant previous experience related to facilitator training.
- How well has the respondent organized a management plan and a project team with the necessary educational, technical, operations, technology transfer, financing, and administrative experience for successfully completing the proposed program?
- Are all roles and responsibilities clearly defined?

### Resources:

Does the respondent have sufficient resources at their disposal to successfully complete the proposed program?

### Cost Criteria:

- Are all cost items explained/justified?
- Are the overall pricing and hourly rates reasonable?
- Is there a detailed budget provided for the overall project, including sufficient detail in the supporting schedule for each cost element, its description, and amount to justify the budget?

The Department reserves full discretion to choose among respondents to identify the proposal most advantageous to the State. All qualified organizations are encouraged to apply. The Department intends to prioritize responses that can demonstrate:

- (a) A deep connection to stakeholders and leaders in overburdened communities;
- (b) A thoughtful approach to stakeholder engagement; and
- (c) Strength in developing the skill of synthesizing stakeholder feedback into actionable information.

At the conclusion of the review of all the responses to this RFP, the Department will advise each respondent in writing whether they were selected to be a project partner. Selected respondent(s) would have the opportunity to enter into a formal agreement with the Department setting forth the specifics of the engagement.

#### **SUBMISSION DETAILS AND REQUIREMENTS**

Interested parties should submit a proposal via email by 5:00 p.m. (EST) JUNE 29, 2023 to: [Rehanna.Azimi@dep.nj.gov](mailto:Rehanna.Azimi@dep.nj.gov) with the subject line: **NJDEP Facilitator Skills Development Program.**

Questions may be directed to [Rehanna.Azimi@dep.nj.gov](mailto:Rehanna.Azimi@dep.nj.gov) and must be received by 5:00 PM, Friday, June 2, 2023. Answers will be provided directly to submitters and posted publicly at the same website(s) as this RFP. Any costs incurred by the Respondent in connection with responding to this RFP shall be borne solely by the Respondent.

This RFP is not intended to result in the selection of any respondent's project ideas. The actual activities to be performed will be memorialized in a standard-form contractual agreement between the Department and the selected respondents after an award has been made by DEP. The selected respondents will be expected to register in [NJSTART](#), if they have not done so already, and will be required to adhere by all State terms and conditions as included in the agreement without modification.

**PLEASE NOTE:** Documents submitted in response to this RFP are subject to public disclosure. A responder may designate specific information as not subject to disclosure pursuant to the exceptions to the Open Public Records Act found at N.J.S.A. 47:1A-1.1 or the common law Right to Know, when the responder has a good faith legal and or factual basis for such assertion. The Department reserves the right to make the determination as to what is proprietary or confidential and will advise the responder accordingly. The location in the response of any such designation should be clearly stated in a cover letter. The Department will not honor any attempt by a responder to designate its entire proposal as proprietary or confidential and/or to claim copyright protection for its entire response. In the event of any challenge to the responder's assertion of confidentiality with which the Department does not concur, the responder shall be notified and shall be solely responsible for defending its designation. The submittals shall become the property of the Department upon submission.