

National Association of State Foresters
State Forestry Statistics Communications Project
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Request for Proposals Date: July 26, 2013

Proposal Submission Deadline: 5:00 pm EST, August 23, 2013

National Association of State Foresters
Attn: Communications Project Proposals
444 North Capitol Street NW, Suite 540
Washington DC 20001

gosullivan@stateforesters.org

A. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The National Association of State Foresters (NASF) is requesting proposals from qualified firms/consultants to develop and implement a multi-tiered communications effort surrounding a set of state forestry statistics.

B. INTRODUCTION

1. Organizational Overview

The National Association of State Foresters is a non-profit organization that represents the directors of all 50 state forestry agencies, territories and associated states, and the District of Columbia. Through public-private partnerships, NASF seeks to discuss, develop, sponsor and promote programs and activities which will advance the practice of sustainable forestry, the conservation and protection of forest lands and associated resources and the establishment and protection of forests in the urban environment.

This multi-tiered communications effort will serve NASF's strategic goals to:

- Be seen as the principal advocate for and source of information on nonfederal forestland among policymakers and influencers.
- Be sought after as a reliable, responsible voice on overall domestic and international forest policy.
- Be increasingly valued by its members as cohesive, effective, involved and a worthwhile investment of resources.
- Be a leader in the promotion of sustainable forests across multiple ownerships and jurisdictions.
- Achieve greater societal recognition of the environmental services provided by trees & forests.

2. State Forestry Statistics Overview

<http://www.stateforesters.org/2010-state-foresters-numbers-report> NASF has been collecting data – usually biannually – from state forestry agencies for a number of years, with the oldest record dating from 1983. The intent of the NASF State Forestry Statistics Survey is to capture key data points pertinent to each state and territory. Survey questions investigate budgets, personnel, projects, resource base, and other items. The resulting statistics have important budget and planning implications for state forestry agencies and are an essential NASF member benefit. They are also a valuable resource for outreach to elected officials, federal agencies, NASF partners and the media on forest policy issues.

During the last survey, great efforts were made to streamline and clarify questions proposed in the survey. Although there may be some additional changes to this year's questions, they will be minimal and the ability to compare results with this year's effort will be essential.

Some examples of the type of data collected:

- Acreage of forestland managed by state agencies
- Forest land ownership make up
- Number of landowners assisted
- Acres under wildfire protection by state forestry agencies
- Top issues facing state forestry agencies
- Agency employment numbers
- Agency expenditures and sources of revenue
- Number of communities receiving technical assistance in urban & community forestry

C. PROJECT SCOPE

1. Objectives

NASF State Forestry Statistics Communications Project

- a. Establish a user-friendly, web-based process to collect key statistics from state agencies, summarize quantitative data, and report results for state foresters to use in benchmarking their resources against other states.
 - b. Develop strategic communications plans to communicate compelling stories about state and private forests and important data trends with external audiences and implement those plans in part or in their entirety.
 - c. Create a framework for future communications efforts by honing the survey content and targeting the most critical data points for the survey to collect going forward.
2. Target Audiences
- a. Internal audiences: State Foresters and their staffs.
 - b. External audiences: news media, policymakers (local, state, federal), government agencies, forestry professionals, educators, and the general public.
3. Funding – This project is funded with a grant from the U.S. Forest Service.

D. REQUIRED DELIVERABLES

The following deliverables are required as part of this communications project:

- 1) Data Entry, Infrastructure and Analysis
 - a) Establish web-based user-friendly database infrastructure that will support:
 - i) *Internal users* (NASF staff, State Foresters and their staff) that require secure access to submit data and obtain reports on all data pieces, and
 - ii) *External users* (media, public, etc) that will have limited access to data and reports.
 - b) Provide user friendly website/application for states to enter information.
 - c) Provide user friendly website/application for internal and external users to query information when statistics survey is final that includes both 2010 and 2012 information.
- 2) Member Services and User Support
 - a) 2012 Survey Form: Provide guidance and information on use of survey website/application. NASF staff will field inquiries and pass along appropriate questions/concerns to Consultant. Consultant will:
 - i) Answer ad hoc questions from NASF and agency staff.
 - ii) Track and compile list of common questions and solutions.
 - iii) Conduct brief webinar(s) for state agency staff on how to use website/application based on concise outline of instructions.
- 3) Reports
 - a) Produce two final reports
 - i) State Foresters by the Numbers (external report) – Contains information for external audiences and can be viewed at <http://www.stateforesters.org/2010-state-foresters-numbers-report>
 - ii) State Foresters Benchmarking report (internal use) – Contains all the information from the external report, as well as information on pay, budgeting, etc for use by members.
- 4) Public Relations – Develop three (3) communications strategies tied to three distinct and compelling stories based on data currently collected. Include tasks, methodologies, audiences, timelines, and key messages.
 - a) **Optional:** Implementation of all communications strategies is not a requirement of this project but may be included in the overall proposal or as an “a la carte” menu of options (see Section E.4. below)

- 5) Gap Analysis – Assess survey to determine what information is not defective and/or lacking, what new questions would contribute to solving that gap, and whether that information is easily available from state agencies.

E. PROPOSAL CONTENT

Please use the following outline to organize your response to this RFP:

1. Organizational Overview – Provide a company profile, statement of qualifications and explanation of core competencies. Provide an overview of successful PR programs that your firm has developed that best reflect your work and have relevancy to our objectives. Summarize your experience working with:
 - a. the nonprofit industry
 - b. forestry and/or natural resource organizations
 - c. statistical analysis
2. Client Relationship
 - a. Provide at least two references from your current clients. Please include company name, address, phone number and contact name.
 - b. Describe in detail the team that will be involved with the account on a day-to-day basis.
 - c. List any contractors or third party companies that will be involved with our account.
3. Work Plan – Provide a detailed plan for executing the deliverables listed in Section D, describing:
 - a. the format and features of the communications plans you would develop if contracted, and a description of the client involvement in the process for each strategy
 - b. how you would approach the data analysis requirements of the project
 - c. the recommended format, functionality and technology requirements of the survey
 - d. the role of each team member and any subcontractors
4. Cost and Timeline – The proposal should provide a multi-phase timeline with prioritized milestones, tasks, and deadlines. The timeline must also provide a cost breakdown for all elements of the Work Plan. This should include an itemization of services included during each phase of the project and a detailed list of services and fees that are excluded from the proposal. For example, proposals may incorporate implementation of one or more of the three required communications strategies into the anticipated budget or, alternatively, include implementation as separate “a la carte” options.
5. Bidder's Suggestions – Please give your suggestions for better and/or additional ways to address the communications/public relations needs set forth for this project which are not otherwise described. Describe advantages and disadvantages of the approaches you recommend, and specify the cost implications, if any.
6. Format – Proposals may be received in hard copy or electronic format. If hard copy, please submit three (3) copies of your proposal.
7. Where to submit:

National Association of State Foresters
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444 North Capitol Street NW, Suite 540
Washington DC 20001

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F. EVALUATION & SELECTION

1. Evaluation – Proposals will be judged on the basis of overall technical quality and cost. The assessment of technical quality will take into account such factors as understanding of the needs and tasks to be performed; technical merit, including clarity and comprehensiveness of the workplan; creativity and added value of the bidder's suggestions about additional or alternative ways to meet the program's communications needs; and familiarity with the relevant forestry issues.
2. Inquiries – Developers may submit questions relating to the proposal to NASF in writing until **5:00 PM (EDT), August 9, 2013**. Please submit questions electronically to gosullivan@stateforesters.org with subject title: NASF Communications Proposals.
3. Interviews – Presentations of proposals may be requested anytime throughout the evaluation period. You will be notified if this is requested.

G. ASSUMPTIONS AND AGREEMENTS

1. Contract Period – The anticipated contract period is not to exceed eight (8) months, beginning approximately September 15, 2013 and ending April 15, 2013. The specific timeline and scope of work will be negotiated between NASF and the vendor.
2. Budget – Include your proposed budget and fees. List specific fees in detail. Indicate your willingness to consider flexible fee arrangements.
3. Staff Contact – The NASF Communications Director will serve as project coordinator/manager.
4. Deadline – Proposals must be received by the National Association of State Foresters at the address listed above no later than **5:00 PM (EST), August 23, 2013**.
5. Notification – NASF will award contract by September 14, 2013; project to begin immediately upon award of contract.

NASF is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, or any other non-merit factor.