

Housatonic River Initiative, Inc.
P. O. Box 178, Lee, MA 01238
Solicitation for a Technical Advisor
United States Environmental Protection Agency Technical Assistance Grant
October 10, 2023

The Housatonic River Initiative (“HRI”), a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit Community Organization, is soliciting proposals for one or more Technical Advisors (“TA”) to provide assistance in the review and analysis of removal and remedial action activities ordered by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (“EPA”) for the General Electric Company (“GE”) at the GE-Pittsfield/Housatonic River Site (“Site”). The work to be ordered is subject to the October 27, 2000 Consent Decree (“CD”) agreed to by the EPA, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts (“MA”), the State of Connecticut (“CT”), the City of Pittsfield, and GE, as well as the 2020 RCRA Cleanup Permit that EPA issued to GE for the removal and remedial action activities of the Rest of River (“ROR”) portion of the Site.

Removal and remedial action activities on the Site have been ongoing since 1997, including the First Half Mile, the next Mile and a Half, some residential properties, a neighborhood school, and the GE factory site in Pittsfield. The Site now moves to the ROR portion of the CD. While removal and remedial actions are being implemented for the Housatonic River and its floodplains in MA, the reality is that the river continues to flow through CT to Long Island Sound. That part of the river in CT also contains polychlorinated biphenyl (“PCB”) contamination originating from GE’s Pittsfield plant site...mainly behind large hydropower dams...and CT has consumption advisories against eating contaminated fish and other species from the river watershed area. The CT section of the river is also addressed in the 2000 CD and 2020 RCRA Cleanup permit. The ROR removal and remedial action activities are expected to continue for 13 to 15 years.

Information on the Site can be found here: <https://www.epa.gov/ge-housatonic>. Those wishing to be considered should submit a proposal that includes a general description of the candidate’s approach for doing the work described in the following Statement of Work (“SOW”), a CV or resume, a detailed cost estimate, and the other required information cited below.

NOTE: This contract will be subject to the grant requirements of federal regulations, including 2 CFR Part 200 and 40 CFR Part 35 Subpart M, and of the Housatonic River Initiative’s EPA Technical Assistance Grant (“TAG”) agreement. In particular, please note that the provisions of 40 CFR Section 35.40.75 prohibits TAG funds from being used for certain listed activities, including, without limitation, reopening or challenging final EPA decisions. Accordingly, the selected TA will be able to review past decisions

for background purposes but cannot provide comments on those documents or propose alternative remedies or risk evaluations.

STATEMENT OF WORK

PURPOSE

Through this contract, HRI will procure the services of a contractor to provide assistance that will ensure that Community members are thoroughly informed about all aspects of the Site's removal and remedial action activities ordered by the EPA at the Site, and be able to participate more effectively in remedy implementation. The contractor will assist Community members in interpreting documents generated throughout the Consent Decree/Superfund process at the Site. These documents may include ROR work plans, sampling plans, quality assurance/quality control plans, pre-final and final engineering designs, final inspection reports, and other Site-related technical reports. The contractor also will help members review Site data and data-gathering techniques.

HRI will use a phased approach in contracting for this work. The three-year contract period for which proposals are now being sought involves work related to the 2020 CD and 2020 Cleanup Permit including the ROR. This contract will include options for continuing work, specified in the "Tasks" section of this solicitation, in future funding periods, if needed.

TASKS

The contract will begin as soon as possible due to ongoing removal and remedial action activities for ROR at the Site, occurring now. HRI will direct the contractor and assign tasks. The contractor(s) will be required to perform the following tasks:

1. The contractor shall review technical documents generated during the ROR design and implementation of the remedy.
 - A. The contractor will review ROR work plans, sampling plans, and other removal and remedial action documents generated pursuant to the current 2000 CD and 2020 Cleanup Permit. No environmental measurements are to be taken by the contractor.
 - B. Upon submissions by GE and EPA of ROR report(s), the contractor shall help the Community review and interpret the results.
 - C. The contractor shall analyze any new health assessments thoroughly to ensure that public health is being considered adequately.
 - D. The contractor shall complete a detailed analysis of any implementation options submitted in technical documents and brief the Community on its contents.
 - E. The contractor will provide the same tasks if the RCRA permit is updated, or a new RCRA permit is issued.
 - F. The contractor shall aid the Community's preparation of public comments.

2. The contractor shall attend ROR meetings remotely via current technology resources both by EPA and other platforms, and in person when feasible.

A. The contractor shall attend meetings scheduled for the ROR presentations by EPA, between EPA staff and the Community when notified properly in advance and if feasible. In preparation for these meetings, the contractor shall prepare questions and review Community questions to be asked of EPA regarding sampling plans and proposed removal and remedial actions, particularly in regard to the Site ROR 2020 Cleanup Permit.

B. The contractor shall attend the public meetings to be held in various locations in Berkshire County, MA and CT during the public comment period(s). The contractor's primary responsibility during these meetings will be to serve as a resource to the Community's spokespersons, interpreting technical information and asking clarifying questions.

3. The contractor shall prepare summary memos and reports, as needed, to convey the results of their reviews and analyses to the Community's leadership.

A. After review of GE submittals, the contractor shall prepare a report detailing the results of their review and brief the community.

B. The contractor shall prepare a written report of their analysis of the remedy implementation in the ROR study to aid the Community's preparation of public input. This report is to include the contractor's recommendations regarding the remedy implementation.

4. The contractor shall review the Community's written comments on the ROR implementation plans and suggest changes as needed, prior to submission of the Community's comments during public input period(s).

5. The contractor shall make presentations, as needed, to Community members and others.

A. The contractor shall brief the Community on the results of their analysis of GE's permit submittals for the ROR.

CONTRACTOR QUALIFICATIONS

The Technical Advisor must have verifiable credentials and must provide the Community with a list of previous clients and information on any past, current, or anticipated business or financial relationships with any potentially responsible party (PRP) at the Site, its parent companies, subsidiaries, affiliates, subcontractors, and current clients. The successful candidate will have:

1. A demonstrated knowledge of hazardous or toxic waste issues with emphasis on polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and other toxic constituents/chemicals of concern.
2. Experience with watershed contamination, river dam removal remediation, and current alternative technologies will be considered a plus.
3. Academic training in a relevant field including toxicology, environmental engineering, environmental chemistry and/or geology.
4. Experience with migration pathways of PCBs and other toxic constituents/chemicals of concern.
5. Knowledge of risk assessment criteria and health assessment criteria as it relates to human health and the environment.
6. No debarment or suspension as a federal contractor. HRI will not award a contract to any bidder who is on the U.S. General Service Administration's Excluded Parties List System which identifies parties debarred, suspended, or otherwise excluded from receiving federal contracts or certain subcontracts and from certain types of federal financial and nonfinancial assistance and benefits.
7. A demonstrated compliance or willingness to comply with civil rights and equal opportunity laws, and other related statutory requirements outlined in the Code of Federal Regulations, 2 CFR Part 200, which contains the Uniform Grants Guidance, and 40 CFR Part 33.301, et seq., which includes making good faith efforts to procure goods and services from disadvantaged business enterprises.
8. Demonstrated ability, including writing and presentation skills, to translate technical information into terms that the Housatonic River Community members can understand.
9. Experience working on hazardous and/or toxic waste problems and communicating those problems and issues to clients who do not possess extensive technical backgrounds.
10. Adequate financial resources and accounting procedures in place to manage the tasks required and account for expenditures. Any proposed subcontractors must have the expertise to perform the tasks assigned and meet conditions described in items 6 (no debarment or suspension as a federal contractor) and 7 (a demonstrated compliance or willingness to comply with civil rights and equal opportunity laws, and other related statutory requirements) above.

TOTAL PROJECTED HOURS

A total of approximately 225 hours of work is estimated for the Technical Advisor during the ROR phase of site removal actions; the distribution of these hours over the three-year contract period is dependent upon the pace at which ROR removal actions activities proceed.

COST AND PRICING DATA REQUIRED

Proposers may submit their cost estimates in any format as long as estimated direct labor costs, estimated indirect costs, any proposed subcontract costs, proposed travel costs, and proposed profit are identified. When proposing travel, including per diem (lodging and food) costs, proposers should bear in mind that this contract is supported by a federal grant. As a result, the Community will only pay for a contractor's hotel and meal costs when anticipated trips require an overnight stay. Furthermore, the Community will only pay the contractor for meals and lodging at the rate the government pays its own employees, which is called the government per diem rate. Information about these rates is available at:

<http://www.gsa.gov/Portal/gsa/ep/contentView.do>

and specific to Pittsfield in Berkshire County: https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates/per-diem-rates-results?action=perdiems_report&fiscal_year=2023&state=MA&city=&zip=01201

SELECTION CRITERIA

Each proposal received will be evaluated on the following criteria, which are weighted based on the Community's priorities:

20% Past relevant experience.

10% Knowledge of EPA procedures and reporting requirements.

20% Price.

25% Relevant expertise (i.e., health sciences, engineering), both academic and demonstrated.

25% Ability to provide written and oral translations of technical documents and data in terms understandable to lay persons.

HRI's TAG Administrator, with other HRI Board members, will evaluate proposals by assigning a score (on a scale of 1 to 5) to each criterion. The weighted scores will be added for a total score. The highest possible total score is 500. The goal of the selection criteria is to obtain the best proposal at a reasonable cost.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

HRI must prevent organizational conflicts of interest, or the appearance of such conflicts, in this procurement. As a result, all those submitting a proposal must include:

- Information on their financial and business relationships with PRPs at the Site, their companies, subsidiaries, affiliates, subcontractors, current clients, and attorneys and agents; or

- Certification that, to the best of their knowledge and belief, they have disclosed such information or that no such information exists; or
- A statement that they will disclose immediately any such information discovered after submission of their proposal or after the contract award.
- A statement that they, or the company, do not work for the federal or state government or any other entity involved at the Site.

CONTRACT RENEWAL OPTION

HRI has the option to renew the contract for additional periods, if needed, for activities included in this solicitation as long as cumulative costs do not move the contract into a different competition requirement level. Contract renewal will be based on satisfaction with the Technical Advisor's previous performance and availability of funds.

CONTRACT AWARD

One time-and-materials contract will be awarded to the most qualified applicant within a competitive price range. HRI will negotiate to obtain the best final offer. Candidates will be informed of the HRI's decision to reject or accept a proposal.

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

The deadline for submitting proposals to the HRI is November 10, 2023. Qualified firms or individuals are encouraged to respond to this Solicitation. Please apply or share with qualified individuals or organizations.

All submissions should be sent to:

Anne Langlais, HRI TAG Administrator

Housatonic River Initiative, Inc.

P. O. Box 178, Lee, MA 01238

Or can be submitted electronically (preferred) to

HRI-TAG Administrator email account at hritag1992@gmail.com