



Workforce Development

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RFP 21-AA20

Request for Professional Services

Community Liaison – Construction Focus

The City of Duluth Workforce Development Department seeks vendors to provide Community Liaison professional services, to assist with outreach and recruitment for the construction industry. Community Liaisons will have strong ties to the Duluth-Superior area African Heritage, Indigenous, Latinx, and/or Asian communities, and will provide information, assistance, and support for both entry and long-term success in highway-heavy construction careers.

Overview of Project Goals

This project is funded by the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) as part of its Twin Ports Interchange Project, which includes goals to increase Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE) participation and ensure that the State's diverse populations are represented through contractors and workers on State projects. MnDOT has set targets that 9% of work hours be performed by women, and 12% of work hours be performed by people of color, and that 5.0% of contracting is with DBEs.

In support of MnDOT's workforce goals, community liaisons would conduct outreach to women and members of the African Heritage and Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities to discuss career pathways in the construction trades and identify individuals with interest and aptitude for trades work. Community liaisons would then refer these individuals to union apprenticeships and apprenticeship prep training programs, guide them through the application process, assist in connecting them to work opportunities on the Twin Ports Interchange project, and serve as an ongoing point of contact to assist with training, job placement, and employment retention. Community liaisons would also represent their respective communities at meetings convened by MnDOT and the Twin Ports Interchange general contractor to review progress toward goals and discuss strategies to ensure goals are met.

Community Liaison Responsibilities

With guidance and oversight from Duluth Workforce Development, Community Liaisons will:

1. Develop and implement an outreach plan to identify and recruit diverse jobseekers interested in construction related careers.
2. Build and/or strengthen partnerships with community leaders and organizations that will help build a diverse construction workforce and DBE contractors list.

3. Assist in planning and hosting workshops and information events to share information about construction careers; open doors for MnDOT to sponsor and/or attend community events or share information through community networks.
4. Plan and host construction employment outreach events that take a culturally relevant and inclusive approach.
5. Provide hands-on connection, mentorship, and guidance to jobseekers as they navigate training and employment in the construction sector. This includes helping individuals prepare to meet minimum requirements for entry into apprenticeship, including navigation of community resources to assist in completing a GED, building math skills, or obtaining a driver's license.
6. Provide ongoing connection and support to individuals after they begin employment. This includes serving as a resource to help navigate worksite challenges often faced by women and BIPOC workers in the construction industry.
7. Provide feedback to construction employers and union representatives to identify and address worksite issues and help build a more inclusive work environment.
8. Participate in developing MnDOT's public engagement plan of activities in a way that effectively engages the community.
9. Assist in identifying and communicating with DBE firms in the Duluth-Superior area that are currently not certified but have the skills and services that could be used on this project and future projects.
10. Attend quarterly project update meetings to provide an update on activities, successes and outcomes and help develop strategies to ensure workforce goals are met.
11. Provide input in development of workforce strategies and tactics to increase diversity in the project's construction workforce.
12. Prepare quarterly summary reports of all activities and measurable outcomes.

Performance Measures of Success

Community Liaisons will submit quarterly written reports outlining performance on the following measures of success:

1. The number of community engagement opportunities created/hosted, and how many people attended.
2. The number of women and African Heritage/BIPOC individuals engaged in exploration of construction careers.
3. The number of women and African Heritage/BIPOC job seekers enrolled in apprenticeship prep training programs.
4. The number of women and African Heritage/BIPOC individuals entering apprenticeship programs in the construction trades.
5. The number of women and African Heritage/BIPOC individuals employed in construction, and working on the Twin Ports Interchange Project in particular.

After being selected, Community Liaisons will work with Duluth Workforce Development to create an annual work plan that includes specific targets for each performance measure. **Training and Supervision**

Community Liaisons will be provided with training on a number of topics, as needed, including:

- Orientation to the construction trades, including highway-heavy construction
- Orientation to apprenticeships, and the requirements and application process for each trade
- Orientation to construction training program options, and support services available to assist participants
- Opportunity to connect with apprenticeship training coordinators and construction contractors working on the Twin Ports Interchange
- Opportunity to meet with and provide feedback to MNDOT and Twin Ports Interchange contractors
- Orientation to the City of Duluth's Human Rights Office and the MNDOT Office of Civil Rights as a resource

Ongoing supervision and support for Community Liaisons will be provided by Elena Foshay, Director of Workforce Development and Betsy Hill, Career Counselor.

Timeline and Compensation

Duluth Workforce Development seeks up to four Community Liaisons, beginning June 1, 2021 and ending December 31, 2021 with the potential to renew annually based on performance through December 31, 2023.

Community Liaisons will be paid at a rate of \$55 per hour for an average of 30 hours/month through the end of this year (up to 176 hours total). The same hourly rate and total hours apply in subsequent years (\$55/hr x 176 hrs per year in 2022 and 2023). Consultants will also have access to a small budget to provide food at community events/meetings.

Community liaisons who will use their car for purposes related to this contract must have a valid driver's license and provide proof of insurance for the vehicle to be used.

Eligibility

Community Liaisons may be individual consultants or organizations. In the case of an organization, more than one staff member may serve as a Community Liaison, provided they are complementing and not duplicating efforts. Knowledge of and connection to the construction industry and/or building trades unions is a benefit, but not a requirement. If needed, Community Liaisons will be provided training to increase familiarity with the construction industry and union apprenticeships, as well as available workforce development resources.

Application and Review Process

Interested consultants should submit a proposal that includes specific responses to the following questions:

1. Please provide background and relevant experience. Interested candidates may submit a resume as well.
2. What is your connection to African Heritage/BIPOC communities in the Twin Ports region?
3. Please describe your connection to or knowledge of the construction industry and/or union apprenticeships.
4. What is your outreach plan to inform woman and African Heritage/BIPOC communities about careers in construction?
5. What methods will be utilized to identify and engage potential candidates who are women and/or African Heritage/BIPOC individuals for careers in highway-heavy construction?
6. What strategies will be utilized to assist interested individuals in connecting to training, employment, and apprenticeship opportunities?
7. What strategies will be utilized to help support retention in employment and/or apprenticeship among those individuals you assisted?
8. What support do you need from Duluth Workforce Development, MNDOT, and Twin Ports Interchange contractors to be successful?

Proposals should be submitted to Elena Foshay, Director of Workforce Development at efoshay@duluthmn.gov. **Deadline to submit proposals is May 21, 2021 at 4:00pm.**

Proposals will be reviewed by a panel that includes staff from Duluth Workforce Development, MNDOT, and construction employers, and evaluated based on:

- Strength of community connections (30%)
- Detailed outline of methods and strategies (40%)
- Strength of methods and strategies in achieving desired outcomes (30%)

Questions regarding this request and the scope of work it contains may be submitted to the email address above.

Mandatory Disclosures

By submitting a proposal, each Bidder understands, represents, and acknowledges that:

1. Their proposal has been developed by the Bidder independently and has been submitted without collusion with and without agreement, understanding, or planned common course of action with any other vendor or suppliers of materials, supplies, equipment, or services described in the Request for Proposals, designed to limit independent bidding or competition, and that the contents of the proposal have not been communicated by the Bidder or its employees or agents to any person not an employee or agent of the Bidder.
2. There is no conflict of interest. A conflict of interest exists if a Bidder has any interest that would actually conflict, or has the appearance of conflicting, in any manner or degree with the

performance of work on the project. If there are potential conflicts, identify the municipalities, developers, and other public or private entities with whom your company is currently, or have been, employed and which may be affected.

3. It is not currently under suspension or debarment by the State of Minnesota, any other state or the federal government.
4. If the proposal is being submitted by an organization or business, the company is either organized under Minnesota law or has a Certificate of Authority from the Minnesota Secretary of State to do business in Minnesota, in accordance with the requirements in M.S. 303.03.

The City reserves the right, in its sole and complete discretion, to reject any and all proposals or cancel the request for proposals, at any time prior to the time a contract is fully executed, when it is in its best interests. The City is not liable for any costs the Bidder incurs in preparation and submission of its proposal, in participating in the RFP process or in anticipation of award of the contract.

All materials submitted in response to this RFP will become property of the City and will become public record after the evaluation process is completed and an award decision made.