



Request for Proposals

Services or Goods to be Procured: Urban Heat Island and Urban Tree Equity Community Engagement Program Design, Management, and Implementation for a “Tree Ambassadors” Program

RFP Issue Date: February 24, 2021

Introduction to Invitation

The Los Angeles Conservation Corps (the “LA Conservation Corps” or “the Corps”) is accepting proposals from non-profit organizations and/or advertisement agencies to manage a community engagement program designed to increase canopy in communities with low tree canopy and communities vulnerable to urban heat and climate change throughout Los Angeles.

The current agreement between the City of Los Angeles and the Corps requests that the Corps monitors the benefits of the tree planting program. The specific requirements are stated below for your review. **Proposals are due no later than 5:00 p.m. on March 10, 2021.** The Corps will not accept any proposals, amendments, revisions, or alterations to already submitted proposals after 5:00 p.m. on March 10, 2021.

The timeline for this RFP process is included below:

February 24, 2021: RFP Released

March 10, 2021: RFP responses due

March 11 - March 26, 2021: Responses reviewed/interviewed by Corps Staff

Week of March 29, 2021: Accepted proposal announced

On or before April 9, 2021: Contract awarded

Pre-Bid Request

In order to better assess the requirements and needs of the Corps, it is requested that your agency evaluate the current community engagement and outreach methods of the City Plants program by visiting www.cityplants.org.

Total Budget Available:

LA Corps has a budget of \$180,000 for this project. If it is impossible to meet every item listed within that budget, please address core items first, the second tier next if possible, then indicate an additional budget for any additional items that might be addressed in the future.

Description of the goods or services:

In an effort to increase canopy cover in low canopy, historically marginalized, disadvantaged neighborhoods in the City of Los Angeles along streets and within private property, the Corps and City Plants seeks to onboard an experienced agency to implement a grassroots community organizing program that focuses on the role of trees in urban cooling and public health.

The contractor will aid in the design, development, implementation, management, and evaluation of a multi-stakeholder, year-long training program beginning in the spring of 2021 to train paid community tree ambassadors; provide information and educational resources on the benefits of trees and the role of trees in urban cooling and public health; align this program to achieve tree goals in Mayor Garcetti's Green New Deal; convey the critical role of a healthy tree canopy to climate resilience, sustainable neighborhoods, and public health. This project will take place in targeted identified neighborhoods across LA lacking canopy and vulnerable to extreme heat.

City Plants will partner with the City Forest Officer, the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, the US Forest Service, Los Angeles Conservation Corps, Koreatown Youth and Community Center, and the contractor, to implement a "Tree Ambassador" program, providing on-the-ground, community-centered support to residents in low-canopy regions of the city. This program will directly fund and hire part time community members in low-canopy regions to organize, in a "block leader" fashion, fellow neighbors to plant trees and participate in City Plants and LADWP free tree programs in their communities. Tree Ambassadors will assist residents in "right tree, right place" decision-making.

Program Objectives:

1. Provide paid, on-the-ground, community-centered urban forestry and tree stewardship training to residents in low-canopy, heat-vulnerable neighborhoods within the City of LA over the course of one year.
2. Assist residents in "right tree, right place, right reason" framework and decision-making, and help residents find suitable locations for private property plantings and street tree plantings.
3. Provide information and educational resources on the benefits of trees, the role of trees in urban cooling and public health, soil remediation, and tree planting and maintenance.
4. Align program to achieve tree goals in [Mayor Eric Garcetti's Green New Deal](#)
 - **Target Goal:** Increase tree canopy in areas of greatest need by at least 50% by 2028 to grow a more equitable urban forest that provides cooling, public health, habitat, energy savings, and other benefits (pg. 120)
 - **Target Goal:** Plant and maintain at least 90,000 trees citywide by 2021 (pg. 120)
 - Support the planting of 20,000 trees annually on residential and public properties.
5. Convey the critical role of a healthy tree canopy to climate resilience, sustainable neighborhood/city building, and public health.

Core Items & Necessities:

- **Program Design:**
 - Attend and support biweekly planning meetings with the core project team, including representatives from LA Corps, City Plants, LA Department of Water and Power, City of Los Angeles, Koreatown Youth and Community Center, the US Forest Service, and others.
 - Create, design, and implement training program curriculum and toolkits for Tree Ambassadors.
 - Curriculum Design: Craft a schedule of topics for 12 training sessions
 - Toolkit Design: Create a “toolkit” or activity workbook for Tree Ambassadors according to curriculum schedule.
 - Create, design, and print all necessary program materials.
 - Create and implement a bilingual communications and advertising campaign promoting the benefits of tree planting for urban cooling, public health, and climate resilience.
 - Identify target neighborhoods based on available urban heat, urban tree canopy, and CalEnviroScreen 3.0 data.
- **Tree Ambassadors:**
 - Hire, onboard, and manage, 8 - 10 part time Tree Ambassadors from target neighborhoods for 12 months, for up to 40 hours per month
 - Ensure Tree Ambassadors are equipped with all necessary materials in a timely manner
- **Tree Ambassador Training:**
 - Co-host bilingual Tree Ambassador trainings online and/or in person, while following COVID-19 safety protocols, once per month
 - Assist in logistics, materials prep, and coordination for monthly trainings
- **Program Evaluation:**
 - Suggest program evaluation metrics
 - Support the tracking of program progress according to suggested and agreed upon metrics, which could include:
 - Number of trees planted
 - Number of “Commitment to Water forms secured Number of yard tree orders submitted
 - Number of Angelenos engaged
- **Reporting:**
 - Generate a final report on the successes, challenges, and drawbacks of the year long Tree Ambassadors Program, providing recommendations for future improvement and scalability

About the City Plants Program:

City Plants is a public-private partnership between the City of Los Angeles, the LA Department of Water and Power, the Los Angeles Conservation Corps, four other local non-profits, and the wider community of Los Angeles. The purpose is to invest in LA’s urban forest and maximize the benefits that trees provide. City Plants is funded through LADWP’s energy efficiency program and tracks the energy that trees save by shading buildings. Through the City Plants

program, non-profit agencies plant, deliver and distribute approximately 20,000 trees through each of City Plants' three program "branches," which include:

- **Yard Tree Delivery** – We deliver 5-gallon shade trees to residents of the City of Los Angeles. Residents can order their trees online and they will be delivered to their home. We ask for information that helps us determine the energy efficiency of a tree during the online application process.
- **Yard Tree Adoption Events** – We adopt out 5-gallon trees – both shade trees and fruit trees – at community events throughout the City. Residents can sign up for a tree at the event and take it home. We ask each constituent to provide us with the information that helps us determine the energy efficiency of the tree during the application process. During COVID, we've switched to a curbside pick-up model.
- **Street Tree Planting** – Angelenos can request that we plant a tree in the parkway in front of their home, or we plant trees along transportation corridors, around schools, and in business districts. These trees are 15-gallon trees rather than the 5-gallon trees intended for private property plantings. Residents must currently sign a "Commitment to Water" form and agree to take on tree care in order to participate in this program, unless outside funds and grants are available for maintenance.

Proposal Evaluation and Selection

1. **Proposal Evaluation and Selection Process:** Each proposal received in response to this RFP will be evaluated by Corps management staff to determine if it meets all the mandatory elements. If it does and is considered responsive, Corps management staff will review the proposals based on the evaluation criteria below and select the prospective contractor. The Corps reserves the right to schedule interviews with the top two selected bidders after receipt of proposals and prior to award of the contract, if deemed necessary. Interviews shall be no more than 20 minutes in length with 10 minutes for Q&A. City Plants personnel may sit in on the interviews as well. However, the ultimate determination will be made by Corps management staff.
2. **Proposal Evaluation Criteria**
 - a. The following represent the principal selection criteria that will be considered during the evaluation process:
 - i. **Mandatory Elements:** Proposals will not be considered unless they meet all of the following mandatory criteria:
 1. The agency has no conflict of interest with regard to any other work performed by the agency in California.
 2. The agency adheres to the instructions in this RFP for preparing and submitting proposals.
 3. The agency is able to comply with the requirements of this RFP.
 - ii. **Technical Criteria:** Those proposals who have met each of the mandatory requirements will be evaluated on the following:
 1. Responsiveness of the proposal to clearly state the work to be performed as evidenced by:
 - a. Comprehensiveness of a work plan

- b. Realistic time estimates of each major segment of the work plan and the estimated number of hours for each staff level including consultants assigned.

- iii. Cost of the services.

3. Disputes and Protests

- a. Bidders who have submitted a proposal may protest the award of the contract.

The process for protesting the award is as follows:

- i. Protests must be filed in writing by email to enethercott@lacorps.org or hand-delivered to the attention of Elisa Nethercott, Chief Compliance Officer at the Corps Administrative Offices (PO Box 861659, CA 90086-1658) by close-of-business on Friday, April 23, 2021. All protests are public information after the protest period ends.
- ii. All protests must state the basis for the protest in clear terms. The basis of the protest must be a violation of a state or federal contracting law, rule or regulation applicable to the contracting process.
- iii. The Corps will review protests that meet the above conditions.
- iv. During any part of the review or consideration, the protestor may be asked to clarify or amplify statements or to provide proof of claims or other statements. Any such requests must be fully responded to within the time designated by the Corps. In the event a protester fails to respond, the protest will be dismissed, and no further protest will be accepted relative to this RFP.
- v. The Corps' Chief Executive Officer will review the protest and issue a written response that is intended as a complete and final answer to the protest. The answer will be issued no later than Friday, June 4, 2021.

Proposal Development:

1. Proposal Format

- a. Proposals shall be prepared on standard 8" x 11" recycled paper, printed as a double-sided document and secured with a staple or small binder clip. Electronic submissions (preferably as one pdf) are strongly encouraged. The proposal shall not exceed 10 pages.

2. Proposal Contents: The response must include the following items:

- a. **Cover Letter** – A cover letter signed by the authorized representative of the agency which contains a commitment to provide the services described with the personnel specified in the proposal response and a statement disclosing or denying any interest, financial or otherwise, that any employee or member of the Corps may have in the proposing agency or proposed project. Include name, address, and email for the person to be contacted for additional information and to schedule oral interview, if deemed necessary.
- b. **Work Plan** — the Work Plan shall include a summary of the understanding of this project and a detailed description of the work to be performed, including time estimates, deliverables and proposed staffing for the services. This work plan

should also include an outline of the training program curriculum for the Tree Ambassador program.

- c. **Qualifications of the Agency** — Describe previous experience with similar type and scope of work and expertise in the field of climate resilience outreach, community engagement, and education, urban heat community engagement, and urban tree equity.
- d. **Cost for Services** — Provide the total cost for performing the required services. The proposed fee is to include all of the Bidder's expenses for labor, communications, travel and other miscellaneous expenses.
- e. Describe any known relationships that exist between your staff and Corps' staff and Board members.
- f. Describe other services and resources available through this proposed engagement.
- g. The completed Bidder Questionnaire and W9 form must be included with the RFP response. If a Non-disclosure and Confidentiality Agreement is attached to this RFP, then it must be submitted with the RFP response.

RFP Terms and Conditions:

Bid response and date requirements:

Due to the nature of the RFP, Los Angeles Conservation Corps (the "LA Conservation Corps") will only accept one bid proposal from each bidder.

All hard copy bids must be submitted to:

Los Angeles Conservation Corps
1400 N. Spring St.
Los Angeles, California 90012
(Mailing: Post Office Box 15868 Los Angeles, CA 90086)
Attn: Jonathan Mason, Sr. Program Manager

All electronic bids must be submitted to Jonathan Mason at jmason@lacorps.org.

All proposals must be submitted by 5:00 pm on March 10, 2021.

Communication Regarding RFP:

If you have any questions regarding the bid process or need clarification on a question within this RFP, you may contact Jonathan Mason, Sr. Program Manager (the "Staff Contact") by e-mail at jmason@lacorps.org.

To ensure fairness to all bidders responding to this RFP, it is forbidden for a bidder to contact any board member or employee of LA Conservation Corps to solicit information regarding the progress of this RFP. If any bidder attempts to solicit information they will automatically be disqualified and eliminated from consideration. For clarification purposes only, your agency may receive a request from the Staff Contact requesting that you provide additional information or

clarify information in your RFP response. Your answer to the request must be in writing and returned to the Staff Contact via direct mail or e-mail.

Pricing: Pricing must include subtotals, taxes, and all other incidental costs (i.e., taxes, shipping fees, travel expenses, installation costs) for the services or goods. If no changes have been requested by LA Conservation Corps or by bidder then the pricing submitted will be the price used during formation of an agreement, at which time the proposed pricing will be considered binding based on the terms and conditions of the agreement.

Withdrawal of Bid: A bidder may withdraw their proposal without prejudice prior to the notice of selection of bidder by submitting a written request to the Staff Contact for removal from the bidding process.

All bids received shall be evaluated with the emphasis placed on the bidder's ability to perform the services or provide the goods required by LA Conservation Corps.

Selection of Bidder: When a selection is made, LA Conservation Corps will notify each bidder if they were selected or not selected to provide the services or goods. LA Conservation Corps will not give any bidder information regarding why they *did not win* the award of business.

Retention of the Bid: LA Conservation Corps reserves the right to retain all bids. LA Conservation Corps also retains the right to reject and waive non-substantial irregularities in any proposal or all proposals, also to reject one part of a proposal and accept the other.

Limitation: The RFP does not commit LA Conservation Corps to award a contract, to pay any costs incurred in the preparation of a response to this RFP or to procure or contract for services or goods. LA Conservation Corps reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals received as a result of this RFP, to negotiate with all qualified sources, to waive formalities, to postpone award or to cancel in part or in its entirety this RFP if it is in the best interest of the Corps to do so.

Rejection or Failure to Accept Terms and Conditions of the Agreement: If a bidder fails to agree to accept terms and conditions of the agreement after notification of winning the award of contract, the pending award will be nullified and offered to the runner up from the analysis where the runner up bidder meets all requirements of the bidding process or LA Conservation Corps will initiate another RFP process.

Non-Exclusive Agreement: LA Conservation Corps will make all efforts to honor the primary bidder that has won the award of contract, however, if it is detrimental to the agency to honor the contract then LA Conservation Corps reserves the right to purchase the goods or services from another company.

Contractual Requirements: The contract award will not be final until the Corps and the prospective contractor have executed a contractual agreement. The bidder to whom award is

made shall execute a written agreement with LA Conservation Corps after notice of the award has been initiated. Terms and conditions of award will be by mutual consent by both the recipient of award and LA Conservation Corps. The contract shall be made in the form adopted by Los Angeles Conservation Corps in these specifications. The bidder warrants that bidder possesses, or has arranged through subcontracts, all capital and other equipment, labor and materials to carry out and perform the services or provide the goods hereunder in compliance with all applicable federal, state, county, city laws, rules ordinances, and regulations.

Attachment(s): Bidder Questionnaire