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REQUEST FOR INTEREST (RFI) Solicitation No. RFI-24-035-HSEO

for CLIMATE POLLUTION REDUCTION U.S. Environmental Protection Agency EPA-R-OAR-CPRGI-23-07

The Hawai'i State Energy Office (HSEO), as established by Act 122 Session Laws of Hawai'i 2019, and codified in Hawai'i Revised Statutes (HRS) §196-71, is tasked with leading efforts to achieve the State's renewable energy and clean transportation goals. HSEO engages with the private sector to help lead efforts to achieve renewable energy and clean transportation goals and is the State's primary government entity for supporting the Hawai'i Clean Energy Initiative.

The State of Hawai'i Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission (Commission), created by Act 32 Session Laws of Hawai'i 2017, was established to provide policy direction, facilitation, coordination, and planning among state and county agencies, federal agencies, and other partners as appropriate and establish mitigation... strategies and goals to help guide planning and implementation of climate mitigation actions statewide.

The City and County of Honolulu Office of Climate Change, Sustainability and Resiliency (Resilience Office), as mandated by the City Charter, is tasked with tracking climate change science and potential impacts on City facilities, coordinating actions and policies of departments within the City to increase community preparedness, developing resilient infrastructure in response to the effects from climate change, and integrating sustainable and environmental values into City plans, programs, and policies.

This solicitation seeks interested partners to be included in a federal grant application to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for the [Climate Pollution Reduction Grants \(CPRG\) Implementation Grants](#), due to the EPA on April 1, 2024. HSEO, the Commission, and the Resilience Office will form the "Coalition", collectively applying for the CPRG Implementation Grants. HSEO will serve as the lead applicant.

The Hawai'i State Energy Office is committed to providing equal access consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Americans with Disabilities Amendment Act of 2008 (ADAAA), and other state and federal laws. If you have a disability that may restrict your ability to meaningfully participate in this solicitation, we will provide you with reasonable and appropriate accommodation at no cost to you. If you need an auxiliary aid/service or other reasonable accommodation, please contact Kathy Yim by phone at

808-460-7995 or by email at kathy.yim@hawaii.gov. Requests made as early as possible will allow adequate time so that we may best serve you.

For screen reader users: The Hawai'i State Energy Office recognizes the use of diacritical markings of the Hawaiian language such as the 'okina (also called a glottal stop) and the kahakō (also called a macron). Please note that screen readers may not read or pronounce the Hawaiian words correctly.

Deadline for Applications: January 5, 2024 by 4:30 p.m. (HST)

SUMMARY

Pursuant to Hawai'i Administrative Rules (HAR) §3-122-16.31, this Request for Interest is being issued for the Coalition to select partners to collaborate on a full application in response to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) number EPA-R-OAR-CPRGI-23-07, Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) Section 60114 "Climate Pollution Reduction Grants".

As described by the EPA, the intent of EPA-R-OAR-CPRGI-23-07 is to enable states, municipalities, tribes, and territories to achieve the following goals:

- 1) Implement ambitious measures that will achieve significant cumulative greenhouse gas (GHG) reductions by 2030 and beyond;
- 2) Pursue measures that will achieve substantial community benefits (such as reduction of criteria air pollutants (CAPs) and hazardous air pollutants (HAPs)), particularly in low-income and disadvantaged communities;
- 3) Complement other funding sources to maximize these GHG reductions and community benefits; and,
- 4) Pursue innovative policies and programs that are replicable and can be "scaled up" across multiple jurisdictions.

As identified by the EPA, applicable projects include, but are not limited to:

Transportation Sector

- Infrastructure projects that increase the share of electric light-, medium-, and heavy-duty vehicles, and to expand electric vehicle charging infrastructure.
- New or expanded transportation infrastructure projects to facilitate public transit, micro-mobility, car sharing, bicycle, and pedestrian modes.
- Incentive programs to purchase zero-emission vehicles and equipment to replace older heavy-duty diesel vehicles and equipment.
- Programs to increase efficiency and reduce GHG emissions at ports and freight terminals, such as vehicle or equipment idle reduction, vessel-speed reduction, equipment electrification, and shore power.

Electric Power Sector

- Installation of renewable energy and energy storage systems on state, municipal, or multi-dwelling facilities serving disadvantaged communities.
- Programs to support smart-grid and/or behind-the-meter technologies to reduce power losses, reduce peak demand, and enable consumer participation in distributed generation.

- Development of distributed or community-scale renewable energy generation, microgrids, or vehicle-to-grid infrastructure in disadvantaged communities, including remote and rural regions.

Buildings Sector

- Implementation projects that install end-use energy efficiency measures in existing government-owned, commercial, and residential buildings.
- Programs to promote recovery and destruction of high-global warming potential (GWP) hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) used in existing appliances, air conditioning system commercial chillers.

Industrial Sector

- Programs to support or incentivize the implementation of energy efficiency measures in the industry, including energy audits, strategic energy management, equipment upgrades, and waste heat utilization.
- Programs to support or incentivize GHG reductions in industrial energy use and industrial processes, including the use of low/no carbon fuels, electrification, renewable energy, and process improvements.
- Programs to develop, expand, and support markets for low-embodied carbon materials and products, such as cement and steel.

Waste, Water, and Sustainable Materials Management Sector

- Projects and programs that reduce or divert waste (including food and/or yard waste) through improved production practices, improved collection services, and increased reuse or recycling rates.
- Projects and programs to expand composting and bio-digestion infrastructure to reduce GHG emissions and increase the beneficial use of organic waste.
- Projects and programs that reduce construction and demolition waste through building reuse, deconstruction, and material diversion and reuse.

Agricultural Sector

- Incentive programs to fund electric agricultural equipment technologies.
- Technologies and techniques that reduce nitrous oxide emissions from fertilizer application.
- Incentives to promote anaerobic digesters to capture methane and generate renewable energy or produce renewable fuel.

Carbon Removal Measures

- Policies to promote improved forest management to enhance carbon stocks in forested land.
- Urban afforestation and green infrastructure programs and projects.
- Restoration of degraded lands (e.g., brownfields, mine reclamation) and forested lands to enhance carbon sequestration.
- Policies and programs to enhance carbon stocks in coastal estuaries, such as wetlands and mangroves.

ELIGIBILITY

This partnership opportunity is open to the following entities: County and state agencies, universities, educational institutions, and non-profit organizations.

For-profit organizations are not eligible for selection as partners. Opportunities for for-profit organizations to participate in competitive procurements funded by this grant may be available in the future.

SELECTION CRITERIA

The Coalition is considering partners with one or more of the following characteristics and capabilities to participate in the CPRG Implementation Grant and collaborate on the preparation and submittal of the full application: Greenhouse Gas Emission Reduction; Greenhouse Gas Sequestration; Community and Labor Engagement; Investing in the American Workforce; Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility; and other contributions.

Interested entities are asked to submit applications describing their proposed contributions, anticipated project cost, scope, and timeline. The following criteria will be used to score submissions, up to a maximum of 200 points. If any criteria are not applicable, applicants shall indicate this in their submissions.

1) Overall Project Summary and Approach (30 points)

- a) **Description of GHG Reduction Measures. (20 points)** The application will be evaluated on the quality of the response and the extent to which it:
 - i) Provides detailed description(s) of the proposed GHG reduction measure(s) proposed; and,
 - ii) Describes the major features, tasks, milestones, and potential risks for the measure(s) proposed.
- b) **Transformative Impact (10 points)**
 - i) Demonstrates that the GHG reduction measure(s) have the potential to create transformative opportunities or impacts that can lead to significant additional GHG emissions reductions.

2) Demonstration of Funding Need (20 points)

- a) Demonstrates a strong need for EPA CPRG implementation funding;
- b) Explains if and how other funding streams have been explored, and why these sources are not sufficient; and,
- c) Lists federal and non-federal funding sources the applicant has applied for, has secured, and/or will secure to implement the GHG reduction measures, if applicable.

3) Environmental Results – GHG Reduction Potential Measurements (30 points)

- a) Identifies expected outputs and outcomes, for each GHG measure, including

listing cumulative GHG emission reductions and listing co-pollution (CAP and HAP) emission changes as outcomes, among others. For information on how to account for and estimate GHG reduction potential, see [EPA's Guidance Document on Calculating GHG Emissions](#).

- b) Provides clear methodology used for GHG reduction accounting.

4) Readiness and Ease of Implementation (20 points)

- a) Demonstrates understanding of permit and regulatory approvals needed;
- b) Explains the ease of implementation including documented community support, identified workforce, or land rights secured;
- c) Demonstrates that the technical potential exists today (e.g. Technical Readiness Level (TRL) 7 or higher);
- d) Includes additional factors that show ease of implementation (e.g. past successful projects); and
- e) Describes whether the implementing entity has current authority to carry out the measure and if they do not, articulate the plan and timing for obtaining it during the grant period.

5) Cost Effectiveness of GHG Reductions (20 points)

- a) Describes the cost-effectiveness of the GHG reduction measures in terms of the dollars requested from this grant divided by cumulative GHG metric tons of CO₂-equivalent emission reductions. If additional funding has been required from elsewhere, this should be indicated and included in the calculation.

6) Low-Income and Disadvantaged Communities (45 points)

a) Community Benefits (30 points)

- i) Provides a comprehensive discussion and assessment of expected benefits and/or avoided disbenefits to low-income and disadvantaged communities from the proposed GHG reduction measures. The application will be evaluated on the quality of the response and the extent to which it demonstrates, as applicable, concrete strategies and commitments to bring direct benefit to low-income and disadvantaged communities. Benefits may include cost savings, employment opportunities, reduction in negative impacts, or other direct improvements to the quality of life for those affected.

b) Community Engagement (15 points)

- i) Explains how input from low-income and disadvantaged communities will be incorporated into the proposed mitigation measures; and
- ii) Describes how meaningful engagement with low-income and disadvantaged communities will be continuously included in the implementation of the GHG reduction measures.

7) Experience (10 points)

- a) Describes the applicant's experience and role in implementing similar projects.
- b) Includes resumes of key staff.

8) Budget and Timely Expenditure of Grant Funds (25 points)

a) Budget Detail (15 points)

- i) Provides a detailed breakdown by funding type in the proper budget category for human resources and deployment of each activity for which the applicant is requesting funding.
- ii) Provides the implementation timeline for each measure, including key metrics and milestones for specific tasks, and discuss the key actions needed to meet the project goals and objectives by the end of the grant period.

b) Reasonableness of Cost (10 points)

- i) The application will be evaluated on the quality of the response and the extent to which the proposed grant expenditures are reasonable for accomplishing the proposed goals, objectives, and measurable environmental outcomes vis-à-vis the metrics described in the application.

SUBMISSION FORMAT

Applicants shall submit their interest in partnering in the following format:

- Coversheet containing:
 - Partner type(s):
 - 1) County or state agency,
 - 2) University,
 - 3) Educational Institution (includes K-12 institutions, private and public),
 - 4) Non-profit organization.
 - Company and contact information:
 - 1) Legal name of business,
 - 2) Address,
 - 3) Contact name,
 - 4) Telephone number,
 - 5) Email address, and
 - 6) Website address.
- A maximum five (5) page description of the proposed contributions of the grant partner, anticipated project cost, scope, and timeline.
- Names and resumes of key executive employee(s).
- A statement that the applicant understands that HSEO reserves the right to incorporate or not incorporate in the full application any recommendations presented in response to this RFI.
- A statement that the applicant understands that neither HSEO nor the interested provider has any obligation under the RFI.

Applicants may amend or clarify applications by filing a new application at any time prior to the submission deadline.

SUBMISSION DEADLINE

To be considered for this grant opportunity, applications must be submitted via email and received no later than **4:30 p.m. (Hawai'i Standard Time) on January 5, 2024.** Timely receipt of the application shall be evidenced by the date and time of email delivery. Any applications received after this date and time will be automatically disqualified. Facsimiles and/or hard copies of any application will not be accepted.

Applications shall be sent via email to dbedt.hseo.solicitations@hawaii.gov, with "Application for Solicitation No. RFI-24-035-HSEO" in the email subject line.

QUESTIONS

All procedural questions regarding this RFI shall be submitted in writing via email to dbedt.hseo.solicitations@hawaii.gov. Only questions received by 4:30 p.m. (Hawai'i Standard Time) on January 1, 2023 will be accepted.

AWARD

All applicants shall be notified in writing of their selection or non-selection as a grant partner. If the grant is awarded, a notice of award shall be posted on the State Procurement Office website.

CONFIDENTIAL SUBMISSIONS

If a person believes that any portion of a proposal, offer, or correspondence contains information such as designated trade secrets or other proprietary data that should be withheld as confidential, then the head of the purchasing agency should be so advised in writing and provided with justification to support the confidentiality claim. Cost is not considered confidential and will not be withheld.

The material designated as confidential shall be readily separable from the submission in order to facilitate eventual public inspection of the non-confidential portion of the submission.

The head of the purchasing agency or designee shall consult with the Attorney General, who shall make a written determination in accordance with HRS Chapter 92F of whether the material designated as confidential is subject to disclosure. If the request for confidentiality is denied, such information shall be disclosed as public information, unless the person appeals the denial to the Office of Information Practices in accordance with HRS §92F-15.5(a).

INCOMPLETE SUBMISSIONS

Applications received by the submission deadline but missing substantive information will be scored according to the criteria above.

TECHNICAL IRREGULARITIES

Technical irregularities are matters of form rather than substance evident from the submission, or insignificant mistakes that can be waived or corrected without prejudice to other applicants. The Procurement Officer may waive such irregularities or allow an applicant to correct them if doing so is in the best interest of the State. Technical irregularities will not have a material impact on scores.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Costs for developing submissions or assisting the full application development process are solely the responsibility of the applicant. Whether or not any award results from this RFI, HSEO will not reimburse such costs.

HSEO reserves the right to cancel this RFI and to reject any and all submissions in whole or in part when it is determined to be in the best interest of the State.

HSEO reserves the right to incorporate or not incorporate in the full application any recommendations presented in response to this RFI.

Neither HSEO nor any interested provider shall have any obligation under this request.

All submissions become the property of the State of Hawai'i.

Mark B. Glick
Chief Energy Officer
Hawai'i State Energy Office
Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism

(Internet Posting: November 17, 2023)