

## **Great Lake Business Network**

### **Request for Proposal**

#### **An Organizational Assessment and Recommendations to Advance Equity, Diversity and Inclusion**

Proposals Due: March 15, 2021

The Great Lakes Business Network seeks a qualified consultant to help the Network review and enhance the diversity, equity, and inclusion of our business members. Within this request, the Network is seeking qualified consultants that can help carry out a two-phase process:

Phase I: Conduct an organizational assessment of equity in our organizational governance, recruiting and member outreach, and management of our issues; and develop a set of recommendations and a strategy to implement changes that will enhance the inclusion and diversity of underrepresented populations, including racial, ethnic, gender, and physical ability, in our membership;

Phase II: Guide our organization to implement this strategy and reshape our internal policies, practices, and programs through an equity lens. with regular contact over the course of the project;

#### **Background on the Great Lakes Business Network:**

The Great Lakes Business Network (GLBN) is currently more than 170 members across several states, working on issues that include:

- decommissioning the Line 5 oil pipeline at the Straits of Mackinac;
- reducing nutrient pollution causing harmful algal blooms in Lake Erie and elsewhere;
- advancing a clean energy economy in the Great Lakes region that is equitable for all users.

The Great Lakes Business Network was established in 2016, and is co-managed by the National Wildlife Federation and the Groundwork Center for Resilient Communities. GLBN members are owners, CEO's and top management of businesses of all sizes and industries across the Great Lakes region.

#### **Proposal Requirements:**

We are seeking qualified contractors that can develop a proposal to be carried out over 18 to 24 months to complete the following work:

1. Perform an assessment of GLBN internal operations and governance structure, including but not limited to messaging, recruiting, networking, communications and member engagement strategies.
  - a. Desired outcomes:
    - i. A list of specific growth and improvement areas for GLBN processes with specific attention to increasing inclusion of underrepresented populations within the Network;

- ii. Clear recommendations of what changes GLBN must make to achieve a Network where GLBN members of underrepresented populations feel welcome, included, valued, and interested in engaging and participating consistently;
  - iii. Clear recommendations to improve the GLBN governance structure that outline implementable changes that are needed to create a more equitable distribution of power and foster inclusive decision making, including recommendations for a strategy to identify and approach business leaders that would be appropriate appointees to fill 2-4 openings on the GLBN executive committee;
  - iv. Clear recommendations to improve messaging, issue framing, communications and external engagement to offer a more valuable experience for minority owned businesses, that also considers other GLBN goals of engaging larger businesses and businesses from new geographic areas;
  - v. Draft language for a “GLBN Values” agreement for approval by the GLBN Executive Committee approval, to accompany the GLBN Membership Agreement, that members will agree to uphold when joining the GLBN.
- 2. Utilize interviews, surveys, and documented survey analysis to assess and inventory equity and justice practices and values within the current GLBN membership.
  - a. Desired outcomes:
    - i. Work with GLBN Equity and Justice committee and Equity and Justice staff at GLBN businesses to inventory resources and expertise within the Network that can be shared more broadly with GLBN membership.
    - ii. Create a brief analytic report that succinctly summarizes survey diversity results for the GLBN membership, identifies the five greatest opportunities for improvement, provides actionable direction for members and staff to improve inside each area of opportunity, and sets reasonable goals for growth in Year 1 and 2.
    - iii. Consult with GLBN membership to understand their vision and goals for equity and justice as a part of the GLBN. Summarize key takeaways to be integrated into the GLBN strategic growth plan.
- 3. Host trainings for Great Lakes Business Network members to build equity and justice competencies, tailored to the needs and interests of business leadership.
  - a. Desired outcomes:
    - i. Add value to the GLBN membership experience by offering relevant educational opportunities that members can apply to their business operations.
    - ii. Improve GLBN member ability and comfort level to engage with GLBN initiatives and contribute to creating more equitable policy and advocacy for the Great Lakes region
    - iii. Improve member competencies and awareness so that members feel confident highlighting equity and justice considerations in authentic member statements and messaging

### **Desired Competencies and Qualifications**

- Experience working with owner of businesses of all sizes, and engaging busy business leaders;
- Ability and willingness to communicate the importance of this work to business leaders with equity and justice competencies ranging from limited to advanced;
- Ability to generate enthusiasm and create valuable training and educational opportunities for GLBN members and staff who will voluntarily participate in this work;
- Willingness to collaborate with NGO staff, business leaders, and other equity and diversity consultants or staff housed at NWF, Groundwork and within our membership;
- Experience developing practical strategic plans that incorporate DEIJ principles for business organizations that have been successfully implemented;
- Ability to conduct interviews, build surveys, host trainings and educational programming;
- Understanding and appreciation of the Great Lakes and the issues that GLBN is pursuing;
- Ability to implement plans with broad coalitions and business organizations over the course of 12 to 24 months, guiding and holding accountable to transform policies, programs, and culture;

Note: The Groundwork Center for Resilient Communities, a managing partner of the GLBN, is also seeking a consultant to conduct a similar assessment of its organizational procedures. Individuals or organizations that are interested and able to work with both Groundwork and GLBN simultaneously are encouraged to submit a proposal for both projects, although individual responses will be considered.

### **Project Timeline:**

This project will be conducted in two phases:

- First phase will be to conduct an assessment of GLBN internal operations, issue management and governance structure, and develop a set of recommendations to increase inclusion of underrepresented populations within the network membership and leadership. This first phase will be completed by December 2021;
- Second phase will be to work with GLBN staff to implement those recommendations within the issue groups and Executive Committee. This second phase will be completed by November 2022.

### **Project Budget:**

The contract for this two-year project will not exceed \$40,000.

### **How to Submit a Proposal**

Send your proposal for this work to Jim Lively, Great Lakes Business Network via email at [jim\(at\)groundworkcenter.org](mailto:jim(at)groundworkcenter.org) no later than Close of Business on Monday, March 15, 2021. We expect to select a consultant by early April with work beginning shortly thereafter. If you have questions regarding work completed to date or any other inquiries regarding this proposal, please submit them to [jim\(at\)groundworkcenter.org](mailto:jim(at)groundworkcenter.org) via email with the subject line "Groundwork Equity Consultant" by February 26th. Responses to all questions will be prepared in a single written document that will be shared by email with all interested applicants by March 5th.