

# Request for Proposals:

The Groundwork Center for Resilient Communities seeks an equity consultant to:

Phase I: Conduct an organizational assessment of equity in our organizational culture and programming, and develop a strategy for reshaping our programs, internal policies, and practices. (\$5,000 - \$8,000 estimated)

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 12 to 24 months, which may include training. (up to \$20,000)

We are accepting proposals for up to \$28,000 over two years to engage in this work. Please see below for a more comprehensive description.

## Background

**History:** The Groundwork Center was founded in 1995 (formerly the Michigan Land Use Institute) as a citizen-based organization that advances solutions to Michigan's most pressing economic and environmental issues. Over 25 years, we have grown in two significant ways. First, we now have 23 staff members and contractors and 17 board and advisory council members. Second, where we once focused on the 10-county region of northwest Michigan, our programs now also have greater statewide reach and impact. We continue to have strong local programming, and we also house the Great Lakes Business Network and the Michigan Climate Action Network, two major statewide networks that have diverse constituencies. We also lead the Ten Cents a Meal Campaign, which is now in schools around the state. In addition to our main office in Traverse City, we now have a second office in Petoskey, and new staff members in Lansing, Ann Arbor, and metro Detroit.

### Background to this RFP

For several years we have been working to incorporate equity into our work, and make sure our programs benefit marginalized communities. We have taken steps including having staff attend anti-racism training, and creating a Statement of Commitment to Equity and Diversity. However, we recognize that we have much to learn. Also, it has become very clear that racial and social equity are intertwined with our program areas to the point where we cannot transform our transportation, food systems, energy production, or address the climate crisis without prioritizing racial and social equity and transforming our organization to be more fully aligned with these values.

This year our growing commitment to center equity in our work and organization reached a tipping point, and our organization committed to a larger effort. Our entire staff completed an 8-week white supremacy and anti-racism training, we formed an Equity Task Force composed of staff and board members, and we developed a plan for how we can transform our

organization to center equity in three areas: 1) Our programs, 2) Our internal culture and policies, and 3) Educating our staff and board.

One of the key challenges we face is that we currently have very little racial diversity among our staff, board, and advisory council, and we acknowledge that we will have blind spots in this work. We are seeking outside experts in equity to help guide this work by evaluating our culture and programs (Phase 1) and to help us plan and implement a path to transform our organization to prioritize equity (Phase 2).

## Qualities of a Successful Proposal

A successful proposal will demonstrate competence in each of the following areas:

- Organizational equity assessment, including hiring, retention, and other policies and procedures, and also assessment of equity and barriers within organizational culture. Experience with nonprofits preferred.
- Equity program assessment to identify strengths and weaknesses in our programs and projects with regard to equity.
- Ability to implement equity plans with organizations over the course of 12 to 24 months, guiding and holding accountable to transform policies, programs, and culture.

### Additional considerations:

An understanding of food and farming systems, transportation, energy, and climate change work and the impacts of these issues on communities is preferred. Willing to be responsive to questions and information from Groundwork staff and board is essential to do this work well. We are seeking not only to come out of this process with concrete improvements to our program, policies, and culture, but also to develop internal capacity for repeating and refining the process on an ongoing basis. Knowledge of Indigenous cultures, history, and lived experience in Michigan is preferred. The Great Lakes Business Network (GLBN), a collaborative partnership managed by Groundwork and National Wildlife Federation, is also seeking a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion consultant. Individuals or organizations that are interested and able to work with both Groundwork and GLBN simultaneously are encouraged to submit a proposal.

## How to Submit a Proposal

Send your proposal for this work to Meghan McDermott, Director of Programs, via email at [meghan\(at\)groundworkcenter.org](mailto:meghan(at)groundworkcenter.org) **no later than 11:59pm on Monday, March 15, 2021**. We expect to select a consultant by early April with work ideally beginning shortly thereafter. If you have questions regarding work completed to date or any other inquiries regarding this proposal, please submit them to [jobs\(at\)groundworkcenter.org](mailto:jobs(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.

Your proposal should include:

1. Scope of work and timeline.
2. Summary of your team and your qualifications, including your approach, expertise, and interest in the scope of work outlined above.
3. Budget and cost breakdown.
4. Three references including contact name, email, and telephone number.

### **Additional Background Information:**

The Groundwork Center for Resilient Communities is a nonprofit collaborating respectfully with citizens and leaders to protect everything we love about Michigan. We have 23 staff and contractors and a board of directors and advisory council with 17 members. Our primary focus is on the 10 county region of northern Michigan, and our programs also have statewide reach and impact.

**Our mission** is to protect the environment, strengthen the economy, and build community. Our three main programs are Local Food & Farming, Climate & Environment, and Transportation & Community Design.

**Our vision:** We work with people to build a thriving local farm and food economy; to make our towns and villages stronger, more walkable, bike-able, and transit-friendly; and to develop local, clean energy. We seek to achieve on-the-ground results in northwest Michigan and leverage them to support other communities and improvements to state policy. All of this is designed to strengthen the local economy, protect the environment, and build community.

### **Our values:**

- Integrity - We embrace honesty and civility at all times. We base our positions on facts and double-check them for the highest standards of accuracy.
- Inclusivity - We build diverse collaborative partnerships and make a special effort to engage those who are often underrepresented, so that all have a voice and together we achieve broad-based solutions.
- Innovation - We apply best practices from across the nation to our program areas. We continuously explore home-grown strategies to improve them and we work to innovate replicable models that can help other places.
- Communication - We believe strong facts and a compelling narrative are essential to raising awareness, inspiring action, and creating change—and we emphasize clear communication in all aspects of our work.
- Results - We are a solutions-based organization. We set ambitious goals and achieve measurable outcomes that benefit people, the economy, and the environment. We work with people from all walks of life to “get to yes.”