



## **Request for Proposal: Contractor support for technical assistance to build more sustainable communities grant proposal ([EPA-OP-OSC-11-01](#))**

### **Summary:**

Smart Growth America (SGA) is preparing a grant proposal to be submitted to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to provide technical assistance to build more sustainable communities (EPA-OP-OSC-11-01). SGA and its partner not-for-profit organizations are seeking to augment team capabilities with contractor (professional consultant) expertise. SGA is accepting proposals from interested consulting firms to be a part of the SGA team that is proposing on the EPA grant. The estimated project period for the grant will begin September 1, 2011. The proposed project period (i.e., the length of the project) may be up to five (5) years.

Proposals under this SGA request are due no later than **5:00 pm Eastern Standard Time on Monday, March 14, 2011.**

EPA's evaluation of the subject grant proposal will consider, as appropriate and relevant, the qualifications, expertise, and experience of an applicant's named contractor(s), including consultants, identified in the proposal/application if the applicant demonstrates in its proposal/application that the contractor(s) was selected in compliance with the competitive Procurement Standards in 40 CFR Part 30 or 40 CFR 31.36 as appropriate. For example, an applicant must demonstrate that it selected the contractor(s) competitively or that a proper non-competitive sole-source award consistent with the regulations will be made to the contractor(s), that efforts were made to provide small and disadvantaged businesses with opportunities to compete, and that some form of cost or price analysis was conducted.

EPA will not consider the qualifications, experience, and expertise of named subawardees/subgrantees and/or named contractor(s) during the proposal/application evaluation process unless the applicant complies with these requirements.

Accordingly SGA is hereby requesting proposals from contractors in accordance with 40 CFR Part 30 as appropriate for a not-for-profit organization. This request for proposal shall be posted on the SGA web site March 7 through March 8. Contractors who have worked with SGA on similar assignments in the past may also be sent a copy of the request for proposal.

### **Contractor services requested:**

Responders to this request for proposal should present for SGA's consideration one or more standardized, "ready to go" smart growth and/or sustainable communities development tools that they propose to use and have used in the past. For the purposes of this RFP, standardized, "ready to go" tools:

- Address common barriers to smart growth and/or sustainable communities implementation found in urban, suburban, rural, and/or tribal contexts.
- Address a pressing/strategic need.
- Have already been developed and used successfully to achieve changes in local policies and/or development regulations.
- Support smart growth—development that benefits the environment, public health, the economy, and the community—as defined by the ten smart growth principles:
  - Mix land uses.
  - Take advantage of compact building design.
  - Create a range of housing opportunities and choices.
  - Create walkable neighborhoods.
  - Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place.
  - Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty, and critical environmental areas.
  - Strengthen and direct development towards existing communities.
  - Provide a variety of transportation choices.
  - Make development decisions predictable, fair, and cost effective.
  - Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration in development decisions.
  
- Support sustainable communities, encompassing the ten smart growth principles listed above and/or the following Livability Principles associated with the HUD-DOT-EPA Partnership for Sustainable Communities:
  - **Provide more transportation choices** with strategies that develop safe, reliable, and economical transportation choices to decrease household transportation costs, reduce our nation’s dependence on foreign oil, improve air quality, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and promote public health.
  - **Promote equitable, affordable housing** by expanding location- and energy-efficient housing choices that lower the combined cost of housing and transportation by saving fuel and, in turn, reducing air pollution.
  - **Enhance economic competitiveness** by enabling workers and businesses to accomplish daily activities by driving fewer miles, reducing the environmental impacts of construction and maintenance of major facilities and leading to reductions of air and water pollution.
  - **Support existing communities** by targeting federal funding toward existing communities—through strategies like transit-oriented, mixed-use development and land recycling—to increase community revitalization and the efficiency of public works investments and safeguard rural landscapes.
  - **Value communities and neighborhoods** by enhancing the unique characteristics of communities through investment in healthy, safe, and walkable neighborhoods—rural, urban, or suburban.

- Are appropriate for use on a neighborhood, community, and/or corridor scale.
- Are appropriate for use in differing local regulatory environments.
- Can be delivered quickly, ideally during one site visit and with a minimum amount of preparation time.

Additionally, the tools selected should lead to a set of suggested actionable next steps specific to the community, at the conclusion of the assistance. The description of the tools should clearly illustrate the applicant's experience delivering these tools to achieve changes in local policies and development regulations.

**Form and content of proposal:**

To be considered complete, all proposals must include:

1. A cover letter. The cover letter that accompanies your proposal must be signed by an official with the authority to commit your organization to the project and should be written on your organization's official letterhead.
2. Descriptions of one or more standardized, "ready to go" smart growth and/or sustainable communities development tools the contractor proposes to use and has used in the past. The description for each tool shall not exceed two single spaced pages of 12-point font text with one-inch margins and shall include a summary description of the tool of no more than 50 words.
3. A budget for presenting each tool in the field. The budget shall detail the cost of presenting the tool one time in one community and shall include information summarizing all relevant direct costs (e.g., personnel, fringe benefits, travel, equipment, supplies, and contractual) and indirect costs. To the extent possible, the budget should also identify anticipated travel costs, the anticipated level of effort and cost for key staff working the project (more than 20 total hours of involvement), and any other major cost categories.
4. Staff profiles and qualifications: The applicant must include short profiles of all principal staff that will have a major role in the project. These staff profiles must specifically address each individual's experience with the issues addressed by this RFP and the EPA RFP.

**Submission Dates and Times**

The deadline for receipt of proposal packages is 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time on March 14, 2011. One copy of the proposal in PDF file format must be received by Roger Millar, Director of Smart Growth America's Leadership Institute via email at [rmillar@smartgrowthamerica.org](mailto:rmillar@smartgrowthamerica.org) by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time on March 14, 2011. No late proposals will be accepted.

**SGA Consultant Review Process and Criteria**

SGA has developed the following review process and criteria in conformance with the attached SGA procurement policy.

## Review Process

- Roger Millar, Director of SGA's Leadership Institute, shall review each proposal for completeness. Only complete proposals shall advance to the next step.
- A proposal review committee shall review each proposal per the criteria listed below.
- SGA will determine which proposals meet its requirements and offer the contractors whose proposals meet SGA requirements a position on the team proposing to EPA. SGA reserves the right to reject any or all proposals as not meeting its requirements.
- Successful proposers will be notified by March 18, 2011.

## Review Criteria

1. Degree to which the applicant demonstrates expertise and experience in the smart growth and sustainable communities approaches associated with this RFP (up to 40 points).
2. Quality and likely effectiveness in addressing a pressing/strategic need of the proposed technical assistance tools and the methodology for delivering them (up to 20 points).
3. Applicant's programmatic capability and environmental results past performance (up to 20 points).
4. Cost effectiveness of applicant's proposal. Degree to which the project budget effectively uses funds as proposed in the EAP RFP (up to 20 points).

## **Pre-Proposal/Application Assistance and Communication**

Any communication regarding this proposal shall be in writing to Roger Millar at [rmillar@smartgrowthamerica.org](mailto:rmillar@smartgrowthamerica.org). SGA requests that applicants not contact other SGA staff.

## **SGA Procurement Policy and Procedures**

It is the policy of Smart Growth America that:

1. No employee, officer, or agent of SGA shall participate in the selection, award, or administration of a contract supported by Federal funds if a real or apparent conflict of interest would be involved.
2. All SGA procurement transactions shall be conducted in a manner to provide, to the maximum extent practical, open and free competition.
3. SGA procurements shall provide for, at a minimum, that paragraphs (1), (2) and (3) of this section apply.
  - (1) SGA shall avoid purchasing unnecessary items.
  - (2) Where appropriate, SGA will make an analysis of lease and purchase alternatives to determine which would be the most economical and practical procurement for the Federal Government.
  - (3) Solicitations by SGA for goods and services provide for all of the following.
    - (i) A clear and accurate description of the technical requirements for the material, product or service to be procured. In competitive procurements, such a description shall not contain features that unduly restrict competition.
    - (ii) Requirements that the bidder/offeror must fulfill and all other factors to be used in evaluating bids or proposals.
    - (iii) A description, whenever practicable, of technical requirements in terms of functions to be performed or performance required, including the range of acceptable characteristics or minimum acceptable standards.
    - (iv) The specific features of "brand name or equal" descriptions that bidders are required to meet when such items are included in the solicitation.
    - (v) The acceptance, to the extent practicable and economically feasible, of products and services dimensioned in the metric system of measurement.
    - (vi) Preference, to the extent practicable and economically feasible, for products and services that conserve natural resources and protect the environment and are energy efficient.
4. SGA shall determine the type of procuring instruments used (e.g., fixed price contracts, cost reimbursable contracts, purchase orders, and incentive contracts). The type of procuring instrument shall be appropriate for the particular procurement and for promoting the best interest of the program or project involved. The "cost-plus-a-percentage-of-cost" or "percentage of construction cost" methods of contracting shall not be used.

5. SGA shall only make contracts with responsible contractors who possess the potential ability to perform successfully under the terms and conditions of the proposed procurement. Consideration shall be given to such matters as contractor integrity, record of past performance, financial and technical resources or accessibility to other necessary resources. In certain circumstances, contracts with certain parties are restricted by funding agencies' implementation of Executive Orders 12549 and 12689, "Debarment and Suspension."
6. SGA shall, on request, make available for funding entities, pre-award review and procurement documents, such as request for proposals or invitations for bids, independent cost estimates, etc.
7. Some form of cost or price analysis shall be made and documented in the procurement files in connection with every procurement action. Price analysis may be accomplished in various ways, including the comparison of price quotations submitted, market prices and similar indicia, together with discounts. Cost analysis is the review and evaluation of each element of cost to determine reasonableness, allocability and allowability.
8. SGA procurement records and files for purchases in excess of the small purchase threshold (currently \$100,000) shall include the following at a minimum: Basis for contractor selection; justification for lack of competition when competitive bids or offers are not obtained; and basis for award cost or price.
9. SGA shall include, in addition to provisions to define a sound and complete agreement, the following provisions in all contracts. The following provisions shall also be applied to subcontracts.
  - (a) Contracts in excess of the small purchase threshold shall contain contractual provisions or conditions that allow for administrative, contractual, or legal remedies in instances in which a contractor violates or breaches the contract terms, and provide for such remedial actions as may be appropriate.
  - (b) All contracts in excess of the small purchase threshold shall contain suitable provisions for termination by the recipient, including the manner by which termination shall be effected and the basis for settlement. In addition, such contracts shall describe conditions under which the contract may be terminated for default as well as conditions where the contract may be terminated because of circumstances beyond the control of the contractor.
  - (c) Except as otherwise required by statute, an award that requires the contracting (or subcontracting) for construction or facility improvements shall provide for requirements relating to bid guarantees, performance

bonds, and payment bonds unless the construction contract or subcontract exceeds \$100,000.

10. All negotiated contracts (except those for less than the small purchase threshold) awarded by recipients shall include a provision to the effect that the recipient, EPA, the Comptroller General of the United States, or any of their duly authorized representatives, shall have access to any books, documents, papers and records of the contractor which are directly pertinent to a specific program for the purpose of making audits, examinations, excerpts and transcriptions.
11. All contracts, including small purchases, awarded by SGA and SGA contractors shall contain the procurement provisions of the appendix to Circular A-110, as applicable.