

## **Request for Proposals**

### **Forest and Wood Products Sector and Workforce Analysis**

This RFP opens immediately and closes on Monday, July 10<sup>th</sup> at 11:59pm. Proposals received after this time may not be considered.

#### **1. Purpose**

The Forest and Wood Products Inclusion Council, facilitated by the U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities, Inc. (the Endowment; [www.usendowment.org](http://www.usendowment.org)), seeks proposals for an analysis of the U.S. forest and wood products sector as it relates to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI).

The Inclusion Council envisions a future where the U.S. forest and wood products sector, reflecting the diverse makeup of our society, is committed to equitable workplaces where people feel valued, safe, and that they belong, so that all people can sustain and benefit from forests.

In order to actualize this vision, we need to establish a baseline level of data related to our workforce. We want to better understand:

- Who is currently represented in our workforce and who is missing?
- What efforts are being deployed to recruit new and diverse talent for our sector?
- What are the gaps and barriers prohibiting new talent from entering this sector?
- What are organizations doing to bolster diversity, equity, and inclusion, and how they measure success?
- How might investing in diversity, equity and inclusion support our sector as a whole?
- What can we do to retain those who might leave the sector?
- What do people want and value from a natural resources career?

Ultimately, by acquiring and understanding this information, our hope is to establish a baseline of where we are today so that we can know how to best work alongside others for the betterment of our sector.

#### **2. About the Endowment and the Inclusion Council**

The Endowment is the nation's largest non-profit dedicated to keeping working forests working for all their environmental, societal, and economic benefits and values. To achieve this, the Endowment works collaboratively with partners in the public and private sectors to advance systemic, transformative, and sustainable change for the health and vitality of the nation's working forests and forest-reliant communities. Our programs range across traditional, future, and ecosystem markets, along with programs for asset creation and forest retention and health.

At the request of industry, the Forest and Wood Products Inclusion Council was facilitated by the U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities as an effort to bring the forest sector together to tackle the challenges we face with respect to diversity, equity, and inclusion in forestry. Our vision is for a forest and wood products sector that reflects the diverse makeup of our society and is committed to equitable workplaces where people feel valued, safe, and that they belong, so that all people can sustain and

benefit from forests. The Inclusion Council is composed of private, public, not-for-profit, indigenous and academic representatives from across the United States' forest and wood products sector.

We collectively know that for the forest sector to tackle the issues and opportunities before us, from climate change to rural economic health and development, to forest health and productivity, we must ensure we can attract, retain, and sustain a diverse workforce that can bring all of their talents to the table. We have developed an initial National Action Plan that includes a focus on data gathering and forest community engagement and learning. The results of this analysis will be used to better inform the National Action Plan.

### **3. Proposed Scope of Services**

We are looking for a partner to help us with the following:

1. We need a literature of review of analyses (i.e., surveys, interviews) that have already been done to understand the current forest and wood products workforce
2. We need to understand patterns of entry to the forestry and wood products workforce (i.e. how are people getting into this sector, what are their on-ramps, what is facilitating access to these on-ramps and what is prohibiting it)
3. We need to understand what people are looking for in a natural resources career (i.e. what do they value and what are their priorities)
4. We need to understand the opportunities and challenges current recruiters and companies are finding as they seek to find and retain talent in our sector
5. We need to understand the challenges and opportunities experienced by people within organizations who are currently tasked with leading DEI efforts in their respective companies and organizations

We invite flexibility in the specific scope that is proposed. Upon selection of a proposal, the Inclusion Council will work with the consultant to refine and update the final scope of work to be included in the contract.

### **4. Outcome and Performance Standards and Deliverables**

In terms of outcomes, we are looking for (1) data, (2) interpretation of data, and (3) support in sharing the data. Specifically, we'd like:

- An executive summary that highlights your top findings
- The data interpreted to be relevant for different sized companies and organizations, across a diverse spread of geographical locations
- A series of actionable insights
- Information shared in a format we can use easily and publicly (a slide deck or a well-designed report)
- A series of briefings (audio and visual snapshots to help tell the story of the research)

## **5. Method of Work Arrangement**

The services agreement will be by written contract between the Endowment and the consultant/organization.

## **6. Budget and Timeline**

The budget is heavily dependent on proposed methodology and time commitment. The Endowment will consider all budget ranges for this application yet anticipate being able to commit to projects within the range of \$50,000 - \$150,000. We anticipate this analysis to be completed within a year, depending on the exact Scope of Services proposed.

## **7. Who May Apply**

This application is open to applicants from government agencies, non-profit organizations, academic institutions, and for-profit companies and consultants.

The U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities is an equal opportunity employer. All applicants will be considered without regard to race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, gender identity, and sexual orientation), national origin, age (40 or older), disability or genetic information or any other characteristic protected by applicable federal, state, or local law.

## **8. Application Instructions**

Please follow the directions closely and fill out all mandatory fields and attachments in the portal. An additional Proposal Narrative must be submitted and uploaded to the portal along with the rest of your application.

The Proposal Narrative should include the following:

1. What are your qualifications to conduct this work?
2. Describe your organization's experience in conducting mixed-methods research and analysis
3. Describe your organization's experience working with diverse audiences and how your organization demonstrates a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion,
4. Describe your organization's experience in forestry, agriculture, water, or other natural resource management areas.
5. How does your organization demonstrate and measure your commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion?

Key Information to be completed in the Online Application Portal:

- Title
- Organizational Experience (please include related work experience and reference projects)
- Qualifications of Team and Partners
- Workplan Activities (please include expected timeline, strategy, and deliverables)
- Budget (please upload the budget to the Financial Information section in the online application, there is a link to a budget template for your use in the Financial Information tab)
- Contact information

For any portal/application issues please contact [subawards@usendowment.org](mailto:subawards@usendowment.org).

For proposal technical questions please contact Delie Wilkens at [delie@usendowment.org](mailto:delie@usendowment.org).  
To view or complete the application go to the Endowment's grantee portal:  
<https://usendowment.my.site.com/grantee>

If you already have an account on the portal from a previous Endowment project, please use those login credentials. If you are a new user, please click on "New User" and follow the instructions to create an account.