

Watershed Alliance of York (WAY)

Request for Proposals (RFP)

Strategic Planning: If There's a Will, There's a WAY

Purpose:

The Watershed Alliance of York (WAY) is seeking an experienced consulting firm or team to design and facilitate an inclusive strategic planning process that will culminate in a clear, actionable plan for the organization's next five years (2026-2030).

The consultant will work closely with WAY's board of directors and executive director to guide a participatory process that considers the voices, opinions, and desires of the local community while holding WAY's mission, vision, and values at the center of the planning process.

Background:

Incorporated in 2001 as a 501c3 nonprofit, the Watershed Alliance of York (WAY) is a non-member umbrella organization serving over 50 academic, civic, for-profit, government, non-profit, and other stakeholder groups and individuals. WAY's mission is to improve York County's water, making it cleaner and healthier for all. WAY currently has a 12-member Board of Directors and 3 Committees – Budget & Finance, Education & Outreach, and Project Implementation. To achieve its mission, in addition to an education and outreach component, WAY strives to be the premier watershed organization working directly with and for landowners to obtain funding to complete water quality projects on private and public land. Most organizations working in York do not have the capacity or ability to manage grants and projects on behalf of landowners like WAY does. Without the willingness of private landowners, water quality goals are impossible to achieve. The projects that WAY completes range from implementation of Best Management Practices (BMPs) such as stream and floodplain restoration, wetland creation, dam removal, and riparian forest buffer installation to water quality monitoring and freshwater mussel research, restoration, and conservation.

In April 2024, the Watershed Alliance of York (WAY) wrapped up a capacity building grant funded by the Chesapeake Bay Trust (CBT). The findings from that capacity building grant solidified the need for WAY to hire a staff person, and as a result, WAY hired an Executive Director in March

2025. This is the first time in the history of the organization that a full-time paid person has been on staff. To continue to build on this great momentum, the goal of WAY is to now develop a strategic plan.

Scope of Services:

Services will include, but not be limited to, the following:

1. A 5-year Strategic Plan that will identify strategies to best enable the organization to advance its mission and will include a commitment to measurable goals and priorities for implementation.
2. Evaluation Measures:
 - a. Track the number of individuals or groups directly impacted by WAY's programs in fulfillment of its mission.
 - b. Through a survey, collect qualitative data from stakeholders and partners to assess the perceived impact of programs.
 - c. Gather data on how WAY's programs have improved water quality in York County (i.e., miles of stream restored/load reductions)
3. Key Learnings & Insights:
 - a. Clearly define WAY's vision and mission statements to guide decision-making and operations.
 - b. Set specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) strategic goals to focus efforts and measure progress.
 - c. Articulate methods as to how WAY intends to achieve its mission and impact.
 - d. Consider scaling strategies to expand WAY's reach and impact over time.

WAY reserves the right to extend the contract for additional consulting and capacity building needs beyond this initial contract.

Anticipated Completion Time:

The strategic planning process must be completed, and funds fully expended by October 15, 2026.

Project Budget:

Upon finalization, the contract should not exceed \$20,000.00.

Proposal Requirements:

All proposals should concisely convey the following information by order and headings given:

- Firm History and Organization
- Experience: Provide a description of the firm's background and experience in strategic planning.
 - Work samples and references with contact information. Community service organizations (non-profit) are preferred but other business examples will be accepted.
 - Description of services strengths, and distinguishing skills or capabilities as they might relate to this project.
 - The owner's name, address, contact person, and telephone number.
- Outline of your firm's proposed approach to providing the Scope of Services described in this RFP and a proposed project timeline.
- Full budget, inclusive of the strategic plan project. You are also encouraged to identify additional activities that are not identified in this RFP but could be beneficial.

Review and Award:

To be considered for selection, responders must submit a complete response to this Request for Proposals. Failure to submit all the information requested may result in the rejection of the proposal. An authorized representative of the company must sign the proposal before the RFP is submitted.

The following criteria may be used in evaluation of the RFP:

- Work and experience samples
- References
- Project approach and timeline
- Interviews with the selected pool of applicants (Upon request)

Terms and Conditions:

- The Watershed Alliance of York (WAY) reserves the right to reject any or all proposals and to select the proposal that it determines is in the best interest of the organization.
- Proposers are bound by the deadline for submittals in response to this RFP as stated above.
- Proposals will remain effective for review and approval by WAY for 45 days from the deadline for submitting proposals.
- The proposer is encouraged to add to, modify or clarify any scope of services items it deems appropriate to develop a high-quality product at the lowest possible cost. All changes should be listed and explained. However, the scope of services proposed must

accomplish the purpose and work stated above.

- WAY shall have unrestricted authority to reproduce, distribute, and use any materials and associated documentation that is designed or developed and delivered to WAY as part of the performance of the contract.

RFP Timeline:

Deadline for Interested Consultants to ask questions:	March 4, 2026
Proposal Due:	March 6, 2026
Consultant Interviews (Upon Request):	March 11, 2026
Selected Consultant Notified:	March 17, 2026
Contract Finalized:	week of March 16, 2026
Project completed and funds expended:	October 15, 2026

Questions and Proposal Submission:

Please direct any questions to WAY's Executive Director, Emily Neideigh at eneideigh@watershedallianceofyork.org. Deadline for questions is March 4, 2026. If needed, a FAQ will be generated and posted on our website, www.watershedallianceofyork.org, under the "Strategic Plan RFP" tab.

Proposals are due March 6, 2026 and can be submitted by e-mail to Emily at eneideigh@watershedallianceofyork.org or by mail to:

Watershed Alliance of York (WAY)
Attn: Rachel Stahlman
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