



Request for Proposals (RFP)
Vermont Agricultural Water Quality Partnership
Regional Coordination Leadership and Facilitation Training

Release Date: Thursday, July 22, 2021

Proposals Due: Monday, August 20, 2021, 5pm Eastern Standard Time

Contact for Proposals:

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Introduction and Background

The Vermont Agricultural Water Quality Partnership (VAWQP) is composed of nine agencies and that provide education, technical and financial assistance to the Vermont farming community to address water quality and other natural resource concerns on farms, and signed an MOU committing to collaboration in January 2018. The purpose of the Partnership is to coordinate efforts to improve water quality and wildlife habitat on farmland; deliver educational, technical and financial assistance in the most efficient way possible; provide the best possible service experience for landowners; and help the Vermont public understand the water quality achievements of the agricultural community and supporting partners. Coordination efforts include regular meetings and trainings, collective learning and policy dialogue, and facilitation of communication through a website, newsletter, shared file system, and other technologies.

The [VAWQP](#) has contracted six groups of [Conservation Districts](#) to serve as Regional Coordinators for the VAWQP. Vermont's Conservation Districts provide landowners and agricultural producers with technical, financial, and educational assistance for working with state and federal programs. Districts are independent, local organizations that act as facilitators linking landowners and producers with the appropriate federal and state cost share programs and private sources of funding that can help them meet their management objectives. Regional Coordination services will support the mission and strategic plan of the Partnership at the local level. This coordination will encourage information sharing, collaboration and coordination among technical and financial assistance providers in order to help farmers achieve measurable water quality results and protect habitats in the most high-quality, cost-effective and positive way possible in each region.

Regional Coordinators will build upon past efforts to promote regional collaboration to advance the mission and strategic plan of the VAWQP at the local level. Activities of the Regional Coordinators are:

- Serving as ambassadors of the VAWQP Partnership for staff, organizations and media in their region, providing information regarding the purpose of the Partnership, and encouraging participation in regional Partnership initiatives;

- Convening meetings of local Partner staff at least twice annually, with representatives of all VAWQP member organizations invited. (These meetings are intended to facilitate information exchange, learning and coordination of efforts to support the water quality and habitat protection efforts of the agricultural community. The meetings may also be used to elicit local staff recommendations regarding agricultural water quality and habitat protection policies and programs to be communicated to the VAWQP leadership. VAWQP regional coordination meetings may dovetail with other regional water quality meetings such as Local Working Groups, Tactical Basin Planning meetings and Strategic Watershed meetings to avoid duplication but will have a unique focus on agricultural water quality and habitat restoration as outlined in VAWQP mission and strategic plan.);
- Utilizing various communications approaches and technologies to promote information exchange and learning among local VAWQP staff;
- Developing opportunities that comply with Farm Bill 1619 requirements for confidential sharing of information regarding assistance to and work with specific farms for non-regulatory purposes; and
- Collaborating with the VAWQP State Coordinator to orient partner staff to the Partnership.

Purpose

On behalf of the VAWQP, the State Natural Resources Conservation Council (NRCC) seeks proposals from entities interested in facilitating a Regional Coordination Leadership and Facilitation Training that will provide skill development, peer learning, identifying and embracing personal leadership style and coaching that will increase the Coordinators' ability to effectively engage partners, facilitate multi-stakeholder groups to develop collaborative action in their region.

Scope of Work

1. Conduct needs assessment of the Regional Coordinators, as their skills and regions are unique.
2. Provide an in-person training based on the results of the needs assessment that will help the Regional Coordinators to design and facilitate engaging meetings that support effective collaboration and managing critical relationships.
3. Post-training, provide ongoing (virtual) support to the Regional Coordinators as they facilitate meetings, navigate collaborative work in the form of one-on-one or group coaching.

Performance Period

Contract will be one year in length from the signing of contract. Leadership and Facilitation Training to begin as soon as possible. Bid proposals must include a proposed timeline to meet the requirements outlined in the Scope of Work. Potential for renewal upon successful performance of the contract.

Funding and Budget

A total of \$10,000 is available to support the VAWQP Regional Coordinators Leadership and Facilitation Training. Initial funding for VAWQP Regional Coordination Leadership Training is provided by the Vermont Department of Agriculture, Food and Markets - Agriculture Clean Water Initiative Program (VAAFWM), through an agreement with the Vermont Natural Resources Conservation Council (NRCC), a state agency supporting Vermont's 14 Natural Resources Conservation Districts.

Proposal Content

Proposals may be up to four pages, single-sided in length, including budget, and should include the following content:

- Contact person for the proposal with full contact information;
- Description and work plan of how the applicant will meet the requirements outlined in this RFP;
- Proposed personnel;
- Description of capacity and relevant experience; and
- Budget that includes personnel hours and billable rate, travel, supplies, and any proposed subcontracts.

Selection Criteria

Proposals will be reviewed and evaluated by several VAWQP partners. Selection of contractor will be based on the following criteria:

- Proposed activities and training plan (40%)
- Demonstrated capacity, past experience and success (40%)
- Cost effectiveness (20%)

Proposal and Award Timeline

- **Proposals Due:** Monday, August 16, 2021. 5pm Eastern Standard Time.
- **Notification:** Friday, August 20, 2021.