

Chesapeake Conservancy

Request for Quote

Workforce Development Scoping

Implementation Period: February - May 2024

Maximum contract amount \$9,000

Quote Process:

- Quotes are due by **5:00 PM February 9, 2024**
- Completed quotes can be emailed to paprograms@chesapeakeconservancy.org, please include in the subject line **“RFQ for Workforce Development Program”**.
- As part of the quote, the contractor must **provide a copy of their certificate of liability insurance. Successful contractor will be required to add Chesapeake Conservancy as additionally insured** in advance of contract signature.
- **Required deliverables:**
 - Deliverable 1: Needs assessment and opportunities for conservation workforce development.
 - Deliverable 2: Recommendation report from needs assessment and opportunities analysis.
- Notification of award will be made **within 2 weeks of the closing** of the RFQ via email.

Background:

Chesapeake Conservancy and our Pennsylvania restoration partners are focused on installing conservation practices in areas where the greatest improvements to water quality can be created in the shortest amount of time (a strategy called rapid stream delisting). There are currently over 40 partner organizations playing different roles within the rapid stream delisting strategy within the seven county region covered by the partnership (Centre, Clinton, Huntingdon, Lycoming, Union, Snyder, and Lancaster).

Current Challenge:

As conservation in the Chesapeake Bay watershed continues to scale up, workforce capacity is an emerging barrier to achieving tree canopy, riparian forest buffer, and other agricultural restoration practice goals that are critical to the partnership's stream delisting work. Many local and state governments, environmental consulting firms, and nonprofits throughout the Bay watershed have had difficulty filling entry-level positions to keep up with the pace of new conservation funding and accelerated landowner adoption of practices. Upon reviewing 16 open, entry-level positions in Pennsylvania, the Conservancy identified 22 professional training topics and certifications that could form the foundation of a new job-readiness program offered to those looking to join the conservation workforce.

Chesapeake Conservancy and Susquehanna University (SU) recently formalized a partnership through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The MOU outlines a three-year commitment to common activities including: facilitating professional skill development for the next generation of conservationists; supporting the restoration, prioritization, and research to meet sediment load reduction goals for the Chesapeake Bay; and integrating SU students into research projects to analyze efficacy of ongoing restoration projects.

Proposed Solution:

Together, the Conservancy and SU's Center for Environmental Education & Research (CEER) are scoping a job-readiness program. In summer 2023, Chesapeake Conservancy and the CEER piloted a portion of the job readiness concept. The Conservancy developed an RFP to hire a contractor to train 4 student interns, have the interns obtain herbicide applicator certifications, and maintain 50 acres of streamside tree plantings as part of our regional effort to restore streams and build workforce capacity.

In an effort to ramp up and formalize the program, the Conservancy is seeking to hire a consultant to answer key questions and help define and develop a new program that will address the hiring gap that exists in conservation and lead to accelerated training of the next generation of conservation professionals. The goal is to build momentum from the summer pilot program to plan for future efforts, identify the largest workforce gaps, and set actionable next steps to build conservation workforce in Pennsylvania.

Deliverable 1: Needs assessment and opportunities for conservation workforce development.

The chosen consultant will work with Conservancy staff and several conservation partners to assess workforce needs and document the training/knowledge gaps in applicants. We envision the following being focal topics of the assessment:

1. Drivers in the conservation field for workforce development (e.g. conservation orgs struggling to fill open jobs; needs assessment of conservation jobs across the Bay watershed); what are the needs facing the conservation community in 1, 3, and 5 years?
2. Entry points into the conservation workforce:
 - a. Types of entities hiring
 - b. Biggest training needs for new hires
 - c. Opportunities for creating new businesses and required knowledge
 - d. Leveraging existing university structures for credentialing.
3. Inventory and evaluation of existing training programs and resources and ways they could be implemented at partner organizations like Susquehanna University or County Conservation Districts.

This information will be collected through the following venues:

- Interviews with the conservation community
- Interviews with workforce development professionals
- Interviews with potential partner organizations including four-year university, community colleges and other workforce development programs
- Monthly meetings with staff from CC and CEER

Task 1 Total: _____

Deliverable 2: Recommendation report from needs assessment and opportunities analysis.

The intended outcome is to have an actionable plan from the recommendation report that can be implemented immediately.

A final list of report content topics will be determined between the consultant, CC, and SU.

Program write-up may include the following data.

- Intended outcomes (e.g. more conservation jobs filled)
- Measures of success (e.g. # students graduating with professional certifications, including types of certifications recommended as part of the program)
- Workplan (e.g. RFP timeframe, semester, etc.)
- Program partners (e.g. Chambers of Commerce, PHEAA, Career Ready PA, Veteran Support orgs., etc.)
- Audience/trainees (e.g. SU students, community college students, veterans, etc.)
- Program implementation fiscal considerations (e.g. interns, trainers, CC/SU staff, who is the fiscal sponsor)

Task 2 Total: \$ _____

Summed total for tasks 1-2: \$ _____

- I certify that my business is not currently debarred by the State of Pennsylvania or the federal government.

Insert payment timeline for your business and contact information including phone number, email, mailing address where payments are to be remitted if you are selected.

Sincerely,

Insert name

Insert Organization or Business Name