VIRGINIA RAILWAY EXPRESS

REQUEST FOR QUOTES (RFQ)

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Consultant

RFQ ISSUED:  April 13, 2021

QUESTIONS DUE:  April 20, 2021 by 2:00 P.M. Eastern Time

QUOTES DUE:  April 27, 2021 by 2:00 P.M. Eastern Time

VIRGINIA RAILWAY EXPRESS
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Submit Quotes To:

Kristin Nutter
Manager of Purchasing and Contract Administration
Email: knutter@vre.org
1. PURPOSE/BACKGROUND

A. INTRODUCTION

Virginia Railway Express (VRE) is soliciting Quotes to establish a Purchase Order, based upon a firm-fixed hourly billing rate, with one qualified and experienced individual or firm to provide diversity, equity, and inclusion consulting services.

B. VRE BACKGROUND

1. VRE is a commuter rail service linking the District of Columbia and Northern Virginia. The Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (NVTC) and the Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission (PRTC) are transportation districts established under Virginia law and jointly own this service. An Operations Board consisting of members from each of the jurisdictions within the VRE service area governs the development and operation of VRE and serves as an advisory board to the NVTC and PRTC governing boards.

2. VRE began operations in 1992 and operates train service on two (2) lines, Fredericksburg and Manassas. In January 2014, VRE’s Operations Board adopted System Plan 2040 which calls for expansion of service, requiring the addition of railcars, expansion of station and maintenance and storage facilities, as well as expanding operations to meet the goal of doubling ridership by 2040. VRE’s multi-prong program addresses short term growth needs, as well as longer term capacity improvements and investments in maintaining and servicing VRE’s equipment and facilities.

3. The primary mission of VRE is to provide commuter-oriented passenger rail service between the outlying suburbs and the Washington-Arlington-Alexandria urban core. Some tourists and “day-trippers” also ride the trains. The service is heavily oriented towards the urban core area in the morning and in the opposite direction in the evening.
2. SUBMISSION OF QUESTIONS

A. DEADLINE

1. All questions and requests for clarification regarding the meaning or interpretation of this RFQ and other solicitation documents, or any ambiguities, discrepancies, inconsistencies, or conflicts in or between any of the technical, pricing, or contractual provisions must be submitted no later than the date and time specified on Page 1 of this RFQ. Questions and clarifications requested after such time will not be answered unless VRE elects, at its sole discretion, to provide responses.

2. Any interpretation of a question made by VRE will be in the form of an addendum to the RFQ. Questions and responses as well as any addendum will be posted on VRE’s website at https://www.vre.org/about/procurement/ for all interested Consultants.

B. FORMAT FOR QUESTIONS

Questions must be submitted to the VRE Manager of Purchasing and Contract Administration in writing via electronic mail to the email address listed on Page 1 of this RFQ. No questions or requests for additional information, clarification or any other communication should be directed to any other individual.

C. VRE POINT OF CONTACT

The VRE Human Resources Administrator will be the point of contact for all aspects of this project following award of a Purchase Order.

D. NO ORAL COMMUNICATION WILL BE ACCEPTED

VRE will not be bound by any oral communications, written interpretations or clarifications that are not set forth in an addendum to the RFQ.
3. SCOPE OF WORK

A. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

1. VRE seeks the services of qualified and experienced Consultant to review its current policies, practices, and training related to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

2. Following review of existing policies, practices, and training opportunities, the Consultant shall make recommendations for improvement. The recommendations shall be consistent with regulatory requirements, including those mandated by the Commonwealth of Virginia, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), and best practices, with particular emphasis on ensuring that VRE can be considered best in class. The recommendations shall subsequently be reviewed and discussed with VRE’s Human Resources Administrator and used to update VRE’s current strategies and approaches to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

3. The Consultant shall, as needed, engage all levels and areas of the organization, from VRE’s frontline staff to the Chief Executive Officer. In total, VRE staff is comprised of approximately fifty-five (55) full-time employees, internal temps, and interns.

B. SPECIFIC TASKS/ASSIGNMENTS

The Consultant shall provide skilled and professional personnel together with the equipment/supplies and other materials and services necessary to successfully accomplish the following tasks:

1. Conduct an analysis and develop a baseline assessment report within three (3) months from award of Purchase Order of VRE’s current organizational policies, practices, training opportunities and level of diversity, equity, and inclusion awareness and competency in order to fully appreciate the contribution of all staff and identify priorities to further strengthen diversity, equity, and inclusion capacity to shape and execute VRE’s operations.

2. Review and make recommendations if noted improvements could be made in how VRE tracks and/or resolves any perceived deficiencies in regards to hirings, promotions, grievances, disciplinary actions, and terminations consistent with the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) provisions of Federal law and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Circular 4704.1A.

3. Provide insight and knowledge on diversity, equity, and inclusion best practices (with a particular focus on non-profit and government agencies).

4. Develop a shared language and framework, including a public statement of principle regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion for VRE, that enhances the organization’s ability to execute its mission, operations, and strategic direction as a public agency.
5. Work with VRE staff to develop/produce language and content of video(s) to be used for hiring/orientation/promotional purposes.

6. Provide insights into the development of an organization-wide commitment and infrastructure to support and sustain VRE’s diversity, equity, and inclusion strategy.

7. Advise VRE on different methodologies to develop training strategies to increase staff diversity, equity, and inclusion competencies, skills, and capacity that reflect VRE’s public statements and goals.

8. Recommend to VRE ways to ensure barriers to inclusion decrease, while awareness, knowledge, and skills increase.

9. Suggest to VRE ways to implement long-term monitoring and evaluation that consider several areas, but not limited to, internal staffing practices, policies, procedures, community partnerships and engagement, and ongoing staff education.

10. Advise VRE on best practices for developing strategies and associated roadmaps that align with VRE’s values and strategic objectives.

11. Provide a comprehensive report within six (6) months from award of Purchase Order and a briefing to the VRE Chief Executive Officer following completion of all assigned tasks; the results of which will subsequently be shared with staff and other stakeholders.

C. CONSULTANT’S MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS & REQUIREMENTS

1. The Consultant must be able to demonstrate its ability to meet the following minimum qualifications prior to award of a Purchase Order. At a minimum, the Consultant shall provide with its Quote, examples of work products and resumes for those individuals assigned to work with VRE.

   a. Demonstrated sensitivity to and understanding of the diverse academic, socioeconomic, cultural, disability, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, and ethnic backgrounds of working professionals.

   b. Minimum of three (3) years of experience in developing and executing organization-wide diversity, equity, and inclusion assessments as well as past experience with planning and implementation efforts.

   c. Professional familiarity with EEO provisions of Federal law, including Title VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (as amended), Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967 (as amended), Equal Pay Act of 1963 (as amended), and Title II of the Genetic Information Non-Discrimination Act of 2008 (as amended).
d. Demonstrated hands-on experience guiding non-profit and/or government agencies through the planning, implementation, and successful completion of organization-wide diversity, equity, and inclusion learning and transformation. This shall be supported by three (3) examples of diversity, equity, and inclusion assessments and plans the Consultant has developed as well as three (3) examples of training/education and coaching components the Consultant has created/provided on diversity, equity, and inclusion.

2. VRE reserves the right to conduct an interview with the Consultant via phone or virtual meeting platform to verify the Consultant’s qualifications.

3. Additionally, VRE shall have the right to request references from the Consultant and to contact the references provided in order to verify the Consultant’s past performance.
4. SPECIAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS

A. TERM OF PURCHASE ORDER

The Consultant shall complete all required work/tasks within six (6) months of receipt of a signed Purchase Order from VRE.

B. SINGLE POINT OF CONTACT

The Consultant shall assign a single point of contact that must be available between the hours of 9:00 A.M. and 5:00 P.M. Eastern Time, Monday through Friday.

C. GENERAL PROVISIONS

The Consultant shall comply with ATTACHMENT 1 – VRE GENERAL PROVISIONS, as applicable to the Scope of Work.

D. MODIFICATION OF THE SCOPE OF WORK

VRE reserves the right to modify the Scope of Work at its discretion when it is in the best interest of VRE. See Clause 15 – Changes of ATTACHMENT 1 – VRE GENERAL PROVISIONS.

E. TRAVEL EXPENSES

VRE will not reimburse the Consultant for travel-related expenses for travel within the greater Baltimore-Washington Metropolitan Area, as defined by the United States Office of Management and Budget, but will compensate the Consultant for reimbursable expenses for travel outside of this area, but only if such expenses are pre-approved by VRE and in accordance with the Travel Expenses Provision included within ATTACHMENT 1 – VRE GENERAL PROVISIONS.

F. QUOTE ACCEPTANCE PERIOD

The Quote and any modification thereof shall be binding upon the Consultant for ninety (90) calendar days following the Quote closing date. Any Quote in which the Consultant shortens the acceptance period shall be rejected, although the acceptance period may be extended by mutual agreement between VRE and the Consultant. At the end of the Quote acceptance period, the Consultant may withdraw its Quote by giving written notice to VRE.
5. DELIVERABLES

A. CERTIFICATE OF INSURANCE

1. By signing and submitting a Quote in response to this solicitation, the Consultant certifies that if issued the Purchase Order, the Consultant will have the insurance coverage identified and described in ATTACHMENT 2 – VRE INSURANCE COVERAGE REQUIREMENTS FOR SMALL PURCHASE OF GOODS/SERVICES.

2. The Consultant shall furnish VRE proof of compliance with these insurance requirements in the form of an original Certificate of Insurance signed by an authorized representative or agent of the insurance company(ies). The Certificate of Insurance must be furnished within three (3) business days of request by VRE.

3. Failure to provide the Certificate(s) of Insurance when required may be cause for VRE to issue a Purchase Order to the next responsive and responsible Consultant. However, in no event shall work be performed until the required Certificate(s) of Insurance have been furnished and approved by VRE.

B. PROJECT REPORTS/DOCUMENTS

The Consultant agrees that all reports, studies, work papers, and other data prepared by or for it under the resultant Purchase Order shall become the property of VRE. VRE shall have the right to use the same hard copies or electronic files without restriction or limitation and without compensation to the Consultant other than that provided for in the Purchase Order.
6. INVOICES

A. INVOICES

1. Invoices shall be submitted by the Consultant for services/goods ordered, delivered, and accepted by VRE.

2. Invoices shall be submitted electronically or via U.S. mail. However, it is preferred that invoices be submitted electronically in one (1) continuous electronic copy in PDF to agotthardt@vre.org.

3. Hard copy invoices may be mailed to:

   Virginia Railway Express
   1500 King Street, Suite 202
   Alexandria, VA 22314-2730

4. The VRE Point of Contact shall be indicated on the invoice cover sheet.

5. At a minimum, invoices shall contain the following information:
   a. Name, address, and telephone number of the Consultant
   b. VRE Purchase Order number
   c. Invoice number
   d. Date of invoice
   e. Date and description of work/tasks performed
   f. Number of hours worked at the associated hourly billing rate
   g. Total invoice amount

6. If invoices fail to meet all of the above requirements, they will not be processed for payment and will result in the invoice being returned to the Consultant for correction and resubmission. VRE may request additional substantiating documentation as necessary.
7. PRICE INFORMATION

*Quoters are strongly encouraged to read this section carefully. INCOMPLETE QUOTES WILL BE AUTOMATICALLY DISQUALIFIED.*

A. The price information must be submitted in ATTACHMENT 3 – QUOTE FORM included herein. Failure to provide complete price information may result in the Quote being deemed non-responsive and removed from further consideration.

B. Unless indicated otherwise, quoted hourly rates shall be *inclusive of all costs* and shall include full compensation for all taxes, fees, materials/supplies, labor, insurance, permits, overhead and profit, etc. necessary to complete the work in conformance with the Scope of Work and to the satisfaction of VRE. Extra charges will not be allowed.

C. The Quote must be signed. No erasures or other handwritten changes may appear on the Quote Form.
8. ATTACHMENTS

The following documents are incorporated in this Request for Quotes and the resulting Purchase Order by this reference.

A. Attachment 1 – VRE General Provisions

B. Attachment 2 – VRE Insurance Coverage Requirements for Small Purchase of Goods/Services

C. Attachment 3 – Quote Form