



## **Request for Proposals – Great Lakes Drinking Water Toolkit & Training September 2017**

### **Statement of Need**

River Network requests proposals from qualified individuals and consultants to support the development, delivery and production of a drinking water toolkit for communities and watershed groups. We are specifically seeking proposals from those with expertise in multiple areas of drinking water management and protection, which might include water quality, legal and policy approaches, financing, affordability, public health and community engagement. The selected consultant will work with River Network staff to develop, test and refine a toolkit in collaboration with our local, state and national partners. Experience interviewing scientists and decision makers, synthesizing complex information, and translating detailed material into practical and understandable formats for a lay audience is required. Consultant will report directly to River Network's Director of Science and Policy and work in close coordination and alignment with our Leadership Development Manager in the Great Lakes.

This work will build on River Network's existing efforts in the Great Lakes including capacity building for organizational development and on science and policy water-related issues. The project will involve research, writing, outreach, project management and training. Strong preference is for individuals/consultants located in the Great Lakes region. An initial version of the toolkit should be ready for launch by River Rally in late April 2018. A final version of the toolkit should be ready for dissemination with general audiences by September 2018.

### **About River Network**

River Network envisions a future of clean and ample water for people and nature, where local caretakers are well-equipped, effective and courageous champions for our rivers. River Network's mission is to empower and unite people and communities to protect and restore rivers and other waters that sustain all life. Visit [www.rivernetwork.org](http://www.rivernetwork.org) to learn more about our current priorities. Our headquarters are in Boulder, Colorado and we have staff located in communities across the U.S. We are committed to embracing diversity, equity and inclusion in all areas to achieve our mission.

Through our programs, we seek to connect with all communities and increase the impact of their efforts to secure clean and ample water. We provide opportunities for people working across the United States at the local level to national level to learn from each other and access solutions, technical support, and financial assistance through our staff, [website](#), and quarterly newsletter [River Voices](#), our annual conference [River Rally](#), and our distance learning programs.

River Network has a longstanding focus on helping watershed organizations better understand and implement policy solutions to achieve clean and ample water. Over the past twenty years, we have educated thousands of watershed protection leaders via our annual national River Rally and other regional, state and local training events. In 1999, we published the Clean Water

Act Owners' Manual, now in its second edition. In all, we have trained some 12,000 leaders throughout the U.S. on how to use the Clean Water Act effectively, resulting in stronger clean water protections throughout the country. More recently, we have produced several policy analyses including *Protecting and Restoring Flows in our Southeastern Rivers: A Synthesis of State Policies for Water Security and Sustainability*, providing guidance on a range of state policies for healthier rivers, and a Delaware Basin Water Policy Review, that examined selected Clean Water Act programs across the four states in the Delaware River Basin.

With this project, we seek to expand our work to provide a broadly accessible toolkit covering the policies and practices communities need to effectively engage a broad range of stakeholders to secure safe, clean and affordable drinking water. Required tasks include:

1. Assist with development and management of a national advisory group of local, state and national drinking water advocates and others with drinking water expertise to inform toolkit tone, content and format;
2. Work with River Network staff and partners to analyze the gaps, needs and opportunities for an effective drinking water toolkit, narrow down possible list of issues to include in the toolkit (see page 3) and develop an outline to share with partners and stakeholders for review;
3. Develop and finalize outline and approach for toolkit – including training topics and delivery mechanisms (e.g. online modules, webinars, training manual, etc.);
4. Research, write and develop main components of toolkit; identify additional expertise needed and work with advisory group members and other outside experts via subcontract to develop and deliver additional key components; secure services of and oversee work of all subcontractors for deliverables;
5. Complete toolkit drafts and training materials in time for presentation at River Rally 2018 (late April);
6. Collect feedback, refine and finalize toolkit materials by August 2018;
7. Coordinate with River Network staff and external contractors in the production of toolkit materials, including written materials, online training modules or other delivery mechanisms;
8. Provide 3-6 trainings to Great Lakes leaders and organizations as well as River Network staff through conferences and webinars.

## **Required Details**

The deadline for responding to this Request for Proposals is Monday, September 25th, 2017 with final decisions to be made by our team by Friday, October 6th.

Proposals must include:

1. Consultant/Individual background and experience
2. Cost estimate for all services and direct expenses associated with delivering on Tasks #1-#8 above. Costs may be shown in project phases. Costs are not to exceed \$40,000, with an additional \$10,000 available for subcontractors (see Task #4)
3. Description of approach and proposed deliverables
4. Timeline for engagement
5. Examples of past work products and client references
6. Any additional information relevant to this project

Please submit your proposal via email to Katherine Baer ([kbaer@rivernetwork.org](mailto:kbaer@rivernetwork.org)) with "Great Lakes Drinking Water" in the title. No phone calls please.

## Possible Topics for Drinking Water Toolkit

### Drinking Water 101

1. Learning about sourcewater and where your drinking water comes from
2. Understanding how drinking water systems work and the role of water utilities
3. Learning about drinking water "infrastructure"
4. Consumer education and how drinking water systems are funded and financed--how do we make water affordable for all?
5. Discovering if your drinking water is safe and what to do if it's not
6. Relevant laws for drinking water (e.g., Safe Drinking Water Act, various portions of the Clean Water Act, state-laws, and special considerations in individual states (e.g., Michigan's emergency manager laws))

### How to Engage Your Community

7. Authentically engaging community members and leaders, including community members that are low-income and of color, in discussions around local water concerns and desired solutions
8. Conducting effective education, outreach and engagement campaigns to elevate community understanding of drinking water issues
9. Identifying, engaging and influencing local utility staff, other relevant decision makers and elected officials
10. Influencing local, state and federal water-related policies
11. Fundamentals of community organizing, including identifying and developing leaders, conducting power mapping, and selecting/implementing appropriate strategies and tactics
12. Water crisis management, including first responder actions and activities
13. Identifying and advocating for financing solutions that work for your community, including Consumer Assistance Programs to support drinking water affordability
14. Using citizen science to monitor conditions and build public trust or agenda for action