

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS (RFQ) FOR WETLAND PARK DESIGN, ENGINEERING, AND CONSTRUCTION ADMINISTRATION SERVICES

**for Sankofa Community Development Corporation
5200 Dauphine St.
New Orleans, LA 70117**

**ALL QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO Marijohn Robinson,
info@sankofanola.org**

RESPONSES DUE BY January 21, 2025 at 4PM Central Time

A. OVERVIEW

Sankofa Community Development Corporation (Sankofa CDC) is a Black-led, woman-led community-based organization, whose mission is to build healthier communities for generations to come. Founded in 2008, we are committed to sustainable, health-centered development to revitalize the historic Lower Ninth Ward (LNW) area of New Orleans, LA using a model of equity and justice. Sankofa CDC's long-established community development programs address the social determinants of health and combat systemic barriers that cause health disparities. Our sustainable infrastructure projects such as the Wetland Park & Nature Trail work to mitigate flooding and storm damage, improve public spaces, and restore environmental balance while supporting economic growth.

Sankofa CDC seeks consulting services from a firm with capabilities in design, engineering, and construction management and administration that is capable of developing final designs for planned physical improvements; managing, overseeing, and supervising construction for the owner for these physical improvements; and researching further potential improvements that can optimize the Wetland Park's ecological services, its community functions, and its ability to provide flood prevention to the Lower Ninth Ward neighborhood.

Sankofa CDC has received Federal and non-Federal funding to carry out planning and physical improvements at the Wetland Park. This contract will include oversight of usage of Federal funds, and therefore a firm with strong experience in the requirements for Federal construction and non-construction projects is preferred, including experience with managing projects that require environmental assessments and Davis-Bacon wage requirements.

B. BACKGROUND

The Sankofa Wetland Park and Nature Trail is located on a 40-acre piece of property bounded by the Orleans-St. Bernard Parish line; the Bayou Bienvenue levee; Deslonde Street; and Florida Avenue. This property is owned by the City of New Orleans; Sankofa CDC has a long-term CEA with the City's Department of Property Management to undertake physical

improvements at the site. A map of the Wetland Park boundaries is shown in Figure 1. Sankofa CDC also has professional surveys of the Park boundaries and current conditions that can be shared with the selected consulting team.

Figure 1. Sankofa Wetland Park Boundaries



Sankofa CDC has already begun the process of restoring this 40-acre site using various non-Federal and state funding sources, including the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), Coastal Protection Restoration Authority, and the Kresge Foundation. Existing restoration activities that have occurred on site include the construction of bioretention ponds, extensive planting of native trees and plants, and installation of a gravel walking path. Restoration is most complete in the area between Tupelo St. and Delery St. The remaining area between Deslonde St. and Tupelo St. has been recently cleared of invasive vegetation and debris embedded in the ground, and initial bioretention pond grading and construction in this area has occurred. However, the bioretention ponds still need additional grading to match the plans approved by the Levee Board.

Sankofa CDC regularly monitors the ecological impacts of the Wetland Park's construction with help from environmental scientists, including conducting regular water quality monitoring activities and wildlife inventories. Hydrology analysis has been conducted through a USACE Silverjackets program.

While Sankofa has surveys and other documentation that can be shared about the Wetland Park, the selected consultant will be expected to conduct an initial site visit to understand conditions on the ground, as well as regular visits throughout the course of the contract to accomplish the required design, engineering, and construction management and administration activities for the benefit of the owner.

C. SCOPE OF SERVICES

Sankofa CDC will use this RFQ to assist in selecting a consultant who will manage and oversee the completion of the Wetland Park construction by engaging in design, engineering, and construction management and administration activities. The consultant may also conduct design and engineering research to examine how the Park can further enhance flood protection and mitigate climate change impacts for the Lower Ninth Ward neighborhood.

1. **HUD Community Project Funding Improvements:** The selected consultant will assist Sankofa CDC to manage physical infrastructure improvements from the design and engineering phase through construction management and administration under Sankofa CDC's Community Project Funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The total project value for this grant is \$2 million, of which \$1.25 million is dedicated to construction activities and the remainder is split between design and construction management and administration, Sankofa CDC staffing, and other soft costs. An environmental assessment is currently ongoing to examine the impacts of the proposed physical improvements that are part of this grant, which include:
 - 1.5 mile, permeable, and ADA accessible multipurpose nature trail that will extend throughout the length of the Wetland Park.
 - 2-acre permeable "green amphitheater" that will incorporate plantings, seating areas, and green infrastructure, while also offering a space for performances and community gatherings.
 - "Learning Trail" signage installation in coordination with the completion of the permeable, multipurpose nature trail. *The content and design for the signage is being accomplished with designers under a separate consulting agreement and will not be part of the scope of work in this RFQ.*

The duties of the selected consultant with regard to the Community Project Funding improvements will include:

- Finalizing 100% design of the mixed-use, permeable, ADA accessible nature trail, boardwalk, and bioretention pond design, in coordination with local and state agencies on permit and design review requirements.
 - Finalizing of 100% design of the green amphitheater, including coordination with all relevant stakeholders for approval.
 - Coordinating with designers of the Sankofa Wetland Park "Learning Trail" to ensure that the signage installations will be compatible with the updated ADA accessible multipurpose nature trail design.
 - Permitting for the Nature Trail and green amphitheater improvements.
 - Assisting Sankofa CDC to develop an RFP and select a qualified contractor to perform construction for the Nature Trail and green amphitheater.
 - Construction management and administration for the duration of construction of the multipurpose Nature Trail and green amphitheater
2. **Wetland Park Accessible Entrance Design and Construction:** Sankofa CDC has initial permitted plans that call for accessible entrances to the park at a number of Florida

Avenue intersections. However, street conditions along Florida Avenue are such that several of these entrances would not be easily accessed by residents who have mobility challenges. The selected consultant will assist Sankofa CDC to update the plans for accessible entrances into the Wetland Park by evaluating the physical condition of Florida Avenue, selecting proposed locations for a revised set of accessible entrances with connections to the Nature Trail, and advancing these revised entrance locations to 100% design. The consultant will work with the City of New Orleans Department of Public Works and other relevant entities to ensure that the revised locations are acceptable to the City. Upon completion of 100% design, the consultant will supervise the permitting for these upgrades and will provide construction management and administration services to oversee the contractor that will install the park entrances.

3. **Bioretention Pond Completion between Tupelo St. and Deslonde St:** The bioretention ponds between Tupelo St. and Deslonde St. have not yet been fully graded to achieve the design intent of the existing permitted engineering drawings.

Scope Items for Design and Engineering Activities Only

4. **Bioretention Pond Expansion - Geotechnical Studies and Design:** Sampling during the initial construction of the bioretention ponds revealed a potential sand deposit that has not been confirmed to exist, but the potential for its existence has affected the current constructed depth and volume of the bioretention ponds. The selected consultant will work with Sankofa CDC to:
 - Conduct soil coring and sampling, potentially including sampling with a finer resolution or other sampling methods, in order to more conclusively understand the subsurface makeup of soils beneath the Wetland Park ponds. Respondents should share their proposed sampling methodology as part of the response.
 - Examine the original designs for bioretention pond construction and interpret the implications of the revised soil sampling with regard to the feasibility of the original designs, which involved deeper bioretention ponds with a higher volume of storage.
 - Communicate the results of testing and the implications for the bioretention pond design to key stakeholders including the Levee Board.
 - Refine final expanded bioretention pond plans to 100% design based on the conclusions of the soil sampling.
5. **Boardwalk Design:** Provide 30%, 60%, and 100% designs for a boardwalk at specific points adjacent to or above portions of the bioretention ponds to provide safety alongside edges of the pond, water research access, and wildlife viewing opportunities for visitors to the Park. Initial design priorities will be established through consultation with the Sankofa CDC team.
6. **Water Control Structures - Stakeholder Coordination and Initial Design:** Sankofa CDC is working to gain initial consensus with local and regional entities to install water

control structures that will allow for potential regulation of water levels in the Wetland Park. This will include at least two control structures, currently contemplated to be installed at the Park's main inlet north of the Dubreuil St. intersection, and near the Tupelo Culvert that enters the New Orleans drainage system near the Florida Avenue intersection with Tupelo St. Sankofa CDC has a SWMM model of the existing drainage system as well as more detailed modeling that has been completed by the USACE Silverjackets technical assistance program to help the selected consultant better understand the movements of water in the area. The selected consultant will:

- Review existing resources including SWMM modeling and Silverjackets modeling results.
- Convene up to four (4) meetings with stakeholders and key parties including the New Orleans Sewerage and Water Board, St. Bernard Parish, the City of New Orleans, the Levee Board, Sankofa CDC, and any other important stakeholders for this conversation. Facilitate these meetings to understand the parties' concerns and areas of interest with regard to the water control structures.
- Based on the outcome of initial meetings, develop one to two (1-2) 10% design alternatives that all stakeholders agree are worthy of further investigation.

D. QUALIFICATIONS

Qualified respondent teams will:

- Include licensed Professional Engineers, including at least one firm or engineer with the ability to conduct geotechnical testing.
- Include a licensed landscape architect and/or landscape architecture firm on the consultant team.
- Have a minimum of ten (10) years of experience conducting engineering and design activities in wetland environments and in public spaces.
- Have a minimum of ten (10) years of experience conducting geotechnical testing.
- Have experience working with municipal governments, levee boards, and parish governments in Louisiana.
- Have experience managing Federally-funded projects that incorporate environmental assessment requirements and Davis-Bacon wage requirements.
- Properly licensed to performed construction management and administration activities and have a minimum of ten (10) years of experience performing construction management and administration activities, including, but not limited to, processing and management of payment applications, change orders, requests for information, schedules, and the like for the benefit of the owner.

Qualifications that are preferred but not essential include:

- Experience working with the City of New Orleans, St. Bernard Parish, and/or the New Orleans Sewerage and Water Board.

E. INSTRUCTIONS, CONDITIONS AND NOTICE TO RESPONDENTS

1. General: The instructions below provide guidance for the preparation and submission of qualifications. Their purpose is to establish the requirements, format, and content of qualifications so that qualifications are complete, contain all essential information and may be evaluated easily.
2. Site Visit: Sankofa CDC will host an optional site visit at the Wetland Park on Tuesday, December 10, 2024 at 10AM for all interested parties to view the location and request clarification on any of the requested services with regard to the physical landscape of the Wetland Park. Sankofa CDC is unable to record the site visit for later review, so Respondents should plan to attend in-person if they wish to avail themselves of this opportunity. Respondents who wish to attend should RSVP to info@sankofanola.org by Thursday, December 5 in order to be notified of any potential changes due to inclement weather or other unforeseeable events.
3. Submission of Questions and Inquiries: All inquiries regarding this RFQ and any correspondence relating thereto shall be submitted in writing to Marijohn Robinson, info@sankofanola.org. Inquiries and/or questions concerning this RFQ must be submitted in writing to the Issuing Office no later than December 10, 2024 by 5:00PM Central time. Questions provided after this deadline will be untimely and will not be considered. Answers to questions will be provided to all Respondents being solicited, giving regard to the proper protection of proprietary information. Responses will be posted on the Sankofa CDC website www.sankofanola.org as one or more addenda.
4. Qualifications Submission Date: All submittals must be received by January 21, 2025 at 4PM CST. Submittals shall be submitted via email to Marijohn Robinson at marijohn@sankofanola.org, with subject line "Qualifications for Design, Engineering, and Construction Administration Services." Any Submittals received after this deadline will be late and will not be considered.
5. Qualifications Content: All complete and qualified submittals will be reviewed by Sankofa CDC. RFQ submittals shall not exceed twelve (12) pages, excluding Supporting Documents. Qualifications shall be organized as follows:
 - a. Qualifications shall be submitted on standard 8.5x11" letter-size paper, in portrait format, with margins of at least 1".
 - b. Submittals shall include the following sections:
 - i. Table of Contents
 - ii. Letter of Interest: includes executive summary/introduction detailing the history and attributes of the company; name and address of the Respondent; proposed Principal-in-Charge and Project Manager for the Services; website and telephone number; email address of the point of contact; ability to perform the work and history of providing the Scope of Services.
 - iii. Documentation to substantiate each of the following Evaluation Criteria:
 1. Experience: Document experience that meets the required and preferred qualifications.

2. Past Performance: Describe the team's record of successfully completed projects that relate to the required qualifications and the items described in the Scope of Services.
 3. Management Approach and Methodology: Provide an overview of the means, timeline and approach, tools, and processes proposed to provide the Scope of Services.
 4. Demonstrated Understanding of the Services: Provide an overview of the plans for compliance with applicable laws, regulations, professional standards, etc.
 5. Section 3 Participation: Identify any certified Section 3 business concerns that are part of the consultant team and the total contract amount allocated to any and all Section 3 businesses. Consultant teams are not required to include Section 3 participation. However, respondents that do incorporate Section 3 business participation in their responses will receive preference as outlined in Section F: Evaluation below.
 6. Litigation History: Please identify any litigation and arbitration you have been a party in for the past five years along with a brief analysis of the claims involved and the outcome for each matter identified.
- iv. References: Provide three (3) recent professional references from clients for whom the individual has performed similar work as described in the Scope of Services within the past 3 years. Include name, affiliation, email, and phone number for each reference.
 - v. Supporting Documents (not included in the 12-page limit - may be as many pages as required)
 1. Resumes of Key Personnel including relevant education, licenses, and certifications
 2. Project Sheets that support relevant past performance
 3. Business License from Louisiana Secretary of State
 4. Relevant Professional Licenses and Certifications – copies of all applicable licenses and certifications including, but not limited to, any licenses of supervising Professional Engineers and landscape architects, including P.Es who will be performing any geotechnical services
 5. M/WBE Certifications of Prime Contractor or subcontractors, if any
 6. Section 3 Certifications of Prime Contractor or subcontractors, if any
6. Conflict of Interest: In submitting qualifications, the Respondent affirms that to the best of its knowledge, there exists no actual or potential conflict between the Respondent's business and financial interests and any commissioner, officer, employee, or agent of Sankofa CDC. To the extent that a potential conflict exists, this must be disclosed in the qualifications submittal.

7. Evaluation Method: Complete qualifications will be evaluated based on established evaluation criteria. Qualifications should set forth full, accurate, and complete information as required by this solicitation. Upon the completion of the review process, the Evaluation Panel will submit its recommendation(s) of Respondents that are deemed best qualified to the Sankofa CDC Executive Director.
8. Manner of Awards: Sankofa CDC will select the top three qualified Respondents to continue to a RFP stage that will include a cost proposal for the work included in the Scope of Services. The RFP stage will also include a virtual Q&A session in which Respondents may request clarifications and documentation necessary to preparing a cost proposal. During the RFP stage, Sankofa CDC will consider cost as well as qualifications in making a final award.
9. Retention: All submittals are the property of Sankofa CDC and shall be retained by Sankofa CDC and therefore, will not be returned to the Respondent.

F. EVALUATION

1. Evaluation of Submittals: All submittals will be evaluated based on the evaluation criteria outlined below. Sankofa CDC may consider a submittal unacceptable if it lacks critical information set forth above under Section E or the submission represents a major deviation from the requirements of this RFQ. Minor omissions such as incomplete references may, at the sole option and discretion of Sankofa CDC, be corrected subsequent to the submission due date. All submittals will be initially reviewed to determine compliance with the format requirements specified within this solicitation under Section E. Submittals that do not comply with these requirements may be rejected without further review.
2. RFP Process Selection: The evaluation factors and the comparative scoring of the factors shown in Section F.3 below will be used to determine which Respondents proceed to the RFP stage of competition. The top three scoring proposals to this RFQ will proceed to the RFP stage. Scoring criteria for the RFP will include cost as a factor.
3. Evaluation Criteria: Respondents are required to respond thoroughly to each of the following evaluation factors, with focus on providing answers that are both clear and concise. If any requirement listed cannot be met, full disclosure must be given, along with an explanation and proposed alternative, if appropriate.

Evaluation Criteria	Total Possible Points
Provide description of the entity's relevant experience in providing services consistent or in similar complexity with the Scope of Services to include a description of the project; services provided and identify how this work relates to this Scope of Services.	20
Provide description of the entity's length of time in business, resources available to enable the Respondent to fulfill requirements,	20

discuss use of subcontractors, quality control, and the organizational capacity the Respondent will bring to the task.	
Provide evidence of relevant past experience including descriptions of similar recent projects and project sheets.	20
Provide three (3) recent professional references with requested contact information from clients for whom the Respondent has performed similar work as described in the Scope of Services.	5
As evidence of entity and key individuals' ability to provide services required to complete the Scope of Work, provide overview/resume of Management and Key Project Staff to include education, licenses, and certifications.	10
Provide an overview of the means, time, and approach, tools, and processes proposed to provide the Scope of Services. Respondents should reference past experience including compliance with applicable laws, regulations, professional standards, etc. Respondents are encouraged to be as specific in their submission as possible.	20
Participation of certified Disadvantaged Business Enterprises, including Minority-Owned and Women-Owned businesses (M/WBEs) as prime contractors or subcontractors. Total points will depend on level of participation of M/WBEs.	10
Participation of certified Section 3 business concerns as prime consultants or subcontractors; total points will depend on level of participation from Section 3 businesses.	5
Maximum Points Available	110

G. CONTRACT TERMS

The successful Respondent(s) will be asked to execute a contract with Sankofa CDC for the services described herein in the form chosen at the sole discretion of Sankofa CDC. No work shall proceed until a contract is executed. In addition to any contract requirements, the Respondent selected will be required to conform to the requirements outlined in this Section of the RFQ, in the event that it is selected as Consultant as a result of this solicitation.

1. Insurance: The successful Respondent, at its expense, shall obtain the minimum insurance coverage set forth below and keep such insurance in force throughout the contract period. Commercial general liability policies shall name Sankofa CDC as an additional insured. Respondent shall provide all relevant Certificates of Insurance to Sankofa CDC prior to commencing contract work and shall notify Sankofa CDC of any relevant changes to insurance coverage during the term of the contract.
 - a. Commercial General Liability (GL):

- i. Per Occurrence: \$1,000,000
 - ii. Aggregate: \$2,000,000
 - b. Professional Liability: \$1,000,000
 - c. Automobile Liability: \$1,000,000 per occurrence. Automobile Liability insurance shall extend coverage to liability arising from the use or operation of any auto, including those owned, hired or otherwise operated or used by or on behalf of the Consultant (Hired & Non-Owned Auto Liability).
 - d. Workers' Compensation: Statutory Limit
2. Indemnification: The Consultant shall indemnify, defend and hold harmless HUD and Sankofa CDC, and its respective employees, agents, consultants, Board of Directors, members, managers and other representatives (the "Indemnified Parties"), from any loss, cost, damage, claim, demand, suit, liability, judgment and expense (including any attorney fees and other costs of litigation) arising out of or resulting from or in connection with any work called for or performed under the contract, any breach by the Consultant, its agents, and employees of any provision of the contract, or any negligent or bad faith act(s) or omission(s) or the negligent performance of the contract by the Consultant, its agents, and employees or any other person or entity for which the Respondent may be responsible.
3. Key Personnel: The key personnel specified in the Respondent's submittal are considered to be essential to the work being performed under the contract. Prior to diverting any of the key personnel for any reason(s), the Consultant shall notify Sankofa CDC in writing at least thirty (30) days in advance and shall submit justification (including proposed substitutions) in sufficient detail to permit evaluation of the impact on the contract.
4. Consent to Subcontract: The Respondent must obtain the written consent of Sankofa CDC to subcontract any portion of the work. All Respondents are required to include in their submittal a list of any proposed subcontractors, and a list of tasks/items, if any, which the Respondent intends to subcontract all or any portion of work.
5. No Warranty: Respondent is required to examine the RFQ, specifications and instructions pertaining to the services required. Failure to do so will be at the Respondent's own risk. It is assumed that the Respondent has made full investigation so as to be fully informed of the extent and character of the services requested and of the requirements of the specifications. No warranty is made or implied as to the information contained in the RFQ, specifications, and/or instructions.
6. Expense of the RFQ Submission: All expenses incurred in the preparation and submission of qualifications in response to the RFQ shall be borne by the Respondent.
7. Cancellation: Sankofa CDC reserves the right to cancel this RFQ, or to reject, in whole or in part, any and all submittals received in response to this RFQ, upon its determination that such cancellation or rejection is in the best interest of Sankofa CDC. Sankofa CDC further reserves the right to waive any minor information on any submittal received, if it is in the best interest of Sankofa CDC to do so. The decision as to who shall receive a contract award, or whether or not an award shall be made as a result of this RFQ, shall be at the sole and absolute discretion of Sankofa CDC.