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REQUEST FOR LETTER OF INTEREST

Fund Raise and Capital Campaign Consultant Northern Forest Center

Overview

The Northern Forest Center seeks a single contractor (or identified team) to guide a capital campaign for organizational capacity and a Rural Community Investment Fund to expand our programmatic work. These two, connected initiatives arose in response to the Center's need to build internal capacity and expand program delivery as we deepen our community revitalization work, an area of focus which has seen unanticipated growth and excitement since the adoption of our 2015 strategic plan.

Northern Forest Center Background

Founded in 1997, the Center creates bold possibilities that give rise to vibrant Northern Forest communities and sustained opportunity in a new forest future. We contribute ideas, support and expertise to people strengthening economic opportunity and environmental resiliency across Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont and New York. We advance this mission through an integrated portfolio of programs that:

- Support innovative approaches to strengthen and grow the regional forest economy
- Invest in community revitalization to retain and attract younger people and entrepreneurs
- Facilitate regional collaboration and public policy advocacy to help the region capitalize on changing trends and opportunities

The Center is an unusual and exciting organization that blends social, economic and environmental disciplines to secure a vital future for the Northern Forest region and its communities. We work regionally and in specific places to deliver programs that make a difference in people's lives. We also bring our perspective to our state capitals and Washington, DC, to advance sound public policies to benefit the region and other rural places.

More on the Center and our current programs can be found in our most recent [annual report](#). More on the Center [staff](#) and [board](#) can be found on our website.

Contact

Lila Thorne, Director of Development
lthorne@northernforest.org
603-229-0679, ext. 102

Closing Date

Qualifications must be submitted to Lila Thorne by email **by March 20, 2020** in Adobe PDF format.

Statement of Need

To fund our expanding work in community revitalization, the Center began raising and deploying two smaller impact investment funds (of \$1M and \$1.5M) for real estate redevelopment in target communities where we were already delivering substantive programs – specifically Millinocket, Maine and Lancaster, New Hampshire. These funds, along with a suite of holistic programming in these communities, have made significant progress towards the

Center's mission to create bold possibilities that give rise to vibrant Northern Forest communities.

Building on our initial success, the Center seeks to scale this approach in a portfolio of up to 10 revitalization projects in targeted communities across NY, VT, NH and ME. The Center intends to select a single firm (or a team submitting their response to this LOI jointly) to support the Center in the following efforts:

1. **Launch and complete a \$10M Capital Campaign (2020-2022):** Building on the Center's twenty-year history and position, we seek to raise \$10M to build our organization's capacity to deliver on our emerging community revitalization work. This includes resources for new staff positions and unrestricted seed funds for program delivery, match for public funding, and other uses. This campaign would complement existing annual operations fundraising to support our \$1.5M operating budget.
2. **Launch and secure \$20M to capitalize a Rural Community Investment Fund (2020-2022):** Building on our recent successes in real estate redevelopment, we seek to raise \$20M from a suite of financial avenues: impact investments and charitable gifts from individuals, foundations, and endowments, tax credits, and other tools. The goal of this Fund is to provide low-cost capital to fuel property redevelopment, business investments, and forest conservation efforts in targeted communities. We foresee impact investments comprising the majority of this Fund and anticipate this capital will be raised in up to four tranches.

Selection Process

The Center requests a preliminary Letter of Interest from all respondents which includes the information outlined below. Select respondents will be invited for interviews with Center staff. Based off the interview and Letter of Interest, select respondents will be invited to submit a full proposal and scope of work. Upon completion of the final review, the Center anticipates conducting interviews with one or more of the respondents prior to selection, with a goal of having a contract in place by June 2020.

Selection Timeline:

- March 20: Deadline for Letters of Interest and accompanying materials
- March 20 – March 31, 2020: Review by Center staff
- April 1 – April 30: Interviews with select respondents, selection of finalists
- May 15: Deadline for full proposals from finalists
- June 1- June 15: Final interviews and selection of top candidate

Information Requested

- a. **Cover Page:** Please include the name of the organization responding to this LOI, and contact information including title, address, phone, and email.
- b. **Qualifications:** Please describe your current and historical experience and results in providing the services identified in this LOI, especially those related to a capital raise for impact investments. Note: If two firms are submitting a joint proposal, please outline how you would work together and if you have worked together in the past.
- c. **Key personnel profiles:** Please include resumes of each individual who will be providing services on this project, as well as written descriptions of the individuals' relevant experience.
- d. **Letter of Interest:** Please describe why you are compelled by this project and how you envision approaching the work. Tell us how your approach is different from others and what makes you

the right fit for this work. We are open to proposals that suggest creative approaches to achieve the desired outcomes.

Evaluation Criteria

Selection will be based on:

- a. Demonstrated knowledge of the tasks identified in the Statement of Need.
- b. Qualifications and experience of the primary personnel identified to provide the services.
- c. Record and experience in providing similar services to other clients.
- d. Demonstrated capacity and team structure to perform the type of services sought.
- e. Project understanding and approach.

Northern Forest Center reserves the right to:

- a. Re-advertise for new submittals.
- b. Investigate the qualifications and experience of the Respondent, including but not limited to interviewing the respondent and such people as the Center deems appropriate, including people other than those provided as references.
- c. Request clarification and/or additional information from the Respondent during the evaluation process.
- d. Negotiate with the selected Respondent(s) to include further services not identified in this LOI.
- e. This LOI does not commit the Center to select any Respondent, award any work, pay any costs incurred in preparing a response, or procure or contract for any services or supplies.