

August 8, 2022

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR TRAINING COURSE ON OPERATIONALIZING EQUITY IN STATE TRANSPORTATION ELECTRIFICATION PROGRAMS

The Northeast States for Coordinated Air Use Management (NESCAUM) is soliciting proposals from bidders experienced in social equity training to develop and present a multi-day training course for state environmental agency technical and policy staff on various aspects of putting social equity principles into practice in state transportation electrification programs.

I. About NESCAUM

NESCAUM is the nonprofit association of air quality agencies in the six New England states (Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont), New Jersey, and New York. NESCAUM assists its member states with implementation of federal environmental programs, provides technical and policy support on a range of air quality, climate, and clean transportation issues, and facilitates collaborative multi-state initiatives to improve air quality and address climate change. Electrification of the transportation sector is a significant and growing focus of NESCAUM's work. NESCAUM also hosts the [Clean Air Academy](#), which provides advanced air quality training for state staff.

II. Background

States across the country are making transportation electrification and the widespread adoption of zero-emission vehicles a top priority to improve air quality and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. As state agencies develop new programs to accelerate the transition to a zero-emission transportation sector, state staff have identified needs for training to foster meaningful engagement with environmental justice and other communities disproportionately impacted by air pollution. The needs are in program planning, decision-making, implementation, and assessment activities in order to ensure that public policies and programs are equitably designed to avoid disproportionate impacts and deliver benefits to these communities. Some examples of state programs to promote transportation electrification include electric vehicle purchase incentives, grants for charging stations, consumer education and outreach, and adding zero-emission vehicles to state fleets. While the primary audience for this training will include technical and policy staff at state air quality agencies in the Northeast involved in designing and implementing transportation electrification programs, the training course may be made available to other agencies in these states and state agencies beyond the Northeast.

A successful course will include the following elements:

1. The inequitable impact of post-World War II U.S. transportation policies on low-income communities and communities of color.
2. Best practices for defining "equity," "environmental justice," and other related terms for purposes of policy design and program implementation.
3. An overview of methods and tools available for equity analyses and community engagement.
4. How to select an appropriate combination of tools and methods for addressing different project and policymaking needs.

III. Scope of Services

This course is expected to be fully developed by the first quarter of 2023, with content as specified below. The development of a course curriculum, a student course manual, and instructional slide decks will be required. This course should be developed so that it can be taught either in a classroom setting or using an online platform.

The training should consist of two separate modules: one on community engagement and trust-building, and the other on analytical methods and tools for developing equitable programs and assessing impacts. Each module should address the course elements identified above, framed for the specifics of the subject. The topical elements of each module are outlined in the next section. In the event of a virtual training, we envision two or three half-day sessions per module; we anticipate one full-day session per module for an in-person training. Respondents should include a proposed length/format in their applications.

A. Course Curriculum and Materials

The awardee will be expected to produce a student manual and instructional slide deck for each of the two modules. The instructional program shall, at minimum, address the topics in the modules listed below. Proposals should include a detailed course outline for each module. The instructional program shall be designed for presentation using a series of slides and handouts, all of which shall be available in electronic format using Microsoft or Microsoft-compatible products.

Module 1: Community Engagement and Trust-Building

The purpose of this module is to equip state environmental agency staff with the understanding and tools needed to incorporate early and more transparent community engagement practices in all aspects of program/project planning and implementation. The training should explain the need for and purpose of this kind of community involvement, and help to prepare staff for constructive community engagement, for example, by anticipating that intersectional issues (e.g., economic development or housing issues raised in a meeting about transportation air quality) are likely to occur. The training should also offer perspectives on how to select parameters for defining what constitutes a community of concern when external guidance (e.g., from the federal government) does not provide explicit criteria.

Topics for this module should include:

- The historical context of U.S. transportation policies (e.g., urban renewal, highway construction, funding) that led to inequitable treatment and impacts on low-income communities and communities of color;
- The distinction between the concepts of equality and equity;
- An overview of past and current inequitable engagement practices and outcomes emphasizing how engagement processes may exclude some populations from full participation, with a focus on transportation and air quality programs;
- In the context of transportation electrification, best practices for:
 - o Engagement processes, methods, and tools to promote inclusivity in different situations; and
 - o Program design and guidance to integrate environmental justice communities in program planning, decision-making, implementation, and assessment activities;

- A discussion of how community engagement may reveal issues outside the nominal scope of the agency soliciting feedback, and how staff can facilitate sensitive inter-agency responses to community needs (sometimes referred to as a “whole of government approach”); and
- Relevant examples of successful efforts to incorporate the best practices covered in this module.

Module 2: Analytical Methods for Planning and Impact Assessment

This module will instruct state agency staff on the range of available tools and analysis that can inform more inclusive and equitable program development and implementation, project design, and community engagement practices. Attendees should leave the training with a clear understanding of how the tools and analytical methods can be utilized to achieve more equitable outcomes and assess impacts for transportation electrification planning and policy.

Topics for this module should include:

- Best practices for defining objectives and indicators when analyzing impacts to environmental justice and other communities disproportionately impacted by air pollution;
- An overview of public sociodemographic, economic, and public health datasets that can be utilized to identify communities of concern and assess impacts;
- An overview of available analytical methods and tools for these kinds of analyses, including the use of:
 - o Statistical software and demographic data for identification of low-income communities;
 - o Geographic information systems software for calculating population-weighted air pollution exposure levels and data visualization;
 - o Other prepackaged tools, such as EPA’s EJScreen;
 - o Community air monitoring tools and data; and
- A discussion of how to choose appropriate tools and methods for different program or project questions.

In addition, this module should showcase existing work through presentations by several practitioners selected in coordination with NESCAUM. Respondents should propose a structure for this portion of the module.

IV. Cost Proposal

Any contracts issued under this RFP will be fixed-price. Respondents should include a cost estimate covering all proposed activities as part of their submission, broken out by work task, including but not limited to the development of curriculum and its presentation including any course updates, preparation, reports, and course delivery for each of the two instructional delivery methods (classroom and webinar). Pre-approval by NESCAUM for other relevant itemized costs will be required.

NESCAUM will pay travel and lodging expenses (if applicable) for instructors. Travel costs should not be included in the cost proposal. Instructors are expected to arrive the day before the course begins and leave the evening the course ends except in special circumstances that should be specified in the proposal.

V. Submission Requirements

Anyone may submit a proposal in response to RFPs if the respondent self-determines that they possess, either singly or by teaming with others, the necessary capability and experience to successfully deliver the project. A prime contractor must be designated for proposals from two or more project partners.

If awarded this contract, the successful bidder must meet the requirements described in 40 CFR Part 30, “Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Non-Profit Organizations.”

All information and data developed and/or updated by the successful bidder for this training course will be in the public domain. This includes materials and presentations. If the proposed course will include the use of any materials considered proprietary and not in the public domain, this must be noted in the proposal.

Any questions about this RFP should be sent in writing via e-mail to Kara Murphy, NESCAUM Training Coordinator, kmurphy@nescaum.org.

Respondents should submit proposals by email to kmurphy@nescaum.org or by mail to:

Kara Murphy
NESCAUM
89 South Street, Suite 602
Boston, MA 02111

Proposals must be received by 5:00 PM EST on October 3rd, 2022.

A proposal should be no more than 10 pages in length, and must include the following:

1. If incorporated, company name, DUNS number, and confirmation that the company is registered on sam.gov (which has replaced the US government’s central contractor registration system).
2. Instructor(s) name and short resume, including information about when and for whom the instructor has previously taught this and/or related course content and experience with webinar presentations.
3. Dates available for course presentation in 2023.
4. Course Description:
 - a. Agenda and/or topics covered;
 - b. Number of hours of instruction;
 - c. Limits (if any) on class size;
 - d. Materials to be provided;
 - e. List of any proprietary equipment or software used in the course and purpose of their use; and
 - f. Capability to host this course remotely as a webinar and in person.
5. Student requirements for pre- or post-class homework, and class computer needs for participating students.

6. Contact information for three references knowledgeable about the instructor's qualifications and performance.
7. If awarded the contract, the successful bidder will need to comply with NESCAUM's MBE/WBE policy which states that if subcontracting, to the fullest extent possible, at least 10 percent of the contract funds will be made available to organizations owned or controlled by socially and economically disadvantaged individuals.
8. Submissions must comply with Subpart C of 2 CFR Part 180 entitled, "Responsibilities of Participants Regarding Transactions Doing Business with Other Persons," and the bidder must certify that he/she is not presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from covered transactions by any federal department or agency.
9. Insurance: Proposal must describe the company's insurance coverage and indicate the company will provide a copy of their insurance certificate as a part of entering into an agreement with NESCAUM.
10. Tax Liabilities: Proposal must affirm that the bidder:
 - (1) is not subject to any unpaid federal tax liability that has been assessed, for which all judicial and administrative remedies have been exhausted or have lapsed, and that is not being paid in a timely manner pursuant to an agreement with the authority responsible for collecting the tax liability; and
 - (2) has not been convicted (or had an officer or agency acting on its behalf convicted) of a felony criminal conviction under any federal law within 24 months preceding the award, unless EPA has considered suspension or debarment of the corporation, or such officer or agent, based on these tax liabilities or convictions and determined that such action is not necessary to protect the US Government's interests.
11. Civil Rights: Proposal must affirm that in carrying out this training, the bidder will comply with laws and regulations prohibiting discrimination based on race, color, or national origin (including limited English proficiency), and prohibiting discrimination against persons with disabilities, and prohibiting discrimination on the basis of age or sex.
12. Indicate in your proposal if NESCAUM will have the right to post publicly and re-use instructional materials, including handouts and presentations used in this class. Specify any limitations on free use and the rationale for the limitations. Note that NESCAUM requires information and materials developed with NESCAUM support to be made available to the public.
13. Cost Proposal:
 - a. Instructional service charges - fixed fee cost for development of curriculum and presentation including any course updates, preparation, reports, and course delivery for each of the two instructional delivery methods (classroom and webinar). Proposals should break out expenses by task, as appropriate.

- b. NESCAUM will pay travel and lodging expenses (if applicable) for instructors. Travel costs should not be included in the cost proposal. Instructors are expected to arrive the day before the course begins and leave the evening the course ends except in special circumstances that should be specified in the proposal.
- c. Other relevant itemized expenses, if any. Pre-approval by NESCAUM of these costs will be required.

VI. Criteria for Evaluation of Proposals

Selection criteria will include:

- Responsiveness of the written proposal to the requirements specified in this RFP;
- Course content and instructional method, including use of appropriate equipment and materials;
- Instructor qualifications and experience in presenting the course material;
- Availability of course outline and materials for posting to the NESCAUM website and for future use by NESCAUM;
- References;
- Availability for course presentation;
- Proposed cost for completing the tasks specified in the Scope of Services; and
- Percentage MBE/WBE participation, if applicable.

This RFP does not commit NESCAUM to award a contract, pay any costs incurred in preparing a proposal, or to procure or contract for services or supplies. NESCAUM reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals received, to negotiate with all qualified sources, or to cancel in part or in its entirety the solicitation when it is in NESCAUM's best interest. NESCAUM is not required to select the lowest cost bid but will consider cost among the other factors listed above. NESCAUM reserves the right to contract with more than one bidder to obtain needed expertise, if necessary. NESCAUM may follow-up with selected bidders if necessary to obtain further information before making a final selection.