

**Alabama Gulf Coast Recovery Council's
Competitive Process for Selection
of the State of Alabama's Center of Excellence
(May 13, 2015)**

The Alabama Gulf Coast Recovery Council (AGCRC) has adopted the rules and policies detailed herein for purposes of selecting a Center of Excellence for the State of Alabama pursuant to Section 1605 of the Resources and Ecosystems Sustainability, Tourist Opportunities, and Revived Economies of the Gulf Coast States Act of 2012 (RESTORE Act).

Public Review and Comment Prior to Implementation of Final Competitive Selection Process:

The rules and policies set forth herein as to this Competitive Selection Process, including the Solicitation for Proposals (SFP) attached as Appendix A, were published for public review and comment for 45 days on the following websites:

- Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources' (ADCNR) comprehensive coastal restoration website, www.alabamacoastalrestoration.org;
- Alabama Gulf Coast Recovery Council website, www.restorealabama.org;
- Mobile Bay National Estuary Program website, www.mobilebaynep.com;
- Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium website, www.masgc.org; and
- Gulf of Mexico Alliance website, www.gulfofmexicoalliance.org.

In addition, the above entities agreed to announce the availability of this Competitive Selection Process through electronic mailing lists managed by these organizations.

Comments were accepted via email to agcrc@dcnr.alabama.gov or by U.S. mail to AGCRC, 118 N. Royal Street, Suite 603, Mobile, AL 36602. After meaningful consideration of public input from individuals, businesses, Indian tribes, and non-profit organizations, a final competitive process for selection of the Alabama Center of Excellence was adopted and will be posted (www.restorealabama.org), and thereafter implemented by the AGCRC in accordance with all requirements of the RESTORE Act, any applicable regulations issued pursuant to the RESTORE Act, and all other applicable federal, state and local requirements.

Conflict of Interest Safeguards:

All members of the AGCRC, as well as ADCNR as its administrative agent, will appropriately guard against any conflicts of interest and will conduct all activities related to the implementation of the Competitive Selection Process in accordance with the provisions of the State of Alabama Ethics Act (Ala. Code §36-25-1, et. seq.) and other applicable requirements of the Alabama Ethics Commission.

Non-Discrimination:

No members of the AGCRC, or ADCNR as its administrative agent, may discriminate on the basis of race, color, age, gender, national origin, genetic information, veteran status, or disability. Any solicitation for proposals issued by the AGCRC will include a statement of non-discrimination.

Issuance of Solicitation for Proposals:

ADCNR, acting on behalf of and as administrative agent for the AGCRC, by notice described herein, has published a Solicitation for Proposals to invite candidates to compete for selection as the State of Alabama's Center of Excellence pursuant to the Centers of Excellence Grant Program established by Section 1605 of the RESTORE Act.

Advertisement of the SFP may be found on the following websites:

- ADCNR's comprehensive coastal restoration website, www.alabamacoastalrestoration.org;
- Alabama Gulf Coast Recovery Council website, www.restorealabama.org;
- Mobile Bay National Estuary Program website, www.mobilebaynep.com;
- Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium website, www.masgc.org; and
- Gulf of Mexico Alliance website, www.gulfofmexicoalliance.org.

In addition, the above entities have agreed to distribute an announcement of the issuance of the SFP through electronic mailing lists managed by these organizations.

Proposals will be accepted for a minimum of 45 days. Included in this SFP is the anticipated Scope of Work as well as a description of the factors to be utilized by the AGCRC in evaluating submitted proposals in relation to the selection of a Center of Excellence.

Process for Selection by the AGCRC:

This competitive selection process initiated by issuance of the SFP allows nongovernmental entities and consortia in the Gulf Coast Region, including public and private institutions of higher education, to compete and gives priority to entities and consortia that demonstrate the ability to establish the broadest cross-section of participants with interest and expertise in science, technology and monitoring in the discipline(s) on which the proposal is focused.

The selection will be conducted pursuant to the provisions of the SFP and will include an assessment of all proposals qualifying pursuant to the terms and conditions for submittals under the SFP (Section II. PROPOSAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS) and will be based upon an evaluation of the factors set forth in the SFP (Section III. SELECTION PROCESS).

Responses to additional requests for information and/or interviews may be required by the AGCRC prior to selection of a Center of Excellence. Final selection of a Center of Excellence eligible to receive pass through funds pursuant to the RESTORE Act will be dependent upon the entry of a written agreement satisfactory to the AGCRC outlining an agreed upon scope of work (Section I. SCOPE OF WORK). Further, as set forth in the SFP, the AGCRC reserves the right not to select any COE as a result of the issuance of the SFP (Section IV. NO COMMITMENT).

Posting of Submissions on SFP:

All proposals submitted to the AGCRC in accordance with the deadline set forth in the SFP (unless withdrawn pursuant to Section II D.) will be made publicly available and posted on the AGCRC's website following final selection of a COE pursuant to the SFP or final determination by the AGCRC not to proceed with selection of a COE pursuant to the SFP.

Appendix A

SOLICITATION FOR PROPOSALS

**By the Alabama Gulf Coast Recovery Council
for the
RESTORE Act Center of Excellence Research Grant Program**

May 13, 2015

THE ALABAMA GULF COAST RECOVERY COUNCIL (AGCRC), through its administrative agent, the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (ADCNR), is soliciting proposals from nongovernmental entities and consortia in the Gulf Coast Region (including public and private institutions of higher education) to serve as the State of Alabama's Center of Excellence as defined in Section 1605 of the Resources and Ecosystems Sustainability, Tourist Opportunities, and Revived Economies of the Gulf Coast States Act of 2012 (RESTORE Act). The Center of Excellence, following its selection by the AGCRC, will administer grant funds received pursuant to the provisions of the RESTORE Act for research on the Gulf Coast Region focusing on science, technology, and monitoring in one or more of the following disciplines, as defined pursuant to the RESTORE Act:

1. Coastal and deltaic sustainability, restoration, and protection, including solutions and technology that allow citizens to live in a safe and sustainable manner in a coastal delta in the Gulf Coast Region.
2. Coastal fisheries and wildlife ecosystem research and monitoring in the Gulf Coast Region.
3. Offshore energy development, including research and technology, to improve the sustainable and safe development of energy resources in the Gulf of Mexico.
4. Sustainable and resilient growth, economic and commercial development in the Gulf Coast Region.
5. Comprehensive observation, monitoring, and mapping of the Gulf of Mexico.

I. SCOPE OF WORK

The Scope of Work is anticipated to include, but not be limited to, the following tasks:

1. Develop and implement a process to manage an effective and efficient large-scale grant program focused on research, identifying the goals and objectives of the research program in consideration of the disciplines set forth pursuant to the RESTORE Act and listed above.
2. Manage all aspects of administering a large-scale grant program, including budgeting, contracting, procurement, reporting, compliance, performance measurement, accounting, record keeping, and auditing services consistent with the RESTORE Act, regulations issued pursuant to the RESTORE Act, and other applicable federal and state requirements including, but not limited to, requirements related to grant compliance (e.g., 2 CFR Part 200) and procurement procedures.
3. Develop, apply and achieve appropriate metrics of success for program activities.
4. Develop and implement an approach to apply and manage data standards, as well as a competitive, peer-review process to ensure unbiased treatment.

5. Provide technical and administrative expertise, and any other required support services to assist and support the program activities.
6. Coordinate compliance with all requirements of the RESTORE Act and all other applicable federal, state, and local statutes, rules, regulations and requirements.
7. Coordinate communications regarding program activities, as appropriate, with AGCRC and/or the ADCNR in its role as administrator for the AGCRC.
8. Develop, coordinate, and implement meaningful and broad-based public outreach efforts consistent with the purpose and requirements of the RESTORE Act's Centers of Excellence program.
9. Develop and implement appropriate policies and procedures associated with the Scope of Work set forth by the AGCRC consistent with the purpose and requirements of the RESTORE Act's Centers of Excellence program. Such policies and procedures will include, but not be limited to, those necessary to ensure appropriate procurement, contracting, compliance, reporting, recordkeeping, auditing, and sub-award issuance, while also guarding against conflicts of interest as to program activities.
10. Perform other tasks as required pursuant to the RESTORE Act and/or otherwise deemed appropriate by the AGCRC.

II. PROPOSAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS

A. Qualified Proposals:

Qualifying proposals must provide all requisite information under this Solicitation for Proposals (SFP) and clearly and specifically respond to all items set forth in this SFP. Unnecessarily elaborate brochures or other presentation materials beyond that deemed sufficient to present a complete, concise and effective proposal are discouraged.

B. Submission Requirements:

- If more than one entity is responding to this SFP under a single proposal, list all entities that are part of the proposal and/or will perform services pursuant to the Scope of Work. If the entity is a consortia, list all consortia members, and the respective areas of expertise and proposed administrative/technical duties and responsibilities as to each member, and identify the entity intending to serve as the lead member if the consortia is selected as the COE.
- Save all required material to a USB Storage Device and include THREE (3) HARD COPIES of all required items. The USB Storage Device must clearly be labeled with name and contact information of the proposer. All pages should include proposer's name and contact information. The original must be signed by an authorized representative of the proposer. All submissions become property of the AGCRC and will not be returned.
- The Proposal should be limited to no more than a total of 20 pages (a page printed two-sided front and back shall be counted as two pages) including contents, pages, and supporting appendices and should explain your institution's interest, qualifications and a comprehensive description of your approach specific to this SFP. Paper size shall be 8½" x 11". Text shall not be smaller than a font size of 12.

C. Submission Deadline:

All submissions must be received no later than June 30, 2015 by 4:00 p.m. CST.

It shall be the sole responsibility of the proposer to ensure actual delivery of the Proposal prior to the deadline. Submissions must be received prior to the deadline by physical delivery (mail, courier, overnight, or in person). Email or facsimile submissions will not be accepted.

Proposal Submissions shall be delivered to the following address:

Alabama Gulf Coast Recovery Council
Attention: Eliska Morgan
118 N. Royal Street, Suite 603
Mobile, AL 36602
(251) 380-7944

D. Withdrawals and Modifications of Proposals:

Proposals may be modified or withdrawn in writing prior to the proposal deadline specified herein. Proposals may not be modified or withdrawn after that time. If a proposer no longer wishes to have its proposal considered subsequent to the proposal deadline specified herein, a notice to that effect must be submitted in writing.

III. SELECTION PROCESS

The basis for the selection of Alabama's Center of Excellence will include, but not be limited to, proposer's successful demonstration of the following:

1. Quality, thoroughness and clarity of proposal as pertinent to the Scope of Work and the selection factors detailed herein, as well as the RESTORE Act, regulations issued pursuant to the RESTORE Act, as well as those outlined in the Department of Treasury Centers for Excellence Funding Application Guidelines.
2. Experience in administering a consortia or similar organization.
3. Specialized expertise, capabilities, and technical competence to manage a large-scale grant program as indicated by the technical training, education, and experience of the individual(s) who would be assigned to coordinate and/or perform the services.
4. Ability to establish the broadest cross-section of participants with interest and expertise in science, technology, and monitoring in one or more of the disciplines as defined in Section 1605 of the RESTORE Act.
5. Description of which RESTORE Act discipline(s) will be pursued and how focusing on such discipline(s) will benefit the State of Alabama and further the purposes of the RESTORE Act.
6. Ability in terms of capacity and availability of qualified personnel, equipment, and facilities, etc., to provide the required services efficiently and effectively, both as to performance and cost and consistent with the disciplines(s) being pursued.
7. Ability to demonstrate how your entity will apply data standards and manage data collected pursuant to research grants.
8. Ability to implement policies and procedures to guard against any conflicts of interest.

9. Description of policies and procedures to be used to maintain and monitor compliance with the RESTORE Act and all applicable federal and state grant requirements.
10. Record of past performance, quality of work, financial standards, proven history as to management of funds (including history of audit performance) as well as ability to issue and thereafter manage/monitor sub-awards.
11. Ability to prepare reports as mandated by the RESTORE Act, regulations issued pursuant to the RESTORE Act, as well as those outlined in the Department of Treasury Centers for Excellence Funding Application Guidelines, and as otherwise may be required by the AGCRC and ADCNR.
12. Ability to maintain all records as mandated by the RESTORE Act, regulations issued pursuant to the RESTORE Act, as well as those outlined in the Department of Treasury Centers for Excellence Funding Application Guidelines, and as otherwise may be required by the AGCRC and ADCNR.
13. Ability to respond to audits as may be conducted pursuant to the RESTORE Act, regulations issued pursuant to the RESTORE Act, as well as those outlined in the Department of Treasury Centers for Excellence Funding Application Guidelines, or otherwise by the AGCRC, the State of Alabama and/or ADCNR.
14. Experience with and ability to conduct broad-based public outreach activities as required pursuant to the RESTORE Act and as may be requested by the AGCRC, including, but not limited to, strategy for engagement with affected communities.
15. Anticipated budget for first five years, reasonableness of budget, ability to efficiently and effectively perform program activities within such budget, and description of the long-range budgetary and operational strategy taking into account uncertainty as to future RESTORE Act funding.
16. Any other relevant factors the AGCRC may deem appropriate in relation to its review of qualifying proposals.

The selection process will consist of assessment of all proposals received pursuant to the Proposal Terms and Conditions of this SFP. Responses to additional requests for information and/or interviews may be required prior to selection of a Center of Excellence.

IV. NO COMMITMENT

The AGCRC reserves the right not to select any Center of Excellence as a result of the issuance of this SFP and may revoke this SFP at any time. Any award of funds related to Alabama's Center of Excellence is subject to the availability of funds and/or the needs of the Alabama Gulf Coast Recovery Council, and, therefore, the AGCRC, at its discretion, may or may not direct ADCNR, as its administrative agent, to enter into any agreement as a result of this SFP. Furthermore, even in the event an initial selection is made by the AGRCC, no selection is final until full execution of a written agreement detailing an agreed upon scope of work. If AGCRC deems, in its sole discretion, that a satisfactory written agreement cannot be reached in accordance with an initial selection, the AGCRC reserves the right to proceed with efforts to make another selection based upon the proposals submitted pursuant to this SFP.

V. NON-DISCRIMINATION

The AGCRC and the ADCNR do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, age, gender, national origin, genetic information, veteran status, or disability.

VI. FURTHER INFORMATION

This SFP is available on the AGCRC website, www.restorealabama.org, and www.alabamacoastalrestoration.org.

It can also be found on the following websites:

www.mobilebaynep.com

www.masgc.org

www.gulfofmexicoalliance.org

Any questions must be submitted in writing and should be emailed to the following (no phone calls please):

Ms. Eliska Morgan

eliska.morgan@dcnr.alabama.gov

Subject line should read: "Question for COE SFP"

Responses to written questions will be provided and posted on the AGCRC website as practicable and as time permits.

VII. POSTING OF SUBMISSIONS ON SFP:

All proposals submitted to the AGCRC in accordance with the deadline set forth in the SFP (unless withdrawn pursuant to Section II D.) will be made publicly available and posted on the AGCRC's website following final selection of a COE pursuant to the SFP or final determination by the AGCRC not to proceed with selection of a COE pursuant to the SFP.