

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
FOR
ENERGY RESILIENCE PLANNING CONSULTANT

Issue Date: October 17, 2024

Proposals Due: November 13, 2024

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SMPDC

SOUTHERN MAINE PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

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I. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Power outages from weather-related disasters are a significant hazard in Maine, which experiences blackouts at some of the highest frequencies in the entire United States. Frequent power outages can incur large costs to the region's businesses, which may experience the loss of perishable products, delay certain activities, damage to equipment, or suffer reduced hours and/or reduced staffing due to lack of power. Recent local Climate Action Planning efforts have identified regional energy resilience planning as a priority for southern Maine businesses and communities. While upgrading grid infrastructure is the responsibility of electricity utilities, there are many actions that the southern Maine region, its business sector, and local governments can take to build upon and coordinate with utility efforts to increase energy resilience.

In this Request for Proposals ("RFP"), the Southern Maine Planning and Development Commission (SMPDC) is soliciting proposals for consultant services to support the development of the Southern Maine Energy Resilience Plan (Plan), a project funded via a grant award from the US Economic Development Administration's Disaster Recovery program to SMPDC. This eighteen-month planning process will bring together a stakeholder group of local municipalities, state energy office staff, industrial and commercial businesses, utility providers, and critical service providers to identify energy reliability challenges, identify local and regional resilience measures, and propose areas for cooperation and partnership. The plan will include a comprehensive energy resilience assessment to identify disaster and climate risks to economic assets, infrastructure, businesses, and industrial sectors and will identify actions to reduce those risks, such as vegetation management interventions, pole management agreements, implementation of microgrids, land use ordinance amendments to require undergrounding of power, and other related measures.

The outcomes of the Plan will be:

1. An increased understanding of the disaster and climate risks to the region's electric grid and the impacts to the region's economic assets, infrastructure, businesses, and communities.
2. Identified strategies and next steps to reduce climate risks at the local and regional level.
3. Increased long term coordination and collaboration between southern Maine electricity stakeholders and local utility providers.
4. Increased economic resilience of southern Maine businesses to weather disaster and climate driven power outages and to adopt new technologies that play a vital role in strengthening economic resilience such as renewable energy, EV charging infrastructure, and battery storage.

SMPDC is seeking a consultant to support this planning project. The consultant will lead the energy resilience assessment and facilitate the stakeholder group and community engagement. The consultant will support other aspects of the project, including project management, strategy identification, and plan creation. The consultant will provide a written regional energy resilience assessment document, as well as stakeholder and community engagement materials and deliverables.

SMPDC is seeking a consultant with technical experience relating to electricity reliability and electrification and that is adept in leading deliberative decision-making processes with a wide range of stakeholders. The consultant should also have a deep understanding of policy and regulations related to the Northern New England electric grid and be knowledgeable about actions to increase grid resilience across local, county, state and regional scales.

II. CONSULTANT SCOPE OF WORK

Roles and Responsibilities:

SMPDC will serve as project administrator, including grant administration, adherence to US Economic Development Administration requirements, and provide consultant oversight. The consultant will lead the regional energy resilience assessment, stakeholder group facilitation, and community engagement. SMPDC will support those three tasks. SMPDC will lead the final development of the Plan, with the consultant supporting. The Consultant will work directly with SMPDC and the stakeholder group throughout the planning process.

The consultant tasks are described below. Consultant proposals should incorporate, expand on, or adjust these tasks as necessary.

1. Task 1: Project Management (Timeframe: Ongoing)

- A. The consultant will assist SMPDC staff to convene meetings and provide administrative support to the SMPDC Project Team, assist with documentation needed for grant reporting and general communications, and develop and finalize project deliverables.
- B. The consultant will assist as needed with the coordination of all public project communications, as well as communications with Federal, State, and local stakeholders, and elected officials.
- C. All information concerning the project, including progress reports, data, meeting agendas and materials, presentations, and draft and final reports will be reviewed by SMPDC prior to public release.

2. Task 2: Regional Energy Resilience Assessment (Timeframe: Dec. 2024 – Aug. 2025)

The consultant will create a Regional Energy Resilience Assessment to provide an understanding of the current conditions and needs for energy resilience in southern Maine and to inform the development of priority strategies to increase energy resilience. The region to be covered in the assessment includes the Central Maine Power (CMP) Alfred service district and the Kennebunk Light and Power District (KLPD), roughly aligning with boundary of York County, Maine. The Regional Energy Resilience Assessment will be comprised of four sub-tasks, described below. The deliverables from each sub-task will be combined into a final assessment report that will be included in the Plan.

Task 2A: Coordination with State Planning Efforts: The Plan will coordinate with and build off current integrated grid planning and climate resilience planning efforts in Maine. The consultant will research current and planned grid planning efforts. The consultant will draft a memo summarizing utility and statewide efforts and noting where there could be beneficial links with this project (i.e. by identifying where regional priorities could be incorporated into the regional utilities' resilience plans or by identifying areas where local or regional actions could amplify the utilities' resilience efforts.)

Deliverables: Memo summarizing current state energy resilience planning efforts and where local and regional action may overlap and/or add to the existing plans of the region's electricity utilities.

Task 2B: Grid Reliability Analysis: The consultant will produce an in-depth analysis of regional electrical grid reliability that expands upon reliability data and assessments available from the region’s utilities, CMP and KLPD. The analysis will incorporate considerations for current and future energy needs, impacts of electrification, and anticipated local and regional impacts of power outages due to future disaster events in a changing climate.

Deliverables: Technical report summarizing the grid reliability analysis.

Task 2C: Cost Assessment of Power Outages: The consultant will provide a memo with a regional expansion and update of the assessment of the cost of power outages to local businesses from the [EDA funded Economic Resilience Assessment for Coastal York County](#) (pages 21-23). It is anticipated that the consultant will utilize the [ICE2.0 Calculator](#), among other sources, for this assessment. However, SMPDC is interested in learning if other tools or analyses might be used as an alternative.

Deliverables: Memo on the cost of power outages to the region.

Task 2D: Microgrid Feasibility Analysis: The consultant will conduct a feasibility analysis for microgrid projects and localized distributed generation and battery storage projects at critical community facilities such as local hospitals, community centers, and municipal facilities. SMPDC will work with the consultant to identify the appropriate scope and breadth of this analysis. It is anticipated that the consultant will work with the stakeholder group to identify critical community facilities to include in the assessment.

Deliverables: Technical report providing a feasibility assessment of microgrid projects at critical community facilities.

Task 2 Deliverables: Regional Energy Resilience Assessment report.

3. Task 3: Stakeholder Group Facilitation (Timeframe: Dec. 2024 – Feb. 2026)

A stakeholder group of local municipalities, state energy office staff, industrial and commercial businesses, utility providers, and critical service providers will be established to discuss energy reliability challenges, identify local and regional resilience measures, and propose areas for cooperation and partnership between stakeholders. It is anticipated that the stakeholder group will be identified by SMPDC, although consultant input is welcome. The consultant will lead stakeholder group facilitation. This will primarily consist of developing and delivering meeting opportunities for stakeholders to provide input and feedback throughout the planning process. Activities will include developing meeting agendas and materials, scheduling meetings, facilitating meeting discussions, leading strategy ideation, meeting follow up outreach, and coordination with stakeholders as needed. It is anticipated that at least the first and final stakeholder meetings will be in person with a hybrid option. All other meetings are likely to be fully remote. The anticipated meeting topics and schedule is as follows:

- A. Stakeholder Group Kickoff Meeting. Anticipated Jan. – Feb. 2025.
- B. Stakeholder Meeting 2, Regional Energy Assessment Update #1. Anticipated April – May 2025.
- C. Stakeholder Meeting 3, Regional Energy Assessment Update #2. Anticipated Jun. – Aug. 2025.
- D. Stakeholder Meeting 4, Strategy Identification. Anticipated Sept. – Nov. 2025.

E. Stakeholder Meeting 5, Strategy Finalization. Anticipated Dec. 2025 – Jan. 2026.

Deliverables: Stakeholder meetings, meeting summaries, presentation materials, and attendee lists.

4. **Task 4: Community Engagement** (Timeframe: Dec. 2024 – Feb. 2026)

The project team will gather input from businesses and community members to ensure that the plan reflects community energy resilience concerns and needs as well as actions that could have broad public support. Community engagement will involve at least three distinct engagement efforts during the planning process, two to gather input about resilience concerns and actions and one to support the final plan. The consultant will advise on possible community engagement strategies to implement and then create and implement a community engagement plan. The consultant will produce a summary of community engagement to be incorporated into the final Plan.

- A. Develop community engagement plan
- B. First community engagement effort
- C. Second community engagement effort
- D. Engagement about final plan

Deliverables: Community engagement plan document, three community engagement efforts, summary report on community engagement efforts.

5. **Task 5: Development of the Southern Maine Energy Resilience Plan** (Timeframe: Sept. 2025 – Feb. 2026)

The project team will draft a plan that incorporates all the information, priorities, and input gathered through the other project tasks. The plan will identify specific actions that the region, local governments, and businesses can take to support energy resilience. The consultant will aid SMPDC and the stakeholder group in identifying appropriate strategies and determining realistic next steps for implementation of the plan. The consultant will also support the content development of the plan, including the incorporation of the deliverables generated in tasks 2 – 4 into the plan.

- A. Outline Plan: The Consultant will assist SMPDC in the development of a framework for the final plan based on the assessment conducted in Task 2 and the feedback and input received in Tasks 3 and 4.
- B. Draft Plan: The Consultant will support SMPDC in the drafting of the final plan.

6. **Additional Considerations:**

- A. Throughout the project, the consultant should ensure that inclusive and equity-focused planning principles are implemented. The consultant should use their expertise to engage

traditionally underserved or disenfranchised individuals and/or groups, including populations with social vulnerability, during the stakeholder group facilitation and community engagement tasks of the project. Equity considerations should also be incorporated into the energy resilience assessment and strategy development, including considerations for how energy resilience strategies could promote energy equity or increase inequity.

III. BUDGET:

The total budget for consultant services on the regional energy resilience assessment, stakeholder group facilitation, and public engagement is **\$160,000**.

IV. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Please submit project proposals via email to Karina Graeter, Sustainability Division Director: kgraeter@smpdc.org no later than **5:00 PM on Wednesday, November 13, 2024**. Hard copies of submissions are not required. Email subject line must include “**Proposal for Energy Resilience Planning Consultant Services**”. Proposal should be submitted as a single PDF file.

By submitting a proposal, the consultant agrees to the Terms and Conditions and to hold open the proposal for a minimum of ninety (90) days. Changes in the consultant staff during the ninety (90) days following the date of receipt of the proposal must be communicated immediately to SMPDC and may, at the discretion of SMPDC, be considered as grounds for rejection of the proposal.

All project proposals should be succinct and include the following information and documentation:

- **Cover Letter:** A narrative that includes:
 - The name of the proposing firm, or in the case of a proposing team, the name of the prime Respondent.
 - The name, title, mailing address, phone number, and email address of the individual who will serve as the prime Respondent’s representative for future communication regarding the proposal.
 - A brief synopsis of the proposal and the Respondent’s relevant experience, capabilities, project development status, and project management approach.
 - Signature of an individual authorized to negotiate and execute the contract on behalf of the Respondent.
- **Table of Contents:** A listing of the individual sections of the proposal and their corresponding page numbers.
- **General Information:** A narrative that provides the following information:
 - The names(s), address(es), and website(s) of each participating firm, including major subcontractor(s).
 - A description of the roles and responsibilities of each participating firm.

- Key personnel, capacity, and skills
 - Identify the employees by number and area of expertise. Provide an organizational chart that shows the interrelationship of key personnel to be provided by the Respondent for this project, including the lead contact person.
 - Describe the time commitment, experience, and references for the key personnel including relevant experience to the Consultant Scope of Work.
 - Identify the Respondent's current and projected workload for projects, and ability to meet the project timeline.
- **Track Record/Experience:** A narrative that provides the following information:
 - A discussion of the technical and professional capabilities that demonstrates each participating firm's ability to perform assigned responsibilities in a timely manner.
 - Description and references for up to five (5) similar projects completed or underway by the Respondent. Include customer name, contact name, title, phone number and email address. Indicate which, if any, of the proposed team members also participated in the project. Provide information related to the implementation of recommendations made through completed projects.
- **Project Approach:** Describe the Respondent's approach to providing the level and nature of services required as evidenced by Consultant Scope of Work. Proposal should use the timeframes proposed in the Consultant Scope of Work to develop a project schedule, explaining any deviations that might be required.
 - Include a detailed workplan for the selection process including, but not limited to:
 - Description of how the Respondent envisions conducting each subtask of the Energy Resilience Assessment and examples of resources and tools to be used.
 - Description of facilitation strategies for stakeholder group meetings that will support coordination and cooperation across different stakeholders.
 - Examples of engagement and outreach tools that could be employed for community engagement efforts and at stakeholder group meetings.
 - Description of how key stakeholders will be engaged in the planning process including traditionally underserved or disenfranchised individuals/groups, populations of elevated social vulnerability, and youth community members.
- **Project Budget:** Provide a lump sum price for all services. Also include:
 - A fee schedule and hours breakdown for each task and subtask of the Consultant Scope of Work including all personnel and sub-contractors (if applicable) assigned to this project.
- **Assurances:** Provide a signed statement that certifies the following for the Respondent, its principals, and any subcontractors named in the proposal submitted in response to this RFP:
 - Representation that the candidate firm or consulting team will, in all aspects, conform to and comply with Equal Opportunity Employment requirements.

- Assurance that this agreement will not result in a conflict of interest.
- Certification that the Respondent, its principles, and sub-consultants:
 - Are not debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible or voluntarily excluded from bidding or working on contracts issued by any governmental agency.
 - Have not within three (3) years of submitting the Proposal for this contract been convicted of or had a civil judgment rendered against them for:
 - fraud or a criminal offense in connection with obtaining, attempting to obtain, or performing a federal, state or local government transaction or contract.
 - violating Federal or State antitrust statutes or committing embezzlement, theft, forgery, bribery, falsification or destruction of records, making false statements, or receiving stolen property;
 - are not indicted for or otherwise criminally or civilly charged by a governmental entity (Federal, State or Local) with commission of any of the offenses enumerated in paragraph (b) of this certification; and
 - have not within a three (3) year period preceding this Proposal had one or more federal, state or local government transactions terminated for cause or default.

RFP TIMELINE:

RFP issued:	October 17, 2024
Proposals Due:	November 13, 2024
Proposal Review:	November 13, 2024 – November 18, 2024
Interviews (if necessary):	November 20, 2024 – November 26, 2024
Consultant Selection:	By December 6, 2024

SMPDC welcomes questions and requests for more information. Questions should be submitted via email to Karina Graeter (kgraeter@smpdc.org) by **November 6th, 2024**. Questions will be posted on a rolling basis on [SMPDC’s Jobs and Active Bids webpage](#).

V. SELECTION PROCESS

Submissions will be evaluated by a Selection Committee that will consist of representatives from SMPDC. The Committee will review, evaluate, and rate each proposal based on the following Selection Criteria:

Criteria	Maximum Points
Consultant Qualifications	10
Previous Experience	40
Project Approach	40
Fees and Hours	10

To evaluate the submissions according to these criteria, the Selection Committee will consider the following, as well as any other factors the Section Committee considers appropriate:

Consultant Qualifications

- The related experience of the lead Consultant and sub-consultants.
- The related experience of individuals assigned to the project.
- Resumes demonstrating appropriate education and professional experience.
- Project team organizational structure.

Consultant Experience

- Applicability of Consultant's and Sub-consultants described expertise and/or specialty to the project.
- Experience completing similar projects on time and within budget.
- Sufficient staff for all facets of the proposed study workload, including previous work with proposed Sub consultants.
- Specific personnel and their qualifications for conducting the work.

Project Approach

- Demonstrated understanding of the purpose and scope of the project.
- Detailed work plan with approach for providing the services described in the Consultant Scope of Work.
- Identification of pertinent issues and potential problems related to the project.
- Demonstrated understanding of the expected deliverables.
- Demonstrated understanding of the project timeline.

Fees and Hours

- Clearly described lump sum price for all services as specified, as well as a fee schedule and hours breakdown for each task and subtask of the Consultant Scope of Work.

The Selection Committee will rank proposals using the above Selection Criteria. Respondents of top proposals may be invited to interview with the Selection Committee. If so, interviews will be conducted remotely to give both the Selection Committee and the Respondents an opportunity to ask questions and discuss the response to the RFP.

The Selection Committee will select a Respondent with which/whom to enter into a contract for the Consultant Scope of Work. The Selection Committee reserves the right to consider any other relevant criteria that it may deem appropriate, within their sole discretion. The Selection Committee may or may not, within their sole discretion, seek additional information from Respondents.

VI. CONTRACT TERM AND PAYMENT

All procurement for contractual services will be in accordance with 2CFR Part 200.318-327, all applicable State of Maine and local laws and regulations, and applicable Federal laws and standards.

The contractor shall prosecute the work expeditiously and continuously until completion. The anticipated timeline for the proposed work is **December 2024 to February 2026**. Consultant shall invoice SMPDC monthly throughout the duration of the project. Invoices shall include a breakdown of fees by task, employee, and hours worked. It shall also include a written report of progress for that billing period.

VII. CONFIDENTIALITY

The information contained in proposals submitted for SMPDC consideration will be held in confidence until all reviews are concluded and the award notification has been made. At that time, the full content of the proposals becomes public record and is therefore available for public inspection upon request.

According to state procurement law, the content of all proposals, correspondence, addenda, memoranda, working papers, or any other medium which discloses any aspect of the request for proposals process will be considered public information when the award decision is announced. This includes all proposals received in response to this RFP, both the selected proposal and the proposal(s) not selected and includes information in those proposals which a Proposer may consider to be proprietary in nature.