



## **Straight Gate International Church**

*Soliciting Qualifications and Proposals from Engineering and Planning vendors for Federal Grant Funding Projects in Energy Efficiency, Environmental Justice, and Clean Energy*

### **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

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## **Section I: Introduction**

**History:** Located in Detroit, Michigan, Straight Gate International Church was founded in 1978 by Bishop Andrew and Pastor Viveca Merritt. It is a non-denominational, full gospel ministry that teaches the Bible as the infallible Word of God and that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever. Actively involved in the community, the church partners with Give Merit, Inc. and other nonprofits dedicated to uplifting Detroit's most vulnerable populations.

**Purpose:** Straight Gate International Church is seeking qualifications from engineering, architectural, and/or planning vendors with extensive experience in designing and implementing federal grant funding projects in the areas of energy efficiency, environmental justice, and clean energy. The purpose of this RFP is to build a team to submit proposals for federal funding opportunities under the Inflation Reduction Act and other relevant state and federally funded programs. Selected vendors will be expected to assess eligible capital projects and funding opportunities, promote multichannel approaches to community and stakeholder engagement, develop scopes of work, budgets, and implementation timelines, and ensure federal grant proposals meet all the technical requirements in the proposal. Additionally, selected vendors may be utilized to provide post-award services related to grant administration in the event Straight Gate International Church is selected for award.

**Background:** The Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), the American Rescue Plan Act, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Act, and a host of other federally funded programs provide significant funding opportunities to support projects that enhance energy efficiency, promote environmental justice, and advance clean energy initiatives. This RFP seeks to leverage these opportunities by assembling a team of qualified professionals to assist Straight Gate International Church in capitalizing on these funding sources. Relevant federally funded programs include, but are not limited to, the Department of Energy's Weatherization Assistance Program, the Environmental Protection Agency's Environmental Justice Small Grants Program and Community Change Grant, and other similar initiatives.

## **Section II: RFP Objectives**

This RFP is part of a competitive negotiation process intended to allow Straight Gate International Church to obtain goods and/or services as outlined herein in a manner that is most advantageous to Straight Gate International Church. This RFP is designed to meet federal procurement requirements outlined in the Uniform Administrative Guidance in 2 CFR Part 200, while providing the flexibility to weigh the qualifications of all professional services providers and to negotiate with vendors, if desired, to arrive at a mutually agreeable relationship. Qualifications will be the leading standard of review for engineering services under this solicitation; while price may weigh heavily in the evaluation process of services outside of A/E, it will not be the only factor under consideration and may not be the determining factor. Upon the award decision announcement, Straight Gate International Church will adhere to all relevant laws and regulations



concerning the public inspection of submissions.

It is Straight Gate International Church's intent to select the vendor(s), which are most favorable to Straight Gate International Church in all respects, including scope, availability of services, quality of services, reputation, and price. If not otherwise stated herein, multiple awards may be made or an award(s) may be made partial, by part, by line item, or by any combination of parts if identified as being in the best interest of Straight Gate International Church. The initial contract term will be for one (1) year(s) with the possibility of two (2) successive one (1) year renewals, for a total term not to exceed three (3) years.

**Section III: Proposal Timeline**

Issue Request for Qualifications/Proposals:	July 23, 2024
Deadline to Submit Questions:	July 31, 2024
Proposals Due:	August 7, 2024
Vendor Selected:	August 17, 2024
Anticipate Vendor Award:	By or before September 6, 2024

**Section IV: Proposed Scope of Work and Associated Tasks**

The selected vendor(s) will assist Straight Gate International Church in identifying, planning, budgeting, and implementing of energy efficiency, environmental justice, and clean energy capital and community-based projects that are eligible for federal funding through the Inflation Reduction Act and other relevant federal and state programs. The primary focus will be on capital projects that significantly enhance energy efficiency and incorporate clean energy technologies. A comprehensive overview of the anticipated scope of work and associated tasks are outlined below. Upon selection, the vendor(s) will collaborate with Straight Gate International Church to establish priorities and develop a detailed roadmap for requisite deliverables and timelines.

The selected vendor(s) will also ensure that all federal grant proposals meet the technical requirements and standards set forth in the funding solicitations. The selected vendor(s) must showcase a proven track record in managing federally funded projects and adhering to local, state, and federal laws. The scope of work includes data analysis, planning, and compliance services, as well as project management and communication expertise. The contract will encompass procurement services and project oversight. Demonstrating proficiency in administering federally funded awards is crucial.

Additionally, the vendor(s) should have the expertise required to anticipate modifications for unexpected events during the planning and design process as part of the contingency plan. As a federally funded project, the selected vendor(s) will create a management plan to ensure that all federal guidelines and due diligence are realized.



The scope of work under this RFP includes, but is not limited to, the following tasks and deliverables:

Anticipated Tasks:

**1. Project Engagement:**

- Set clear direction, communication guidelines, and a schedule aligned with the project's scope.
- Create project templates for various deliverable categories to ensure uniformity in format and design, and document discussions and outcomes by preparing and sharing meeting minutes with Straight Gate International Church for feedback.
- Establish a detailed project schedule and budget, identifying tasks, meetings, milestones, and deliverables. These tools will help in resource allocation, task sequencing, monitoring project progress, and updating stakeholders regularly. A simplified schedule will be created for broader dissemination to various audiences.

**2. Existing Conditions Analysis and Project Identification:**

- Conduct a comprehensive assessment of all properties to identify potential capital projects.
- Evaluate the current state of energy efficiency and clean energy technologies on each property.
- Identify projects with the highest potential for energy savings and environmental impact.

**3. Feasibility Studies:**

- Perform feasibility studies for identified projects to determine technical and financial viability.
- Analyze potential energy savings, cost-effectiveness, and return on investment.
- Identify potential barriers and develop strategies to mitigate them.

**4. Community and Stakeholder Engagement:**

- Outline how public interaction will unfold throughout the implementation of any federal grant proposals and subsequent implementation.
- Detail the vendor(s) strategies for engaging with community members residing near the project site and other relevant stakeholders.

**5. Funding Opportunity Assessment:**

- Research and identify relevant federal and state funding opportunities, including those under the Inflation Reduction Act.
- Match identified projects with appropriate funding sources.



- Ensure compliance with eligibility requirements for each funding opportunity.
- 6. Scope of Work Development:**
- Develop detailed scopes of work for each identified project.
  - Outline specific tasks, timelines, and resource requirements.
  - Include technical specifications and performance standards.
- 7. Budget Development:**
- Prepare comprehensive budgets for each project, including cost estimates for materials, labor, and other expenses.
  - Develop financial models to project long-term savings and return on investment.
  - Identify potential cost-saving measures and funding gaps.
- 8. Implementation Planning:**
- Create detailed implementation plans for each project.
  - Develop project schedules with key milestones and deadlines.
  - Coordinate with internal teams and external stakeholders to ensure smooth project execution.
- 9. Grant Proposal Development:**
- Draft and prepare federal grant proposals for each project.
  - Ensure all technical requirements and standards are met.
  - Identify and coordinate key constituents to provide letters of support for grant applications.
  - Facilitate communication and collaboration with constituents to enhance grant applications.
  - Compile necessary documentation and supporting materials for grant proposal.
- 10. Project Management/Grant Administration:**
- Provide ongoing project management support throughout the implementation phase.
  - Monitor progress, manage timelines, and ensure adherence to budgets.
  - Manage and oversee the procurement process to ensure compliance with grant guidelines and requirements.
  - Ensure that all products and contractors procured meet the standards and criteria specified by the grant.
  - Address any issues or challenges that arise during the grant(s) implementation.

Anticipated Deliverables:

**1. Project Assessment Reports:**



- Detailed reports on the current state of energy efficiency and clean energy technologies on each property.
  - List of identified projects with potential energy savings and environmental impact.
2. **Feasibility Study Reports:**
- Comprehensive feasibility studies for each identified project, including technical and financial analysis.
  - Recommendations for project implementation.
3. **Funding Opportunity Reports:**
- List of relevant federal and state funding opportunities.
  - Eligibility assessments for each identified project.
4. **Detailed Scopes of Work:**
- Detailed scopes of work for each project, including tasks, timelines, and resource requirements.
  - Technical specifications and performance standards.
5. **Project Budgets:**
- Comprehensive budgets for each project with detailed cost estimates.
  - Financial models projecting long-term savings and return on investment.
6. **Implementation Plans (including energy efficiency engineering design):**
- Detailed project implementation plans with schedules and key milestones.
  - Coordination plans with internal teams and external stakeholders.
7. **Grant Proposals:**
- Completed federal grant proposals for each project.
  - All necessary documentation and supporting materials.
8. **Progress Reports:**
- Regular progress reports during the implementation phase.
  - Updates on project timelines, budgets, and any issues or challenges.

## **Section V: Submission Guidelines and Requirements**

Proposals should not exceed 30 pages, or 15 double-sided pages, on standard 8 ½" x 11" paper, single-spaced. The project team's resumes will not count against the page limitation. Hard copies must be printed



double-sided and should not use plastic sheeting. All proposals should include and address the following items in the order listed below:

1. **Cover Letter with Signature:** A cover letter must be submitted and signed by a person with authorization to bind the vendor to all commitments made in the proposal. The hardcopy submitted to Straight Gate International Church must include an original signature. Failure to include an original signature may result in proposal disqualification.
2. **Business Profile:** The full vendor name, address, telephone numbers, fax numbers, and e-mail address of the main point of contact with authority to bind the responding vendor to all items presented in the proposal. If applicable, include the address, telephone numbers, fax numbers, and email addresses for the branch office or subconsultant(s) that will perform or assist in performing work for the project. This information can be included in the Cover Letter or stand alone.

Indicate whether the responding vendor operates as an individual, partnership, or corporation, and if incorporated, indicate the state of incorporation.

3. **Executive Summary:** The Executive Summary should provide a brief background, areas and levels of expertise, relevant experience, project approach, and the ability of the responding vendor to meet the requirements set forth in the RFP. The summary should indicate any major requirements that cannot be met, or the responding vendor may offer adjustments to the scope of work if it is believed that the adjustments will add value to the overall project. The summary should be written so that it can serve as a short, stand-alone document apart from the entire proposal.
4. **Project Team:** Provide the following for each team member who will have an active role in the project from both the primary and subconsultant(s) vendors:
  - Name and Title;
  - Resume;
  - The role/assignment within the project the team member will serve;
  - Professional registrations including the field of registration and year where applicable;
  - Summary of work experience, training, or other experiences which will provide insight into each team member's potential contributions to the project; and
5. **Technical Proposal:** Describe the technical and creative strategies planned to achieve the proposal's goals, along with a detailed outline of professional services based on the scope of work and associated tasks provided in Section IV of this RFP. Vendors may suggest additional tasks, but must cover all tasks listed herein, even if proposing an alternative approach. For each task in



the scope of work, the proposal should outline the expected deliverables. The deliverable, may, but are not required to align with the anticipated deliverable outlined in Section IV. If any changes are made to the proposed scope of work, provide a thorough explanation for the reasoning.

Proposals should also specify project management tools, troubleshooting protocols, and a schedule detailing project milestones. The proposal should emphasize how community engagement will be approached. Responding vendors may propose handling tasks within their firm, through subcontractors, or via external procurement to occur in collaboration with Straight Gate International Church post-award.

The section of the response should comprehensively justify why the proposal is the best fit for Straight Gate International Church's needs.

6. **Proposed Innovations:** The responding vendor can suggest technical or procedural innovations that have been useful on similar projects. If applicable, include innovative approaches or specific new concepts that the responding vendor believes would benefit Straight Gate International Church.
7. **Demonstrated Understanding of Project Area:** Briefly describe your understanding of the project area including potential project barriers and unique opportunities offered by the site.
8. **Prior Project Experience:** Responding vendors should describe their experience with similar energy efficiency, environmental justice, and/or clean energy projects, including work samples, costs, and timelines of successfully completed projects.
9. **Fee Structure:** A summary of estimated fees for services. This may be structured in one or more of the following formats, but must clearly articulate a pricing structure for all services contemplated herein:
  - Estimated lump sum fee of services listed under Section IV;
  - Line item of billable hourly rates for key project personnel for additional services outside of specified scope of work listed in Section IV; and/or
  - An alternative fee structure.
10. **References:** Provide three to five references for the primary vendor's implementation team members). References should be based on projects with similar objectives and requirements outlined in this RFP and performed by team members that will be assigned to this project. Include the names, titles, organization affiliation, phone numbers, email addresses, and physical addresses





of each reference.

## 11. Add any additional requirements

### Section VI: Proposal Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on the most qualified and best proposal to complete the project in consideration of the following factors:

1. Expertise and past experience in the planning, engineering and implementation of energy efficiency, environmental justice, and clean energy projects and in providing services on projects of similar size, scope, and features as those required on this project.
2. Availability to accommodate the required services;
3. Qualifications and experience of the energy efficiency and clean energy planning, engineering and design project manager or principal to be assigned to this project.
4. Ability to develop a project management strategy that considers Straight Gate International Church's surrounding community and project implementation strategies that prioritize meaningful community involvement.

Evaluation of proposals will be performed by an evaluation committee consisting of Straight Gate International Church staff. The proposals will be evaluated on the vendor's ability to meet the requirements of this RFP. Some specific evaluation criteria, among other factors, will include:

#### Relevant Experience and Qualifications of the Implementation Team: 30%

- Experience and qualifications of the implementation team performing work on similar projects
- Experience working with the public and government agencies
- Clear explanation of project management approach and methodology
- Strength and stability of the vendor and client references

#### Proposed Schedule and Pricing: 15%

- Ability to meet project requirements within a proposed timeline
- Proposed timeline includes specific milestones and deadlines
- Reasonableness of unit rates and other elements of the fee estimate proposal.
- Cost control and quality assurance.

#### Approach to Completing the Scope of Work: 30%

- Clarity and completeness of scope of services outlined in proposal



- Comprehension of the organization's vision and the leadership's direction for the project proposal.
- Quality and thoroughness of proposed deliverables
- Demonstrated understanding of the historical and community implications of this project
- Innovative approaches to meaningful engagement with local businesses, residents, and community stakeholders
- Technical alternatives, creativity, and problem-solving ability.

Completeness of Response: 10%

- Completeness of response in accordance with the RFP instructions.

Disadvantaged and/or Minority Business Enterprise (DBE): 15%

- Consideration of whether the primary vendor and/or its subcontractors are a small, woman-owned; minority-owned; veteran-owned; or disadvantaged-owned business

Total Points = 100

**Section VII: Instructions for Proposal Submission**

Proposal Submission Deadline: All responses must be received by Straight Gate International Church by **4:00 pm EST on Wednesday, August 7, 2024**. Please direct any inquiries regarding the RFP requirements to David Merritt via email at [dmerritt@meritgoodness.com](mailto:dmerritt@meritgoodness.com) by no later than 4:00 pm EST on Friday, July 26, 2024.

Five (5) hardcopies and an electronic file must be submitted. Electronic files will be accepted via email directed to **David Merritt** at [dmerritt@meritgoodness.com](mailto:dmerritt@meritgoodness.com) with the title "Energy Efficiency, Environmental Justice, and Clean Energy RFP". Hardcopy and electronic responses must arrive at Straight Gate International Church on or before the aforementioned date and time to be considered. Late submissions will be disqualified. Responses cannot be sent by facsimile.

Hardcopies can be hand-delivered or mailed to Straight Gate International Church office at:



- Straight Gate International Church  
Attn: David Merritt  
10100 Grand River Ave  
Detroit, MI 48204

All expenses incurred while preparing and submitting a proposal is the sole responsibility of the responding vendor. All responses, inquiries, or correspondence relative to the RFP, reports, and documentation submitted will become the property of Straight Gate International Church.

### **Section VIII: Oral Interviews/Other Information**

Oral presentations and interviews with questions and answers may or may not be requested as a determining factor of contract award. The cost of preparing, submitting and presenting a proposal is the sole expense of the vendor(s). Straight Gate International Church reserves the right to reject any and all proposals received as a result of this solicitation with any qualified source, to waive any formality and any technicalities or to cancel the RFP in part or in its entirety if it is in the best interest of Straight Gate International Church.

Straight Gate International Church further reserves the right to request clarification of information submitted and to request additional information of one or more responding vendors. It will be necessary for responding vendors to comply fully with the general terms and conditions outlined in this document if they are to be considered.

### **Section IX: Miscellaneous**

#### *MBE Considerations*

Straight Gate International Church is committed to working with Minority Business Enterprises (MBE) and views this as a top priority for proposal consideration. As such, competitive proposals should make every effort to incorporate work from a primary vendor, subconsultant(s), or supplier with MBE status totaling, at minimum, 20% of the contract value. Proposals should clearly indicate the total percentage of the budget and detail the work that will be performed by a business with MBE status.

#### *Evaluation*

Proposals will be reviewed by a committee of individuals with relevant experience including Straight Gate International Church staff, stakeholders, and community members. Proposals will be evaluated based on the criteria in Section VI, including experience, qualified personnel, responsiveness, clear understanding of



the project goals, and extent to which the services offered most closely match Straight Gate International Church's needs. In the event that a vendor(s) cannot be selected solely on the proposals submitted, Straight Gate International Church may invite any number of qualified vendors responding to this Request for a virtual interview and/or formal presentation.

#### *Notification of Award*

The successful vendor will be notified by phone and written communication. Vendors whose proposals were not selected will be notified in writing. Straight Gate International Church is not obligated to explain the results of the evaluation process to any denied vendor. Upon the award decision announcement, Straight Gate International Church will adhere to all relevant laws and regulations concerning the public inspection of submissions.

#### *Conditions Governing Responses*

The Energy Efficiency, Environmental Justice, and Clean Energy solicitation is a Request for Proposals, not a Request for Contract; therefore, Straight Gate International Church reserves the right to:

1. Accept or reject any or all submissions, or portions, associated with this work, cancel the solicitation request prior to making an award for any reason or for no reason, or re-request proposals for this scope of work;
2. Require responding vendor to clarify aspects of their proposal and/or approach via video conference or phone;
3. Waive or modify any irregularities in a submitted proposal;
4. Amend specifications contained within the RFP after its release, with proper notification to all responding vendors to provide an opportunity to modify responses to reflect the change; and
5. Negotiate with the successful responding vendor.

Submission of a proposal does not guarantee any further consideration. All proposals will become property of Straight Gate International Church once submitted and any restrictions of use of the data contained in the proposal must be clearly stated.

#### *Required Forms*

Attached to this request are the following required forms that must be completed and returned with the Proposal:

1. Certification of Proposal
2. Anti-Lobbying Certification



3. Federal Debarred List Certification
4. Vendor Information

NOTE: Please provide a copy of the DBE Certification for vendors claiming such status. Certification must have been obtained from a federal, state, or local governmental agency, must have been issued within the past year, and must state the effective date of certification.

#### *Confidentiality*

The Awardee will receive and have access to confidential information from the project's major stakeholders, as well as internal affairs of Straight Gate International Church. The Awardee is expected to respect and maintain the confidentiality of all employee records, business records, data, donor information, land negotiations and agreements and other information of Straight Gate International Church, or our major stakeholders, not otherwise available to the public. At the end of this engagement, the selected vendor(s) must return all documents, records, or property of any type that belongs to Straight Gate International Church or a major stakeholder. Any programs, writings, or other material developed by the selected vendor(s) as part of this project will become property of Straight Gate International Church.

#### *Insurance and Indemnification*

The chosen consulting vendor(s) must maintain specific insurance coverage throughout the contract duration, including worker's compensation, comprehensive general liability, automobile liability, and professional liability. The vendor(s) must also furnish Straight Gate International Church with a standard Certificate of Insurance. While the coverage amount will be determined during contract negotiations, it should be adequate to shield Straight Gate International Church from any project-related liabilities. Any changes to the coverage - such as cancellation, reduction, or lapse - must be communicated in writing. It is also the selected vendor's responsibility to provide proof of the same requirements of any subconsultants or subcontractors.

The selected vendor(s) will indemnify Straight Gate International Church and its officials, agents, and employees from all suits or claims of any character brought by reason of infringing on any patent trademark or copyright. Additionally, a hold harmless agreement must be executed by the selected vendor along with any subcontractors and subconsultants.