REQUEST FOR STATEMENT OF INTEREST AND QUALIFICAITONS
FOR
VANISHING TREASURES SUSTAINABILITY EVALUATION AND STRATEGY PROJECT
TO BE INITIATED
THROUGH THE
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE (NPS)
AND
THE COOPERATIVE ECOSYSTEM STUDIES UNIT (CESU) NETWORK

Responses to this Requests for Statement of Interest will be used to identify potential collaborators who are partners with any of the 17 CESUs to provide organizational development assistance for the National Park Service's (NPS) Vanishing Treasures (VT) Program.

<u>**Work Description:**</u>
The three-part project will complete research about VT Program operations by conducting interviews with stakeholders and compiling and analyzing responses received, conduct a stakeholder workshop to explore operations alternatives and conclude with a report recommending at least two program operations alternatives.

<u>**Background:**</u>
The NPS VT Program supports the preservation of traditionally-built architecture in the Western United States, facilitates the perpetuation of traditional skills, and promotes connections between culturally associated communities and places of their heritage. The program's mission areas—expert technical assistance, training, and project management/implementation—merge to serve parks and build a community of practice throughout the NPS Intermountain (IMR), Pacific West, and Alaska Regions. IMR provides organizational support for the program across these regions.

VT started in 1998 as an initiative to address deficiencies in funding and loss of skills for conserving architectural ruins in the southwest. Beginning in 1998, $1,000,000 in funding was provided by the NPS Washington Office to support VT projects and staff. Similar funding was provided annually through 2002. In 2003, 25 parks received base funding increases under the umbrella of the program to hire technical staff. These parks continue to have VT staff, though funding support is variable by park. Through 2014, cumulative base funding to parks for VT totaled over $50M. While this park base funding is not part of the VT program budget, many of the park specialists are a strong component of the VT community of practice. In 2005, VT changed from a stand-alone initiative to a program under the IMR Office Resource Stewardship and Science Directorate.

Beginning in 2003, the Western Center for Historic Preservation (WCHP) was jointly developed by the NPS and the National Trust for Historic Preservation to preserve and reuse the White Grass Dude Ranch and to provide a venue for traditional skills training. WCHP manages the White Grass Dude Ranch in Grand Teton National Park (GRTE) as a training facility and cultural resource center for seasonal research. The preservation shop and office facility is located in Moose, WY and provides the following:
   a.   Specialized project execution (focusing on preservation technology and traditional skills);
   b.   Technical assistance for parks on deferred maintenance-oriented historic preservation projects;
   c.   Year-round carpentry and woodworking projects; and
   d.   Administrative work i.e., project management, training support and facility operations.

WCHP became part of the IMR Research Stewardship and Science Directorate in 2012 (it was originally supervised out of GRTE) and merged with the VT program in 2013.

Problem Statement:

VT has been a successful NPS program for the last twenty years. Recently, the program has been faced with challenges regarding changed NPS human resource management policies; the need for additional predictable, consistent funding; the addition of program focus areas following the merger with WCHP; and operational challenges with the White Grass facility in GRTE. These issues led NPS staff to seek external expert organizational development assistance to conduct an evaluation of current program operations and make recommendations about how to best address program operational needs going forward so that VT can continue to be a sustainable program serving the needs of historic park resources.

Scope:

- Goal:
  - **Complete a sustainability evaluation and develop an operating plan for the VT program, including:**
    (a) Reviewing operation of current core program areas of:
      a. Expert Technical Assistance (consider VT staff skills and needs of park customers)
      b. Training in historic preservation skills and cultural resources management
      c. Project Management and Implementation
    (b) Addressing questions about core program areas, including, but not limited to:
      a. Who are the audiences served?
      b. What are the park needs in technical assistance, project management/execution and training?
      c. What are the staffing challenges/opportunities?
      d. What are the operational challenges/opportunities?
      e. How does the housing shortage in Jackson, WY impact programs?
      f. How does the management of White Grass affect WCHP operations?
      g. How are the programs functioning relative to staff and funds?
      h. Are there ways to capitalize on economies of scale within other NPS programs?
      i. How can VT add value to other NPS programs?
    (c) Assessing budgets (including sources and uses of funds) for each program area and identifying challenges and opportunities.
    (d) Identifying the costs and benefits of each of the three program areas including, but not limited to, addressing questions such as:
      a. What is the cost of the operation of core program areas relative to the number of people, projects, and parks served?
      b. What other similar services exist in the marketplace? Where else in NPS is similar work being done or could be done?
      c. How is VT filling a unique service unavailable elsewhere?
      d. How is VT balancing mission vs. margin activities?
    (e) Analyzing budget trajectory and alternative means to meet desired outcomes in each program area, assessing questions such as:
      a. Does NPS have the resources needed to carry out or expand the three core program areas?
      b. Are there ways to work more efficiently?
      c. Should we add, modify or subtract core programs? If so, how?
      d. What partners should we be working with?

- Tasks:
  - After award, conduct in-brief with NPS staff. Review NPS-provided VT budget documents (approximately 2014 to present), staffing (last three years of org charts and position descriptions), operations materials (GRTE/WHCP operating agreement, 2017 White Grass pro forma), and program supporting documents (training brochure 2014-present, technical assistance spreadsheet 2014-present, program work plan 2014-present, 2014 strategic plan and 2017 training needs assessment and curriculum development document, sampling of program annual reports) to prepare for interviews and workshop. Will take place virtually.

  - After award, and with NPS input, develop stakeholder interview questions about current program approaches and sustainability issues; identify ~20-25 stakeholder interviewees; conduct stakeholder interviews and document responses. Anticipated interviewees will include representatives from VT, the VT leadership committee, VT training participants, park staff (including those who have had park projects managed by VT), National Trust for Historic Preservation, NPS Learning and Development, and other partners. Will take place virtually.
  - After award, and following the completion of stakeholder interviews, organize and lead a 2-day in-person planning workshop with ~15 key stakeholders at the NPS Intermountain Regional Office (12795 West Alameda Parkway, Lakewood, CO, 80228) to gather additional stakeholder input, explore alternatives as further described above and analyze:

    - operation of the core program areas
    - budgets (including sources and uses of funds) for each program area
    - costs and benefits of each of the three program areas including alternative means to meet desired outcomes in each program area.

- Deliverables:
  - Following the interviews, submit summary of interview results and notes or other raw interview data to NPS.

  - Following the workshop, produce a draft report outlining at least two recommended alternative program approaches, along with pros and cons of each.

  - Submit draft report for NPS review

  - NPS returns draft, partner collects & addresses NPS comments, and produces final report in Word format including interview summaries.

Approximate Start Date: July 15, 2018

End Date: December 15, 2018

Desired Qualifications and Experience:
- Experience working with National Park Service programs and parks or similar organizations (such as state parks, other federal land management agencies, etc.)
- Experience analyzing and addressing complex organizational development issues and/or change management

- Expertise in social science practices, such as designing and conducting effective stakeholder interviews
- Use of an interdisciplinary project approach involving multiple subject matter experts

Prospective partners should include the following with their submission:
- A 1-3 page summary of experience in conducting organizational development research including an explanation of how the partner intends to cover the needs of the project
- A description of the methods and approach proposed for the project and a general timeline for completion
- A proposed budget in the range of $15,000-25,000
- Details on the partner and team qualifications or experience
- Information about past performance, including examples of similar projects conducted

Materials requested can be sent via email or hard copy to the addresses below.

Convey expression of interest to:
Amy Cole
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National Park Service, Intermountain Region
P.O. Box 25287
Denver, CO 80225-0287
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FED EX Mailing Address:
National Park Service
12795 W. Alameda Pkwy.
Denver, CO 80228
Proposal receipt is required on or before June 15th

A scope of work and task agreement for this project, under the master CESU cooperative agreement, will be executed as soon as possible.