

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS AND PROPOSALS

Environmental Consulting Services

FY2026 EPA Community-Wide Brownfields Assessment Grant

RFQ/P No. BF-2026-01 • Issued August 19, 2026 • Due September 18, 2026, 4:00 p.m. CST

Issuing Organization	C3 of Northwest Alabama, Inc. (d/b/a Northwest Alabama Economic Development Alliance, “the EDA”)
Mailing Address	4020 US Highway 43, Guin, AL 35563
Primary Contact	Jamie Christian, Marketing & Membership Director — jchristian@northwestalabamaeda.org / 205-468-3213
Funding Source	U.S. EPA FY2026 Community-Wide Brownfields Assessment Grant (Cooperative Agreement pending; EPA Region 4)
Solicitation Type	Competitive, qualifications-and-price based negotiated procurement under 2 CFR Part 200
Anticipated Term	Up to four (4) years, with option(s) to extend for future EPA Brownfields grants (see Section 5)

1. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

C3 of Northwest Alabama, Inc., doing business as the Northwest Alabama Economic Development Alliance (the “EDA”), has been selected by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to receive a Community-Wide Brownfields Assessment Grant to inventory, assess, and plan for the reuse of brownfield sites across its service area. The EDA is soliciting qualifications and proposals from qualified environmental consulting firms (“Offerors”) to serve as the EDA’s environmental consultant and to perform the technical work funded by the grant.

This solicitation is issued in accordance with the federal procurement standards at 2 CFR 200.317 through 200.327, the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) requirements at 40 CFR Part 33, and the EDA’s own Purchasing and Procurement Policy. It is the EDA’s intent to award a single contract to the responsible firm whose proposal is most advantageous to the EDA, with price and other factors considered. The EDA reserves the right to reject any and all proposals and to waive minor irregularities.

2. BACKGROUND AND PROJECT SUMMARY

The following is a summary of the project provided so that Offerors may understand the general scope and prepare responsive proposals. It is a summary only; it is not the EDA's grant workplan, and Offerors should propose their own approach.

Service area and target areas. The EDA serves the three rural Alabama counties of Marion, Lamar, and Fayette (combined population under 60,000). The two initial target areas for this grant are the City of Fayette and the east-west I-22 Development Corridor. Additional sites and target areas across the three-county region may be addressed as funding allows.

Priority sites. The EDA's top priority is the former Brilliant Mine and adjacent mine-impacted properties near I-22 Exit 30 in Marion County — an approximately 19-acre former surface coal mine with suspected acid mine drainage and heavy-metals impacts — which the EDA is positioning for advanced-manufacturing, technology, and defense-related reuse along the I-22 corridor. The former Fayette Cotton Mill, an approximately 22-acre former textile site in the City of Fayette with suspected asbestos, PCBs, VOCs, PAHs, and heavy-metals impacts, is a secondary priority site; it is currently under contract to a private buyer, so the scope of the EDA's brownfields involvement and the buyer's ultimate reuse plans are still being determined and may be addressed as scope allows. A range of additional legacy mining, manufacturing, commercial, and petroleum sites has been identified region-wide.

Program goals. The EDA intends to assess priority and additional sites, engage the community, and produce cleanup- and reuse-planning products that position sites for redevelopment — supporting advanced-manufacturing recruitment, affordable/energy-efficient housing, and improved access to healthy food and services.

3. SCOPE OF SERVICES

The selected firm will support the EDA across the following task areas over the grant period. Estimated quantities are approximate, are provided for proposal purposes only, and will vary based on available funding, EPA approvals, and site conditions. The EDA (not the contractor) retains overall project management, decision-making, and grant administration.

Task 1 — Cooperative Agreement Support & Reporting

- Support project management, scheduling, and budget tracking; participate in monthly project-team calls.
- Assist the EDA in preparing quarterly performance reports and ACRES database entries, and a final summary report.
- Support EPA/state coordination and, as needed, attendance at brownfields training/conferences.

Task 2 — Community Outreach Support

- Support the EDA-led community engagement effort: outreach materials, fact sheets, public and stakeholder meetings, and inventory updates.
- Provide technical content and presentations at community and partner-network meetings.

Task 3 — Environmental Site Assessments

- Prepare and submit site-eligibility documentation for EPA/state review and approval.
- Conduct Phase I ESAs (ASTM E1527 / AAI Rule, 40 CFR Part 312) — estimated 10–15.
- Conduct Phase II ESAs, including site-specific QAPP addenda and Health & Safety Plans — estimated 5–7.
- Prepare a generic Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) and conduct ACM and LBP surveys as needed.

Task 4 — Cleanup and Reuse Planning

- Prepare Analyses of Brownfields Cleanup Alternatives (ABCAs) for priority sites — estimated 4.
- Prepare site-specific reuse plans and market studies with community input — estimated 4.
- Prepare an I-22 Corridor area-wide plan integrating site-specific assessment, cleanup, and reuse strategies for the Brilliant Mine and adjacent corridor sites — estimated 1.

All assessment work must be performed by, or under the responsible charge of, a Qualified Environmental Professional (QEP) meeting the definition of “Environmental Professional” in the AAI Rule (40 CFR 312.10), and must comply with the applicable ASTM standards, the AAI Final Rule, and any EPA-approved QAPP.

4. MINIMUM ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

To be considered responsible, an Offeror (individually or through its proposed team) must:

- Have, or have access through its proposed team to, a Qualified Environmental Professional as defined by the AAI Rule (40 CFR 312.10);
- Be able to perform Phase I/II ESAs and related planning consistent with applicable ASTM standards and EPA requirements;
- Be registered (or become registered before award) in SAM.gov and not be suspended, debarred, or otherwise excluded from federal assistance;
- Be able to carry the insurance and accept the federal and general terms in Sections 8–9.

Note on competition. The EDA seeks full and open competition. Prior experience specifically with EPA Brownfields Grants is welcomed but is NOT required and will not be used to limit competition; firms experienced in assessing contaminated properties, and firms new to the EPA Brownfields program, are encouraged to respond.

5. CONTRACT TYPE, TERM, AND OPTIONS

The resulting contract will be a negotiated services contract for an initial term of up to four (4) years. Consistent with EPA's recommended options-based procurement, the EDA may amend or extend this contract beyond the initial four years to accommodate the terms and conditions of the FY2026 Brownfields Assessment Grant or future EPA Brownfields grants awarded to the EDA within this four-year period, provided that a market survey conducted by the EDA indicates that the prices the contractor proposes remain reasonable.

If an option is exercised, the EDA will request updated cost information and verify, using market information, that any rate change is reasonable as required by 2 CFR 200.324(a) and 2 CFR 200.404. Exercising any option is at the EDA's sole discretion and is subject to satisfactory performance and the availability of federal funds.

Order structure. Work will be authorized through firm-fixed-price task orders to the maximum extent practicable, priced from the rates and unit prices in Attachment B. If any task order is issued on a time-and-materials basis, it will include a not-to-exceed ceiling price, and the EDA will document that no other contract type is suitable, consistent with 2 CFR 200.318(j).

6. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Proposals should be concise and organized in the following order. Offerors should submit the Technical/Qualifications materials (items a–g) and the Cost Proposal (item h) so that price can be evaluated together with the other factors.

1. **Cover letter & firm information** — legal name, form of organization, federal taxpayer ID, address, and principal contact.
2. **Key personnel & project team** — identify the QEP and each key team member, role, experience, and availability; note any subcontractors/teaming firms and their roles.
3. **Statement of qualifications** — the firm's and key personnel's experience assessing contaminated properties and completing similar tasks; confirm the QEP meets the AAI definition.
4. **Relevant project list** — representative projects involving contaminated-site assessment, cleanup planning, and/or redevelopment, with brief descriptions and outcomes.
5. **Technical approach & schedule** — the firm's understanding of the project and proposed methodology for Tasks 1–4, including QA/QC and a proposed schedule; note any recommended variations.
6. **Community engagement & agency coordination** — approach to supporting community engagement and coordinating with the EDA, EPA, and the Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM).

- 7. References** — at least five (5) client references (name, organization, phone, email) for similar work.
- 8. Cost proposal — use Attachment B** (the standardized Cost/Price Proposal Form). Complete every field: the hourly-rate schedule, the unit prices for standard deliverables, and the fixed prices for the defined model Phase I ESA and model Phase II ESA. Prices from Attachment B are used to compute the objective price score, so all offerors are compared on the same basis. State how and how often rates are reviewed.
- 9. Required certifications** — the signed Independence & Non-Collusion Certification and DBE/Non-Discrimination acknowledgment (Attachment A).

7. EVALUATION CRITERIA AND WEIGHTING

Proposals will be evaluated by an EDA selection committee using the weighted criteria below, which establish a documented basis for selection as required by 2 CFR 200.318(i). Consistent with 2 CFR 200.320(b)(2)(iii) and EPA guidance, the reasonableness of cost/price is a substantially weighted factor (25%). This is an assessment-grant procurement; qualifications-based (price-excluded) selection is NOT used.

Evaluation Factor	Weight	Points
Firm experience with related work (assessments, studies, plans, and completing similar projects)	30%	30
Project team & QEP capacity (qualifications, availability, who does the work)	20%	20
Technical approach, methodology & proposed schedule	20%	20
Community engagement & agency coordination	10%	10
References	10%	10
Reasonableness of cost/price (rates & unit prices vs. competing offers and market)	10%	10
TOTAL	100%	100

Scoring method. Factors 1–5 are rated 0–4 by each committee member and converted to weighted points (rating ÷ 4 × the factor’s points). Cost/price (Factor 6) is scored objectively, not by opinion: the lowest total evaluated price from Attachment B receives the full 25 points, and each other offeror receives (lowest total evaluated price ÷ that offeror’s total evaluated price) × 25. The EDA also confirms price reasonableness against its independent cost estimate and market information.

Interviews (optional Stage 2). Based on the initial evaluation, the EDA may shortlist and invite one or more firms to interview. Interviews are used to refine the committee’s scoring on Factors 1–5; they do

not add a separate weighted factor and do not change the objective price score or reduce the 25% weight assigned to cost/price.

8. SELECTION AND AWARD PROCESS

1. The selection committee independently scores each responsive proposal using the criteria in Section 7 and the attached scoring sheet.
2. The EDA performs a cost/price analysis to confirm reasonableness for the scope of services.
3. The EDA may request clarifications, shortlist firms, and hold interviews.
4. The EDA negotiates scope and price with the highest-ranked firm; if agreement cannot be reached, the EDA may negotiate with the next-ranked firm.
5. If the firm selected is not the lowest-priced offer, the EDA documents the rationale and basis for the contract price (2 CFR 200.318(h)–(i)).
6. Award is recommended to, and approved by, the EDA President & CEO and/or Board of Directors; the contract is executed after verifying SAM.gov status and is subject to EPA cooperative-agreement execution.

The EDA reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, to waive minor informalities, to request additional information, and to make no award. This RFQ/P does not commit the EDA to award a contract or to pay any costs incurred in preparing a proposal.

9. FEDERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Any contract resulting from this solicitation is funded in whole or in part with federal funds and incorporates the applicable provisions of 2 CFR Part 200 (including Appendix II), 2 CFR Part 1500, and 40 CFR Part 33. By submitting a proposal, the Offeror agrees to comply with, as applicable:

- Equal Employment Opportunity (E.O. 11246) and applicable nondiscrimination requirements;
- Davis-Bacon Act prevailing wages and Contract Work Hours & Safety Standards Act — to the extent any covered construction activity (e.g., caps, barriers, contaminated-soil excavation, in-building abatement) is triggered under CERCLA 104(g); the applicable wage determination will be included if such work is procured;
- Build America, Buy America (BABA) domestic-content preference — to the extent any covered infrastructure activity is triggered;
- Rights to Inventions (37 CFR Part 401); Clean Air Act and Clean Water Act compliance; Byrd Anti-Lobbying Amendment; debarment and suspension (2 CFR Part 180/1532); and procurement of recovered materials (2 CFR 200.323);
- DBE requirements under 40 CFR Part 33, including the six good-faith affirmative steps and the EDA's MBE/WBE "fair share" objectives, which will be established in accordance with 40 CFR

Part 33 as negotiated with EPA and incorporated into the resulting contract by addendum, and MBE/WBE utilization reporting;

- Access to and retention of records, and the right of the EDA, EPA, and Comptroller General to examine records.

Consultant compensation charged to the grant shall not exceed the equivalent of EPA's applicable maximum daily consultant rate (SES Level IV). Contractor invoices are subject to review and verification before payment.

10. GENERAL TERMS

- Governing law. Alabama law governs; the contract will be consistent with applicable federal requirements, which control in the event of conflict.
- Insurance. The selected firm shall maintain commercial general liability, automobile liability, workers' compensation/employers' liability, and professional liability (errors & omissions) insurance in amounts acceptable to the EDA, naming the EDA as additional insured where applicable (except professional liability).
- Independence & no conflict of interest. The selected firm must certify it did not assist in developing, drafting, or preparing this RFQ/P and did not participate in preparing the EDA's grant workplan in a manner that would create an unfair competitive advantage (2 CFR 200.319). See Attachment A.
- Indemnification. The firm shall indemnify and hold the EDA harmless consistent with the negotiated contract.
- Proposal validity. Proposals shall remain firm for at least ninety (90) calendar days after the due date.
- Addenda. Any changes to this RFQ/P will be issued in writing as numbered addenda posted with the solicitation.

11. QUESTIONS, SCHEDULE, AND SUBMITTAL

Questions must be submitted in writing to the primary contact no later than 4:00 p.m. CST on September 11, 2026; answers will be shared with all known Offerors by written addendum. Proposals must be received electronically by the primary contact no later than the date and time on the cover page. Late proposals will not be considered except as required by law.

This solicitation will be publicly advertised for a minimum of thirty (30) calendar days to promote full and open competition, consistent with EPA guidance and 40 CFR 33.301.

ATTACHMENT A – REQUIRED CERTIFICATIONS

Independence & Non-Collusion. The undersigned certifies that this firm (and its proposed team members) did not assist the EDA in developing, drafting, or preparing this RFQ/P; did not provide sample solicitation materials or suggest a particular community’s solicitation to the EDA for this procurement; and did not prepare the EDA’s grant workplan in a manner creating an unfair competitive advantage. The undersigned further certifies that this proposal was made without collusion, fraud, or unlawful kickbacks.

DBE & Non-Discrimination. The undersigned acknowledges the EDA’s obligations under 40 CFR Part 33 and will, if awarded, make good-faith efforts to use Disadvantaged Business Enterprises for any subcontracting, and will not discriminate in the performance of the contract.

Debarment/Suspension. The undersigned certifies that the firm is not presently debarred, suspended, or otherwise excluded from participation in federal assistance programs.

Signature: _____	Date: _____
Printed name / Title: _____	Firm: _____

ATTACHMENT B – STANDARDIZED COST/PRICE PROPOSAL FORM

Every Offeror must complete this form in full. Prices entered here are the sole basis for the objective price score in Section 7, so all firms are compared on the same work. Enter all-inclusive prices in U.S. dollars (labor, expenses, travel, and standard lab costs). Estimated quantities elsewhere in this RFQ/P are planning figures only; this form neither caps the contract nor guarantees any quantity.

B-1. Hourly Rate Schedule (Year 1)

Labor category	Hourly rate (\$)
Principal-in-Charge	\$ _____
Project Manager / Qualified Environmental Professional (QEP)	\$ _____
Senior Scientist / Geologist / Engineer	\$ _____
Staff Scientist / Professional	\$ _____
Field Technician	\$ _____
CADD / GIS Specialist	\$ _____
Administrative / Clerical	\$ _____

B-2. Unit Prices for Standard Deliverables

Deliverable	Unit	Unit price (\$)
Generic Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP)	each	\$ _____
Phase I ESA (per Model Scenario B-3)	each	\$ _____
Phase II ESA (per Model Scenario B-4)	each	\$ _____
Site-specific QAPP + Health & Safety Plan	each	\$ _____
ACM survey	each	\$ _____
LBP survey	each	\$ _____
Analysis of Brownfields Cleanup Alternatives (ABCA)	each	\$ _____
Reuse plan & market study	each	\$ _____

B-3. Model Phase I ESA — Fixed Price

Price a single ASTM E1527-21 / AAI-compliant (40 CFR Part 312) Phase I ESA for one commercial/industrial parcel up to 25 acres with up to two existing structures. Includes records/regulatory-database review, site reconnaissance, interviews, and the report. Assumes site access is provided; excludes Phase II sampling. Provide one all-inclusive fixed price.

Model Phase I ESA — all-inclusive fixed price	\$ _____
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B-4. Model Phase II ESA — Fixed Price

Price a follow-on Phase II ESA at the same parcel: site-specific QAPP + HASP; up to 8 soil borings and 4 temporary groundwater samples; laboratory analysis for RCRA metals, VOCs, SVOCs, and PAHs at standard turnaround; data evaluation and report per ASTM E1903. Assumes utility clearance and access are provided. Provide one all-inclusive fixed price.

Model Phase II ESA — all-inclusive fixed price	\$ _____
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B-5. Total Evaluated Price (used for scoring)

The Total Evaluated Price below is used only to compute the objective price score in Section 7. It represents a common, representative basket of work and does not limit the contract or guarantee quantities.

Model Phase I ESA (B-3)	\$ _____
Model Phase II ESA (B-4)	\$ _____
One ABCA (B-2 unit price)	\$ _____
One Reuse plan & market study (B-2 unit price)	\$ _____
TOTAL EVALUATED PRICE	\$ _____

Authorized signature: _____	Date: _____
Printed name / Title: _____	Firm: _____