

February 23, 2026

Baltimore Community ToolBank



## **Request for Proposals - Consultant Services**

### **Membership surveying, outreach, and program recommendations**

#### **Section 1 – Introduction:**

**Purpose:** The goal of this project is to support the Baltimore Community ToolBank’s (“ToolBank’s”) efforts to equip community and nonprofit groups with the tools they need to effectively plant and maintain trees in Maryland’s disadvantaged communities as part of the 5 Million Trees MD initiative. Through this project, the ToolBank will strengthen its model of shared resource access to:

- **Increase equitable access to urban tree canopy** by supporting groups planting and maintaining trees in underserved neighborhoods and Maryland at large
- **Promote community engagement** by equipping over 300 current partner organizations and volunteers to host plantings, pruning days, and stewardship events.
- **Advance climate resilience** and capacity of organizations by ensuring trees are properly maintained with high-quality pruning tools, increasing their survival and long-term benefits.

All of this is aimed at removing barriers and encouraging tool equity to prioritize disadvantaged communities, increase equitable access to urban tree canopy, and promote community engagement and climate resistance. The Offeror will play a key role in developing, surveying, and analyzing outreach efforts to support and grow access to the ToolBank as a resource.

#### **Section 2 – Scope of Services and Offeror’s Minimum Qualifications**

**Timeline:** Work would begin as early as April 2026 and fully conclude by December 2027. Bulk of work should be completed in preparation of Fall 2026 Tree Planting season and Winter 2026/2027 Tree Pruning Season (between May 2026 and December 2026). Tentative timeline is as follows:

- April 1, 2026 - Consultant selected, contract finalized, and work begins
- April – May 2026 – Survey questions, outreach target list, and methodology developed by consultant and approved by ToolBank
- May – August 2026 – Bulk of organizations surveyed, outreached, and site-visited
- September 2026 – Analysis of survey and outreach results and refinement of program
- October – December 2026 – Outreach focused on tree maintenance tools

**Scope of Work - Outreach Survey:** Offeror would develop a targeted outreach list that will include current ToolBank members (approximately 300 total active users) and refine that to organizations

working (or potentially working) on urban tree canopy issues, tree planting projects, and related environmental work. This list would be supplemented with current, former, and prospective Urban Tree Grant recipients and cross reference with other organizations involved with tree planting projects in Maryland. This list will include the organizations to be surveyed and connected to the ToolBank.

Offeror will develop and disperse an outreach survey to identify organizational capacity, tool challenges and needs, knowledge of the resource the Baltimore Community ToolBank provides, barriers to accessing the ToolBank's program, and barriers to effective tree planting/maintenance. This will include Offeror meeting with community groups and representing the ToolBank (and/or coordinating ToolBank staff meeting with community groups) and will include in-person meetings, attending community meetings, traveling to meetings and site visits, and virtual meetings. The Offeror will also share information about the ToolBank's Tool Lending Program and may need to develop outreach materials.

Finally, the offeror will compile and analyze the survey results and provide recommendations of the application of a potential ToolBank subsidy, identify gaps in tool inventory, and make outreach and programmatic recommendations to enhance access to tools to enable more organizations to plant and maintain trees effectively towards MD's 5 Million Trees Program.

**Expected Outcomes:**

- Outreach and survey at least 75 organizations that currently, have, or plan to plant/maintain trees (or similar environmental work) in Maryland
- Introduce at least 10 new tree planting/maintenance organizations working in disadvantaged communities introduced to the ToolBank as a resource to empower their work
- At least 20 tree planting/maintenance organizations working in disadvantaged communities to utilize the ToolBank to empower their projects

**Qualifications and expertise:**

- Working experience with tree planting efforts, initiatives, and funding across Maryland, preference for experience in disadvantaged communities in Baltimore City and Baltimore, Howard, Carroll, Hereford, and Anne Arundle Counties
- Experience working with neighborhood associations, community groups, non-profits, and local governments who have, are, or potentially could be planting trees towards MD's 5 Million Trees
- Experience designing, implementing (i.e. planting), and maintaining tree planting projects at a large/community scale with a diverse array of partners, settings, and funders
- Experience working with Chesapeake Bay Trust grants and federal funding
- Familiarity with environmental/community networks (not exclusive to tree planting)
- Experience surveying, polling, and soliciting feedback from community groups and neighborhoods, including attending site visits and community meetings
- Familiarity with the Baltimore Community ToolBank's mission, philosophy, and program

**Additional services:** additional services may be added at the request of the ToolBank and mutual agreement by the Offeror.

### **Section 3 - Proposal Format and Submission information:**

#### **Point of Contact (Contract Officer):**

Elliot Weidow, Executive Director, Baltimore Community ToolBank

Email – [elliott.weidow@toolbank.org](mailto:elliott.weidow@toolbank.org)

Office Phone – 410-244-5565

Address – 1224 Wicomico Street, Baltimore, MD 21230

**Submission:** Offerors must submit proposals via email to [elliott.weidow@toolbank.org](mailto:elliott.weidow@toolbank.org) with a subject line referencing this RFP no later than **Monday March 9, 2026 at 5pm** (the “Closing Date”). All offers will receive a confirmation receipt, if that is not received in two business days, contact Contract Officer.

**Cancellation; Discretion of Contract Officer:** This RFP may be canceled in whole or in part and any proposal may be rejected in whole or in part at the discretion of the Contract Officer. In addition, the Contract officer has the right to negotiate separately with any Offeror in any manner which will best serve the interests of the ToolBank. The Contract Officer may waive any mandatory condition or minimum qualification if they determines that such action is in the best interest of the ToolBank.

#### **Proposal Format:** (maximum length of 2-pages for entire proposal)

- Narrative: Describe the Offeror's relevant experience and qualifications for the project. Ability regarding timeline, scope, and proposed approach should be included. Any other relevant notes (or suggestions to modify) should be here. See “Section 4 Evaluation Procedures”.
- Budget: Submit a budget including total number of hours and hourly rate of compensation for the services to be performed during the term of the Contract broken down by direct hourly rate (or rates), indirect expenses, and any additional costs required to complete the project; and total compensation. The proposed rates of compensation will be irrevocable for a period of 90 days from the Closing Date, or if modified during negotiations, for a period of 90 days from the date such modified rates are proposed by the Offeror.

**Eligible Offerors:** Not-for-profit and for-profit entities are eligible to submit proposals.

## **Section 4 - Evaluation Procedure:**

**Qualifying Proposals:** The Contract Officer will review each proposal for compliance with the minimum qualifications set forth in "Qualifications and Expertise".

**Deviations and Negotiation:** The Contract Officer shall have the sole right to determine whether any deviation from the requirements of this RFP is substantial in nature, and the Contract Officer may reject non-conforming proposals. In addition, the Contract Officer may waive minor irregularities in proposals, allow an Offeror to correct minor irregularities, and negotiate with responsible Offerors in any manner deemed necessary or desirable to serve the best interests of the Project.

**Evaluation:** Proposals shall be evaluated by a review committee facilitated by the Contract Officer. Evaluation will be made on the basis of the evaluation criteria discussed below. The Contract Officer reserves the right to recommend an Offeror for contract award based upon the Offeror's proposal without further discussion. However, the Contract Officer may engage in further discussion if they determine that it might be beneficial. In such case, the Contract Officer will notify those responsible Offerors with whom further discussion is desired. In addition, the Contract Officer may permit qualified Offerors to revise their proposals by submitting "best and final" offers.

**Evaluation Considerations:** Proposals by Offerors who meet the minimum qualifications set forth will be evaluated by the review committee on the basis of the following factors:

- A. Proposed Team (Specific Individual(s) Responsible for Performance of Contract). Evaluation of the qualifications, reputation, and compatibility with needs of the ToolBank and the Project. Evaluation of the quality and quantity of the Offeror's experience and expertise in the areas proposed, supported by samples or references.
- B. Proposed Approach. Evaluation of the work to be performed to accomplish the goals outlined in the Scopes of Work in Section II.
- C. Capacity. Evaluation of the Offeror's ability and commitment to meet the Project timeline.
- D. Price and Hours. Hourly rate and number of hours devoted to the project.

## **Section 5: Other Information:**

**Disclosure:** Proposals submitted in response to this RFP may be provided to government agencies and be subject to disclosure pursuant to the provisions of the Access to Public Records Act of the State Government Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland (the "Public Information Act"). Offerors must specifically identify those portions of their proposals, if any, which they deem to contain confidential or proprietary information and must provide justification why such materials should not, upon request, be disclosed by the State under the Public Information Act.

**Expenses:** The ToolBank is not responsible for any direct or indirect expenses which an Offeror may incur in preparing and submitting a proposal, participating in the evaluation process, or in consequence of this solicitation process for any reason.

**Acceptance of Terms and Conditions:** By submitting a proposal in response to this RFP, (A) the Offeror accepts all of the terms and conditions set forth in this RFP; (B) the Offeror, if selected for award, agrees that it will comply with all federal, State, and local laws applicable to its activities and obligations under the Contract; (C) the Offeror shall be deemed to represent that it is not in arrears in the payment of any obligation due and owing the United States Government or the State or any department or unit thereof, including, without limitation, the payment of taxes and employee benefits, and, if selected for award, that it shall not become so in arrears during the term of the Contract; and (D) the Offeror, acknowledges that they are compliant with federal employment and non-discrimination laws and have not been debarred, convicted, charged or had civil judgment rendered against them for fraud or related offense by any government agency (federal, State, or local) or been terminated for cause or default by any government agency (federal, State, or local).

**Disadvantaged Business Enterprise/Minority Business Enterprise (DBE/MBE) Participation:** This RFP encourages the participation of DBE/MBE/WBE entities.

**Contract:** Once the Contract Officer has selected an Offeror a contract (the “contract”) shall be drafted and entered into as a result of this RFP . This Contract shall be between the successful Offeror (the “contractor”) and the ToolBank. In the event of an inconsistency, the Contract shall have priority over the other documents and specific conditions of the Contract shall have priority over General Conditions. The Contract will state the term of the contract, termination, modification, or renewal processes; billing procedures; and other relevant items.

**Availability of Federal Funds:** This project is ultimately funded by federal funds. As will be defined in the Contract, the ToolBank may suspend the contract based on the availability of federal funds. If this happens, the ToolBank will provide the reason and duration of the suspension. The ToolBank will make every effort to avoid suspending Contracts and communicate with Contractors throughout the process.