

## **Request for Qualifications to Support Tribal Engagement and Technical Assistance**

### **Background**

The Northeast Regional Ocean Council (NROC) was formed in 2005 “to provide a voluntary forum for the New England states and federal partners to coordinate and collaborate on regional approaches to support balanced uses and conservation of the Northeast region’s ocean and coastal resources.” NROC invites the Tribes, regional organizations, and partners who are interested in coastal and ocean management issues to participate in its committees, projects, meetings, and other activities.

NROC is managed through an Executive Committee (EC) and conducts its activities through its three topical committees – the Coastal Hazards Resilience Committee (CHR), the Ocean and Ecosystem Health Committee (OCEH), and the Ocean Planning Committee (OPC). Committees identify priorities, develop strategies for addressing those priorities, and establish subcommittees or working groups to execute projects. NROC also manages the [Northeast Ocean Data Portal](#), an online mapping application to inform coastal and ocean management decisions, and co-hosts the [Regional Wildlife Science Collaborative for Offshore Wind \(RWSC\)](#), a collaboration from Maine through North Carolina to coordinate research and data collection related to marine wildlife and offshore wind planning.

NROC currently has six contract staff who support the organization and manage the subcommittees, workgroups, and additional contracts advancing NROC’s project work. This includes a Tribal Engagement Coordinator who has convened the Tribes in group and individual settings to identify Tribal priorities and to ensure their priorities are represented in NROC’s committees and projects. The Tribal Engagement Coordinator also developed a Tribal Engagement Strategy that includes increasing Tribal participation in NROC committees and projects, attending Tribally-focused conferences and meetings, visiting with the Tribes, and sending out monthly newsletters to Tribes about relevant coastal and ocean management activities. This led to Tribes identifying priorities for NROC work and the implementation of concrete project activities on topics such as submerged archaeological and cultural resources, water level monitoring, and youth engagement. Tribes also came together and created a Tribal Caucus to learn from and support each other, identify gaps in knowledge and needs, and bring emerging, Tribally-identified topics to the attention of NROC’s committees. One outcome of this work was the need for technical assistance for specific topics, including:

1. Geographic Information Systems (GIS), mapping, and development of databases and systems to support Tribal management of coastal and ocean resources
2. Coastal and submerged archaeological and cultural resources
3. Offshore energy, transmission, and ocean planning
4. Water quality, fisheries, marine mammals, habitat, and species of significance to Tribes (for example, anadromous fish and whales)
5. Youth programming, capacity building, grant writing, and communications and outreach
6. Other priorities aligning with NROC’s three committees: Ocean Planning, Ocean and Coastal Ecosystem Health, and Coastal Hazards Resilience.

## Request for Qualifications

NROC is seeking one or more Tribal Technical Assistance Specialist(s) to work closely with the Tribal Engagement Coordinator, to provide support to the Tribal Caucus and Tribal members, and to assist Tribes in advancing their ocean and coastal priorities. The Tribal Technical Assistant Specialist(s) will assist Tribes with their technical assistance needs and priorities, including but not limited to those stated above. The Tribal Technical Assistance Specialist(s) will have an opportunity to contribute to NROC's strategic direction and to work with the federal and state agencies, Tribes and the Tribal Caucus, industries, research institutions, and non-governmental organizations involved in coastal and ocean management issues in the Northeast.

Instructions for submitting qualifications follow.

### Responsibilities:

- Respond to Tribal technical assistance needs, including:
  1. Geographic Information Systems (GIS), mapping, and development of databases and systems to support Tribal management of coastal and ocean resources
  2. Coastal and submerged archaeological and cultural resources
  3. Offshore energy, transmission, and ocean planning
  4. Water quality, fisheries, marine mammals, habitat, and species of significance to Tribes (for example, anadromous fish and whales)
  5. Youth programming, capacity building, grant writing, and communications and outreach
  6. Other priorities aligning with NROC's three committees: ocean planning, ocean and coastal ecosystem health, and coastal hazards resilience.
- Coordinate discussions around specific Tribal technical assistance priorities and needs related to Ocean Planning, Ocean and Coastal Ecosystem Health, and Coastal Resilience.
- Plan and host webinars on data-related projects, products and priorities of interest to Tribes and the Tribal Caucus.
- Identify Tribal data priorities and support the development of related data products to be included in the Northeast Ocean Data Portal.
- Work with the Tribal Caucus to develop a data sovereignty and intellectual property plan specific to Tribal data needs.
- Support Tribal participation in the RWSC
- Support Tribes in developing grant proposals for Tribal coastal and ocean priorities.
- Contribute to NROC communications with Tribes and other NROC members, and the website, including social media and newsletters.
- Liaise with other organizations conducting Tribal technical assistance in the region, such as the USGS Technical Education in Support of Native American Relations (TESNAR) program and the [Tribal Exchange Network](#).
- Coordinate with other NROC staff, NROC member staff, the Tribal Caucus, and the RWSC.
- Attend regional Tribal meetings and relevant NROC meetings.

Qualifications:

- Experience with one or more of the following:
  1. Geographic Information Systems (GIS), mapping, and development of databases and systems to support Tribal management of coastal and ocean resources
  2. Coastal and submerged archaeological and cultural resources
  3. Offshore energy, transmission, and ocean planning
  4. Water quality, fisheries, marine mammals, habitat, and species of significance to Tribes (for example, anadromous fish and whales)
  5. Youth programming, capacity building, grant writing, and communications and outreach
  6. Other experience aligning with NROC's committees
- Experience working with Tribes and on Tribal environmental issues, including coastal and ocean management issues, is preferred but not required.
- Interest in growing this position within NROC.
- Ability and interest in working independently.

Additional Details:

- NROC currently has funding for 20-30 hours per week for one or multiple contractors based on availability and expertise. This position reports to the Tribal Engagement Coordinator and the Executive Director for an initial term of one year with the potential to extend for additional years.
- The Tribal Technical Assistance Specialist is expected to work from their own office and attend regular NROC staff meetings via Zoom or other virtual meeting platforms.
- The ability to travel to meetings within the Northeast is required. The Tribal Assistance Specialist will occasionally be asked to travel to meetings outside of the region. All travel expenses will be reimbursed.
- NROC prefers candidates to be located in the Northeast, but this is not a requirement.
- Respondents for this position should provide a fully loaded hourly rate, annual contract and salary target, or both. Candidates are expected to carry their own insurance and benefits and to include those costs in their hourly rate and annual contract/salary request.

**RFQ Submission Requirements and Process**

Applicants should submit a package to NROC for electronic receipt no later than **11 PM EST on Thursday, November 7, 2024**. Electronic submissions should be submitted as a single PDF and directed to Asha Ajmani, NROC Tribal Engagement Coordinator, at [aajmani@northeastoceancouncil.org](mailto:aajmani@northeastoceancouncil.org), and Nick Napoli, NROC Executive Director, at [nnapoli@northeastoceancouncil.org](mailto:nnapoli@northeastoceancouncil.org). Applicants are encouraged to submit earlier than the final deadline and NROC will review packages on a rolling basis. NROC may reopen this RFQ or extend the deadline.

At a minimum, all submissions must include:

1. A resume.
2. A cover letter clearly articulating an understanding of the role, and indicating how the applicant meets the desired responsibilities and qualifications of each of the technical assistance categories. We do not expect every applicant will have expertise in each of the technical assistance categories. We are interested in understanding where the applicant has expertise and which topics they feel strongly they could cover.
3. A summary of successfully completed, relevant projects, deliverables, and a description of the applicant's role in those projects, if applicable.
4. A statement of availability from December 2024 through November 2025 (number of hours per week, month or for the whole one-year term) and fully loaded hourly rates. For organizations, we also encourage the submission of a requested total annual contract value.
5. Additional information the applicant feels necessary to provide.

There is no page limit. Applicants are encouraged to be concise. Submissions should demonstrate the applicant's interest, capabilities, and knowledge of the subject matter. Submissions should not include specific proposals or solutions and associated cost information.

### **Review and Selection Process**

NROC intends to use this RFQ to interview and hire one or more technical assistance specialists. NROC will also interview and pre-qualify applicants for supporting work across the categories should additional opportunities become available. NROC will maintain a list of pre-qualified candidates and request a specific proposal from one or more pre-qualified candidates to support specific work opportunities as they arise. Interviews and pre-qualification of applicants will occur on a rolling basis. Work is expected to begin as early as December, if possible. NROC will notify those applicants it doesn't wish to interview, pre-qualify, or hire, by mid-January 2025 at the latest.

Please direct any questions about this RFQ to Asha Ajmani at [aajmani@northeastoceancouncil.org](mailto:aajmani@northeastoceancouncil.org) or Nick Napoli at [nnapoli@northeastoceancouncil.org](mailto:nnapoli@northeastoceancouncil.org).