



Request for Applications (RFA)

Advancing Sustainability and Preparedness in Rural Economies (ASPIRE)

LOCAL ECONOMY AND HOUSING

RFA No: 10032_20068-24-RFA-03

Issued October 10, 2024

Closing November 10, 2024

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS (RFA)

SECTION 1: PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

1.1 PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

Winrock International (WI) is a non-profit organization that works globally to empower the disadvantaged, increase economic opportunity, and sustain natural resources. Winrock's U.S. Programs unit provides capacity building assistance to communities in the Mid-South. To date, U.S. Programs has provided technical assistance to over 80 communities, resulting in those communities securing over \$32 million in both public and private funding.

The Advancing Sustainability and Preparedness in Rural Economies (ASPIRE) project is designed to build the capacity of four (4) rural communities—Altheimer, Elaine, Humphrey, and Wabbaseka—in the Arkansas Delta across key areas essential for successful planning and execution of community and economic development initiatives. Winrock is deploying a cohort-based, tiered technical assistance approach to generate innovative community and economic development strategies. To help communities thrive, Winrock will focus on three goals:

1. Build the capacity of local coalitions in the Arkansas Delta to effectively plan and execute community development strategies that increase rural economic growth and improve quality of life.
2. Build the capacity of local coalitions in the project area to prepare and address climate and public health hazards to improve sustainability and resilience.
3. Build the capacity of local coalitions to better plan and implement community infrastructure projects that support economic recovery.

To help execute the first goal, **Winrock is seeking a dynamic organization to collaborate with communities to provide Economic and Housing Assessments and specialized technical assistance to rural leaders in how to act on these assessments.**

An ideal candidate will have demonstrated success in developing market potential and housing assessments with rural communities. An ideal candidate will also have broad knowledge of local economic factors and housing topics such as retail leakage, retail trade area estimation, demographics, housing stock assessment, and housing affordability. Skills in community engagement and online data collection are expected.

The purpose of this RFA is to solicit applications from qualified organizations or individuals to support Winrock in the implementation of the Scope of Work, detailed in Attachment A.

SECTION 2: GRANT INFORMATION

2.1 ANTICIPATED START DATE AND DURATION OF GRANTS

The anticipated period of performance is January 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026, depending on the negotiated award activities. Awards are expected to be issued in December 2024.

2.2 TYPE OF GRANTS TO BE ISSUED

Winrock will determine the appropriate grant mechanism, in consultation with the applicant during the negotiation process, based on the pre-award assessment of the applicant, nature of the award activity, and estimated total cost of the award.

2.3 ESTIMATED AMOUNT OF GRANTS

It is expected that an individual grant amount will not exceed \$40,000. The final amount awarded will depend on award activities and final negotiations.

SECTION 3: ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

3.1 ELIGIBLE APPLICANT

To be minimally eligible for funding, applicants must comply with the following conditions:

- Be legally registered or otherwise authorized to conduct business in the applicant's country or countries of operation.
- Agree to be subject to a pre-award assessment to examine that the applicant has sound management in the form of financial, administrative, and technical policies and procedures.
- Provide a Unique Entity ID (UEI) at the time of award. If the applicant already has a UEI number, it should be included in their application. Otherwise, applicants will be expected to obtain a UEI number before an award is issued. UEI numbers can be obtained online at <https://sam.gov/content/duns-uei>.

SECTION 4: INSTRUCTION TO APPLICANT AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

4.1 TECHNICAL APPLICATION

Please submit a technical application using the template provided in Attachment B. The technical application should be responsive to the Scope of Work provided in Attachment A. The technical application should include a description of how the applicant will coordinate, achieve, or create all deliverables described in the Scope of Work in collaboration with each ASPIRE community and Winrock. Submissions must clearly define an implementation plan with a proposed time frame and budget.

4.2 COST APPLICATION

Please submit a summary and detailed budget in Microsoft Excel using the template provided in Attachment C. The budget narrative (template provided in Attachment D) should explain and justify the need for the costs proposed in the budget. The narrative should help the reviewer understand

why an item of cost is necessary and how it will be used to support the activity for which it will be incurred. The budget narrative should demonstrate the relationship between the proposed activities and the budget. Just as the technical application should reflect the applicant's understanding of the objectives and the proposed approach to achieve those objectives, the budget and the accompanying narrative should be realistic and show a similar understanding of the financial requirements of the proposed activities.

4.3 SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Applications must be received no later than **11:59 PM Central on Sunday, November 10, 2024**. Late submissions will not be accepted. All proposals are to be submitted following the guidelines listed below. Winrock may request additional documentation after the submission deadline. Any inquiries or questions must be received no later than 5:00 PM Central on **Friday, November 1, 2024**, and must be submitted via e-mail to jaylin.sprout@winrock.org.

Only electronic submissions in response to this Request for Application (RFA) will be accepted. The delivery address to be used for all submissions is:

Jaylin Sprout

Program Associate, U.S. Programs

Winrock International

Email: jaylin.sprout@winrock.org

Subject: 10032_20068-24-RFA-03 Application

Winrock International will review all submitted proposals after the closing date and may conduct in-person or remote interviews with candidates under consideration. Winrock International will evaluate complete proposals to determine which application represents the best value. A complete submission, at a minimum, will include the following. Files may be compiled into a single document or attached as separate documents. Any additional submitted documentation must be relevant to the RFA and addressed to Winrock International.

1. A copy of the applicant's valid legal registration
2. A completed and signed grant application (Attachments A and B)
3. CVs or resumes for key personnel
4. A completed budget application (Attachment C)
5. A completed budget narrative (Attachment D)

4.4 EVALUATION CRITERIA

The criteria presented below have been tailored to the requirements of this RFA. A total of 100 points is possible for all components of the application. The relative importance of each criterion is indicated by approximate weight by points.

In evaluating the applications, Winrock will examine overall merit and feasibility, as well as specific criteria relevant to each component as elaborated below. Applicants should note that these criteria: (1) serve as the standard against which all applications will be evaluated, and (2) serve to identify the significant matters which applicants should address in their applications.

Grant applications will be reviewed and evaluated by an evaluation panel using the merit review criteria indicated below. Cost applications will not be scored but will be reviewed and evaluated for reasonableness and effectiveness based on the scope of activities being proposed.

| Merit Review Criteria | Points (100) |
|--|--------------|
| 1. Technical Approach Clarity and appropriateness of proposed activities for collaborating with communities to achieve all required deliverables and create Economic and Housing Assessments | 50 |
| 2. Organizational Capacity Extent of applicant's capacity to work collaboratively with small, rural communities to provide quality services that promote sustainable development. | 40 |
| 3. Past Performance Previous or on-going experience implementing similar activities in small, rural communities. | 10 |

SECTION 5: OTHER TERMS AND CONDITIONS

5.1 DISCLAIMERS

- The issuance of this solicitation does not commit Winrock to make an award to any prospective grantee responding to this solicitation. Prospective grantees will not be reimbursed for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of an application. Winrock reserves the right to reject any and all applications, or to make an award without further discussion or negotiation.
- All awards will be negotiated, denominated, and funded in USD. All costs funded under the grant must be allowable, allocable, and reasonable.

5.2 CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Applicants must provide disclosure of any past, present, or future relationships with any parties associated with the issuance, review, or management of this RFA and anticipated grant. Failure to provide full and open disclosure may result in Winrock having to re-evaluate selection of a potential applicant.

5.3 OTHER CONDITIONS

- Applicants must agree and be willing to sign and submit required certifications before a grant is issued.
- Winrock may conduct a pre-award risk assessment.
- Application forms should be signed by an authorized agent of the applicant's organization.

Additionally, the following items cannot be purchased under the potential resultant grants:

- Any purchases or activities deemed unnecessary to accomplish grant purposes as determined by Winrock, including any grantee headquarters expenses that are not directly linked to the implementation of the proposed activities
- Private ceremonies, parties, celebrations or "representation" expenses
- Previous obligations and/or bad debts
- Expenses related to overtly religious purposes
- Expenses intended to influence the outcome of elections or other political processes
- Fines and/or penalties
- Creation of endowments
- Alcoholic beverages

- Real property (land, including land improvements, and structures thereto)
- Construction costs

SECTION 6: ATTACHMENTS

Please note that use of these templates is not required. However, all information included in the templates must be included in the application. Therefore, use of these templates is strongly encouraged to ensure a complete application.

- Attachment A: Scope of Work
- Attachment B: Technical Application Template
- Attachment C: Detailed Budget Template (Activity-Based Budget and Line Item Budget)
- Attachment D: Budget Narrative Template