



July 2024

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS:
Community Navigator Initiative
Community Navigators for Grant Navigation for Frontline Communities
Hybrid

Coalitions and Collaboratives, Inc
<https://co-co.org>
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About Coalitions & Collaboratives:

Coalitions and Collaboratives (COCO) is a nonprofit organization with a mission to advance healthy and resilient communities through collaborative conservation and restoration, with a vision of a future where ecosystems are resilient and communities thrive together. COCO supports community-based organizations committed to climate resiliency by bringing expertise, resources, and funding.

About the Community Navigator Initiative:

The Community Navigator Initiative is an initiative of the USDA Forest Service intended to support frontline communities in advancing climate resiliency goals via federal funding. The Community Navigator Initiative supports:

- Tribal governments and Indigenous communities
- Low-income rural communities
- Communities at high risk of climate impacts who have historically been underserved by federal agencies,
- Communities at risk of wildfire who have been historically underserved by federal agencies.
- Communities that meet Climate & Economic Justice criteria within the [CEJST Screening Tool](#)

Navigators work to support these communities to overcome barriers in accessing funding and to build community capacity. *For a comprehensive description of the Community Navigator Initiative, please visit Appendix 1 of this RFP.*

PROJECT OVERVIEW

We are seeking qualified Community Navigators based on a time/cost proposal, who will be available to receive task order contracts for work across the United States and support delivery of services to frontline communities nationwide via the Community Navigators Initiative.

Contractor Expectations:

Successful navigators will have demonstrated established ties to frontline communities and demonstrated the ability to build trusting collaborative partnerships therein. This includes a sophisticated understanding of the barriers many communities face.

Navigators must also demonstrate knowledge pertaining to navigating federal grants and agreements, finance, and subject matter expertise relevant to climate resilience. Such subject matter expertise may include, but is not limited to: IRA/BIL, Federal Grant Management experience, wildfire mitigation; natural disaster recovery; forestry; green stormwater infrastructure, and climate-smart energy (i.e., solar installation).

The chosen contractor is expected to:

- Competently perform the services described in this document on time (see the attachment to this RFP for details),
- Represent COCO at the highest level of professionalism,
- Adhere to the COCO code of conduct, and
- Carry insurance as required as required by governing laws.

CONTRACTOR SELECTION PROCESS

COCO welcomes inquiries for the position on a rolling basis, recognizing the high level of experience required. To submit a proposal, please provide the following information:

1. *Letter of Interest* A comprehensive letter describing your experience, relevant *Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSAs)*. This should showcase your qualifications for the position.
2. *Pay Rate* Your proposed hourly pay rate for this consultant position.
3. *Resume or CV*. A detailed resume or curriculum vitae outlining your professional background, including relevant experience, education, and qualifications.
4. *References*. Contact information for references who can speak to your qualifications and experience. References must reflect ties to frontline communities.
5. *Example Project/Program*. Provide details of one specific project centered on frontline communities for which you had significant responsibility. This example should effectively highlight your skills and capabilities.

SUBMISSION OF REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

Please send all required documents to: WorkWithUs@co-co.org

Subject Line: CNI Independent Contractor

APPENDIX 1
COMMUNITY NAVIGATOR
CONTRACT POSITION WITH COCO

OVERVIEW

Independent Contractors, as a Community Navigator, will support the delivery of the [USDA Forest Service Community Navigators Initiative](#), Coalitions & Collaboratives engages in this initiative in partnership with [First Nations Development Institute](#), [Federation for Southern Cooperatives](#), [Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network](#), [Hispanic Access Foundation](#), and [Alaska Native American Indian Tourism Association \(AIANTA\)](#). While each of the community-based organizations above carries out independent programs of work pertaining to the initiative, these organizations coordinate efforts to ensure eligible communities receive holistic support to meet their goals.

TIMELINE

- Proposals under this RFP should be based on an annual work plan. Opportunities exist for extended time frames based on deliverables and outcomes of proposed work.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Community Navigators will work directly with COCO CNI staff, partners, grant recipients, and the USDA Forest Service to deliver resources for frontline communities to navigate federal funding supportive of climate resiliency efforts.

Navigators identify opportunities for communities to engage with a wide variety of new and existing federal programs. They direct communities to opportunities based on eligibility and needs and are responsible for guiding local communities through the completion of high-quality grant, contract, and partnership applications. They ensure the community has the capacity and resources to apply for, implement, and manage the federal grant effectively. Examples of USDA Forest Service grant opportunities that the Community Navigator Initiative currently supports:

- [Community Wildfire Defense Grant](#)
- [Forest Landowner Support Grants](#)

Navigators also provide post-award financial and reporting compliance mentorship. They are responsible for arranging periodic check-in meetings with recipients to ensure the recipient is well resourced to meet grant compliance requirements, including reporting and financial management.

A Navigator may also be involved in developing and delivering:

- Collaborative Training amongst Navigator cohort to share expertise with fellow navigators pertaining to subject matter expertise, federal grants expertise, etc.

- Developing community-facing resources with inclusive messaging, including producing bi- or multilingual materials.
- Post-fire Navigator (PFN) Focus Area: Providing communities with the education, support, and services they need to effectively recover from the impacts of wildfires. With a focus on comprehensive training and skills needed the PFN will strengthen post-fire response to reduce both short-and long-term impacts to communities and ecosystems.

IMPORTANT STIPULATION

Contractors who engage as Navigators cannot themselves apply for or benefit from IRA/BIL federal grant opportunities as it poses a conflict of interest. If a navigator has an interest or is pursuing any of these grants, they will only be able to participate in certain CNP activities that exclude direct application assistance. Permissible activities include developing and delivering general training, tools, and resources. If at any time a Community Navigator's interests change, they shall notify CNP leadership immediately. Contractors will need to sign a Conflict of Interest Statement Prior to beginning work on the CNP.