



# **Request for Proposals**

## **Community Engagement Coordinator**

**Proposals due by July 30, 2022**

### **A. Background and Purpose**

The LSU AgCenter, SU AgCenter, MRCTI and EBRP were awarded a grant by the Environmental Protection Agency Trash Free Waters program to kickstart an effort that will demonstrate how to reduce and eliminate litter in our neighborhoods and watersheds of Baton Rouge.

The grant represents a collaborative community engagement process centering around neighborhoods most impacted by litter (waste and plastics) primarily due to the continued increase in single-use items.

Entitled “A Multi-Pronged Approach to Trash-Free Watersheds in Baton Rouge,” the local effort consists of two objectives, the first of which is to reduce and prevent surface litter on city streets by engaging and empowering communities and by working with businesses, LSU and Southern University to implement water-filling stations and replace and prevent single-use and unsustainable plastic products that often end up as pollution in the environment. This objective will be managed by MRCTI but led by the Community Engagement Coordinator.

The second objective is to set up demonstration sites at Burden Museum & Gardens and Capital Lakes for data collection, awareness and remediation of litter that makes its way into watersheds by using innovative litter-trap systems that intercept single-use items. This objective will be managed by LSU AgCenter, Louisiana Stormwater Coalition, and The City of Baton Rouge.

Community Engagement is key to the success of this project. The focused mission of this proposal will be carried out through a collaborative community engagement. The two communities selected for this project are Scotlandville in North Baton Rouge and Old South Baton Rouge in the southern part of the city (Figure 2). North Baton Rouge includes Southern University (SU), a Historically Black College/University, and Old South Baton Rouge is near Louisiana State University (LSU). The community engagement process will include both universities and their campuses for increased education opportunities and involvement from young adults. This philosophy is grounded in resilience, community-led solutions, inclusion, equity, sustainability, and connectivity.

Often anti-litter and waste reduction campaigns are geared around messaging that does not honor the voices of those most impacted. Community members should feel empowered, they

should know that their voices matter and that the community engagement process led by the engagement coordinator is to be a bottom-up approach to organizing.

The community engagement process will help restore a healthy environment while positioning community stakeholders to take ownership of the process, solutions, and outcomes. 12-15 anticipated leaders (cohort participants) in the priority areas will be mentored in environmental sustainability, environmental justice, data capturing, and organizing and community engagement (i.e. asset & power mapping, communications strategy, campaign development, meeting facilitation). Cohort participants will be connected to existing tools, resources, and funding to implement their solutions and maintain future desirable outcomes. To support participants, mini-grants will be provided to cohort participants who have solidified community-based solution(s). Specific eligibility will be determined collaboratively with the Community Engagement Coordinator, and will be set up similarly to the mini-grant program offered through the Boston Mountain Solid Waste District <https://nwarecycles.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Mini-Grant-Announcement-2021.pdf>. Water filling stations will also be installed in locations determined by data collection and community input. After the water filling stations are installed and mini grants are awarded, the Community Engagement Coordinator will ensure ongoing mentorship will be provided to cohort participants, helping to track outcomes and actualize permanent engagement and solutions.

Throughout this project, SU AgCenter students and potential community members will be trained by the University of Georgia's Debris Tracker Citizen Science Director and will engage in data collection utilizing the [Marine Debris Tracker App](#). This process has been used in Baton Rouge in April 2021 during the launch of the [Mississippi River Plastic Pollution Initiative](#). Baseline litter data will be collected prior to implementation of pollution prevention and reduction activities, and again after actions have been implemented. The Engagement Coordinator will support coordination and awareness of this process.

Plastic pollution disproportionately affects marginalized communities and communities living near<sup>[JW1]</sup> plastic production and waste sites, constituting an environmental injustice, according to a new report by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and environmental justice non-governmental organization, <https://azul.org/en/who-are-we/Azul>. The report, [NEGLECTED: Environmental Justice Impacts of Marine Litter and Plastic Pollution](#), calls for the recognition of communities affected by plastic waste and their inclusion in local decision making.

“Environmental justice means educating those on the frontlines of plastic pollution about its risks, including them in decisions about its production, use, and disposal, and ensuring their access to a credible judicial system,” said UNEP Executive Director, Inger Andersen.

Because of the historical treatment and environmental issues of marginalized communities in Baton Rouge, mistrust, demoralization, and apathy are common outlooks toward government programs within minority communities. This proposal focuses on breaking down these barriers and making progress.

The community engagement will focus on two neighborhoods previously listed, North Baton Rouge/Scotlandville, and Old South Baton Rouge, both of which are predominantly African American and above average percentage of low-income population.

The philosophy and goals of the community engagement, based on the [Jemez Principles](#), is as follows:

- The opinions, wisdom, and experience of community members is critical. The community is trusted to know what is best for them.
- True community engagement is a long-term process that requires trust-building, relationship development, and genuine care for the well-being of stakeholders. Long-term, meaningful relationships and partnerships with community members and partner organizations is the object.
- Transparency will be evident at every stage of the process. A commitment to providing feedback mechanisms that keep the community informed of decisions and updates made during the duration of the project is key.
- The history of the community and its relationship to its city, other organizations, and structural systems should be researched and understood before engagement takes place.
- The community will be met where they are by holding meetings and events at places community members already frequent at venues that are accessible.

## **B. Scope of Work**

Through this Request for Proposal (RFP), MRCTI is seeking proposals from local community-rooted individuals that are representative of marginalized and/or under-represented persons, and is willing and able to effectively engage such community members to participate in the reduction and prevention of plastic pollution.

Work will include, but will not be limited to:

- Work in partnership with core group grantees; MRCTI, SU, and LSU and supporting groups; Scotlandville Community Development Corporation, Old South BR Economic Redevelopment Group, Sierra Club, Delta Chapter, etc.
- Identify and engage various community members and groups for focused engagement, including residents, religious institutions, youth, restaurants, retailers, businesses, etc.
- Schedule, plan, and hold listening sessions/interviews using the [Jemez Principles](#), including:
  - Conversations with various types of stakeholders
  - Conduct extensive outreach to ensure at least 20 contributors
  - Documentation and reporting of listening sessions/interviews
- Support the coordination and awareness of the Southern University led data collection process, using the [Debris Tracker](#).

- Administer mini-grant program for organizations and businesses to reduce/prevent plastic waste.
- Assist in the coordination of installation of 9 water filling stations.
- Participate in multilateral meetings with organizations (e.g., EPA, United Nations, the City of Baton Rouge, BREC, Louisiana Stormwater Coalition, manufacturers).
- Quarterly reports of activities
- Follow-up Community Survey
- Final report of results and proposed long-term solutions (with assistance from MRCTI)

*(See attached timeline. Anticipated Start Date of Project will occur upon selection of Community Engagement Coordinator)*

### **C. Qualifications**

*Ideal Candidate will possess:*

- Facilitation and/or public-speaking experience, ideally in grassroots organizing around climate justice, racial justice, and/or economic justice.
- 5 years of experience in coalition building, alignment, and community network development.
- Knowledge and experience using calendaring software, email, social media, and other digital tools for coordination and communication.
- Demonstrated ability of coordination skills across multiple perspectives, geographies, and identities.
- Demonstrated ability to think strategically as well as understand local nuances.
- Demonstrates ability to work as part of a grassroots team.
- Demonstrates ability to foster and cultivate relationships.
- A deep commitment to supporting, amplifying, and following frontline leadership.
- A deep commitment to fostering self-determined and governed work.
- A deep understanding, knowledge, and experience in working in Baton Rouge.
- Knowledge of plastic waste complications and sustainable materials management preferred (*Sustainable Materials Management is a systemic approach to using and reusing materials more productively over their entire lifecycles. It represents a change in how a society thinks about the use of natural resources and environmental protection.*)

The budget for this position is \$80,000 for the 2-year grant timeline.

**To apply: Email relevant work experience and brief cover letter to [jwendt@mrcti.org](mailto:jwendt@mrcti.org) with subject “Community Engagement Coordinator” by 5:00pm, July 30, 2022.**

Questions about this RFQ may be sent to [jwendt@mrcti.org](mailto:jwendt@mrcti.org) on or before July 20, 2022. Responses will be provided via email no later than July 22, 2022. To receive responses to all inquiries, you may email [jwendt@mrcti.org](mailto:jwendt@mrcti.org) to be added to the respondent list.

Applicants to this program bear the sole responsibility for ensuring that all submitted proposals, including attachments and application forms, are complete, accurate and received on time.

Incomplete proposals or proposals sent after 5:00 p.m. on the due date or thereafter will not be accepted. Costs incurred by applicants in responding to this RFP are entirely the responsibility of the applicants and will not be reimbursed.

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- On-Board Community Engagement Coordinator
- On-Board SU Graduate Student
- Community engagement meetings kickoff
- Baseline community survey
- Engage and train participants



- Baseline transect sampling data collected
- Community engagement meetings
- Engage businesses and universities for actions to reduce & prevent litter
- Roll-out mini-grant program

## TIMELINE - YEAR 1



- Trash-trap location selected for Ward Creek
- Trash-trap installed at Ward Creek
- Trash-trap installed Capital Lakes
- Trash-trap installed at Bayou Fountain
- Deep clean of watershed at Burden and quantify
- Deep clean of Capital Lake (big lake) and quantify
- Educational signage installed at Demonstration Sites



- Implement mini-grant reduction actions
- Community engagement meetings
- Install water filling stations based on data and community input, promote community awareness and use



- Quarterly transect sampling data collection
- Establish long-term solutions
- Follow-up community survey

## TIMELINE - YEAR 2



- Maintenance of trash-traps
- Quarterly monitoring of trash-traps
- Quarterly ETAP (Escaped Trash Assessment Protocol) Reporting