

Request for Proposals
Executive Search Firm
Release Date: March 11, 2021
Due Date: April 7, 2021

The Pierce Conservation District invites proposals (RFP) from qualified consulting firms to assist the board to recruit and hire the organization's next Executive Leadership. This RFP outlines the expectations and timeline for the scope of work. The selected consultant will possess the capacity and competencies on a full range of services, including experience with conducting successful executive searches for similar-sized government and nonprofit organizations, and implementing equitable and inclusive recruiting and hiring processes.

Proposals will be reviewed and evaluated based on the criteria defined in the "[SELECTION CRITERIA](#)" section of this RFP packet. A contract will be awarded to the responsive and responsible consultant that is most advantageous to the District in fulfilling these services.

The Pierce Conservation District:

- Reserves the right to reject any and all proposals and to waive as an informality any irregularities contained in any bid
- Is prohibited from making an award to an individual, consultant, or sub-service provider that is debarred from receiving awards from the U.S. Government
- Is an equal opportunity employer dedicated to implementing equitable and inclusive practices in seeking position candidates in all hiring processes

We look forward to working with the selected consultant to develop a process that attracts a highly qualified and diverse set of candidates, implement this process, and assist us in placing the successful candidate to carry forward the District's mission-based work.

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1. DISTRICT BACKGROUND

The Pierce Conservation District was founded in 1949 and operates as a special purpose district under the authority of the State of Washington (Revised Code of Washington 89.08). The mission of the Pierce Conservation District is to equitably support community-driven solutions to our most pressing local environmental challenges. We do this by working with community members, and other organizations and agencies to improve water quality, promote sustainable agriculture, create thriving habitat, and build a just and healthy food system for all, through education, community engagement, and financial aid and technical assistance.

The District is governed by a 5-member Board, 3 elected at large by the citizens of Pierce County and 2 appointed by the State Conservation Commission. They are volunteer public officials who determine matters of policy, oversee the budget and management of the Executive Director. The Board hires a full-time Executive Director who is the lead administrator coordinating day-to-day activities.

The District provides a range of natural resource and food security protection and improvement services including:

- Farm Planning & Agricultural Assistance
- Habitat Improvement
- Environmental Education
- Water Quality Improvement
- Water Quality Monitoring
- Urban Agriculture & Local Food Access
- Climate Resiliency

To learn more about the Pierce Conservation District go to: www.piercecd.org

The Pierce Conservation District is an equal opportunity employer and makes efforts to attract people of color and individuals from diverse backgrounds to apply for open positions.

2. OBJECTIVES

The District invites proposals from qualified consulting firms to select the consultant most able to assist the District in successfully placing an Executive Director who will lead

the District to future success in our goal of protecting and enhancing the natural resources of Pierce County, Washington.

3. DISTRICT'S RESPONSIBILITIES

The District will appoint a Staff Lead, who will serve with the Board Chair to be the primary points of contact for the selected consultant. The Staff Lead will provide the consultant with all relevant information it has pertaining to the District and its operations including existing job description, organizational charts, current position salary schedule, and benefits package. It is anticipated that the selected consultant will perform the bulk of activities, under the direction of the Staff Lead and Selection Committee. The District may provide additional documents and information as requested from the consultant, including names and contact information of key partners, staff, board members and others to conduct engagement activities on behalf of the district, and any other information important to fulfilling the scope of work.

4. PROPOSAL FORMAT

Proposals shall be a maximum of 8 pages, not including references and attachments, and include the following information:

1. Cover letter summarizing the proposal.
2. Organizational Background: Brief description of organizational history and summary of expertise, especially related to similar executive searches.
3. Project Team: List the project lead and other members of the project team and describe relevant experience (resumes/CVs acceptable)
4. Project Approach: Describe the process suggested to identify and recruit the successful candidate. Description should include the attached scope of work and a clear delineation of which party (Consultant or District) will be responsible for each task. This description should also include any professional networks or organizations intended to assist on behalf of the search.
5. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion: Outline suggested DEI practices taken to ensure outreach to a diverse candidate pool.
6. Project Phases and Benchmarks: Specific points in the process which can identify whether the search is likely to produce a successful hire.
7. Timeline identifying starting and ending points of each phase of the search process.
8. Proposed Budget: Anticipated costs broken down by phase and including narrative description of each.

9. References: Three references which indicate firm’s project lead and team-members. References must include at least one from each of these categories:
- a. A successful Executive Director search, where the Executive Director has been with the organization for more than three years. Please provide contact information for both the Executive Director and, if possible, for the board member contact with whom the consultant worked most closely.
 - b. A recent (within the past 12 months) Executive Director placement. Please provide contact information for both the Executive Director as well as the board or staff contact with whom the consultant worked most closely.

Proposals must be received by the District in digital or printed format no later than 3:00 PM Pacific Standard Time on April 7, 2021. Proposals can be sent by email with the subject line “Exec Search RFP” to: SelenaC@pierced.org

Proposals may also be mailed to:

Pierce Conservation District
 Attn: Exec Search RFP
 P.O. Box 1057
 Puyallup, WA 98371

5. CONTRACT

The selected consultant will be required to enter into a standard professional services contract outlining roles and responsibilities, scope, timelines and expectations of the parties.

6. SCHEDULE

The following is an outline of the selection procedure and a tentative time schedule:

Event Date	Date / Time
Release RFP	March 11, 2021
Questions about RFP due	March 26, 2021

Deadline for submission of proposals	April 7, 2021 / 3:00 p.m. PST
Proposal evaluation complete	Week of April 12, 2021
Contract award	Week of April 12, 2021
Work complete	October 15, 2021

7. SELECTION CRITERIA

Although the District has a strong focus upon fiscal prudence, factors beyond cost will affect consultant selection. Low-cost may not be the only, or most significant factor in consultant selection. Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

Evaluation Criteria	Weight
Demonstrated understanding of principles of equity in designing/implementing executive search processes that return diverse pool of candidates for consideration	30
Background and experience in successful placement of executive staff. Recent public-sector experience, preferably in a governmental or nonprofit setting within the State of Washington, conducting similar executive searches.	30
Staff expertise and overall experience of personnel assigned to the work.	20
Thoroughness and understanding of the tasks to be completed. Overall content quality and responsiveness to RFP requirements	20
Cost	20
Total	120

8. DISCRETION AND LIABILITY WAIVER

The District reserves the right to reject all proposals or to request and obtain

supplementary information as may be necessary for District staff to analyze the proposals pursuant to the consultant selection criteria listed above. The consultant, by submitting a response to this RFP, waives all right to protest or seek any legal remedies whatsoever regarding any aspect of this RFP.

9. CONTACTS

All communication concerning this RFP should be directed in writing to the RFP Coordinator listed below. Any oral communications will be considered unofficial and non-binding on the District.

Selena Corwin
Senior Director of Finance & Administration
308 W Stewart Avenue / P.O. Box 1057
Puyallup, WA 98371
253-845-9770 x101
SelenaC@PierceCD.org

10. ATTACHMENTS

- A. Scope of Services
- B. Organizational Chart

ATTACHMENT A: SCOPE OF SERVICES

Note: This scope is not final until a consultant is selected and negotiations are completed.

The selected consultant will:

- Work in close coordination with the Staff Lead, Board Chair, and Search Committee to plan and structure the recruitment and hiring process and timeline, and to implement the process;
- Work with board and staff to develop and prioritize a clear list of ideal candidate qualities and qualifications;
- Provide assistance in updating Executive Director job description, if necessary and appropriate;
- Incorporate outreach to Pierce Conservation District board and staff, and external stakeholders to gain input on the recruitment and placement process in order to ensure a wide variety of perspectives are being taken into account;
- Perform an extensive search with a focus on candidates with local experience, connections and/or knowledge for the next Executive Leadership of the District;
- Demonstrate that equity principles are helping guide the recruitment process so that a diverse set of highly qualified candidates is available to choose from; and
- Support the process of final negotiations that result in an accepted Letter of Hire.

A successful search is one that ends in the recruitment of a candidate who effectively meets all the job requirements and qualifications, and who receives approval for hire from the Board of Supervisors. The end of engagement will be marked by a signed Letter of Hire. The Board of Supervisors is hopeful that this will occur no later than October 2021.

If the process does not result in a signed offer, the District may work with the consultant to negotiate possible extensions, and/or adjustments to the process to identify a wider pool of candidates that results in a successful hire. District reserves the right to terminate contract if process does not result in a signed offer.

Project Team

The executive search consultant will report to the Staff Lead, or other designee, and will work in close coordination with the Search Committee, an ad-hoc group of board and community members providing support in the search process. The search consultant

and the Search Committee will work collaboratively to develop an inclusive process that includes regular and consistent communication with staff members and other key stakeholders. The Pierce Conservation District Board of Supervisors will make the final hiring decision.