

TOWN OF NORWICH

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS Policing and Community Safety Consulting Services

1. Background

The Town of Norwich, Vermont, is seeking proposals for a consultant to examine our community safety. “Safety” is understood to mean the myriad ways different people of all backgrounds experience a sense of security attributable to the delivery of specific public services.

The Consultant, Consultants, or Consultant Team will work with a Community Safety Task Force of Norwich residents appointed by the Selectboard. The Community Safety Task Force is charged with two questions:

- 1) What types and level of services does the Norwich community want to provide for public safety?
- 2) How does the answer to 1 (above) compare to the provision of public safety by the current Norwich Police Department (“NPD”)? In answering this question, the consultant team will observe who represents the NPD, how they conduct their public safety work and what services (formal and informal) are provided. If existing services provided by the NPD could be more effectively provided by other agencies the consultant team should identify alternatives.

2. Scope of Work

The Town of Norwich welcomes proposals from individual consultants or teams in response to specific work products identified below.

The scope of services to be provided:

What types and level of services does the Norwich community want to provide for public safety?

Public Engagement:

- 1) The Consultant will prepare a draft public engagement strategy designed to provide broad public input on a vision for a healthy and safe community in Norwich. Appropriate tools may include online surveys, listening sessions and public meetings.
- 2) Consultant(s) will establish a method of gathering reports of any harms, experiences, perceptions, or fears experienced by the NPD. Consultant(s) will confirm any needed legal considerations or obligations following the collection of anonymous reports or surveys that disclose legal, medical or other protected or sensitive information.
- 3) Consultant(s) will summarize all material gathered through the approved public engagement strategy and provide insights and conclusions to the Task Force.
- 4) The consultant(s) may draft a strategy or program for continuous community input into a public safety program that delivers services aligned with the values and vision of the community.

Provide Expertise on Policing Services and Trends, Relevant Reform Efforts, and Current Legal Constraints on Policing Reform: What services do the Norwich Police department perform and what services, if any, currently provided by the NPD can more effectively be provided by other agencies?

NPD Review:

- 1) The Consultant(s) will determine a methodology to collect, gather, and analyze data from: NPD-reported statistics including data reported in annual town reports and data to the Crime Research Group; social service requests; and 911 call data; and any other forms of data deemed applicable or relevant.
- 2) A review of current systems, social service providers, and stakeholders along with an assessment of current NPD interactions with those systems and providers.
- 3) A review of NPD key department directives and standard operating procedures with an assessment of how practice conforms, or does not conform, to these directives and operating procedures. This assessment may consider a comparative review with the Vermont Criminal Justice Council.
- 4) The Consultant(s) may advise on current collective bargaining and civil service laws and identify how these systems may constrain or enable inquiry and recommendations for reform.

Writing a Report Containing the Task Force's Recommendations

Task Force Support:

- 1) The consultant(s) will draft a report summarizing the Task Force's advisory recommendations on how to develop recommendations for policing and public safety reform in areas of inquiry outlined above and seek out expertise, as appropriate, with specialized insight into questions of policy, legality, behavioral or mental health, and emerging technologies. The Selectboard anticipates a presentation of progress at a Regular or Special Selectboard Meeting in December 2021.
- 2) To facilitate the report-writing process, the consultant(s) may develop a plan, including a timetable for action, to assist the Task Force with meeting its goal of issuing a report containing recommendations to Selectboard.

3. Meeting Requirements

- 1) Meetings shall be open, accessible, and affirmatively engage public participation in accordance with the Vermont Open Meeting Law and or any emergency order issued by the Governor in response to covid-19 or other declared emergencies. Virtual meeting access will be a requirement.
- 2) Meetings will be scheduled at various times convenient to working residents and will be recorded and available for viewing at times convenient to interested Norwich residents.
- 3) A process may be instituted to anonymously collect community members' actual and feared experiences with police and other emergency responders, including mental health crisis services. These experiences should include both perceived positive and negative experiences and include, any and all Norwich residents who wish to contribute, and welcoming interactions experienced by groups historically marginalized (e.g., BIPOC, LGBTQ+). Consultant(s) will confirm any needed legal considerations or obligations following the collection of anonymous reports or surveys that disclose legal, medical or other protected or sensitive information.

- 4) A process will be developed for obtaining and hearing, anonymously or otherwise, the thoughts, concerns, and obstacles to policing as experienced by the Norwich police officers and staff. Consultant(s) will confirm any needed legal considerations or obligations following the collection of anonymous reports or surveys that disclose legal, medical or other protected or sensitive information.
- 5) Should the need for childcare services or interpreter services be identified, recommendations will be presented to the full Selectboard for consideration on how to address these needs.
- 6) No member of the committee shall be a serving police officer. Norwich police information, be it data or requested verbal or written information, may be included in the study as appropriate.

4. Performance Timeline

The successful consultant(s) must be ready to commence project work as soon as practicable after the contract is awarded. Any deviation from this schedule must be clearly stated in the consultant's response to the proposal, and any delay to start should be negotiated between the parties. Failure to start and/or to meet the due dates for timelines and reporting, unless specifically renegotiated with the Selectboard, will constitute breach of the contract and forfeit of any contractual fees due under the contract.

5. Proposal Content and Submission Requirements

- 1) The proposer's name, address, and telephone number;
- 2) A description of general skills, including a description of the proposer's familiarity with projects of similar scope. A description may include qualitative research, social justice work, facilitation of public meets, or other work or qualifications which could be deemed relevant to the study
- 3) Resumes of the team members who will be providing the services under this contract, including the number of hours each principal is expected to devote to this project;
- 4) A Plan of Services describing the manner in which the consultant will fulfill the Scope of Services as outlined in Part II of this RFP and the proposed timetable for project completion.
- 5) A list of all projects of similar nature and magnitude performed by the consultant within the last five (5) years
- 6) Respondents to this RFP should provide a clear breakdown of expenses and identify personnel, and their required qualifications, who will carry out specific tasks.
- 7) **Proposals must be submitted no later than noon November 15, 2021** via email with Police and Community Services in the Subject Line to the Town Manager's Office care of mbergmeier@norwich.vt.us

6. Qualifications

Desired qualities may include but may not be limited to:

1. No preconceived notions of what public safety in Norwich should look like or involve.
2. Experience in creating spaces and processes where many voices are included and power differences do not result in any people being excluded.
3. Experience in qualitative research methods (i.e., semi-structured, interviews, focus groups, community forums, ethnographic observations, participatory research).

4. Familiarity with, and interest in, creating new decolonized systems and how currently operating systems may work or be amended by new decolonized systems. Demonstrate a familiarity with restorative and transformative models and technology.
5. Ability to handle sensitive data in an ethical, legal, and culturally-appropriate way, with full disclosure of the process to be used for same, with identified controls for storage, use, access and disposal of that data subject to Selectboard approval.
6. Experience working with groups that have been historically marginalized by police and social services (i.e., BIPOC, LGBTQIA+, low-income, psychiatrically-labelled people, those in recovery, an aging population, those that have been victimized or the victim of a crime, or any other persons with real or perceived fears of the police and social services).
7. Experience working with in rural communities with scattered and not dense population centers.
8. Experience with police policy issues.

7. Evaluation Criteria

Criteria	Points
Meets Qualifications	35
Comprehensive and Achievable Scope	35
Thoughtful Plan of Services	20
Budget	10
Total	100

8. Disclaimers

1. Those submitting RFPs do so entirely at their own expense. There is no express or implied obligation by the Town of Norwich to reimburse any entity or individual for any costs incurred in preparing or submitting proposals, preparing or submitting additional information requested by Selection Committee, or participating in any selection interviews.
2. The Town of Norwich reserves the right to withdraw this Request for Proposals, to accept or reject any or all proposals, to advertise for new proposals if it is in the best interest of the Town to do so, and to award a contract as deemed to be in the best interest of the Town.

9. Information

All questions related to this Request of Proposals will be addressed to Miranda Bergmeier care of the Town Manager’s office. Questions may be emailed to mbergmeier@norwich.vt.us

Responses to consultant questions posed concerning this RFP will be posted on the Town of Norwich website at the following link: <http://norwich.vt.us/>

Proposals must be submitted no later than noon November 15, 2021