

## **Request for proposals for exploratory scenario planning grant**

### **I. Background**

Western Lands and Communities (WLC), a joint program between the Sonoran Institute and the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, is seeking communities interested in using exploratory scenario planning to assist in a planning or community decision-making process that engages multiple stakeholders. Topics could include issues such as water resources, energy, and climatic variability or change, as well as how these issues may relate to land use planning or community futures.

Exploratory scenario planning is a creative, long-term planning method that can be used within a community's traditional planning processes to develop and implement plans, strategies, and actions in a manner that will help the community to be more resilient under an uncertain future. Exploratory scenarios are focused on what might occur in the future rather than value based visions of a desired future. Exploratory scenarios are created by anticipating the range of uncertainty about the future for forces and trends external to the community's control that may impact the community in the future. Using this anticipated range of possible future conditions, a set of plausible future scenarios is created. Policy decisions or actions the community is considering are then assessed against these plausible futures to understand how they may affect the ability of the community to achieve their desired goals or visions for the future. Using this assessment, strategies and actions can be identified that anticipate threats and opportunities for achieving the community's goals that may occur as the future unfolds.

In multi-stakeholder exploratory scenario planning, representatives of all the stakeholders are assembled to participate in the scenario building and assessment effort. In the multi-stakeholder setting, an important secondary result is the social learning, development of a common language for discussing the focus issue, and achieving alignment regarding the nature of the issue.

Although there are many examples of planning projects that involve multiple stakeholders, community-wide participation and/or controversial issues, planning processes that combine all of these characteristics are difficult to find. Examples of exploratory scenario planning projects incorporating some of the components of the type of projects sought by this RFP include:

- **Phoenix Sonoran Preserve Plan.** This project considered various options for acquiring, and funding the acquisition of, lands identified for inclusion in a large north Phoenix desert and mountain preserve. The majority of targeted lands were State Trust Land, but significant areas of private lands were also targeted.

- Rising Waters, the purpose of which was to strengthen the preparedness and adaptive capacity of the Hudson River Estuary Watershed to meet the impacts of climate change. More information is available here: [http://www.nature.org/media/newyork/rw\\_070509\\_exec.pdf](http://www.nature.org/media/newyork/rw_070509_exec.pdf)
- The Futures Project of the Middle Rio Grande Water Assembly. In this project the goal was to engage the local communities in a dialogue about water resources and thereby influence water management agencies to implement water accounting mechanisms. More information is available here: <http://www.waterassembly.org/futuresproject.htm>
- The Valley Futures project in California's Central Valley, the purpose of which was to raise public awareness of how decisions being made today lead to different outcomes that impact quality of life in California's Central Valley, and how altering the current decision making process can change these outcomes.

## **II. Purpose**

The purpose of this project is to further develop the use of exploratory scenario planning in existing or proposed community-wide, multi-stakeholder long-term planning efforts within the context of uncertain futures and controversial issues.

## **III. Examples of community scenario planning projects**

Examples of potential community level planning projects appropriate for exploratory scenario planning include comprehensive or large area land use plans, natural resource or recreational planning, resilience planning, water resource planning, transportation planning, water or sewer infrastructure planning, energy development or infrastructure siting, and climate change adaptation planning.

## **IV. Proposal Requirements**

### **A. Address WLC's Areas of Interest**

Projects should address Western Lands and Communities' three top areas of interest:

1. Use of exploratory scenario planning as a method within a larger planning process;
2. Multi-stakeholder engagement with community-wide participation; and
3. Involve a controversial issue of importance to the community.

## **B. Project strengths**

Strong proposals will include:

- Description of the planning needs
- Rationale for using scenario planning in the process
- Identification of key stakeholders
- Letters of support for the project by key stakeholders
- Contribution of in-kind resources to facilitate convening and community-wide participation
- Description of a decision-making process to consider the results of an exploratory scenario planning project
- A project in which the results directly benefit, and are relevant to, a decision-making process that helps resolve a complex issue

## **C. Eligibility**

The ideal proposal will involve a partnership of appropriate organizations. Groups eligible to apply include:

- Municipal, county or regional planning departments and agencies
- Community organizations
- Citizen coalitions
- Watershed organizations

## **D. Proposal Submission**

Please submit your proposal via email to [jmarlow@sonoraninstitute.org](mailto:jmarlow@sonoraninstitute.org).

## **Exploratory Scenario Planning Grants**

**Applications will open December 15, 2013. Applications will close at 5 p.m., February 15, 2014.** The application should cover the following:

- Project contact person (person responsible for reporting on project progress to WLC)
- Brief history of lead organization, its programs and services
- Project description and outcomes. Here you will describe the project in detail. What are the goals and objectives of conducting scenario planning? How will planning be implemented? What outcomes, both immediate and longer term, is the project expected to achieve?
- Lead organization qualifications, including list of partner organizations that will participate in this planning process

- Project budget, including other funding sources and how WLC staff and funds will be used
- Timeline indicating duration of key phases and project milestones. Please note that the exploratory scenario planning component of your project should be completed by March 1, 2015.
- Please limit your proposals to 5 pages in length. This proposal submitted is intended to initiate a discussion with details, final scope and workplan to be worked out in conjunction with WLC if your proposal is selected.

If you have questions regarding the grant application process, please contact Joe Marlow at 520-290-0828, ext. 1146.

## **V. Awards**

### **Planning Grants**

- The major portion of the award will be WLC's contribution of our staff time and expertise to design and lead a scenario planning exercise. WLC will also fund additional scenario planning expert consultants to assist in the exercise and provide an additional small grant directly to the applicant or local lead agency that can be used to cover some of the local costs associated with the exercise. Potentially available funds include:
  - A commitment of WLC staff time of up to 500 hours
  - Up to \$5,000 of consulting time from a scenario planning expert(s) to be chosen jointly by the applicant and WLC.
  - A one-year grant to the local community up to a maximum of \$10,000.
  - Grant funds can be used for local staff planning time, logistics costs, consultants, market research, economic analyses, etc.
  - Planning processes should reflect collaborative/multi-organization efforts with one lead organization designated to apply for WLC funds.

### **Role of Local Partners**

- The applicant and other local partners are expected to serve as active participants in the exercise and dedicate adequate in-kind services to ensure a successful project. Local partners are responsible for:
  - Establishing the exercise, including working with WLC to specify the objectives and process
  - Creating any necessary advisory or stakeholder groups and handling any public information and advertising necessary
  - Planning and funding any necessary logistics

## **VI. Timelines**

RFP issued: **December, 2013**

Pre Proposal Meeting: Will be arranged with each applicant

Grant applications and full proposals due: **February 15, 2014**

Proposal Evaluation: **February 15, 2014 through March 1, 2014**  
Final grant decisions: **March 15, 2014**

WLC reserves the right to deviate from this schedule.