



The Earthly Advocate

Request for Proposals For Statewide Lobbying Services

Issued by:

The Earthly Advocate

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STATEWIDE LOBBYIST SERVICES

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SECTION 1 – GENERAL INFORMATION

1.1 Background

The Earthly Advocate, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization headquartered in Maryland, serving communities across Michigan and the Washington, D.C.–Maryland–Virginia (DMV) region. The governing body of the organization is a six-member Board of Directors elected every three years.

The Earthly Advocate integrates Geographic Information Systems (GIS), remote sensing, and environmental literacy to equip residents, youth, and grassroots organizers with data-driven tools to identify and address environmental inequities. Through initiatives such as the Mapping for Environmental Justice workshops, youth GIS summer camps, and environmental literacy outreach programs, the organization promotes accessible scientific education and fosters locally led solutions to issues such as air quality, pollution, and climate resilience.

In addition to education and outreach, The Earthly Advocate conducts applied environmental research focused on advancing community-scale air quality monitoring and the use of emerging geospatial technologies for environmental justice. These research initiatives not only contribute to the scientific understanding of environmental change but also translate into practical, publicly accessible data tools that empower communities to advocate for policy and health interventions based on evidence.

1.2 Purpose

The Earthly Advocate (TEA) seeks proposals from qualified individuals or firms to provide statewide lobbying services in Michigan and/or Maryland on behalf of the non-profit organization (NPO). The selected lobbyist or firm will represent TEA's interests before the State Legislature. The initial contract term will be for one year, with the potential for renewal upon mutual agreement.

1.3 General Submission Information

TEA intends to award a single contract for statewide lobbying services. The proposal should address the lobbying firm's capabilities for performing all aspects of the scope of work.

1.4 Questions

Questions regarding this proposal shall be submitted by email to:

President of the Board of Directors (Daja Elum):

info@earthlyadvocate.com

1.5 Preparation Costs

TEA shall not be responsible for any proposal preparation costs incurred by any of the lobbying firm or individual responding to this RFP, nor for costs including attorney fees associated with any challenge related to the award of a contract and/or rejection of a proposal. By submitting a proposal each lobbying firm agrees to be bound in the terms herein and waives all claims to any costs and fees associated with or resulting from its response to this RFP.

SECTION 2 – GUIDELINES FOR PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

2.1 Proposal Term

Consultants should carefully examine the entire RFP, any addenda thereto, and all related materials and data referenced in the RFP. All proposals must be valid for a period on not less than 120 calendar days from the date of submission.

2.2 Confidentiality

The content of proposals that is not in the public domain will be deemed confidential by TEA and will not be shared with other bidders or any third party. TEA may disclose and provide all information provided in response to this RFP to employees and officials of TEA as deems necessary for its review and evaluation of the proposals.

2.3 Proposal Format

Proposals must provide a concise description of the lobbying firm's or individual's capabilities. Emphasis should be placed on:

- Conformance to the RFP instructions
- Responsiveness to the RFP requirements
- Overall completeness and clarity of content

2.4 Signature Requirements

All proposals must be signed and notarized. The Proposal must be signed by a person authorized to enter into Contracts on behalf of the lobbying firm. Documentation of this authority must be provided to the TEA upon request. The

printed name and title of the individual(s) signing the proposal must be clearly shown immediately below each individual's signature.

2.5 Proposal Submission

Proposals must be received by TEA prior to **5:00 PM, December 21, 2025**.
Proposals shall be e-mailed, mailed or delivered to:

The Earthly Advocate
8507 Oxon Hill RD STE 200/1130
Fort Washington MD 20744

Or by email to:

info@earthlyadvocate.com

cc: Aishah Johnson, Governance Board
aishah.johnson@earthlyadvocate.com

2.6 Disposition of Proposals

All materials submitted in response to this RFP become the property of the Earthly Advocate.

2.7 Modification/Withdrawal of Proposals

A lobbying firm or individual may withdraw a proposal at any time prior to the deadline for final submission by sending written notification of its withdrawal, signed by an agent authorized to represent the Consultant's firm. A final proposal cannot be changed after the deadline for final submission, except to respond to modifications requested by TEA.

2.8 Rejection of Proposals

TEA reserves the right to reject any or all proposals.

SECTION 3 – SCOPE OF WORK

3.1 General Scope of Work

TEA seeks to retain the services of a pro bono lobbyist from a qualified professional or firm with expertise in state government (Michigan and/or Maryland)

earmarks and appropriations, particularly those that direct funding toward community-based environmental and educational initiatives.

Specifically, the requested services may include but are not limited to the following:

- Identify federal and statewide earmark opportunities relevant to environmental justice, education, and workforce development.
- Build relationships with key state agencies and legislative committees.
- Position our programs, such as youth GIS camps, Mapping for Environmental Justice workshops, and literacy outreach for future funding inclusion.
- Develop a sustainable earmark and appropriations engagement plan that can support ongoing community organizing efforts in Michigan, Maryland, and the D.C. metropolitan area.

4 – PROPOSAL AND SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

The proposal must contain the following components in a single PDF file :

- A brief cover letter expressing interest in the pro bono engagement.
- Summary of relevant experience and past projects (especially community-focused).
- Proposed timeline or availability.
- References or examples of previous advocacy successes (if applicable).

4.1 Qualifications

Ideal candidates should possess:

- Demonstrated experience with statewide appropriations or earmark processes.
- Proven success in community-based or environmental justice funding initiatives.
- Established relationships with bicameral state agencies and legislative staff or relevant committees (Environment, Education, Appropriations).
- Commitment to equity, community empowerment, and environmental sustainability.

- Experience with pro bono or nonprofit advocacy partnerships is strongly preferred.

SECTION 5 – EVALUATION CRITERIA AND SELECTION PROCESS

5.1 Evaluation Criteria

TEA reserves the right to award Contract(s) solely on the written proposal. TEA also reserves the right to request oral or in person interviews with any lobbying firm submitting a proposal.

The final selection will be made by the TEA in its sole discretion.

Submissions will be evaluated based on:

- Relevant experience with federal/statewide funding and environmental justice issues.
- Demonstrated commitment to equity and community-driven outcomes.
- Feasibility of proposed support timeline.
- References and past success in similar efforts.

5.2 Interview Process

After the initial evaluation of proposals, TEA may, at its discretion, conduct interviews with the top-ranked proposers. Each interview will be limited to no more than 45 minutes, including a presentation of up to 20 minutes by the proposer. TEA will identify any areas of specific concern in advance to allow proposers adequate preparation.

5.3 Contract terms

The selected firm or individual will enter into a consulting agreement with TEA that includes, but is not limited to, the following provisions:

- **Term:** January 2026 – January 2027, with the option for renewal upon mutual agreement (The term aligns with the start of the 448th and 103rd State Legislative Session for Maryland and Michigan, respectively).
- **Independent Contractor Status:** The consultant will operate as an independent contractor and not as an employee of TEA.
- **Confidentiality Obligations:** The consultant will maintain the confidentiality of all nonpublic information received during the course of the engagement.

- Conflict of Interest: The consultant must avoid any actual or potential conflicts of interest and promptly disclose any that arise during the contract period.
- Compliance: The consultant will comply with all applicable state and federal lobbying laws and disclosure requirements.
- Termination: Either party may terminate the agreement with 30 days' written notice upon mutual consent or for cause.

The selected consultant will provide an initial briefing and strategy session with The Earthly Advocate leadership to establish priorities, key contacts, and advocacy objectives. Within 30 days of engagement, the consultant will deliver a comprehensive earmark opportunity report outlining relevant state funding streams and community project allocations aligned with the organization's mission. In addition, the consultant will develop a state agency and legislation outreach plan identifying recommended offices, committees, and timelines for engagement. Finally, the consultant will produce a draft advocacy toolkit, including talking points, one-pager templates, and other communication materials to support effective outreach and funding requests.

5.4 Non-Discrimination and Equal Opportunity

Proposers shall not unlawfully discriminate or permit harassment against any employee or applicant for employment based on sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, race, religious creed, color, national origin, ancestry, denial of family and medical care leave, medical condition (including cancer and genetic characteristics), physical or mental disability (including HIV and AIDS), denial of pregnancy disability leave or reasonable accommodation, marital status, or age (40 and above) in the performance of any TEA contract.

Proposers and any subconsultants shall ensure that the evaluation, selection, promotion, and treatment of their employees and applicants are free from such discrimination and harassment.

Proposers shall include the non-discrimination and compliance provisions of this clause in all subcontracts entered into for work performed under this agreement.