The Water Research Foundation
Request for Qualifications (RFQ)

Evaluating Utility Staff Training to Improve Knowledge Retention (WRF 5074)

RFQ Due Date: 05/06/2020, 4:00pm MDT
Maximum Funding: $100,000 total for Phases 1 and 2

PURPOSE
The purpose of this RFQ is to identify a contractor to assist The Water Research Foundation and Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) in evaluating the in-house training program of LADWP Water Distribution Division’s (WDD) employees at the Sylmar West Training Facility. The selected contractor will evaluate the effectiveness of training delivery and testing methods, as well as recommend and implement best practices to improve staff knowledge retention from the training courses.

BACKGROUND
LADWP’s Water System Mission Statement is “to provide our customers with reliable, high quality and competitively priced water services in a safe and publically environmentally responsible manner.” One of the Water System’s five-year goals (2017-2022) is to “increase effectiveness of hiring, housing, training, retaining and developing staff, and of the Water System Safety Program.” The goal of the WDD Safety Office is “to eliminate preventable injuries through the use of substitution, elimination, engineering, and administrative controls and the use of Personal Protective Equipment,” and the Sylmar West Training Facility “trains employees that are involved in the installation and maintenance of the water distribution system.” See attachment 1 for information on LADWP Water System’s Mission Statement and Goals, the WDD Safety Office goals, and a description of the Sylmar West Training Facility.

SUMMARY OF PROJECT
This project will evaluate LADWP’s in-house training programs to better prepare their staff to safely and effectively perform their job functions. Funding for Phase 1 and Phase 2 is a maximum of $100,000. The primary objectives of this project are as follows:

Phase 1 (up to $70,000):

1. Evaluate efficacy of the different training delivery modes (e.g., video, online, hands on, instructor led, other);
2. Evaluate information retention of students delivered by the various delivery modes;
3. Develop recommendations to improve student knowledge retention of training materials;
4. Document, report, and present findings from the evaluations and provide recommendations based on industry standard practices for use by LADWP and other agencies with similar capabilities to improve their internal training practices.

**Phase 2 (performed at LADWP discretion, up to $30,000):**

Implement a recommendation and document results. This objective is at the discretion of LADWP.

The scope of contractor activities will include onsite observation and evaluation of various training modes for several courses, particularly where the same content is delivered through two or more different platforms. LADWP wishes to compare the knowledge retention of a small subset of employees trained within the last six months under existing delivery modes to retention gained through new training methods. The contractor must be cognizant of restraints imposed by union requirements when considering evaluation methods and when dealing with staff.

The approach for this effort may include the following tasks:

- *Meet with LADWP training staff to explain scope of project and determine courses and delivery modes to be evaluated, as well as staff to be included in revised training.*
- *Evaluate effectiveness of current training delivery methods.*
- *Recommend and implement training course changes.*
- *Evaluate effectiveness of changes.*
- *Present evaluations, recommendations, and potential implementation plan to LADWP staff.*
- *Prepare Final Report that documents project tasks and findings for LADWP, including strengths and weaknesses of various training modes, evaluation of current and revised training outcomes, recommendations for improvements to training courses, and outline of potential implementation plan.*

**PROJECT SCHEDULE**

Anticipated duration for Phase 1 is four to five months. At the discretion of LADWP and following the delivery of Phase 1 recommendations, Phase 2 will be executed. The duration for Phase 2 is anticipated to be two to four months.
SUBMITTAL AND AWARD STEPS

1. **RFQ Submittal.** Letters of Interest must be received via email by 4:00 PM MDT on May 6, 2020. **Please send RFQ submittals to Mary Messec Smith, Email:** requestforqualifications@WaterRF.org, Phone: (303) 347-6134. Letter of Interest must be submitted as one PDF file and include the following items and detail how the respondent(s) meets the Evaluation Criteria:

   1. Qualitative and quantitative descriptions of previously facilitated learning experiences. (max 5 pages)
   1.2. Resumes or CVs outlining the respondent’s experience and experience of key team members. (2 pages/each resume/CV)
   1.3. Research approach, budget, and schedule (max 6 pages): Must include summary of research approach, estimate of budget (line items for labor, travel, indirect costs), and estimate of schedule of deliverables with breakouts for both Phase 1 and Phase 2. Project duration is expected to be 6-9 months. Anticipated value with respect to proposed efforts and budget will be a selection consideration.

2. **Evaluation Criteria.**

   2.1. Research Approach, Budget, Schedule, deliverables, and applicability (20%)
   2.2. Qualifications, capabilities, and management (80%). Competitive candidates will demonstrate strong experience and qualifications in the following areas:

      2.2.1. Excellent written communication skills (20%)
      2.2.2. Peer-to-peer learning, the connection between learning and socialization, and learning in group settings. (20%)
      2.2.3. Training methods and learning processes that include checking for understanding. Utilizing knowledge retention tactics for effective learning. (20%)
      2.2.4. Strong working knowledge of International Association for Continuing Education and Training (IACET) guidelines, processes, and procedures. (20%)

3. **RFQ Evaluation and Award.** WRF and LADWP will evaluate RFQs and may elect to interview a short-list of candidates. Award notification is anticipated by [Date]. The selected contractor should be available to begin work within two weeks of contract award.

4. **Submittal and Acceptance of Required Contract Elements.** After the contractor is selected, the contractor will develop at their own expense a Scope of Work (SOW), Budget, and Budget Narrative, and present it to WRF and LADWP for discussion and approval. The Scope of Work must include the following elements: Project Abstract; Project Description, including Research Objective, Background/Understanding of the Problem, and Technical Approach; Quality Assurance/Quality Control; Schedule; Management Plan; and References (as required). Please visit the WRF website for instructions on budget preparation, the required budget narrative, and the required budget form. The maximum funding for this project is $100,000. This project is from the WRF Facilitated Research Program and is funded by LADWP. The project will be administered by WRF.
5. **Execution of Project Funding Agreement (PFA).** After the above materials are developed, a PFA will be executed. Our template is found on the WRF website and will require Standard Project Exhibits [https://www.waterrf.org/contract-materials](https://www.waterrf.org/contract-materials). All data will be owned by LADWP. *These documents should be reviewed in advance of the RFQ submittal.* In the event the PFA cannot be executed in 30 days, the funding will be awarded to the next highest ranked bidder.
Attachment 1: LADWP Water System’s Mission Statement and Goals, the WDD Safety Office goals, and a description of the Sylmar West Training Facility
WATER SYSTEM MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power Water System is to provide our customers with reliable, high quality and competitively priced water services in a safe and publicly and environmentally responsible manner.

WATER SYSTEM FIVE-YEAR GOALS

(2017-2022 * Not in priority order)

Manage infrastructure optimally

Achieve customer service satisfaction

Diversify water supply portfolio

Provide safe, high quality water

Increase effectiveness of hiring, housing, training, retaining and developing staff, and of the Water System Safety Program
WDD’s Safety Office ensures the safety and health of its employees. Our goal is to eliminate preventable injuries through the use of substitution, elimination, engineering, and administrative controls and the use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

We achieve these objectives by:

- Eliminating employee exposure to identified hazards
- Emphasizing that no job should be performed in a manner that subjects employees to unnecessary risks
- Emphasizing that an employee’s safety depends on the continual practice of safe work habits
- Providing Cal/OSHA (Title 8) regulatory safety trainings
- Reviewing and conducting accident investigation reports and independent investigations
- Approving the use of safety equipment, tools, and other devices
- Conducting employee safety orientations and trainings
- Monthly safety meetings
- Providing training to instruct employees on how to identify hazards and safe work practices
- Monitoring job sites to ensure safety procedures are followed
- Providing PPEs and appropriate training for identified hazards
- Emphasizing the importance of an employee’s knowledge of the safety rules, procedures, and practices
- Collaboration with LADWP’s Office of Safety, Water System Safety Office, and JSI/JTI on safety efforts
SYLMAR WEST TRAINING FACILITY

The Sylmar Water Education Safety and Training (Sylmar WEST) facility is an International Association for Continuing Education and Training (IACET) accredited educational facility tasked with addressing the learning needs of WDD employees. This facility trains employees that are involved in the installation and maintenance of the water distribution system. Learning needs are primarily driven by compliance with state and federal regulations. All training is developed to mimic real-world work situations to train employees to provide the best quality service to our customers.

The following are some of the competencies expected for both program planners and instructors:

- All course instructors and program planners must be active LADWP employees.
- Since Continuing Education Units (CEUs) are awarded only for learning events designed to prepare employees for State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) Water Distribution Operator and Water Treatment Operator certification examinations, all instructors and program planners involved must be currently certified at least at the level of D2 and must be certified at least at the level of certification for which the learning event is designed and presented.
- Individuals certified at the D3/T3 and D4/TS level must complete 24 and 36 hours, respectively, of continuing education contact hours in subject matter related to drinking water treatment, distribution, or safety within the past 36 months.
- Program planners and instructors involved in the design and delivery of courses in subjects of water distribution and water treatment may utilize contact hours completed for purposes of recertification to meet the 24/36 hour professional development requirement, or may elect to complete part or all of this requirement by participating in professional development activities focused on learning event planning, instructional methods, and/or learning processes.

Sylmar WEST offers 53 training courses that are all IACET approved which include: Confined Space Awareness, Fall Protection, etc.