

*RFP and Specifications for Workforce Development/Education  
Contractor for the Emerald South – Terra Firma Project*

*PRE-PROPOSAL MEETING  
APRIL 23, 2025*



# *MISSION & VISION*

Delta Institute collaborates with communities to solve complex environmental challenges throughout the Midwest. We address Midwestern environmental, economic, and climate challenges today, so that our home and region are more resilient, equitable, and innovative tomorrow.



## *WHY WE EXIST*

Delta Institute exists because environmental, economic, and climate issues hit communities—urban and rural—through disinvestment, systemic inequity, and policy decisions. We collaborate at the community level to solve our home region’s new and legacy issues, by focusing on the self-defined goals and needs of our partners.

Our work takes us to population centers like Chicago, St. Louis, and Detroit; to mid-sized cities such as Gary and South Bend, Indiana; to Great Lakes coastal towns like Michigan City, Indiana and Muskegon, Michigan; and to rural communities and watersheds with tens of thousands of acres of farmland and waterways across our region. It’s quite likely that you—or someone you know—lives, works, or passes through a community that Delta Institute has helped since our founding in 1998. Delta Institute is proud to serve as the EPA’s Environmental Finance Center for Water Infrastructure for the next five years, which means that we may be supporting a community near you right now. We are a trusted 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with a Platinum Seal of Transparency from Candid/GuideStar, a recognition received by fewer than 1% of all 1.5 million registered nonprofits in the United States.

**Acting now is not only a pressing climate change issue, but also an issue of equity and environmental justice.**





# *SUSTAINABILITY AND SUPPORT SERVICES*

Our Sustainability and Support Services are designed to respond to invitations to participate in community-led plans, which include a wide array of sectors in which Delta Institute has sizable experience. We forecast that by 2025, Delta Institute will work with more than 250 partner communities while securing **\$40 million in external investment** and creating **100 practical tools, resources, strategies, and municipal-, county-, and state-level plans.**







# *NATURE-BASED CLIMATE SOLUTIONS*

Delta Institute assists municipalities by integrating natural climate solutions and Green Infrastructure (GI) to reduce climate change impacts by capturing **100 million stormwater gallons** and leveraging **\$100 million in municipal GI investment**. We focus on communities that are disproportionately affected by flooding and climate change, to collaboratively improve their environmental indicators, mitigate local impacts of climate change, and strengthen their neighborhoods' resilience.



# *EMERALD SOUTH – TERRA FIRMA PROJECT WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION CONTRACTOR PRE-PROPOSAL MEETING AGENDA*

- Project Overview
- Scope of Work
- Request for Proposal Guidelines
- Submission & Review Process
- Question & Answer Session

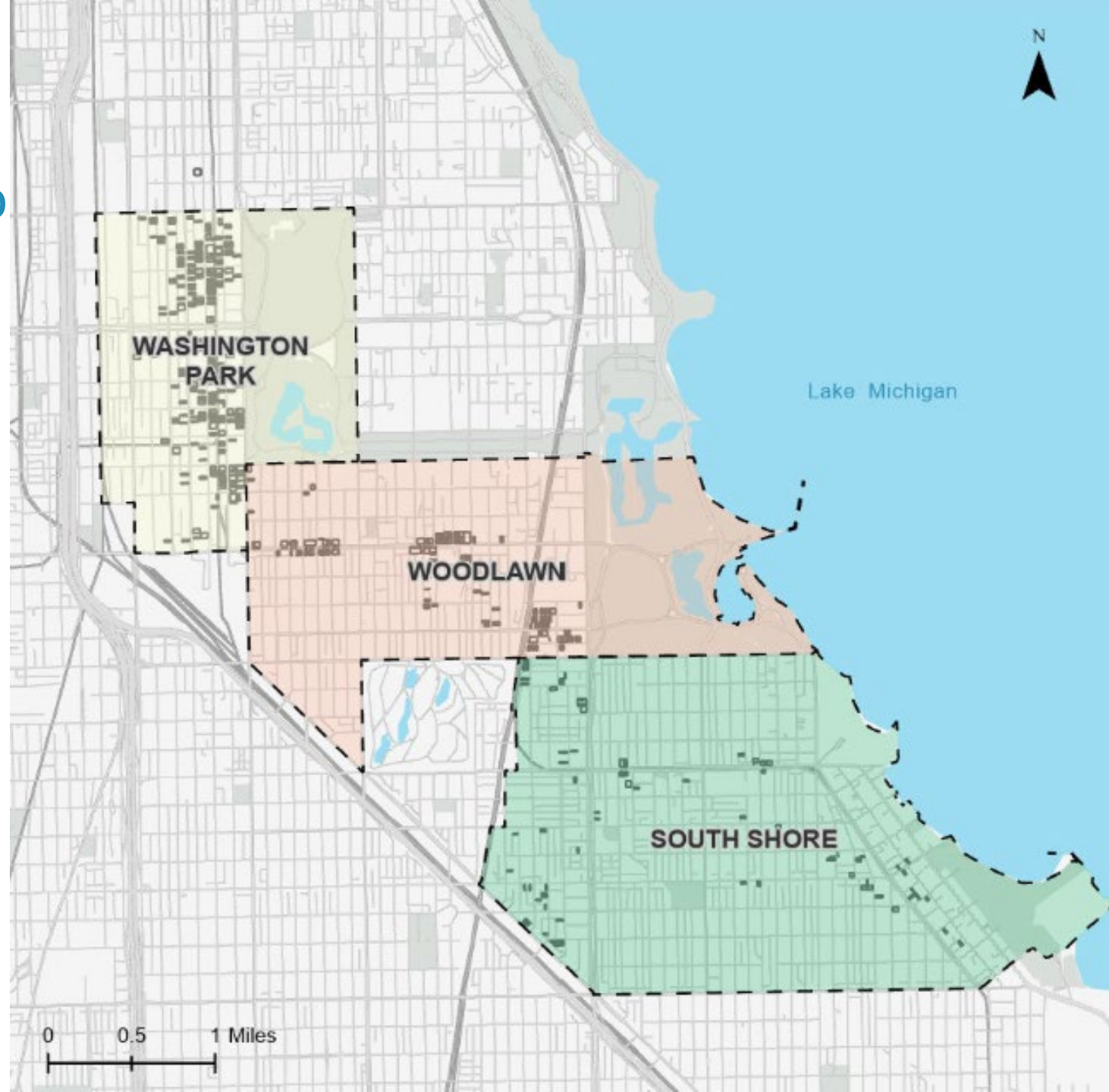


# *PROJECT OVERVIEW*



This project aims to improve environmental quality while also increasing economic development opportunity in Chicago's South Side communities through several initiatives that support Emerald South's Terra Firma project.

Terra Firma project focuses on the revitalization of vacant land in the South Shore, Washington park, and Woodlawn neighborhoods.





## Delta intends to undertake the following four tasks:

1. Maintenance and improvement of the Terra Firma vacant lots
2. Community engagement and mapping
3. Workforce development
4. Rebuilding community garden capacity

## This Request for Proposals is focused on Workforce Development (Task 3)

- Education and skills training for adults
- Education and experiential learning for high school students

## Workforce Development (Task 3) project goals include:

- Developing a workforce development **training program with opportunities for replication** and scalable expansion.
- Training adults in **skills directly applicable to green space maintenance and improvement**, including hands-on field training opportunities.
- Creating a **pipeline of skilled workers** for Terra Firma projects and other local green initiatives.
- Fostering economic empowerment by **creating pathways to long-term employment** in green industries.
- **Creating awareness** among youth to explore sustainability-focused career paths.



## *OPTIONS FOR RFP SUBMISSION*

There are two options for responding to the RFP. The Contractor can either:

1. Deliver a new, standalone workforce development program, **or**
2. Integrate the scope into an existing training initiative

Both approaches **must align with the goals and structure outlined this scope**—delivering five months of in-class and hands-on fieldwork for adults, alongside engaging, exploratory learning for high school students.

# *SCOPE OF WORK*



# *SCOPE OF WORK*

1. Equip **20 adults** with the skills needed to pursue careers in green infrastructure, landscaping, and environmental sustainability
2. Engage **100 high school students** in experiential learning activities, raising their awareness about urban environmental challenges and green infrastructure
3. Deliver a **final report**



Photos by Sandra Steinbrecher

## *SCOPE OF WORK*

**Timeline:** June 2025 (as soon as the Agreement is signed) to October 31, 2025. Additional funds may be available to support the project for two more years.

**Budget:** The maximum amount allocated for the Workforce Development scope of services is \$50,000.

*This funding is provided through generous support of the Restore, Reinvest, and Renew (R3) Program by the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority (ICJIA).*



## *SCOPE OF WORK (Deliverable 1)*

Equip 20 adults with the skills needed to pursue careers in green infrastructure, landscaping, and environmental sustainability. **Training will include both in-class and hands-on fieldwork components.**

- a. Ensure participants are equipped with both **foundational knowledge** and essential certifications, enhancing their employability and readiness to work in environmental and landscaping sectors.
- b. Give participants **practical experience** to apply what they've learned in a real-world setting, providing valuable skills that are directly transferable to green infrastructure projects and related job opportunities.

**Training topics may include:** Landscaping and native gardening fundamentals for urban lots; Invasive species management in urban environments; Soil health and assessment; Land stewardship and site management; Safety and professional development

## *SCOPE OF WORK (Deliverable 2)*

Engage 100 high school students in experiential learning activities, raising their awareness about urban environmental challenges and green infrastructure. Learning activities may include:

- a. Delivering a three (3) part series of seminars on green infrastructure in urban environments
- b. Organizing job shadowing days and tours at up to ten (10) green infrastructure-focused organizations in South Side Chicago
- c. Hosting three (3) resume building workshops

**Seminar topics may include:** Environmental justice 101; Benefits of green infrastructure; Importance of biodiversity and resilience

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## *SCOPE OF WORK (Deliverable 2, continued)*

Job shadowing days and tours may include organizations/companies/facilities in the following fields: Ecological conservation; Forestry; Urban gardening / urban farming; Climate resilience planning; Sustainable development; Landscape architecture; Regenerative agriculture; Circular economy; Environmental education

Resume building workshops may focus on: Career awareness and goal setting; Skills identification and building experience; Resume development and feedback

The Contractor will also work with the project team to develop educational material for Delta Institute's BioBlitz events, which act as community-driven biodiversity assessments in urban areas.





*Participants of the South Shore BioBlitz on September 28<sup>th</sup>, 2024, at the 71st and Crandon Organic Garden (2301 E 71st St, Chicago, IL 60649). Image Source: Delta Institute.*



## *SCOPE OF WORK (Deliverable 3)*

Deliver a final report to Delta Institute. The final report will include the following:

- Summary of trainings and learning activities provided, including total number of participants engaged and total hours of engagement
- Lessons learned
- Recommendations for post-training pipelines for job placements, including potential positions supporting Terra Firma projects
- Recommendations for workforce development training program replication and scalable expansion, including a rough timeline for years 2 and 3
- Resources for career fairs, apprenticeships, and further training opportunities

# *REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL GUIDELINES*



# *PROPOSAL CHECKLIST*

- Completed Non-collusion Affidavit Form.
- Completed Official Proposal Pricing Form.
- Proposal narrative (10 pages max) identifying a clear understanding of the project scope and the contractor's approach to project management.
- Completed References and Qualifications Form.
- No more than three 1-page informational summaries of referenced projects with pictures and graphics from those projects with name of client, location, and contact information.
- Description of key personnel with brief bios and their role on this project.
- Résumé for project manager with whom Delta will interface.
- Certificate of Insurance.
- Completed Delta Institute Signature Authorization Form.
- Completed Delta Institute Questionnaire Form.
- Completed Delta Institute Exception Form.
- Completed Delta Institute Workers' Compensation Certificate Form.
- Completed Acknowledgement of Addendum Form for all Addendums Form.
- Drug Free workplace policies and procedures.
- Affidavit and statement regarding E-Verify compliance.
- No investment in Iranian energy sector.

*SUBMISSION & REVIEW*

# *SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS*

One (1) digital copy of the proposal shall be submitted by email to:

- Helen Hardy: [hmhardy@delta-institute.org](mailto:hmhardy@delta-institute.org) **and**
- Jamie Zouras: [jzouras@delta-institute.org](mailto:jzouras@delta-institute.org)

The proposal must be received by:

- **Tuesday, May 13, 2025 at 5:00 PM CST**



# SCORING RUBRIC

MAXIMUM POINTS	CRITERIA
10	Understanding the scope of work and quality of the Proposal to meet this scope.
30	Qualifications of Team
30	Ability to meet the Project Team's needs, on time and within budget.
30	Price including all costs
<b>100</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>

- Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (e.g., Minority-owned business enterprises or MBEs, Women-owned business enterprises or WBEs, etc.) are encouraged to respond to this RFP.
- Firms with staff with some of the following credentials and licenses will be considered more qualified than those that do not have any: P.E., ASLA, and/or AIA.

## *KEY DATES*

April 30<sup>th</sup> (5:00 PM CST): Deadline for Questions

May 13<sup>th</sup> (5:00 PM CST): Proposal Submission Due Date

May 18<sup>th</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup>: Proposal Review Period

May 26<sup>th</sup>: Tentative Award Date

June 2<sup>nd</sup>: Tentative Project Kickoff

# *QUESTION & ANSWER*



# *ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS*

Please email additional questions to:

- Helen Hardy ([hmhardy@delta-institute.org](mailto:hmhardy@delta-institute.org))
- Deadline for questions: **Wednesday, April 30, 2025 at 5:00 PM CST.**

All questions will be answered and issued to all companies that are on the RFP holders list.

- If you are unsure if you are on the RFP holder's list, please contact Helen Hardy ([hmhardy@delta-institute.org](mailto:hmhardy@delta-institute.org))

# CONNECT WITH US

## Social Media

- LinkedIn: [/delta-institute](#)
- Instagram: [deltainstitute](#)
- Facebook: [@DeltaGreatLakes](#)
- YouTube: [deltainstitute](#)

## Website

- Bookmark us: [delta-institute.org](http://delta-institute.org)
- Keep posted on our events: [delta-institute.org/events](http://delta-institute.org/events)
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*THANK YOU*