

CCST Request for Proposals for a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Consultant: Definition and Metrics for “Scientific Expertise”

The California Council on Science and Technology (CCST) is reassessing what it means to be considered an “expert” in the STEMM fields, and the body of expertise needed to effectively make policies stronger with science. As part of its ongoing efforts in this area, CCST seeks to partner with a diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) consultant to provide guidance and direction to CCST staff in the design and application of an updated definition of “scientific expertise” in our science advisory services.

CCST is utilizing a competitive selection process, referred to herein as a request for proposals (RFP), to select one or more expert consultants to support this work. This is not a bid, but a RFP that could become the basis for negotiations leading to a contract with one or more vendors to provide the tools and services described in this document.

CCST reserves the right to cancel or withdraw the request for proposals at any time if we deem it is in the best interests of our organization.

A. ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW

Established in 1988, CCST is a nonpartisan, nonprofit corporation that connects California’s leading scientists and research institutions with policymakers to inform public policy development with science and technology (S&T). CCST is a “boundary organization”: we convene and draw expertise from universities and nonprofit research institutions, the private sector, and government to solve problems by leveraging the collective contributions from each sector.

CCST works with a range of government, research, and philanthropic partners to *build* more agile, inclusive, and impactful S&T advisory frameworks; *elevate* policymaker awareness of the S&T contributions of California’s research institutions; and *foster* a more diverse and inclusive network of S&T-savvy policy leaders. As a boundary organization, we avoid advocating for specific political positions, agendas, or outcomes (unlike lobbying or policymaking organizations).

Our core values of service, independence, and partnership are anchored in our foundational commitments to diversity, equity, and inclusion:

- **Service.** We are driven by a desire to serve and see S&T applied to public policies that provide all Californians with opportunities to participate and prosper. We connect our diverse network of S&T experts with policymakers to help them fulfill their missions.

- **Independence.** As a nongovernmental, nonpartisan institution, we operate independently of organizations and individuals with a stake in the outcome of State policy decisions. We engage inclusively with S&T experts from a broad range of disciplines and lived experiences, serving as honest brokers of their knowledge and perspectives.
- **Partnership.** We work across institutions, partnering with academic, research, governmental, philanthropic, and other communities to leverage their collective expertise and diverse perspectives to fulfill our mission.

For more information, please visit <https://ccst.us/>.

B. STATEMENT OF NEEDS

CCST provides value to the State of California by enhancing policymaker access to S&T advice that is informed by diverse expert perspectives and translated to be relevant in California's policy landscape. To be effective, CCST's science advisory services – our peer-reviewed studies, workshops, and expert briefings – must draw from diverse expertise in the science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and medicine (STEMM) fields.

CCST recognizes that the STEMM fields are characterized by systemic racism and inequities that disproportionately impact members of underrepresented minority communities, members of the LGBTQ+ community, people with disabilities, and women. As we engage with diverse experts to meet our mission, CCST has opportunities – and a responsibility – to promote DEI in STEMM.

Purpose of this RFP: CCST seeks assistance in defining guidelines for engaging STEMM expertise (referred to herein as “scientific expertise”) that extends beyond traditional disciplinary representation and definitions of expertise in STEMM fields. We intend to develop a broader definition of scientific expertise, along with guidelines for identifying, engaging with, and compensating diverse scientific experts in the development and implementation of our science advisory services. We envision this work occurring in two phases, which may be supported individually or by the same vendor.

Phase 1. Workshops on Defining Scientific Expertise

Timeline: April – October 2022

Deliverables:

1. With guidance from an advisory group and in collaboration with CCST and its partners, develop an agenda, goals, invitation, and proposed invitee list for a workshop series on updating the definition of “scientific expertise” to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion. CCST is targeting June 2022 for the first workshop.
2. Produce and/or review summary documents of observations, recommendations, and best practices to ensure consistency and alignment with principles of DEI.

Phase 2: Developing Guidelines and Metrics for Engaging Diverse Expertise

Timeline: June – October 2022

Deliverables

1. In partnership with CCST staff and in support of CCST’s Study Process, develop guidelines and questions for enhancing the recruitment and participation of diverse scientific experts in CCST studies, workshops, and expert briefings (“science services”).
2. Develop materials to guide CCST study teams in framing DEI questions for ongoing science services.
3. Develop processes and metrics for assessing and tracking the diversity of expertise represented in CCST’s science services.

C. SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

1. Please submit proposal(s) in writing (one electronic PDF or Word format copy) to Brie Lindsey, brie.lindsey@ccst.us by April 6, 2022. Proposals may address Phase 1, Phase 2, or both.
2. Selection Timeline: Proposal evaluation will begin April 7 and be completed **by April 29, 2022, or until a vendor is selected.**
3. Please include the following to be considered in this RFP:
 - a. Cover sheet including vendors’ contact information, email address, and phone numbers;
 - b. An overview that reflects the vendors’ understanding of the efforts described in this Request for Proposals and the project deliverables;

- c. A description of completed similar projects that demonstrate the Vendor's experience and area of expertise, including Vendor's ability to provide the stated deliverables;
- d. At least three (3) client references with appropriate contact information that the vendor has performed work for in the past three (3) years and that can attest to vendor ability to complete work as stated;
- e. A written statement acknowledging either no conflict of interest or identifying any conflicts of interest as it relates to this project; and
- f. Include individual cost proposal for each project component (including any project-related expenses).

D. PROPOSAL EVALUATION

1. CCST will evaluate all complete proposals received by the submission deadline. Incomplete proposals may not be considered.
2. CCST will evaluate proposals based on the fit with project specific requirements as outlined in the RFP, robustness of methodology, vendors' experience with performing previous work, vendor's past performance and client references, and cost-effectiveness. CCST reserves the right to determine, at its sole and absolute discretion, whether any aspect of a proposal satisfactorily meets the criteria established in this RFP.
3. CCST may request additional information from vendors during the proposal evaluation process.
4. CCST may elect not to award a contract solely on the basis of this RFP.
5. CCST is an equal opportunity employer. We make hiring decisions based on qualification, merit, and our organization's business needs. We do not discriminate based on race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, gender identity, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, veteran status, pregnancy, or any such status protected under federal, state or local law.

Please direct any questions about this RFP to Brie Lindsey, brie.lindsey@ccst.us.