



REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL FOR RESEARCHER

General Information

Project objective: Proactively enlist a researcher to produce a comprehensive study on issues of compensation and other impediments for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) leaders joining environmental and climate finance boards.

Issuing organization:

Green Leadership Trust

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RFP issued: Tuesday, February 14, 2023

Due date for proposals: March 14, 2023 by 6:00pm ET

Contact for further information:

Summary

Green Leadership Trust (GLT) seeks consulting services to produce a comprehensive study on issues of compensation and other impediments for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) leaders joining environmental and climate finance boards. The goal of the study would be to examine these and other underlying challenges; raise awareness of these impediments; and lift up best practices for boards to implement to increase the recruitment and retention of board members of color. Lack of board diversity causes real repercussions and problems for the world, not just the non-diverse organizations. The study should also showcase case studies where lack of representation caused issues within boards. We want to include in the study, research on climate finance and impact investment boards that focus on this thematic area.

The process should be inclusive of members, staff, Steering Committee, Raben Group contractors, and external stakeholders. GLT research consultants will pursue original research to supplement existing research, including interviewing GLT members, prospective members, and other potential board members of color. The impediments study will also influence the revision of existing GLT resources, such as best practices. The consultants would develop case stories; and other original research materials to identify impediments and lessons/best practices that can be implemented.

The ideal candidate to lead this process has strong research, writing, communication, and facilitation skills; extensive experience working with non-profit organizations; and proven success drafting research- and discovery-based studies. Experience on issues of racial justice in the environmental sector is a plus.

A competitive proposal budget will be an important factor in the selection of the research consultant.

Background



GREEN LEADERSHIP TRUST

Established in 2013, Green Leadership Trust's mission is to build power for the environmental and conservation movement, including communities of color and indigenous communities, by leveraging the knowledge, experience, and networks of participating board members. We do so by training and activating these leaders serving Boards of environmental organizations. The niche of GLT is singular as the first cross-organizational effort focused on building power and diversity in any advocacy sector.

We operate on a budget of approximately \$500,000. We have 3 full time staff, an intern and 5 contractors and are a membership organization with over 150 members. The full membership meets annually and maintains six committees: Steering, Finance and Development, Membership, Retreat Planning, Board Excellence, and Communications & Advocacy.

Green Leadership Trust is governed by a Steering Committee (11 people) 3 of which serve as Co-chairs for a two-year period acting in advisory capacities. Together with the Executive Director, the Managing Director and the Membership Director make up the management team.

GLT is transforming the environmental sector by diversifying its leadership and sharing best practices centered in equity that respond to the values and needs of diverse communities. We wish to grow our impact beyond our annual in person convenings. We have a membership base and we are exploring ways to elevate their engagement. We have raised an operating budget, hired our second Executive Director and have strengthened our relationships with CEOs and leadership of national environmental organizations well as numerous regional environmental justice organizations. Providing thought leadership on compensation and other impediments can help remove obstacles to significant BIPOC leadership and improve the functioning and effectiveness of environmental and climate finance agencies thereby impacting the environment movement as a whole, which is why this study is crucial to advance our work.

Green Leadership Trust is the first cross-organizational effort focused on building power and diversity in any advocacy sector. Through an annual board member census, we have identified all (or most) of the people of color and indigenous people on major national environmental and conservation boards. Our programs support diversification of the most senior environmental leadership through promotion of board best practices and by driving the leadership pipeline. Green Leadership Trust is funded both by foundations and contributions from members. Green Leadership Trust works with an extensive set of partners, including CEOs and Equity officers to non-governmental environmental organizations, environmental justice organizations and community leaders of color and indigenous people.

GLT currently has four primary goals:

1. Diversify Boards (through recruitment, placement, and best practices)
2. Place Equity front and center in all decisions (with CEO performance evaluations and in all conversations)
3. Board member training and capacity building (webinars, annual convenings and monthly member calls)
4. Ensure sustainability and governance (Fundraising and Development plan and activities, Strategic planning and establishing committee structure).



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Scope of Work

GLT is seeking a consultant or consultancy to proactively enlist a researcher that would produce a comprehensive study on issues of compensation and other impediments for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) leaders joining environmental and climate finance boards.

The research will be grounded in a comprehensive environmental scan of existing research and be complimented by a highly inclusive interview process involving Green Leadership Trust staff, contractors, and volunteer leadership.

The study will include measurable goals and actions to guide boards to retain BIPOC fiduciaries. The consultant will work directly with GLT staff over 6 months, commencing in April 2023 and concluding by September 2023. However, we are open and flexible to additional timelines. The proposed scope of work will include a three-pronged approach defined as:

Inquiry: Gathering relevant data and assessment phase (April and May 2022)

- Finalize the study's scope of work and consultant contract, including research criteria.
- Conduct environmental scan of existing research on the impediments of BIPOC in joining boards, particularly in the environmental and climate spaces.
- Highly inclusive data gathering process engaging all staff, Steering Committee, membership, and environmental organization CEOs.
- Design and conduct an electronic survey and interviews of key stakeholders (including GLT members, Steering Committee members, CEOs to member organizations, funders, leaders and allies, and other important partners) to assess and evaluate board impediments from their perspectives as well as folks that contribute to the impediments.
- Synthesize the assessment data into a short key finding report and a presentation at an upcoming monthly member call to indicate direction of the study.

Creative and bold thinking: Producing study with key findings (June and July 2023)

- Design, prepare and draft study with key findings from the research coupled with the interviews/survey results.
- Engage GLT's leadership to discuss, address and clarify questions and findings.
- Continue moving the study forward, incorporating GLT's feedback on direction and findings.
- Present initial draft to the steering committee for any initial feedback.

Amplifying: Share best practices to address findings (August and September 2023)

- Finalize study with the approval of the steering committee and GLT leadership.
- Present the study to our full membership and other key stakeholders.
- Provide recommendations on how to best amplify the study.
- Debrief and evaluate the research process with GLT leadership.

Deliverables

The impediments study for GLT will include the following deliverables and outcomes:

- 1) A succinct yet comprehensive study that explores and expands on the below issues:
 - Awareness/Network



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- Board candidacy many times relies on the amplification of the opening and the networks/platforms used to amplify these openings. Some people of color may be left out of the roles simply because the openings are not promoted in an inclusive, equitable and intentional way.
- Time
 - We recognize that the time commitment of being a board member is extensive but there are alternative models that can be implemented to explore which would be more inclusive of diverse board members.
- Compensation
 - Only 13% of nonprofits pay their board members for their service, despite the fact that compensation remains an obstacle for some, particularly young BIPOC leaders who want to serve on boards.
 - We will examine the issue and develop a set of recommendations that elaborate why and how nonprofit Boards need to financially compensate Board members. We intend to examine parallels from unpaid internships in today's labor market to the unpaid work of enslaved peoples and the continued racial wealth gap in the U.S. We will unpack the current practice of unpaid board work and assess how it may be harmful to BIPOC candidates, particularly young BIPOC leaders.
 - We hope to make the case for compensation, including the need to budget for compensation in fundraising and institutional development planning.
- Aligning DEI work with board practices
 - Although there is evidence that boards which include people of color are more likely to have adopted diversity, equity, and inclusion practices than boards that do not include people of color, recruitment of people of color to boards remains a low priority for many organizations.
- Onboarding
 - A clear and effective onboarding process would allow board members to understand their roles and responsibilities and lead them down a pathway to success yet there is evidence that the processes need to be redesigned to institutionalize social onboarding and relationship building so that boards can build trust.
- Tipping Point
 - Data indicates that an organization must meet an estimated 25% threshold for Boards of Directors to successfully attract and retain BIPOC Trustees.

2) The study will also include specific and measurable best practices for boards to implement to increase the recruitment and retention of board members of color.

Proposal

Proposals should be no longer than 5 pages, address the scope, deliverables and research methodology, include a budget and an anticipated timeline for project completion, and indicate who will be the primary consultant on the project.

An additional attachment of no more than 2 pages should include your recent engagements and references. You may submit the proposal to the GLT, by email to gltinternal@rabengroup.com.



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Any costs or time associated with the preparation of a proposal response to this RFP are the responsibility of the bidder and will not be reimbursed.

Depending on the final scope of work for the impediments study, consultant fees and the budget for this project will range from \$30,000-35,000. This assumes a consultant hourly rate of \$150 with a maximum of 233 consultant hours on this project.

Reimbursement for reasonable direct expenses (i.e., mileage, materials, parking, transit, etc.) related to the consultant's work on this project is additional beyond the contract amount and will be billed separately. Travel time by the consultant will be billed at \$50/hour.

Timetable

- Interviews: Week of March 20, 2023
- Select firm: Week of March 27, 2023

Email submissions may be made to: gltinternal@rabengroup.com. If you have any questions, please contact Emira Woods at ewoods@greenleadershiptrust.org.