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King County

King County RainWise Outreach Grant Program Request for Proposals

RainWise is pleased to announce the opportunity to apply for a 2021 RainWise Outreach Grant. \$240,000 has been allocated for this effort. Applications will be accepted through Nov. 15, 2020.

RainWise is a King County Wastewater Treatment Division (WTD) effort to address combined sewer overflows and stormwater pollution by offering rebates to private property owners for the installation of rain gardens and cisterns. This program is a team effort with Seattle Public Utilities (SPU). These grants fund community-based organizations, non-profit organizations, and small businesses with King County Small Contractor and Supplier (SCS) certification (<https://kingcounty.gov/depts/finance-business-operations/business-development-contract-compliance/SCSCertification/contracting-opportunities.aspx>) to help with outreach and promotion of the RainWise program in King County combined sewer overflow (CSO) basins. The RainWise Outreach Grant Program is seeking talented organizations to submit proposals that help accomplish goals in the five Program Areas below:

1. Embed equity and social justice in RainWise outreach and program delivery
2. Provide innovative and effective virtual engagement in the time of COVID
3. Conduct outreach, marketing and customer support to interested residential property owners in eligible King County RainWise basins
4. Execute outreach, marketing and customer support to RainWise Big Roof property owners in King County RainWise basins
5. Develop resources and provide support for Green Stormwater Infrastructure education and job training.

Grant applicants can:

- Apply for one or more grants with each grant requiring a separate application
- Grant proposals may:
 - Propose a **specific** program or campaign within one of the five Program Areas
Examples: Specific outreach to the Vietnamese community under Program Area One, or produce a specific webinar/virtual event in Program Area Two
 - Propose a comprehensive effort that addresses ALL the objectives within ONE Program Area
 - Propose an effort that encompasses more than one Program Area
Examples: A robust virtual engagement proposal (Program Area Two) might be a big part of residential or big roof outreach (Program Areas Three and Four).
- **Submit application(s) by midnight, Sunday November 15, 2020.**

The overall budget for the program is \$240,000 and the approximate budget for each Program Area is listed below. The final budget allocation will be determined by review and selection of the proposals received.

For information, contact GreenGrants@kingcounty.gov or call Jo Sullivan at 206-477-5528.

The rest of this document will cover:

- **an overview of the five Program Areas**
- **more detailed information on aspirations within each Program Area**

Overview of the five Program Areas:

- 1. Embed equity and social justice in RainWise outreach and program delivery – Approximate budget \$65,000 annually**
 - Conduct effective multicultural outreach to RainWise eligible property owners in King County to increase numbers of RainWise installations in diverse communities
 - Recruit and support diverse RainWise contractors
 - Propose and develop new ideas and opportunities
- 2. Provide innovative and effective virtual engagement in the time of COVID – Approximate budget \$50,000 annually**
 - Play a pivotal coordination role for the RainWise program’s virtual presence. Assist other staff and grantees in delivering content virtually.
 - Explore new platforms and opportunities to keep the program’s virtual presence fresh
 - Oversee and conduct webinars, Meet Ups and other virtual outreach opportunities to educate and inspire property owners to participate in RainWise.
 - Assist with RainWise’s web and social media presence
- 3. Conduct outreach, marketing and customer support to interested residential property owners in eligible King County RainWise basins – Approximate budget \$65,000**
 - Conduct creative outreach to inspire residential property owners to participate in RainWise including communication pieces and events
 - Plan and coordinate workshops and events
 - Maintain RainWise Info box network
 - Recruit and manage RainWise Ambassadors
 - Propose and develop new ideas and opportunities
- 4. Execute outreach, marketing and customer support to RainWise Big Roof property owners in King County RainWise basins. Schools, places of worship, multifamily residences, and businesses are examples of big roof properties. – Approximate budget \$30,000**
 - Conduct outreach and recruitment of Big Roof opportunities
 - Provide coordination and customer support

- Cultivate and maintain relationships with partners with multiple properties (Seattle Housing Authority, religious dioceses, etc.)
- Propose and develop new ideas and opportunities

5. Develop resources and provide support for Green Stormwater Infrastructure education and job training – Approximate budget \$30,000 annually

- Provide training in the design, construction and maintenance of RainWise and other Green Stormwater Infrastructure (GSI) installations using actual projects, both in construction and completed
- Create educational tools for all RainWise contractors while providing a maintenance resource team for fixing and teaching about RainWise repairs
- Propose and develop new ideas and opportunities

More detailed information on aspirations within each Program Area

Goal One: Embed equity and social justice in RainWise outreach and program delivery – Approximate budget \$65,000 annually

King County is committed to providing equitable programs and services and we endeavor to put the County’s strategic plan into action with the RainWise program

(<https://kingcounty.gov/elected/executive/equity-social-justice/strategic-plan.aspx>).

We seek organization(s) with diverse networks and relationships, and multi-lingual and culturally appropriate skills to provide outreach support to increase the number of RainWise installations in King County basins and the total square footage of the roof area captured by these installations. We expect this will require extra assistance for low-income and multicultural customers and contractors to take advantage of this program by providing information and support in multiple languages. We also appreciate the expertise of successful grantees to identify and suggest barriers to participation and to explore new tools and strategies that could help the RainWise program be more equitable. Below are two specific areas where we are hoping for proposals under this goal.

Multicultural Outreach, Marketing, and Customer Support for RainWise

Recruit and engage eligible property owners in King County RainWise basins through a variety of means. This may include:

- Webinars and virtual opportunities for education and outreach
- Canvassing
- Social and earned media
- Host and participate in community events
- Identify communication pieces and languages needed (flyers, brochures, articles, signage, etc.)
- Provide customer support throughout the RainWise process including meeting with a contractor, rebate paperwork assistance, and system maintenance.
- Recruit neighborhood “champions” or “ambassadors”.
- Place and maintain Info boxes near successful installations and community gathering places.

- Recruit multicultural “big roofs” such as places of worship, apartment buildings, community spaces, and businesses.
- Cultivate and maintain relationships with multicultural demonstration projects.
- Leverage existing projects by writing articles and blog posts for the organizations newsletters and social media, creating signage, hosting volunteer work parties and events to promote RainWise to constituents.
- Track contracts and interactions for program records.
- Provide communications and analytical/strategic support.

Work to maximize equity and social justice opportunities. This may include:

- Provide advice and outreach on best ethnic media campaigns. Provide translation review of ads and participate in interviews and programs.
- Provide information to site property owners, business owners and employees in their primary languages.
- Provide coaching and translation support, if needed.
- Promote tools that allow low-income clients to participate in the RainWise program such as the Pilot Access Loan, RainWise Access Grant and translated materials.
- Suggest tools that help eliminate barriers to participation. Work with RainWise staff on the development of these tools.

Diverse RainWise Contractor Outreach and Recruitment

The overall goal of this effort will be to increase the social and ethnic diversity and language capacity of the trained pool of RainWise contractors. By doing this, we hope to get more participation in this program by property owners of different backgrounds and ethnicities.

The program needs to increase contractor capacity, especially in South Seattle where contractor availability is a limiting factor to the success of the program.

We need proposals that support outreach, recruitment, communications, training, business development skill-building and follow-up coaching to a diverse pool of local landscapers and contractors.

We seek organization(s) with diverse networks and relationships, and multi-lingual and culturally appropriate skills to:

- Promote being a RainWise contractor as a viable business strategy and specifically promote the contractor training required to participate in this program.
- Connect participating contractors with skill-building and business development workshops and other resources and assistance for helping them to become part of the trained RainWise contractor pool.
- Provide pre-training in the form of support and coaching for diverse contractors interested in attending the official RainWise contractor training.
- Participate and assist in up to four contractor trainings.
- Provide coaching and translation support, if needed, for one or two client meetings per contractor after they have completed the required RainWise contractor training and met the requirements to be listed on the website.

- Acquaint contractors interested in participating in the program with the Pilot Access Loan Program and RainWise Access Grant Program tools that can help low-income clients take advantage of RainWise.
- Identify barriers to participation and provide specific recommendations for reducing those barriers, including translation needs and best approaches for training.
- Document the success stories of this program in multiple formats.
- Provide communications and analytical/strategic support.

New Opportunities

This grant program also encourages applicants to suggest and create new ideas for equity and social justice best practices within the RainWise program other than those listed above.

Goal Two: Provide innovative and effective virtual engagement in the time of COVID – Approximate budget \$50,000 annually

The overall goal of this effort is to conduct effective virtual outreach to help potential RainWise customers learn about and participate in RainWise in order to increase the number of installations and total square footage of roof area captured by these installations in King County basins. We are assuming in person events will not take place until at summer 2021 at the earliest, so having a vital, fresh, and creative virtual presence is essential. This effort may also help King County’s Green Stormwater Infrastructure communications efforts.

- Oversee and conduct approximately 20 webinars, Meet Ups, Virtual Tours, and other virtual outreach opportunities to educate and inspire property owners to participate in RainWise. The assumption is that each webinar takes approximately 25 hours between planning (two hours), promotion (10 hours), actual webinar production (three hours), follow up communications with resources and reporting (five hours). New webinars would require additional hours for preparing content although often the content will be provided by other RainWise staff or consultants.
- One of the most challenging steps of RainWise is for clients to meet and hire a RainWise contractor. Conduct MeetUps and other virtual networking opportunities to help solve this challenge.
- Support Big Roof effort with virtual meetings or webinars for partner presentations.
- Support RainWise contractor skill building by helping deliver Contractor Orientation and Skill Building Workshops or other virtual educational tools for RainWise contractors.
- Explore new platforms and opportunities to keep RainWise’s virtual presence fresh!
- Assist with both RainWise and King County’s GSI content on the 700milliongallons.org website
- Assist with broader GSI communications efforts as they are required to provide virtual webinars and site tours. There may be opportunities to support the Clean Water Healthy Habitat initiative such as webinars, web support or social media.
- Assist with social media presence.
- This effort will require a lot of coordination with the broader RainWise outreach team and will need program management skills.
- Provide communications and analytical/strategic support.

Goal Three: Conduct outreach, marketing and customer support to interested residential property owners in eligible King County RainWise basins – Approximate budget \$65,000

The overall goal of this effort is to recruit, encourage and engage eligible property owners to participate in RainWise by implementing a variety of marketing, outreach and customer support efforts. Specific areas of emphasis may include:

- Encourage and support residential property owners to become RainWise by conducting creative outreach and involvement campaigns. Plan, promote, implement and evaluate these efforts.
- Plan and implement at least twelve RainWise workshops, webinars, virtual tours and other events annually. Participate in relevant opportunities offered by other community groups or campaigns (i.e. participation in Green Home Tour, Seattle Night Out, Tilth Alliance Edible Plant Sale, etc.).
- Prepare communication pieces including mailings, case studies, promotional materials, contractor rosters, etc.
- Assist in generating earned and social media. This may involve creating homeowner stories, virtual tours, self-guided walking tours, or educational aspects of RainWise.
- Maintain RainWise Info box network.
- Recruit and manage RainWise Ambassadors.
- Conduct maintenance checkups with previous RainWise customers.
- Provide customer support when needed to help property owners navigate the RainWise process.
- Conduct surveys and other evaluation strategies and report back on RainWise customer experience, barriers, and potential solutions to increase program participation.
- Provide communications and analytical/strategic support.

New Opportunities

This grant program also encourages applicants to suggest and create new ideas for effective outreach, marketing and customer support other than those listed above.

Goal Four: Execute outreach, marketing and customer support to RainWise Big Roof property owners in King County RainWise basins – Approximate budget \$30,000

The overall goal of this effort is to recruit, encourage and support eligible non-residential private property owners to participate in RainWise. The King County RainWise Big Roof Campaign defines Big Roofs as non-SFR (single family residential) roofs generally over 2,000 square feet and often much larger. There are currently over 60 Big Roof projects and they include schools, places of worship, apartment buildings, businesses, and a sorority. Specific areas of emphasis may include:

- Conduct analysis, outreach and recruitment of Big Roof opportunities through efforts such as GIS analysis, email, phone calls, site visits, presentations, events and other creative means.
- Provide coordination and customer support with Big Roof property owners and other related responsible parties such as Facilities Director, Green Teams, Landscaping staff, and facility advocates.
- Cultivate and maintain relationships with partners with multiple properties (Seattle Housing Authority, religious dioceses, etc.).
- Communicate with contractors on Big Roof opportunities and maintain a Big Roof roster and assist in connecting interested property owners and contractor pool.

- Leverage and maximize the outreach potential of these projects by promoting RainWise through the institution's affiliations, newsletters, social media, on-site interpretive signage and RainWise information signs; holding celebratory events such as groundbreakings and ribbon-cuttings, hosting volunteer maintenance parties, conducting walking tours, and more.
- Work with King County staff to develop interpretive signage, case studies or other media to promote the demonstration sites.

New Opportunities

This grant program also encourages applicants to suggest and create new ideas for effective outreach, marketing and customer support other than those listed above.

Goal Five: Develop resources and provide support for Green Stormwater Infrastructure education and job training -- Approximate budget \$30,000 annually

Contractor capacity, especially in south Seattle is a significant limiting factor for RainWise. The overall goal of this effort is to provide resources and support for GSI job training and skills to potential and existing RainWise contractors using RainWise and other GSI installations as learning opportunities. Areas of emphasis may include:

- Provide training in the design, construction, and maintenance of RainWise and other GSI installations using actual projects in the pipeline.
- Function as a maintenance resource for teaching about and fixing RainWise installations needing maintenance and repairs.
- Create videos and other virtual tools to create educational modules and an advanced skill-building library to help ALL RainWise contractors build up their skills (i.e. cistern installation, piping, plant selection modules).
- Inform and invite RainWise contractors to participate in specific opportunities and advanced skill-building sessions.
- Coordinate with the RainWise program staff to offer skill-building sessions for new contractors following Contractor Orientation sessions (typically November and March).
- Develop a program providing mentoring assistance for interested RainWise contractors with specific skill development.
- An active GSI Workforce Development cohort is being headed up by the Nature Conservancy. Outside funding may be available for training a new cohort. If this is the case, up to \$10K from this grant can be used as matching funds for helping to fund a GSI Workforce Development effort provided it includes RainWise specific training on installation of rain gardens and stormwater cisterns.

New Opportunities

This grant program also encourages applicants to suggest and create new ideas incorporating GSI training and RainWise repairs and maintenance.

RainWise Outreach Grant applications are due by midnight, November 15, 2020. For further information on the RainWise Outreach Grant Program, please contact Jo Sullivan at 206-477-5528 or email GreenGrants@kingcounty.gov.