

Below are questions in response to the Curriculum & Training Plan: USBG Volunteer Program Statement of Work. RFQ BG230025

- 1. Is there flexibility in the full-time status of the Instructional Designer? Can the ID be a subcontractor or a part-time employee of the prime contractor? Having a robust team that includes project managers, science translators, local citizen engagement specialists, and subject matter educators may be of greater value to the client.**

The USBG is willing to consider variations in proposal requirements to adapt to industry norms while achieving the optimal outcome.

- 2. May a sole proprietor of an LLC respond to the proposal, backed by a small business corporate team?**

An individual can submit a proposal in response to this contract opportunity. If you're selected, you would need to be registered in [SAM.gov](https://sam.gov) for the contract to be awarded. Please note that SAM registration is a 100% free process.

- 3. Would you consider equivalent expertise across several employees in place of a single instructional designer?**

The USBG is willing to consider variations in proposal requirements to adapt to industry norms while achieving the optimal outcome.

- 4. When was the existing volunteer program created? May we see the current volunteer training curriculum?**

The existing volunteer program was created around 1990. Over time, the program was professionalized by adding training opportunities and expanding volunteer activities. There is not a formal curriculum package to share. Please see the below information copied from the SOW.

“Formal volunteer training teaches trainees botanical content, Garden policies and procedures, volunteer program policies, and visitor engagement techniques. In addition, many volunteers participate in informal, on-the-job training. We seek to provide our volunteers opportunities for continued learning, personal satisfaction, and community participation.

Formal trainings vary in several ways including required frequency, length, content, and availability. They are mostly facilitated by USBG employees, with occasional contractor support. Formal trainings include, but are not limited to:

- *Pre-service*
 - *Volunteer orientations attended once by each volunteer; currently offered as an e-learning module*

- *In-service*
 - *Discovery Cart Facilitator; interpretive content and technique instruction; 2-3 trainings offered quarterly*
 - *New docent training; one course per year, length and timing varies*
 - *Docent continuing education (covers a wide range including basic plant science information, museum education techniques, and content specific to particular areas of the Garden); timing varies*
 - *General accessibility training; timing varies*
 - *Refresher training as volunteers return on site; timing varies*

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, all trainings occurred in-person at the USBG. Beginning in 2021, the USBG began offering hybrid training experiences with material shared through Zoom sessions that was supported by onsite shadowing and walk-throughs.”

5. Are there gaps or areas for improvement beyond the evaluation findings that should be addressed in the trainings?

Our focus is on addressing gaps identified in the evaluation of volunteer training and responding to instructional design best practices. After the award of the contract, we will discuss further details and review areas for improvement.

6. Is the contractor only responsible for designing course curriculum content or are we also expected to provide graphic, multimedia, IT, etc. support?

Proposals should take into account graphic design, multimedia, and IT support to accomplish the tasks and deliverables detailed in the scope of work. USBG will provide a robust style guide and access to the current volunteer management system/eLearning system in addition to ongoing discussion and feedback. All deliverables shall be delivered via applications and media as appropriate and mutually agreed to by the parties

7. Is there a budget ceiling for this work?

Yes, but we are not at liberty to release agency internal budgeting.

8. Will there be an extension on the proposal due date?

At this time we do not plan to extend the proposal due date. Any updates to our guidance on this will be published on this page.

9. The materials state: “Because Docent training requires robust LMS features not currently available in Better Impact, this option shall include a proposal for selecting an appropriate LMS.” Can you explain what robust features you feel are needed/lacking in the current system?

The two main desired features are (1) ability to have a training cohort and/or interaction between students and (2) the ability for instructors to provide feedback throughout the training. We are looking for the successful applicant to bring their perspective and experience to prioritizing additional features.

10. Can you describe the types of training content and activities that are currently being delivered asynchronously through Better Impacts? What percentage of current training is done in an asynchronous or flipped format?

In Better Impact, we currently offer volunteer orientation and seasonal exhibit information. About 10% of training is currently done in an asynchronous format, but we plan to continue expanding asynchronous training moving forward.

11. Is it expected that all training materials produced will meet specific accessibility standards? Have they in the past?

We have an Accessibility Coordinator at the Garden, and we follow their guidance on the accessibility of our trainings. We are open to working with specific accessibility standards based on contractor recommendations.

12. Page 9, section 10.0 says there are no authorized materials costs, does that mean that no materials to support training may be purchased/used?

No materials need to be purchased directly by the contractor. If there are required materials to support training, they will be purchased by the Garden based on suggestions and justifications from the contractor.

13. In Investigative Thread 2 it mentions that training does not feel like it is inclusive of all, and that the volunteer group lacks diversity. Have strategies been identified to address these issues?

One strategy is to offer more asynchronous training to lower the barriers for volunteers to access training. We started working with Better Impact and offering eLearning options after completing the evaluation of volunteer training. In addition, we're developing an intentional volunteer recruitment plan instead of relying on passive recruitment where volunteers discover us.

14. Is there an opportunity for update UnPACK to include additional recommendations and design principles?

Yes, the version of UnPACK included as an appendix to the scope of work was created to support our public programs. There is an opportunity to create a version of UnPACK specifically addressing training.

15. What is the priority level of each of the 3 training package options? Is it expected that they will be done sequentially or simultaneously?

The three training packages are all important to the Garden's volunteer program development. We anticipate they will be done sequentially in an order to be decided with the contractor after award of contract. They could potentially overlap or 2 could be done simultaneously based on the recommendations of the contractor.

16. Will priority be given to proposals that look to address all 4 options included?

Each proposal will be evaluated in accordance with the Technical Evaluation Plan.