



NMSDC

National Minority Supplier
Development Council

NMSDC Acres Program Director Consultant RFP

Proposals Due: July 8, 2024

CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE: *This request for proposal and accompanying documents contains information belonging to NMSDC which is confidential in nature. This information is only for the use of companies responding to the RFP and should not be disclosed to anyone*

Introduction and Company Background

The NMSDC Acres: Cultivating Equity in Black Agriculture program was established in 2022 to address a significant disparity in the U.S. agricultural industry. Today, only 1.4% of farmers identify as Black or mixed race, compared to about 14% a century ago. Furthermore, these farmers represent less than 0.5% of total U.S. farm sales.

The Acres program, a collaborative effort between NMSDC, Cargill, an HBCU educational partner, and other funding sponsors, aims to rectify this imbalance. It seeks to elevate Black MBEs in the agriculture industry by providing a pathway for Black farmers to achieve parity. This is accomplished by helping them obtain their NMSDC certification, enhancing their business acumen, and ultimately growing their capacity to land larger national contracts with NMSDC's corporate members.

After two successful cohorts, the Acres program has solidified its foundation and is poised to continue its positive upward trajectory. To assist in this journey, NMSDC is seeking a consultant to act as the Acres Program Director. This individual will be responsible for the overall program management and leadership of Acres, including strategic planning, program development and execution, partnership management, and team leadership.

The Program Director will:

- oversee all aspects of the Acres Program,
- provide leadership to the entire Acres program team,
- build strong relationships with key stakeholders,
- develop strategies to elevate the program's presence and recruitment among Black farmers and BIPOC farming organizations, and
- lead the development of key new programmatic structural elements,
- ensure timely and accurate reporting of program progress and outcomes.

As a potential vendor, you have been selected to lead NMSDC in developing a cohesive proposal for the overall management of Acres. This proposal will position NMSDC as a thought leader in the area of BIPOC agriculture and equity in agriculture, defining programs that produce relevant and tangible results. The following Acres Program Director Request for Proposal (RFP) includes background information on our organization and describes the purpose of the engagement, the desired outcomes related to program management, specific timelines, and requirements for your proposal.

Project Overview

NMSDC is seeking a consultant to take on the role of Acres Program Director, responsible for managing the day-to-day operations of the program. We are confident in the solid foundation of

the program and its effective execution towards our overarching goals. These include NMSDC's mission to bridge the racial wealth gap by boosting the number of certified Black farmers in the U.S. agricultural industry, expanding opportunities for capital access, market penetration, and technology adoption, and fostering the emergence of the next generation of Black farmers in agriculture. While we acknowledge the positive strides we've made towards our goals, we also recognize the need to enhance the program's infrastructure to sustain the growth necessary for maintaining the program's robust foundation and broadening our impact among Black farmers.

Cohort three will rely on our current two programmatic pillars while adding two new core pillars and other enhancements.

Learning Program: The Southern University Agricultural Research and Extension Center will provide a 12-week focused curriculum designed to enhance the capacity of participants to pursue national contracts with NMSDC corporate members. This educational component equips farmers with the knowledge and skills necessary to navigate the agricultural industry successfully.

Strategic Business Support: Participants will receive strategic business support, including assistance with obtaining NMSDC certification and covered certification fees. Additionally, they gain access to growth-oriented capital opportunities tailored specifically for program farmers. This support aims to remove barriers and provide resources that enable farmers to grow their businesses.

Acres Alumni Society (new): The highly anticipated Acres Alumni Society will foster professional growth, camaraderie, and strengthen bonds among Acres graduates. This network will help participants deepen relationships and scale their businesses by creating a supportive community that extends beyond the program's duration.

Corporate Mentorship (new): Participants will have the opportunity for mentorship through a revamped and clearly defined program that will provide access to NMSDC's network of over 700 national and 1,000 local corporate members. This mentorship will be a transformative experience, empowering both mentor and mentee to guide, inspire, and shape their businesses. It provides a platform for shared learning and collaboration, further enhancing the impact of the program.

The NMSDC programs team is looking for a Program Director that will bring leadership, collaborative relationship management and advanced project management skills to accomplish the following:

- **Program Management:** Oversee all components of the Acres program, ensuring that objectives are met, and impact is maximized. Lead the establishment of new program elements to enhance the program's impact.
- **Strategic Expansion:** Identify and pursue opportunities to elevate the program to new markets and organizations, thereby amplifying our impact and recruitment in the black farming community.
- **Partnership Management:** Cultivate strong relationships with key stakeholders, including farmers, partner organizations, and educational institutions. Work closely with our HBCU educational partner to ensure alignment, collaboration, and curriculum development.
- **Team Leadership:** Provide leadership and direction to the Acres program team, which includes a Farming Liaison Specialist and an HBCU educational partner. Foster a positive and collaborative team environment.
- **Reporting and Communication:** Ensure timely and accurate reporting of program progress and outcomes. Communicate effectively with all stakeholders, including program participants, partners, and NMSDC leadership.

Company Background

Founded in 1972, NMSDC is the longest-operating business growth engine for the broadest group of systematically excluded communities of color (Asian-Indian, Asian-Pacific, Black, Hispanic, and Native American), and our impact goes far beyond supply chain. It's about upward mobility for the emerging majority of Americans, an equal shot at participating in the American experiment of free-market capitalism and entrepreneurship. Our work is about correcting the unequal access to wealth-building opportunities.

Our Mission and Vision

NMSDC's mission is to serve as a growth engine for NMSDC certified minority businesses and enable our members to advance economic equity.

We create connections between minority business enterprises (MBEs) and corporations, MBEs and the public sector, and MBEs and other MBEs, to help them benefit from each other, stoking entrepreneurship and growing wealth for these systemically excluded communities.

Our vision is to be the leading organization for driving socioeconomic equity and generational wealth in communities of color.

We build capacity and capabilities through our programs and other educational offerings that help close that wealth gap, the key to creating a more united and prosperous society for all.

Our Impact and Network

For over 50 years, NMSDC has been advocating access to the American dream for MBEs. Our success is historic and unmatched: over 15,000 MBEs connected to more than 1,500 corporations, resulting in nearly \$400 billion in economic output annually, generating \$130 billion in tax revenue, and sustaining 1.75 million jobs. We are the nation's largest, most impactful, and successful nonprofit advocacy organization for MBEs, proving growth for MBEs is growth for all.

We are supported by [23 Regional Affiliates](#) nationwide which are the backbone of our gold standard certification program, working in the field locally to ensure our certified MBEs reach their full potential.

Proposal Guidelines and Requirements

Timeline

The following tentative timeline will govern the RFP process:

Date	RFP Process Component
June 20	RFP Issued
July 8	Proposals Due
July 8-11	NMSDC Evaluates Proposals
July 15-19	Top Three Finalists Present to NMSDC
August 1	Tentative Contract Start Date

NMSDC reserves the right to adjust the timeline at any time and for any reason but will notify all those who submit a proposal of the change. NMSDC may at any time choose to discontinue this RFP process without obligation to firms.

Proposal Components/Deliverables

Please be sure to include the following in your submission:

- Information about your experience with BIPOC agriculture programs/projects and your successes in that ecosystem.
- A brief explanation of how you will help the NMSDC Acres program achieve the goals outlined in this proposal.
- A brief description on your approach to developing working relationships with subcontractors, clients and third-party representatives (our funders)
 - Include an outline of your team structure (if applicable)
- A list of farming organizations and farming advocates that you have working relationships with
- A sample scope of work; to be finalized during contract negotiations.

- All costs associated with your services and how they will be billed.
- At least two examples of project/program management contracts or tasks that you've worked on.
 - Please include a minimum of two references.
- Any special awards, certifications, experience with this work.
- NMSDC certification status; if not NMSDC certified, please demonstrate how your organization cultivates and maintains a culture of inclusion and belonging, and its principals and workforce should be diverse. It will be vital for the consulting firm to share NMSDC's commitment to inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility.

Evaluation Guidelines

All proposals will be evaluated by the NMSDC's programs staff. The factors that will be taken into consideration are (in no particular order):

- Alignment with NMSDC goals and values.
- Completeness of proposal.
- Costs and associated value.
- Samples and references.

The evaluation process is not designed to simply award the contract to the lowest bidder, but to select the proposal with the best combination of attributes, including price, based on the evaluation factors.

Finalists will be required to present their proposal to members of NMSDC's programs team via video conference call the week of July 15, 2024.

NMSDC may choose not to disclose reasons for the rejection of a proposal.

Pricing

NMSDC is a nonprofit and holds a 501(c)3 tax exemption certificate. Please be sure to apply any nonprofit/charitable/pro bono discounts where applicable. Sales tax should not be applied.

Proposals should include a breakdown of the applied pricing system(s) such as whether work is priced per by the hour, by the month, or some other way.

If optional services are proposed, these should be clearly marked, listed, and priced separately.

Questions

If you have questions regarding the RFP, please compile those and submit one document/email that contains all questions by the date/time listed under Timeline.

Contact Information

All communications must be directed to:

Brandi Wiggins
Program Manager

brandi.wiggins@nmsdc.org

The preferred method of communication is email.