

The PA Wilds Center for Entrepreneurship

Outreach Specialist Request for Proposals

Summary

This RFP is for an Outreach Specialist focusing on the eastern counties of the Pennsylvania Wilds: Tioga, Clinton, Lycoming and northern Centre. The ideal candidate will have a diverse and relevant network to bring to bear on this project; a genuine passion for the Pennsylvania Wilds as a place and a movement; excellent public speaking and communication skills; be tech savvy and a public-oriented person on social media; be entrepreneurial; and have a demonstrated track record for successfully working autonomously from a home/remote office. Travel will be required.

RFP Issued: Sept. 19, 2016

Responses Due: Nov. 18, 2016 (COB)

Send questions and/or proposals to: Abbi Peters, Managing Director, at apeters@pawildscenter.org

Contract Amount: \$20,000/year

Timeline: Have contractor in place by Jan. 2, 2017

About Our Organization

The PA Wilds Center for Entrepreneurship, Inc. (PA Wilds Center) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit whose mission is to work with partners to grow the nature and heritage tourism industry in the Pennsylvania Wilds region in a way that creates jobs, diversifies local economies, inspires stewardship and improves quality of life.

The Pennsylvania Wilds, one of the state's 11 official tourism regions, is a large rural area that covers about a quarter of the Commonwealth and is home to about 4 percent of the state's population. The 12 1/2 -county landscape is known for its two million acres of public land -- more than Yellowstone National Park. It also boasts two National Wild & Scenic Rivers, the largest wild elk herd in the Northeast and some of the darkest skies in the country. It has a rich oil and lumber heritage.

Many local partners are involved in the regional movement to marry conservation and economic development through nature and heritage tourism development. The PA Wilds Center is the coordinating entity among these partners.

The PA Wilds Center's work is sustained through program fees, foundation and government grants, private-sector donations and entrepreneurial activities related to the Pennsylvania Wilds brand.

Project Scope

The Pennsylvania Wilds is geographically very large and all of the PA Wilds Center's current staff and regular contractors are located in the western or central part of the region. The PA Wilds Center has strong partners

on the eastern side of the region, in the counties of Tioga, Clinton, Lycoming and northern Centre, and we now want to build on that with a regular contractor who can be the face of the PA Wilds Center in this area.

The PA Wilds Center has programs and resources that serve individuals, businesses, nonprofits and communities. The successful contractor will be trained on the PA Wilds Center's programs, resources and communications platforms, and then expected to use their network to set up presentations and other outreach efforts (tours, site visits, etc.) to help communities and individuals better understand the services and resources the PA Wilds Center offers, and then to help manage new partnerships that arise out of their work.

Major PA Wilds programs/resources the contractor will be trained on include:

[The Wilds Cooperative of PA](#): This is the PA Wilds Center's main business development program. It focuses on growing the kinds of unique businesses that are central to place-based tourism development (artisans, craft micro-producers, B&Bs, unique restaurants and retailers, etc). This is a juried program with dues (\$25-\$105 annually). Benefits include branding and marketing tools; access to new markets; educational and networking opportunities; and mentorship/referrals to PA's service provider network (financing, business planning etc.)

[PA Wilds Licensing](#): This program offers businesses a way to expand their product lines by developing PA Wilds-branded products for wholesale and retail. It also allows outdoor recreation events, festivals, etc. to use the Wilds logo to help promote their event.

[PA Wilds Conservation Shop](#): The PA Wilds Center currently operates one of these gift shops, at the new visitor center and skywalk at Kinzua Bridge State Park. It will soon have an online store and is looking to expand to more locations. Most of the inventory for the Center's Conservation Shops is purchased from local businesses and micro producers in The Wilds Cooperative and PA Wilds Licensing programs.

[PA Wilds Mini Grants](#): The PA Wilds Center and its partners have offered mini grants to communities in the past. We hope to have new offerings in the future.

[PA Wilds Champion Awards](#): These regional awards open each March and are announced in late spring at the PA Wilds Annual Dinner & Awards Banquet, which draws about 250 people from around the region. The awards cover several categories, including Artisan of the Year, Great Places Award, Best Business, Event of the Year, Best Brand Ambassador, Outstanding Leader, Youth Leadership, Great Design, etc. Communities are encouraged to submit nominations from their areas.

[PA Wilds Design Guide for Community Character Stewardship](#): This is a free, award-winning resource for communities to help them protect their community character as they grow. It has been used by many businesses, developers, planners and others around the region.

[Pawildscenter.org](#): An online clearing house for all of our PA Wilds programs and resources for individuals, organizations and communities.

[Pawilds.com](#): This is our regional visitor site. It is currently going through a major overhaul and due to relaunch in February. The new site will provide new opportunities.

Results Tracking: The PA Wilds Center tracks the impact of its work in a variety of ways, from recording the number and type of businesses assisted, to jobs created, to referrals made to service providers, to when and where outreach presentations were held and how many attended. The contractor will be trained on these systems and expected to submit information to them.

Communications: The PA Wilds Center has a number of communications platforms – social media channels, press releases, e-blasts, newsletters, blog, etc. The Center prides itself on being open and friendly about its work and thanking the many partners involved in the success of the Wilds effort. Contractor will be expected to participate in these platforms.

Equipment Requirements

Contractor will be responsible to have:

- a smart phone
- a laptop with basic office software (Word, Excel, PowerPoint)
- a dependable vehicle
- internet
- office space (does not have to be public)

PA Wilds Center will provide:

- projector as needed for presentations
- a pawildscenter.org email address
- business cards and other appropriate organizational and program materials
- travel budget (mileage is reimbursed at the federal rate for approved trips up to budget amount)

Budget Details

As listed in the summary, our budget for this project is \$20,000 annually. This amount would be paid to the contractor at regular intervals as work is accomplished.

Sustainability of Contract

The PA Wilds Center is interested in sustaining this contract or growing it into a full-time staff position, but it will take new partnerships to do so. The ideal candidate will be a partner in this effort by doing an excellent job in the field and tracking those results to build support for the position; and by helping cultivate relationships with potential future partners who have an aligned stake in the Wilds work.

Proposal Requirements

Please submit your proposal in pdf format to apeters@pawildscenter.org by COB Nov. 18, 2016. Files over 2MB should be sent using a Dropbox or similar file share method. Include the following in your proposal response:

- Cover letter summarizing your qualifications
- Description of the network you would bring to bear on this project and generally how you've come to know these individuals and organizations
- Description of how you envision tackling this contract – e.g. How many hours a week or month would you commit to this contract? How does it align with other personal, volunteer or work efforts you are involved in?
- Briefly describe your experience/expertise/comfort level in these areas: 1. public speaking 2. social media 3. written public communications (press releases, newsletters, blogs). 4. technical writing

(grants) 5. small business development and entrepreneurship 6. Understanding of the Pennsylvania Wilds as a place and as a movement 7. arts 8. retail 9. outdoor recreation.

- Briefly describe your experience working autonomously. In past projects or jobs, have you had to set your own schedules and deadlines? How did this turn out?
- Please list 3-5 references

RFP & Project Timeline Details

RFP Issued: Sept. 19, 2016

Questions deadline: Nov. 4, 2016 Interested applicants may send their questions to Managing Director Abbi Peters, apeters@pawildscenter.org on or before Nov. 4 (questions will be responded to within 48 hours).

Responses due: Nov. 18, 2016 (COB)

Winner Selected & Contacted: Dec. 12, 2016

Project Kick-off: January 2, 2017

Thank you for your interest in responding to this RFP. We look forward to your response.

If you have any questions, please contact Abbi Peters at apeters@pawildscenter.org.