



## Request for Proposals: Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice Consultant for Oregon's Regional Innovation Hubs

### Overview

Business Oregon and the Lemelson Foundation have partnered, along with a seven-person Advisory Committee, to hire a consultant (funded by the Lemelson Foundation) to provide diversity, equity, inclusion and justice (DEIJ) consultancy services to support Oregon's Regional Innovation Hub (Hubs), described below.

The consultancy will have three phases and last about 16 months. The first, the "Hub Planning Phase" is expected to begin in February 2023, lasting until the end of June 2023. The second phase, "Planning Period" will take place July-September of 2023 and will be a planning phase for the consultancy for the third phase. The third phase, the "Hub Implementation Phase" will begin in October 2023 and last until June 2024.

### About Business Oregon

Business Oregon, the state's economic development agency, invests in Oregon businesses, communities, and people to promote a globally competitive, diverse, and inclusive economy. In February 2021, Business Oregon released a [10-Year Innovation Plan](#), which aims to orient the economy around better paying jobs with higher growth potential, help the state weather future economic challenges, and encourage participation among populations presently underserved in the innovation economy.

### About Business Oregon's Regional Innovation Hubs

A key component of the 10-Year Innovation Plan is to award [Regional Innovation Hub](#) designations to fund and incentivize collaboration that will build and advance innovation-based ecosystems at the regional level. Regional Innovation Hubs will be sector-agnostic partnerships

that will implement programs, strategies, and connections to support and grow a regional innovation ecosystem. Hubs should be an innovation cultivator and a facilitator of networking, serving as a regional network of service providers and their collaborators to assist Oregon's innovation-based, high-growth, traded-sector companies in achieving growth. One of the key purposes of the Hubs is to ensure programming is culturally-specific and accessible to relevant rural and historically underserved populations in order to broaden participation among underserved communities in the innovation ecosystem.

As the first stage in a two-stage process, 11 [regions](#) across Oregon have received a Regional Innovation Hub Planning Grant to determine how they can create and sustain a Hub in their region. Business Oregon intends to release a Request for Grant Applications for full Regional Innovation Hub designation and funding in late summer/early fall 2023, pending Legislative funding.

Each Hub region has a different lead organization, representing educational institutions, economic development organizations, and nonprofits. For more information on the lead organization, key partners, and planning activities in each Hub region, please see this [map](#).

## About The Lemelson Foundation

The [Lemelson Foundation](#) is a private family foundation based in Portland, Oregon, with a unique focus on improving lives through invention. We are driven by the belief that inventors will solve our biggest challenges and improve lives in communities in the U.S. and around the world. Established by prolific US inventor Jerome Lemelson and his wife Dorothy in the early 1990s, and guided today by the Lemelson family, The Lemelson Foundation has provided over \$290 million in grants and other investments to hundreds of organizations.

As our initiatives have evolved over the years, the Foundation has increased its focus on diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice. Core to the Foundation's ethos is that anyone can be an inventor and that the pressing problems of today and tomorrow require a diversity of inventors. Research shows that women and members of the Black, Latinx, and American Indian communities are not experiencing the same opportunity to invent and participate in the innovation economy. As a result, our society is losing enormous potential; gender, racial, ethnic, and socio-economic divides are being perpetuated; and people are being left out of the upside of the innovation economy.

This understanding is the basis for the decision for the Lemelson Foundation to partner with Business Oregon to hire a consultant to provide DEIJ services to Hub planning partnerships to better ensure progress towards the goal of a more inclusive, diverse, and equitable invention ecosystem.

## Scope of Work

The consultancy will begin at the end of February 2023 and end around June 2024. At the broadest level, the consultant will:

- Engage with the Hub regions to develop a DEI strategy for each Hub to ensure programming, materials, and services are accessible to historically underserved populations in region.
- Engage with Business Oregon staff to develop a tool to measure implementation of Hubs' DEI strategy.

How exactly the consultant engages in outreach to the hubs and ultimately supports them in their DEI journey will be up to the consultant. However, Business Oregon, the Lemelson Foundation and the Advisory Committee do suggest the following food for thought:

- It is important to think beyond training. While training can be helpful and at times necessary, a variety of forms of engagement will likely be needed.
- There cannot be a "one size fits all" model for the regions.
- The most credible approach won't be too baked in from the start. This is messy work and it will take nimbleness, creativity, and perseverance.
- It will be worth the time and resources to travel to places and do in person engagement whenever possible. Virtual engagement and/or the use of surveys by itself will not be sufficient.
- It is critical to have a state-wide perspective and a plan for engaging outside of the Metro areas; Rural areas should be prioritized as much as urban areas.

### **Deliverables:**

Using the tool developed in partnership with Business Oregon and The Lemelson Foundation, the Consultant is to certify/report progress of Hubs toward the following outcomes on a quarterly basis:

- A commitment to the long-term work of building relationships with and understanding the culture of their local communities (versus just engaging in outreach);
- Recognition that there is usually a wide diversity of thought within one community—one voice at the table cannot represent all;
- Understanding and action upon the principle "nothing for us without us" as a necessary driving force in creating an environment where **all** can flourish in their region;
- Putting leadership from underserved communities in the driver's seat;
- Having a plan for measuring the impact of their HUB project from a DEI lens and making course corrections, as needed;
- A commitment to accountability and transparency in demonstrating progress towards milestones and metrics (both qualitative and quantitative).

We welcome responses to this RFP that are rooted in realistic expectations considering the short timeframe of the first phase of work, the varied cultures and resources of the 11 state regions, and the complexity of working with governmental, non-profit, educational, corporate and private stakeholders within regions that are collaborating to achieve HUB designation.

### **Timeline (subject to change, as needed)**

We envision there to be roughly three phases to the work:

### **Phase 1 : Hub Planning Phase**

RFP opened: December 16th

Responses due: January 17th

Finalist interviews announced: January 30th

Interviews conducted: February 6th-10th

Decision announcement: February 17th

Contract signed: February 25th

Work begins: February 27th

- Discovery:
- Plan Development:
- Start of Plan Implementation

End of Phase One: June 30th.

In the first phase, Hub regions will be working on their Hub applications plans, to be submitted in June. The consultant will be providing support to both applicants and Business Oregon, as needed. Please keep in mind that once Phase One starts, the Hub regions will be just four months away from submitting their Hub plans.

### **Phase 2: Planning Period**

July 1st- September 2023

Once the plans are submitted in June, there will be a short period of time before the designations are announced in September. This period of time, Phase Two, can be used as the consultant feels is helpful to prepare for Phase Three.

### **Phase 3: Engagement and Implementation Part 2**

October 2023-June 2024

Phase Three begins in October, after Hub designations have been made, and continues until June 2025. During this time, the consultant will continue to work with the Hubs and Business Oregon to make progress towards the outcomes outlined above.

## **Budget**

The consultancy will be paid for by the Lemelson Foundation. The budget for the three phases of the engagement is up to \$200,000.

## Selection Criteria

Minimum criteria:

- Bi-lingual and/or bi-cultural team member(s).
- Ability to travel to different regions throughout Oregon.
- Experience working in rural communities.
- Prior experience in developing innovation networks and/or economic development.
- Demonstrated success as a convener.
- Experience in past projects in identifying people from excluded communities and executing long-term engagement models that evens the playing field/centers new voices/disrupts business as usual/expanded leadership/etc.

## Responses to the RFP

Respondents are welcome to submit clarifying questions in advance of the submission deadline on any of the above information. Please email: [laural@lemelson.org](mailto:laural@lemelson.org).

Please include the following:

Part I: There is a **6-page limit** for answering the following three questions:

- **Background:** A cover letter or executive summary with the name and contact information of the firm or individual with a brief history and description of your business.
- **Approach and Experience:** A description of your approach. Tell us what you believe most firmly in your practice. What guides your practice of DEIJ work? What experience do you have in providing similar services? Why you believe your firm is a good fit for this consultancy?
- **What would be the engagement plan and associated timeline?**

The following information **is also required** but does not count towards the page limit for the proposal:

- **Resumes.** Please include resumes of all who will be providing services (even if not client-facing). Please specify who will be the lead contact/s (accountable for the work and outcomes).
- **Budget.** Include a detailed proposal budget.
- **Business References.** Three verifiable and relevant client references with contact details.

**Responses are due by midnight (PST) on January 17, 2023.** Responses that do not include the required information will not be considered. Please send your response to: [laural@lemelson.org](mailto:laural@lemelson.org). Laura will email you a confirmation that she has received it. If you do not receive a confirmation within 24 hours, please send her an email to make sure it was received.

Note: All proposals and documents submitted will be kept confidential.