

The Maryland Natural Dyes Initiative

Request for Proposals (RFP)

Date of Announcement: December 21, 2018
Re: Request for Proposal for a farmer to establish, maintain & deliver Natural Dye plant products as specified
Due Date for Responses to be Received by MARBIDCO: January 31, 2019
To: Experienced Farmers working in or near Baltimore City
Contact Information: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Primary Contact Name: Allison Roe• Title: MARBIDCO Financial Programs Specialist• Phone Number: 410.267.6807• E-Mail Address: aroe@marbidco.org

1. Background/Introduction

The project aims to transform a portion of a vacant lot in West Baltimore into a demonstration urban farm which will produce crops to make natural dyes for artistic, educational, and commercial use. The natural dyeing process has attracted recent attention and popularity in textiles and art for its unique qualities.

An agreement between six parties from the State of Maryland, Baltimore City, and academic institutions has been entered into in support of this Initiative. The funding partners in the Initiative are the Maryland Department of Commerce (through the Maryland State Arts Council), the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), the Maryland Agricultural and Resource-Based Industry Development Corporation (MARBIDCO), and the Baltimore Development Corporation (BDC). Additional key partners include the Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA), which is extending its dye curriculum to teach and better understand the natural dyeing process, promote the benefits of natural dyes, and engage individuals that may be interested in using the dyes for artistic, educational, and/or commercial applications; and Coppin State University, which is the owner of the parcel of land where the demonstration urban farm will be developed.

2. Project Goals and Scope of Services

MARBIDCO, on behalf of the Initiative partners, is seeking a qualified farmer to establish, maintain and deliver multiple species of plant products that can be processed into natural dyes (including two indigo species – with indigo seeds to be provided to the selected farmer).

The farmer to be engaged will be responsible for the following:

- Manage a pre-selected one-acre demonstration urban plot located at 731 Ashburton Road in Baltimore City (in the Mosher Neighborhood), and a separate plot of approximately 1,000 to 10,000 square feet in size at a site managed and operated by the farmer. The pre-selected urban plot will be delineated and roughly prepared under the direction of an organization hired by DCHD (the Parks and People Foundation) prior to the farmer assuming responsibility for the demonstration site. Final preparation of the demonstration plot, such as soil amendment application, will be required of the selected farmer.
- Grow the species of plants/crops to be used for the natural dying process (that will be performed by MICA). The species of plants/crops to be grown are as follows:
 - Korean Indigo (*Persicaria tinctoria* called “NaramBlue”) – **supplied seed**
 - Tropical Indigo (*Indigofera tinctorial*) – **supplied seed**
 - Black-Eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia fulgida*) – **seed NOT supplied**
 - Marigolds– **seed NOT supplied**
- Grow the supplied species of plants from seeds to transplantable sized “plugs” in a controlled structure, such as a greenhouse or high tunnels, and provide enough plugs for the two demonstration plots previously described (i.e., the “home farm” and the Coppin State University-owned land in the Mosher Neighborhood). Please note, a small percentage (no more than 10%) of the transplants may be used for two or three very small additional test plots in separate farm locations located around Baltimore City. (The farmer will receive additional information about who will receive these plugs at a later time.)
- Transport and plant “plug sized” plants to the designated demonstration urban farm plot as well as on the designated farmer’s farm plot.
- Procure and implement an irrigation system for both locations. It is anticipated that one or more large water storage containers will be needed at the Mosher Neighborhood site.
- Apply soil amendments that are in compliance with State of Maryland regulations. (*Note: It is preferred, but not required, that Applicants be qualified/certified to complete nutrient management plans for the farmer’s property and Mosher Neighborhood demonstration farm plots.*)
- Manage the weed population to help ensure a healthy and harvestable crop of natural dye products.

- Harvest crops and deliver as directed to a designated MICA facility located in Baltimore City (or within the Baltimore City area) for processing. (Note: Multiple harvests of crops are anticipated. A temporary greenhouse and a temporary drying shed may need to be erected onsite to fulfill the goals of the project).
- Allow the use of community engagement that will be coordinated by MICA at the demonstration urban plot.

3. Anticipated Selection Schedule

The Request for Proposal timeline is as follows:

RFP Announcement: December 21, 2018

Deadline for Bidders to Submit Questions: January 15, 2019

Responses to Bidder Questions to be Distributed: January 22, 2019

Deadline for Proposal Submission: January 31, 2019

Selection of Initiative Farmer Announced / Notification to Unsuccessful Bidders: February 15, 2019

4. Time and Place of Submission of Proposals

The RFP posting will be available on the MARBIDCO website on December 21, 2018 (www.marbidco.org).

Respondents to this RFP must submit their proposals to the designated MARBIDCO staff (Allison Roe) by no later than January 31, 2019, at 4:00 p.m. Proposals will be accepted as either an electronic file (Word or PDF) via email, or by a hard copy sent via mail (with a postmark date by January 28, 2019).

Proposals are to be submitted to the following:

Electronic mail address: aroe@marbidco.org
Subject line: Proposal – Maryland Natural Dyeing Initiative

Post office mail address: MARBIDCO
Attn: RFP – Maryland Natural Dyeing Initiative
1410 Forest Drive, Suite 21
Annapolis, MD 21403

5. Timeline

This project is proposed for the 2019 growing season, and the following is subject to change (due to weather, etc.):

- Seed growth should begin by: 5 weeks before the average date of last frost
- Transfer of plants from plugs to plot locations by: After risk of frost
- Harvest of crop to begin by: To be determined
- Harvest of crop to be completed by: At least one week before the first frost

6. Elements of Proposal

The submitted proposal must include the following:

- Description of farmer's experience related to agriculture and/or urban agriculture. *(No more than a one-page response, single-spaced, 10 point type or larger.)*
- Description of farmer's current farming business operation, including: crops produced, farming methods, and location(s) and size(s) of the land owned or leased by the farmer. *(No more than a one-page response, single-spaced, 10 point type or larger.)*
- A one-page narrative outlining the strengths and distinguishing skills or capabilities related to agriculture and/or urban agriculture.
- Two letters of support from individuals or organizations who are knowledgeable about the farmer's operations and agricultural experience. *(It is recommended that letters of support include the organization's letterhead, if available).*

7. Evaluation Criteria

The selected respondent must:

- Have been operating in agricultural-related production for a minimum of two years and have access to farming and capable of meeting the project needs.
- Demonstrate the experience, knowledge, skills, and qualifications of an urban farmer who will provide the services needed.
- The ability to meet the project goals within the project budget and payment windows.

8. Budget & Payment Milestones

The Maryland Natural Dyes Initiative has budgeted to establish, maintain and deliver 2.00 acres of plant materials, including the identified species of plants from section 2. Project Goals and Scope of Services. The budget for product has been divided between two budgets: 1) a Labor Budget, where payments will be disbursed to the farmer upon completion of certain milestones; and 2) a Pre-Production Budget, where payments will be disbursed to the farmer upon item purchase receipts or vendor invoices.

Labor Budget – *payments disbursed upon completion of tasks described*

Amount (\$)	Performance Tasks
\$1,000	Signing of contract AND seed delivery
\$5,000	Irrigation system is operational and recommended soil amendments have been applied
\$10,000	Transplants delivered and planted at designated urban and personal plot sites
\$5,000	First harvested crop is delivered to MICA facility
\$10,000	Additional crops are harvested and completion of 2019 harvest season, including cooperation in developing a report of lessons learned

Pre-Production Budget – *payments disbursed upon proof of purchase*

The submitted proposal must include a pre-production budget that does not exceed \$10,000 and includes the following:

- Seeds not supplied
- Irrigation System/Equipment: Water Tank, Water Source, System Set-Up, etc.
- Soil Amendments: Lime, Fertilizer, etc.
- Materials: Flats, Growing Media for Plugs, etc.
- Equipment: for Weed Control, Pest Control, Harvest Knives, Containers, etc.

(All items to be approved by MARBIDCO prior to purchase.)

Please note, MARBIDCO reserves the right to terminate the RFP agreement for unsatisfactory performance at any time.

- ***For More Information Contact:*** Allison Roe, MARBIDCO Financial Programs Specialist, by telephone at 410.267.6807, or by email at: aroe@marbidco.org