



**Sonoma
Water**

MEMORANDUM

TW: 24/25-019

DATE: May 1, 2025

TO: Grant Davis, General Manager

FROM: Sasha Ponomareva, Project Manager *SP*

SUBJECT: **Selection of Rincon Consultants, Inc. for Development of Climate Equity Strategy**

Sonoma County Water Agency (Sonoma Water) desires to develop a climate equity strategy to guide Sonoma Water's climate resilience planning and implementation (Project). Key Project elements will include a climate equity analysis, the development of a draft climate equity strategy, development and implementation of an outreach strategy in conjunction with local community-based organizations, finalization of the climate equity strategy, and preliminary scoping of possible projects or studies.

Through the development of a climate equity strategy, Sonoma Water seeks to better understand how climate change currently impacts and will impact vulnerable communities within Sonoma Water's service area. Further, Sonoma Water seeks to identify the nature of any inequities in the provision of those services and to develop a strategy to address them in partnership with local community members.

On November 1, 2024, Sonoma County Water Agency (Sonoma Water) issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) to the following 14 firms:

- Rincon Consultants, Inc. Oakland, CA
- Estolano Advisors, Berkeley, CA
- Amplify Communities, Rancho Cucamonga, CA
- Farallon Strategies, Sacramento, CA
- Interethnica, San Francisco, CA
- The Watershed Project, Richmond, CA
- Dudek, Oakland, CA
- Greenbelt Alliance, Oakland, CA
- Tierra, Walnut Creek, CA
- HDR, Walnut Creek, CA
- US Water Alliance, Federal Way, WA
- RAND Corporation, Santa Monica, CA
- Kearns and West, San Francisco, CA
- Black & Veatch Corporation, Walnut Creek, CA

The RFP was also posted on Sonoma County Water Agency and County of Sonoma Purchasing Department websites.

The 13 firms listed below submitted Proposals.

- Amplify Communities
- ClimateThrive Community Strategies, Hull, Massachusetts
- Dudek
- Dyett & Bhatia, Oakland, CA
- Eastern Research Group, Inc., Oakland, CA
- Estolano Advisors
- ICF Incorporated, LLC, Reston, VA
- Public Works, LLC, West Chester, PA
- RAND Corporation
- Rincon Consultants, Inc.
- Stockholm Environment Institute, Davis, CA
- T.Y Lin International, San Francisco, CA
- WaterNow Alliance, San Francisco, CA

The following criteria were used to evaluate each firm:

- Professional qualifications and demonstrated ability to perform the work.
- Responsiveness to the work requirements.
- Exceptions to standard terms in the sample agreement.
- Thoroughness of proposal.
- Local Service Provider Preference.

Rincon Consultants, Inc. (Consultant) was selected to perform the work because Consultant provided the strongest overall proposal and interview to meet the needs of the proposed Climate Equity Strategy. Consultant demonstrated a strong understanding of Sonoma Water's specific needs and appreciated the importance of a phased approach. Consultant has familiarity with Sonoma County and has done (and is currently doing) work that will be directly applicable to this effort. This will support an efficient use of resources both for Sonoma Water and more broadly for government entities across Sonoma County. Consultant displayed the most sophisticated vision for community outreach. This approach, in partnership with Sonoma Water's Community Engagement team, is most likely to provide Sonoma Water with authentic, meaningful, personal, long-lasting relationships with community groups at the end of this effort, which is currently a gap and a much-desired outcome. Finally, the team Consultant brings together has a strong track record of completing related work and possesses a wide breadth of expertise. To support this decision-making process, we received feedback on the Climate Equity Strategy approach and consultant distribution list from Sonoma County's Office of Equity. We additionally spoke to references for the top two candidate firms, including the project manager for Rincon Consulting's contracts with Sonoma County's Climate Action and Resiliency Division and Permit Sonoma. References provided overwhelmingly positive referrals.

Proposals and evaluation forms have been sent to Records.

The hiring of Consultant for this agreement causes no conflict of interest and is not based on any financial incentive provided to Sonoma Water or its employees and representatives.

c: Julie Sykes