



Request for Proposals:

Board Governance Audit and Recommendations Consultant

Virginia Conservation Network (VCN) is seeking an experienced consultant to conduct a governance audit of VCN's Board of Directors and provide recommendations to strengthen board structure, roles, practices, policies, and engagement. The selected consultant should be able to identify strengths, gaps, and areas of risk. The goal of this audit is to ensure VCN's board governance practices are clear, effective, equitable, and aligned with VCN's mission and coalition model

Proposal deadline: July 24th, 2026

For any questions or to submit a proposal, please contact:
Brittney Beazley, Director of Operations and Fundraising
brittney@vcnva.org

About Virginia Conservation Network

Founded as the Conservation Council of Virginia in 1969, Virginia Conservation Network (VCN) began as a roundtable of major conservation groups and has grown to include over 170 Network Partners across the Commonwealth. VCN is committed to building a powerful, diverse, and highly coordinated conservation movement focused on protecting our Commonwealth's natural resources.

VCN is a facilitator of strategic action, a resource for Network Partners statewide, and a constant conservation presence in Virginia's Capitol. Playing a unique role in Virginia's conservation community, VCN helps the community speak with one coordinated voice. The organization and its staff focus on strengthening the conservation community as a whole and winning environmental victories that benefit all Virginians.

VCN's Network Partners work on a wide range of issues, including stream restoration, transportation reform, renewable energy advancement, and sustainable community growth. Given the diverse work of our partner organizations, VCN organizes its programs into four main categories: Clean Water and Flood Resilience, Clean Energy and Climate, Land and Wildlife Conservation, and Land Use and Transportation.

Our current staff includes eight employees, and this project will be overseen by the Executive Director and Director of Operations and Fundraising.

Scope of Work and Deliverables

The selected consultant will work with VCN staff and board to assess current governance practices and provide clear, actionable recommendations. The scope may include, but is not limited to, the following:

1. Governance Documents, Policies, and Structure:

Review existing board governance materials including bylaws, committee descriptions, meeting minutes, confidentiality policies, expectation materials, and other relevant materials.

The consultant should assess whether VCN's current governance structure clearly addresses:

- Board roles and responsibilities
- Staff leadership roles and engagement with board
- Board officer roles (President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary)
- Committees structure and purpose
- Executive Committee role, authority, and meeting cadence
- Partner organization criteria and representation
- Board terms
- Leave of absence policies
- Attendance/ engagement expectations
- Confidentiality expectations
- Recordkeeping practices
- Access to board resources

2. Board and Staff Roles

Provide recommendations to clarify the appropriate role of the board vs. staff in organizational decision-making and oversight. This will empower staff to make decisions and to know when board engagement is necessary and helpful. Specifically, how the board should engage with:

- Strategic direction and org priorities
- Programming
- Partner and strategic ally relationships
- Funding opportunities/ funder relationships
- Rapid response needs
- Oversight of the Executive Director
- Appropriate levels of board awareness

3. Executive Director Support

Review and provide recommendations on best practices for how the board should supervise and support the Executive Director, including:

- Evaluation processes
- Communication between the ED and executive committee, and support of ED role
- Boundaries between governance and operations/ management
- How board or staff should raise and discuss concerns or feedback

4. Board Demographics, Recruitment, and Engagement

Review current practices and provide recommendations related to board recruitment, onboarding, participation, and expectations. Including:

- Board recruitment
- Desired skills, perspectives, and experience
- Attendance and participation expectations
- Board member trainings
- Board member onboarding

Deliverables

Expectations for selected consultants:

- Project kickoff meeting with VCN leadership (staff and board)
- Review of existing governance documents and practices
- Interviews, surveys, or listening sessions with selected board members and VCN staff as needed
- Written governance audit summary that identifies strengths, gaps, potential risks, and opportunities
- Provide tailored practical recommendations for improving board governance and practices, including outlines for documents and materials needed
- Present finding to VCN staff and board

Project Timeline

RFP Released: 7/8/2026

Proposals due: 7/22/2026

Consultant selected: 7/31/2026

Project kickoff: Beginning of August 2026

Audit: August-October 2026

Draft findings review: November 2026

Final report and presentation: December 2026

*Applicants must confirm their availability to complete the project within this timeline.

Proposals Submission Requirements

Proposals should include:

- Relevant experience with nonprofit board governance, coalition-based organizations, environmental or advocacy nonprofits, etc. (Helpful to include examples of similar projects)
- Proposed approach and work plan with timeline
- Proposed project fee schedule
- Description of key staff who would work on this project
- Three references from past clients
- Commitment to equity and inclusion (helpful to include prior governance projects focused on inclusivity and aligning values)

VCN values consultants who bring a thoughtful, practical, and collaborative approach. We are seeking someone who understands the unique needs of a statewide coalition-based organization and can provide best-practice recommendations that are realistic for our board and staff, not a generic governance template.

Budget

VCN has allocated \$5,500 for this project. Please include your proposed project fee in your submission.

Submission Instructions

Please submit proposals via email to Brittney Beazley, Director of Operations & Fundraising at brittney@vcnva.org. Please include “Board Governance Audit RFP” in the subject line.

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