



Request for Proposals: Event Consultant for Utility University

Virginia Conservation Network (VCN) is seeking proposals from experienced event management consultants to support the planning and execution of Utility University, a two-day educational retreat for Virginia lawmakers, legislative staff, and environmental and energy nonprofit partners.

Proposals are due no later than **7/24/2026**, at 5:00 PM ET

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: Healthy Rivers, Clean Energy and Climate, Land Conservation, and Land Use and Transportation.

Our current staff includes eight employees, and this project will be overseen by the Director of Climate and Clean Energy, Lillian Anderson.

Background

Utility University is a multi-day educational retreat designed to help Virginia lawmakers and legislative staff deepen their understanding of utility regulation, energy policy, and Virginia's evolving electric grid. The event brings together legislators, agency staff, industry experts, advocates, and environmental organizations in a collaborative learning environment focused on relationship building and policy education.

VCN seeks a consultant to provide project management and logistical support from project kickoff through event completion, anticipated in September or October 2026.

Scope of Work and Deliverables

The selected consultant will work closely with VCN staff and the planning committee to coordinate all major event logistics and maintain project timelines.

Project Management

- Develop a detailed project timeline and work plan with VCN staff.
- Attend bi-weekly planning meetings.
- Take meeting notes and track action items for follow-up.
- Coordinate responsibilities between consultant, VCN staff, and other planning committee members.
- Manage the overall event budget and track expenses.

Venue Selection and Contracting

- Contact approximately six potential venues for quotes.
- Obtain pricing estimates and availability.
- Identify top candidates based on agreed-upon needs criteria.
- Prepare a venue recommendation memo for the planning committee.
- Coordinate venue selection during a planning committee meeting.
- Secure the selected venue and confirm at least three potential event dates.

Participant Logistics

- Accommodations
 - Coordinate lodging arrangements for participants, speakers, and staff.
- Meals
 - Work with the venue to select menus and establish meal schedules (keeping attendee dietary restrictions in mind).
- Travel
 - Coordinate travel arrangements and provide support for speakers and participants as needed.
- Registration
 - Create and administer event registration.
 - Track attendee information and attendance.
- Communications
 - Draft logistical communications for participants and speakers.
 - Coordinate with VCN staff to distribute event information and reminders.
- Materials
 - Work with the planning committee to finalize the agenda.
 - Develop content for printed and digital event materials.
 - Coordinate production and execution of the event with VCN staff.

On-Site Event Management

- The consultant will:
 - Develop a detailed event operations plan with venue staff.
 - Coordinate room assignments and event schedules.
 - Arrive on site before the event to oversee setup.

- Provide logistical support throughout the two-day event.
- Remain on site for breakdown and cleanup following the event.

Timeline

- Project Start: as soon as possible after proposal selection
- Planning period: Summer-Fall 2026
- Event Dates: September or October 2026 (final dates to be determined)

Requirements

- Most of the work can be completed remotely, except for event execution.
- Consultant must be available for periodic virtual meetings during normal business hours.
- Consultant must be able to travel to the event location and provide on-site support during the event.
- VCN is not liable for any costs incurred prior to contract execution.

VCN will provide:

- Planning committee participant and subject matter expertise.
- Speaker recommendations and relationships.
- Branding and communications support.
- Event content and curriculum development.
- Access to registration platforms and organizational resources as needed.

Proposals Submission Requirements

Proposals should include:

- Description of relevant event planning experience.
- Proposed approach and project management process.
- Draft timeline and work plan.
- Description of staffing and team members to be assigned to this project.
- Detailed budget, including estimated hours and travel costs.
- At least two references from similar projects.
- Proposals must be submitted in PDF format by email to **brittney@vcnva.org** before the submission deadline.

Selection Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on:

- Experience managing conferences, retreats, or other nonprofit events.
- Ability to provide all requested services.
- Strength of project management approach.
- Experience working with nonprofit organizations.
- Pricing and value.
- References.

Budget Range: \$10,000-\$15,000.