



**Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency**

NOACA

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**Request for Proposals (RFP) for Consultant for Air Quality Public Education and Outreach Strategy**

Issue Date: **February 14, 2017**

**Closing Date: April 14, 2017**

NOACA is seeking a qualified person or firm to contract for consulting services to guide the development of a strategy for our air quality public education and outreach activities. The deadline for submittals is 12:00pm on **April 14, 2017**. Please read the entire RFP for specific information and requirements.

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## ABOUT NOACA

NOACA is the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) and designated Areawide water quality management agency for the counties of Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake, Lorain, and Medina in Ohio. In these capacities it:

- Works with other organizations to help address northeast Ohio's transportation, air quality, and water quality planning needs.
- Conducts metropolitan planning for various modes of transportation, including vehicles, freight, transit, bicycles, and pedestrians, while considering the transportation system's impact on the environment and land use.
- Prepares the region's long-range transportation plan and short-range transportation improvement program, which is the region's capital budget for federally funded transportation projects.
- Conducts studies that address congestion, improve safety and strengthen community livability.

NOACA is directed by a 45-member Board of Directors, representing all five NOACA counties, plus transit agencies, the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District (NEORS), the Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Port Authority, Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (Ohio EPA), and the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT). The NOACA region is home to nearly 2.1 million people and over 150 units of government. The region is anchored by several urban core cities, the largest being Cleveland.

More information about NOACA is available on our website: [www.noaca.org](http://www.noaca.org).

## BACKGROUND

NOACA aims to improve air quality and increase public awareness of both the causes and impact of air pollution. The Agency assesses the air quality needs of the Cleveland-Akron-Lorain metropolitan planning area through data analysis, legislative review, and community outreach. NOACA also promotes transportation choice alternatives to single-occupancy vehicle (SOV) trips and supports an interactive, user-friendly software platform with other Ohio MPO partners to incentivize such choices. The Agency recognizes the important role of transportation choice to mitigate mobile emissions; reduce air pollution; and improve public health.

NOACA's vision statement:

NOACA will **STRENGTHEN** regional cohesion, **PRESERVE** existing infrastructure, and **BUILD** a sustainable, multimodal transportation system to **SUPPORT** economic development and **ENHANCE** quality of life in Northeast Ohio.

In keeping with NOACA's vision, the strategy for air quality public education and outreach will support the Agency's overall efforts to educate the general public on the region's pressing air quality challenges; demonstrate the vital linkages between transportation and air quality; provide information on steps that individuals, organizations, and institutions can take to reduce emissions; and increase transportation choice within the region through alternatives that reduce mobile emissions, improve public health, and enhance quality of life.

## **WHAT NOACA SEEKS**

NOACA seeks proposals from qualified persons or firms to contract for consulting services to develop a strategy for the Agency's air quality public education and outreach activities (hereafter referred to as "the strategy"). Consultants are invited to submit a proposal that includes an outline of their experience and qualifications to perform work directly related to such services.

The strategy development effort is intended to determine where NOACA air quality staff will focus its efforts and resources both in the short-term (three to five years) and long-term (five to ten years). It should produce a clear snapshot of the future of the Agency's air quality planning efforts, including specific, relevant goals and measurable benchmarks toward those goals.

NOACA is interested in a strategy development process completed proactively and transparently with community engagement and acceptance. The process should allow for both active and passive involvement to ensure diverse and extensive community participation. While the details of the strategy development process will be negotiated with the chosen consultant, a four-step process to be considered:

1. Set Direction (assess the current air quality public education and outreach environment; develop a mission)
2. Focus Efforts (identify goals and priorities for air quality public education and outreach)
3. Strategy (construct a detailed action strategy with clear objectives and benchmarks)
4. Reporting/Evaluation (outline means to evaluate the success of the strategy)

Through this process, NOACA will prioritize its efforts based on the following objectives:

- Analyze the role that other organizations play in air quality public education and outreach to minimize redundancies and maximize impact;
- Evaluate NOACA's current air quality public education and outreach efforts;
- Improve public communication about the effect of individual transportation choice on emissions production, air quality, and personal health/quality of life;
- Educate local decision-makers about NOACA's role in the region's air quality.

## **SCOPE OF SERVICES**

The proposed scope of services must address, at a minimum, the following five items:

1. Kickoff Meeting (The successful consultant shall hold the meeting within 20 working days of the effective date of the agreement at 1299 Superior Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio 44114): Plan, coordinate, and moderate an initial stakeholder meeting to introduce the project; outline the timeline for completion and scope of work; and solicit feedback from attendees. The meeting should include a survey instrument to capture information on what stakeholders hope to see from NOACA's air quality activities. The consultant should provide written copies of the minutes and survey responses to NOACA within two weeks of this meeting.
2. Project Management Plan (shall be submitted within two (2) months of contract execution): The consultant will provide a written plan outlining how the development of the public education and outreach strategy will be managed. The project management plan (PMP) is the main planning document describing how the project will be managed. The PMP is a living document and should be updated throughout the project.

At a minimum the plan should contain:

- a. Project overview
  - b. Scope
  - c. Methodology
  - d. Schedule
  - e. Budget
  - f. Project team
  - g. Risk management
  - h. Data collection plan
  - i. Communication/Public Involvement
3. Mission Statement (shall be submitted within three (3) months of contract execution): Facilitate a process that includes a series of public meetings, focus groups, and other outreach forums with stakeholder groups and members of the general public, as appropriate. The desired outcome of this process should be a concrete mission for NOACA's air quality public education and outreach activities that supports the agency's vision statement. The mission statement should come with a set of specific goals to serve as the framework for the final strategy. It should define the role that NOACA should play in public outreach and education on air quality issues in Northeast Ohio.
4. Strategy Development (shall be submitted within 12 months of contract execution): The consultant should develop and finalize a strategy document– in concert with the Steering Committee, Air Quality Subcommittee, NOACA staff, and stakeholder groups – for approval by the NOACA Board of Directors. The strategy development process and final document should, at a minimum, include the following components:
- Information gathering and analysis: Gather and analyze relevant information to become familiar with NOACA; NOACA's air quality monitoring region (Ashtabula, Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake, Lorain, Medina, Portage, and Summit Counties); and pertinent issues related to air quality, transportation, and public health within the region. Conduct an internal scan of the region (in coordination with NOACA staff, the Steering Committee, the Air Quality Subcommittee, and relevant stakeholder groups) to inventory the region's air quality resources; to identify key strengths and weaknesses; and to determine how NOACA's air quality public education and outreach could fill existing gaps. Conduct an external scan to examine what occurs outside of the region – at the state and national levels – that may affect air quality, transportation, public health, and NOACA's programming in these areas.
  - Describe the overall strategy and identify key challenges and opportunities.
  - Develop an action plan and establish implementation steps and schedule.
  - Establish benchmarks/milestones to measure the Agency's progress through the implementation strategy development process.
  - Develop and initiate a public involvement program that engages relevant regional stakeholders in the strategy development process. Stakeholders should include, but should not be limited to: representatives from each of the counties in the NOACA air quality monitoring region, technical experts, communications/outreach experts, air quality regulatory agencies, the healthcare/public health sector, the transportation/transit sector, sensitive/disadvantaged populations, and regulated private sector industries (e.g. developers). The consultant can use various forms of outreach to engage the public, but it must ensure that the public, including members of each of the

aforementioned groups, have the ability to inform the development of and review/comment on, the strategy throughout the process. The consultant must provide summaries and analyses of all public input.

- Coordinate with the appropriate NOACA staff, the Steering Committee, and the Air Quality Subcommittee throughout the process.
  - Participate in briefings and presentations to relevant NOACA Committees, including the Air Quality Subcommittee, the Planning and Programming Committee, and the Board of Directors.
  - Facilitate regular or special meetings with the Steering Committee, stakeholder groups, Air Quality Subcommittee, and Board of Directors to guide discussion and the decision-making process for the timely development of the strategy.
  - Provide, at a minimum, the following deliverables:
    - A reader-friendly document that details the strategy development process for distribution to interested parties;
    - A final strategy document that includes clear benchmarks/milestones to measure progress for the next three to five years; and
    - An outreach and education strategy executive summary.
5. Communications Plan Development (shall be completed within 14 months of contract execution): In addition to a strategy to guide NOACA's air quality public education and outreach activities, the consultant should create a communications plan. **This plan should include a menu of options for proposed communications activities. Each option should include timelines for targeted outreach efforts and examples of work from previous communications campaigns by the consultant. If any of these options involve the purchase of paid advertising, or paid media, please include separate cost estimates, or a range of cost estimates tied to performance measures. Paid media buys are not part of this specific proposal, but may be added in the future subject to available funding.**

## QUALIFICATIONS

Any combination of skills and experience that can successfully and effectively address the scope of services will be considered.

## PROCUREMENT TIMELINE

NOACA's process and timeline for selection of a consultant are as follows:

### **April 14, 2017. 12:00 noon - Deadline for RFP Submittals.**

Submittals must be received at NOACA by the above deadline. Submittals should be marked to the attention of Susanna Merlone. Digital proposals are to be submitted via e-mail to [procurement@mpo.noaca.org](mailto:procurement@mpo.noaca.org), but NOACA assumes no responsibility for formatting or transmission errors. Submittals received after the deadline will not be considered.

### **April 14 - April 23, 2017. Consideration of Submittals and Selection of Interview Candidates.**

An evaluation team will select candidate(s) from submittals received for interview(s). This process will include review of submittals, references, and other information as necessary, as well as rating of submittals.

**April 24 - April 25, 2017. Interviews with Selected Candidates.**

Interviews will provide an opportunity for NOACA and selected candidates to further gauge their fit and ability to work with each other.

Please ensure that the appropriate representative, including the designated Project Manager, will be available to attend an interview if invited.

**May 2017 – June 2017. NOACA Committee Review Process and Board of Directors Approval**

**June 2017 Contract Signed**

## **SELECTION PROCEDURES**

NOACA will directly select a consultant based on the Letter of Interest (LOI) and interview. NOACA will interview firms within ten points of the top scoring firm. The requirements for the LOI and the Consultant Evaluation are contained in this document.

Firms interested in being considered for selection should respond by submitting one (1) copy of the LOI electronically to [procurement@mpo.noaca.org](mailto:procurement@mpo.noaca.org) **by 12:00 PM on the response due date** listed above: **Responses received after 12:00 PM on the response due date will not be considered.**

**Please ensure that the appropriate representative, including the designated Project Manager, will be available to attend an interview (April 18th-20th, 2017) if invited. Interviews may occur via conference call.**

### **Scope of Services**

The Scope of Services document is included on Pages 4-6.

### **Requirements for Letter of Interest**

- A. Instructions for Preparing and Submitting a Letter of Interest
1. Provide the information requested in the Letter of Interest Content (Item B below), in the same order listed, in a letter signed by an officer of the firm. Do not send additional forms, resumes, brochures, or other material.
  2. The Letter of Interest shall be limited to 12 single-sided pages (8½" x 11" only), including four (4) pages for the Project Approach (see Letter of Interest Content (Item B) below).
  3. Please adhere to the following requirements in preparing letters of interest:
    - a. Please use a minimum 11-point font size and maintain margins of 1" on all four sides.
    - b. Page numbers must be centered at the bottom of each page.
- B. Letter of Interest Content

### **Firm & Staff:**

- *Team Personnel* – List the Project Manager and other key staff members, including key sub consultant staff. Include personnel for important disciplines and staff members that will be responsible for the work, and the project responsibility of each. Address the experience of the key staff members on similar projects and the staff qualifications relative to the selection sub factors noted. Provide resumes of each firm/team member along with a list of major services offered by each team member.



- *Firm Experience* – Provide details of the firm’s qualifications as well as success with projects of similar programs, budgets, and/or clients. Describe the capacity of your staff and their ability to perform the work in a timely manner, relative to present workload, and the availability of the assigned staff. List significant sub-consultants, their current prequalification categories and the percentage of work to be performed by each sub-consultant.

Project Approach:

- Provide a description of your Project Approach, not to exceed four (4) pages. Address your firm’s: 1) Technical approach; 2) Understanding of the project; 3) Qualifications for the project; 4) Innovative ideas; 5) Project specific plan for ensuring increased quality, reduced delivery time and reduced costs; 6) Schedule for completing tasks.

Cost:

- Provide a budget that includes detailed project costs by task and estimated hours. Actual compensation is subject to contract negotiations.

The above items must be included within the 12-page body of the Letter of Interest. Remaining space within the twelve (12) pages may be utilized to provide personnel resumes or additional information concerning general qualifications.

**Evaluation Criteria**

| Category                | Total Value | Scoring Criteria | Score |
|-------------------------|-------------|------------------|-------|
| Qualifications of Staff | 20          | Exhibit 1.1      |       |
| Firm Experience         | 20          | Exhibit 1.2      |       |
| Project Approach        | 40          | Exhibit 1.3      |       |
| Project Budget          | 20          | Exhibit 1.4      |       |
| <b>Total</b>            | <b>100</b>  |                  |       |

## Exhibit 1 - Consultant Selection Rating Form Notes

1. **Qualifications of Staff** - The Proposal must demonstrate that the consultant has the organizational capability and experience to complete the project. Identify the project team members, the role of the prime consultant, and any sub-consultant(s). The rankings and scores will be based on the Staff's experience demonstrated through similar projects and past performance for NOACA and other appropriate agencies.

Differential scoring should consider the relative importance of the Project Manager's role in the success of a given project. The Project Manager's role in a simple project may be less important than for a complex project, and differential scoring should reflect this, with higher differentials assigned to projects that require a larger role for the Project Manager.

2. **Firm Experience** – NOACA will rank each consultant, with the highest ranked consultant and proposed sub-consultant(s) receiving the greatest score, and lowest ranked consultant and proposed sub-consultant(s) receiving commensurately lower scores. The rankings and scores should be based on each firm's experience demonstrated through similar projects and past performance for NOACA and other appropriate agencies. The selection team should consider documented performance ratings if available, and consult other agencies as appropriate. The use of documented ratings shall place emphasis on the specific type of services requested.
3. **Project Approach** – NOACA shall evaluate each consultant based on the approach presented in the proposal to complete the project. Factors for evaluation shall include project schedules; demonstration of understanding for the project; methods and strategies to best accomplish the project; creativity; viability; and implementation. Consultants should clearly describe how they will complete each task or deliverable.
4. **Project Budget** – NOACA will evaluate total cost on a scale relative to the cost of all proposals received. The low cost proposal shall receive the highest points possible and each proposal thereafter will be weighted in comparison. The selection team shall review cost factors, such as billable hours, rates of pay, and appropriate staff assignment, relative to the complexity of each task.

## ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES AND CONDITIONS

A. It is the policy of NOACA, as required by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), that Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBEs) shall have equal opportunity to compete for contracts and/or subcontract with another consultant to perform the requested services. The Consultant must use its best efforts to solicit from and to utilize DBE subcontractors with meaningful minority groups and female representation among their employees. The Consultant must ensure that the DBE sub-consultant(s) is performing a "commercially useful function" as defined in CFR 26.55. **This agreement includes a DBE Goal of 12.1%. At least this percent of the agreement shall be subcontracted to certified DBE firms. However, in the event the Consultant is unable to meet the DBE goal placed on this project, a good faith effort must be demonstrated, which documents the effort made to secure the services of DBE subcontractors. This documentation must be included with the proposer's submittal, which is not part of the 12 page limit.** The percentage goal may be met if the awarded Consultant is DBE certified. Consultant proposals that do not include the minimum percentage of

DBE participation noted above, or that cannot demonstrate good faith efforts to include a DBE, **May be rejected**. If selected, the Consultant's price proposal shall reflect the required level of DBE participation, or provide an explanation of how the requirement will be met in later phases of the work.

B. Consultants agree not to discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, color, religion, age, creed, sex, sexual orientation or national origin. Such action shall include, but not be limited to, the following: employment, upgrading, demotion or transfer, recruitment or recruitment advertising, layoff or termination; rates of pay or other forms of compensation; and selection for training, including apprenticeship. Consultants further agree to comply with all requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. § 2000d et seq., 49 C.F.R. Part 21.

C. All proposals received by NOACA in response to this RFP shall remain valid for 90 days from the date of submittal.

D. An RFP does not constitute an offer or a contract. No contract may be awarded without a resolution by the NOACA Board of Directors.

E. NOACA reserves the right to cancel or reissue the RFP or to revise the timeline at anytime. NOACA reserves the right to reject any and all proposals and to waive minor irregularities in the proposal process. NOACA may accept any proposal if such action is believed to be in the best interest of the agency.

F. NOACA is not liable for any cost incurred by the proposer prior to execution of a contract.

G. The contract between the successful proposer and NOACA shall include all documents mutually entered into specifically including the contract instrument, the RFP, and the response to the RFP. The contract must include, and be consistent with, the provisions stated in the RFP.

H. The prime consultant or system provider will be required to assume the responsibility for all services offered in the proposal whether or not directly performed by the prime consultant. Further, the prime consultant will be the sole point of contact for NOACA with regard to contractual matters.

I. The consultant project team shall be approved by NOACA. NOACA must approve any changes in the project team.

J. Any award of contract will be to the consultant or contractor that provides the highest value relative to costs.

K. Consultants must show proof of liability insurance.

L. NOACA reserves the right to cancel or reissue the RFP or to revise the timeline at anytime.

### **Suspended or Debarred Firms**

Firms included on the current Federal list of firms suspended or debarred are not eligible for selection.

### **QUESTIONS**

For questions regarding the RFP, please contact [procurement@mpo.noaca.org](mailto:procurement@mpo.noaca.org). All questions must be submitted by email and be submitted by noon (12pm) on March 17th. All answers will be publicly posted on [www.NOACA.org](http://www.NOACA.org).

## **SUBMITTALS**

Submissions must be made electronically by **12:00 pm on Friday, April 14, 2017**, using a PDF or Microsoft Office format. To submit the proposal, please email the proposal to [procurement@mpo.noaca.org](mailto:procurement@mpo.noaca.org). If the proposal is a large file (greater than 65MB), please request the File Transfer Protocol (FTP) site and password for posting the proposal materials.

NOACA supports environmental consciousness and discourages mailed submissions for this RFP. However, for material that must be mailed, use:

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