



Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency

NOACA

1299 Superior Avenue

Cleveland, Ohio 44114-3204

(216) 241-2414

www.noaca.org

Request for Proposals (RFP) for State/Federal Legislative Services

Issue Date: July 24, 2015

Closing Date: August 17, 2015

NOACA is seeking a qualified person(s) or firm(s) to contract for State/Federal Legislative Services to implement NOACA's 2015 Legislative Agenda and beyond. The deadline for submittals is 12:00PM ET on August 17, 2015. Please read the entire RFP for specific information and requirements.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

1.	About NOACA	3
2.	Background	3
3.	What NOACA Is Looking For	3
4.	Scope of Services	4
5.	Qualifications	5
6.	Evaluation Criteria	5
7.	Submittal Requirements	5
8.	Process and Timeline for Selection	6
9.	General Information	7
10.	Questions	8

ABOUT NOACA

NOACA is the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) and designated areawide water quality management agency for Greater Cleveland. This includes the surrounding counties of Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake, Lorain, and Medina in Ohio. NOACA:

- Works with other organizations to help address northeast Ohio's transportation, air quality, and water quality needs.
- Conducts metropolitan planning for various modes of transportation, including vehicles, freight, transit, bicycle, 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, improves safety and strengthens 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, the Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Port Authority, Ohio EPA, and the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT). The NOACA region is home to 2.1 million people and over 150 units of government.

BACKGROUND

On January 23rd, 2015 the NOACA Board of Directors approved the Federal and State Legislative Agenda. The Legislative Agenda includes the platform and priorities that NOACA will advocate for in Washington, D.C. and Columbus.

NOACA's 2015 Legislative Agenda is available at:

<http://www.noaca.org/modules/showdocument.aspx?documentid=6632>

The consultant (s) will work with NOACA to implement the current agenda and will begin the process of developing and then executing the 2016 agenda which will be offered to the full NOACA Board in December.

The State/Federal Legislative Services contract is intended for a potential term of three (3) years (one year commencing in September 2015 and two individual option years to be exercised at the discretion of NOACA), specific terms to be negotiated. The contract is preferred to be based on a monthly retainer.

WHAT NOACA IS LOOKING FOR

NOACA is committed to implementing its Federal & State Legislative Agenda. To achieve this goal, NOACA is seeking proposals from qualified persons or firms to contract for legislative services. Consultant (s) are invited to submit a proposal that includes an outline of their experience and qualifications in performing work directly related to the services required.

NOACA is seeking to integrate its approach to government affairs. Respondents may provide proposals that are inclusive of both Federal and State legislative services, Federal services

individually or State services individually. Firms may offer proposals with a subcontractor(s) so as to be inclusive of both State and Federal legislative services. NOACA reserves the right to execute two separate contracts if necessary.

SCOPE OF SERVICES

The successful candidate will inform, provide analysis, develop strategy and advocate for NOACA throughout the State of Ohio and Congressional legislative sessions with the objective of capitalizing on opportunities for policy development and funding for the region. The candidate will also be expected to develop a legislative services plan to account for these efforts.

Provide Legislative Analysis & Advocacy

Key components of the State work will be reviewing and providing ongoing analysis and advocacy on the issue of asset management, the transportation budget, and any other potential opportunities for infrastructure-related funding. This may include coordination of coalition-building efforts as well.

Key components of the Federal work would be legislative coordination with transportation stakeholders, analysis and advocacy concerning the reauthorization of the current surface transportation bill and specific expertise in the appropriations process.

The State and Federal work will include facilitating meetings with the Northeast Ohio Congressional and State delegations, the U.S. and Ohio Departments of Transportation staff and relevant Federal and State Administration officials on behalf of NOACA.

Develop Legislative Services Plan

The legislative services plan (LSP) is the main planning document describing how the project will be achieved. The LSP is a working document that should be updated throughout the project. It should reflect the legislative agenda (which is inclusive of the NOACA legislative platform and corresponding priorities). This document will be shared with the NOACA Board as a means of determining whether milestones have been achieved.

At a minimum the plan should contain:

- Project overview
- Scope
- Budget
- Project team
- Legislative strategy
- Timeline

QUALIFICATIONS

Any combination of skills and experience that can successfully and effectively address the scope of services will be considered. Federal or State consultants need to be able to communicate how legislative events (such as hearings or the movement of legislation) has import to Northeastern Ohio. Specific State and Federal qualifications would include the following:

- State
 - Experience developing comprehensive legislative strategies
 - Specific expertise within the transportation budget
 - Coalition-building experience

- Federal
 - Knowledge of transportation funding trends
 - Experience working with the relevant authorization and appropriations committees
 - Previous work with transportation stakeholders

EVALUATION CRITERIA

The evaluation criteria includes the following:

- | | |
|---|-----|
| • Background & experience relative to the scope | 40% |
| • Strategy to execute the scope | 25% |
| • Plan for managing the engagement | 25% |
| • Monthly costs, expenses | 10% |

SUBMITTALS REQUIREMENTS

Proposals are due via email to NOACA at **12:00 noon ET on August 17, 2015**. Respondents may use a PDF or Microsoft Office format. Please email the proposal to procurement@mpo.noaca.org. If the proposal is a large file, greater than 65MB, please instead request the File Transfer Protocol (FTP) site and password for posting the proposal materials. Such a request must be made before 5:00pm ET on August 14, 2015, and the upload to the FTP site must be complete before the proposal deadline indicated above. Please call (216) 241-2414 if you do not receive an email response indicating that your proposal submittal was received.

To be considered, interested parties must submit by the deadline a proposal package that includes the following:

- Letter of interest – must be no more than 2 pages and include contact information and authorizing signature.
- Summary of qualifications, experience and availability – must be no more than 6 pages in length. It should summarize qualifications, relevant experience, and availability to participate in the RFP process (including interviews) and provide services to NOACA over the full contract term including options. It should also identify key staff members who will be participating.

- Proposed approach to the process, including a proposed timeline and description of proposed legislative services – must be no more than 3 pages summarizing method and approach to providing consulting services to NOACA.
- List of professional references – must be no more than 1 page listing most recent professional references and their contact information.
- A minimum of 3 examples of legislative services related to transportation infrastructure and policy is required in the body of the proposal.
- DBE documentation shall be placed as an addendum to the proposal.
- Proposed budget shall be sent in a **separate electronic file**– and must be no more than 3 pages and include detailed project costs. Actual compensation is subject to contract negotiation.

PROCESS AND TIMELINE FOR SELECTION

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

August 11th, 2015 10:00 – 11:00 a.m. ET – Pre-submittal Conference.

This will be an opportunity for potential candidates to ask questions and obtain information about the RFP process. Attendance is optional. The Pre-submittal Conference will be held at NOACA. A conference call number will be made available for those who cannot attend in person and request to participate. Requests can be made to procurement@mpo.noaca.org.

August 17th, 2015 12:00 noon ET - Deadline for RFP Submittals.

Submittals must be received at NOACA by the above deadline. Digital proposals are to be submitted via e-mail to procurement@mpo.noaca.org. NOACA assumes no responsibility for formatting or transmission errors. Submittals received after the deadline will not be considered. An evaluation team will open bids and 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 ratings of submittals.

August 25th-26th, 2015 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 selected as a finalist.

August 28th, 2015 Selection of Preferred Candidate and Negotiation of Contract

This is a targeted date. NOACA will select a preferred candidate, based on the interviews, written proposal, and other information, as well as the results of reference checks.

NOACA will attempt to negotiate a satisfactory contract with a preferred candidate. If NOACA determines, at its sole discretion, that the negotiation is not proceeding satisfactorily, it may terminate negotiation with the preferred candidate and may begin negotiation with another candidate.

September 11, 2015 Approval of Selection by the NOACA Board of Directors

The preferred candidate will be offered for approval on September 11, 2015 by the NOACA Board of Directors.

GENERAL INFORMATION

- 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. The percentage goal may be met if the awarded Consultant is DBE certified. Firms can be certified as DBE through the Ohio Unified Certification Program or if an out of state vendor, their state certification program.
- B. The Consultant must document the progress and efforts being made in securing the services of DBE subcontractors. In the event the Consultant is unable to meet the DBE goal placed on this project, a good faith effort must be demonstrated.
- C. The Consultant's proposal must include the percentage of work to be performed by each DBE sub-consultant, and a description of the work to be performed by each. Consultant proposals that do not include the minimum percentage of DBE participation noted above, or that cannot demonstrate good faith efforts to include DBEs, will 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.
- D. 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 that they will insert the foregoing provision in all subcontracts in connection with services provided. 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.
- E. All proposals submitted become public information and may be reviewed by anyone requesting to do so after the award.
- F. All proposals received by NOACA in response to this RFP shall remain valid for 90 days from the date of submittal.
- G. A RFP does not constitute an offer or a contract. No bid or proposal can be accepted nor any contract awarded without a resolution by the NOACA Board of Directors.
- H. NOACA reserves the right to cancel or reissue the RFP or to revise the timeline at any time. 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.

- I. NOACA is not liable for any cost incurred by the proposer prior to execution of a contract.
- J. 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.
- K. The prime consultant 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.
- L. The consultant project team shall be approved by NOACA. NOACA must approve any changes in the project team.
- M. Consultants must show proof of liability insurance.

QUESTIONS

For questions regarding the RFP, please contact procurement@mpo.noaca.org. All questions must be submitted in writing or by email. All answers will be publicly posted on www.NOACA.org.