



LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
FOR CONSULTANT SERVICES
TO EVALUATE LSC'S BASIC FIELD GRANT
COMPETITION AND AWARD PROCESS

March 20, 2012

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AND AWARD PROCESS**

I. Introduction and Project Overview

Background

The Legal Services Corporation (LSC) is a private, non-profit corporation established by Congress in 1974 to promote equal access to justice and to provide grants for high-quality civil legal assistance to low-income Americans. The Corporation is headed by a bipartisan board of directors whose 11 members are appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate. LSC distributes almost 95 percent of its total funding to 135 independent nonprofit legal aid programs with more than 900 offices that provide legal assistance to low-income individuals and families in every county in the United States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, and Micronesia.

LSC promotes equal access to justice by awarding grants to independent legal services providers through a competitive grants process; conducting compliance reviews and program visits to oversee program quality and compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements as well as with restrictions that accompany LSC funding; and by providing training and technical assistance to programs. LSC encourages programs to leverage limited resources by partnering and collaborating with other funders of civil legal aid, including state and local governments, Interest on Lawyers' Trust Accounts programs, state access to justice commissions, the private bar, philanthropic foundations, law schools and the business community.

LSC-grantee programs are administered by local governing or policy bodies, a majority of whose members are appointed by state and/or local bar associations, and at least one-third of whose members are eligible clients. They provide legal assistance to individuals in civil matters pursuant to locally-established priorities that respond to pressing community needs. The most common categories of cases handled by LSC recipients are family, housing, income maintenance, consumer, health and employment. Case types frequently encountered include evictions, debt collection, foreclosures, divorces, child custody, spousal abuse, child abuse or neglect, access to health care, and benefit claims such as unemployment, disability, food stamps and public assistance.

Project Overview

In June 2010, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) issued Report Number GAO-10-540, *Legal Services Corporation: Improvements Needed in Controls over Grant Awards and Grantee Program Effectiveness*. With respect to LSC's grant application processing and award system, GAO recommended in that Report that LSC:

Conduct and document a risk-based assessment of the adequacy of internal control of the grant evaluation and award and monitoring process from the point that the Request for Proposal is created through award, and grantee selection.

GAO-10-540 at p. 25. LSC reported to the GAO in its formal response that it was considering engaging an outside expert to perform a full evaluation and assessment of the competitive grants process. LSC is now seeking to engage a consultant to perform the evaluation and assessment that GAO recommended.

II. Statement of Work – Consultant Services

LSC is seeking to engage a consultant to perform a full evaluation and assessment of the internal controls for the competitive grants process that LSC uses to award its basic field grants. The evaluation and assessment should include the following components:

- evaluation of the process for recording all data used, discussions held, and decisions made on grant applications
- evaluation of the process for implementing and documenting management’s review and approval of the grant evaluation and award decisions
- assessment of the adequacy of the internal controls for the grant evaluation, award, and monitoring process from the point that the Request for Proposal is created through award, and grantee selection
- a cost/benefit assessment of further improvements to internal controls for LSC’s grant evaluation and award and monitoring process
- such other evaluation as the consultant deems necessary to assess the adequacy of internal controls for the grant evaluation and award and monitoring process from the point that the Request for Proposal is created through award and grantee selection

The results of the evaluation and assessment, including recommendations for improvements, shall be delivered to LSC in a written report. LSC expects the written report will be delivered six weeks from the execution of a contract and the commencement of work on the project.

III. Proposal Requirements

Proposals must address the following:

A. Firm and Key Personnel Qualifications

Describe the Submitter’s expertise in grant competition and award processes and experience with projects of this type. Highlight the breadth of knowledge and experience of the particular consultant who will be assigned to the project. Provide or describe a sample of comparable work completed by the consultant.

Provide a resume for the primary consultant assigned to the project, describing his/her qualifications and experience which make him/her particularly suited for this project. Include relevant education, training and work experience.

B. Statement and Methodology

Describe your understanding of the objectives and deliverables for this project. Include a clear description of the work to be performed, the anticipated methodology to be used to complete the work, and the objectives to be reached and/or product to be delivered. Describe resources and data that may be available to complete the project.

C. Management

Provide a work plan for carrying out the project, including a timeline for completing the project on the requested schedule. Clearly identify the proposed primary consultant to be assigned to this project. The proposal must include the labor hours anticipated to complete the work specified herein.

D. Cost

Identify the estimated cost and the proposed cost basis, including direct and indirect costs and expenses. Rates, whether fixed or hourly, must include all overhead costs and profit. If hourly rates are proposed, the proposal must estimate the total number of hours the consultant, including any subcontractors, expects to bill. The proposal should include a cost-not-to-exceed limit. Costs for subcontractors, if any, must be clearly identified. LSC has a budget of \$25,000 for this project, and LSC expects Submitters to submit proposals within that budget. However, proposals with an estimated total cost in excess of \$25,000 will not be rejected as unresponsive.

E. Alternatives

The proposal may include discussion of alternative tasks or areas of work that the Submitter believes will better enable LSC to achieve its objectives for this project. If the proposal contains any such alternatives, the proposal must clearly identify the ways in which the proposal would modify the scope of work as presented in this RFP and be clearly identified in the proposed work plan.

F. Subcontractors

Identify all subcontractors and subcontract activities proposed to be used. Indicate the specific roles for each subcontractor and provide qualification and experience information similar to that provided for the Submitter in accordance with Paragraph A of this section.

G. References

Provide three (3) recent references concerning the consultant's performance on comparable projects, particularly ones in which the primary consultant assigned to this project was significantly involved. Indicate the project name, a brief description of the project and the name, title, telephone number and email address of a reference who is knowledgeable about the project and who may be contacted by proposal evaluators.

IV. Evaluation Process and Selection Criteria

A. The Evaluation Process

Written proposals will be reviewed and evaluated in accordance with the criteria set forth below. LSC reserves the right to conduct interviews with some or all Submitters before making final award of the contract.

B. The Selection Criteria

a) Firm and Key Personnel Qualifications

The Submitter should demonstrate the experience of the primary consultant assigned to this project that qualifies him/her for the consulting services. The response must focus on experience and expertise in grant competition and award processes and experience and background with projects of this type.

b) Statement and Methodology

A concise project statement must be provided which indicates a clear understanding of the project objectives and deliverables as identified herein. The response must include a clear description of the work to be performed, the anticipated methodology used to complete the work and the objectives to be reached and/or product to be delivered.

c) Management

The Submitter must clearly identify the primary consultant to be assigned to this project. The response must include a timeline for completion of the project in accordance with the anticipated schedule and the labor hours anticipated to complete the work as identified herein.

d) Cost

The proposal must identify and delineate the hourly rate for the primary consultant and any subcontractors who will complete this project, all direct costs, and all indirect costs. Clarity of the proposed budget and reasonableness of indirect cost estimates and the cost to complete deliverables are important elements of this criterion. LSC has a

budget of \$25,000 for this project and LSC expects Submitters to submit proposals within that budget. However, proposals with an estimated total cost in excess of \$25,000 will not be rejected as unresponsive.

C. Contract Award

LSC reserves the right to award the contract to the Submitter with the best overall approach, regardless of cost, or to not award a contract to any Submitter.

V. Proposal Format and Administrative Requirements

A. Proposal Format

The Submitter must provide LSC with one hard copy of the proposal and one additional copy of the proposal must be submitted electronically in PDF format. Double-sided copying and use of recycled paper is encouraged. To the extent possible, proposals should be prepared on 8 ½” x 11” paper. Fold-outs for charts, tables and/or spreadsheets are permitted. Proposals must not exceed 20 pages, not including a cover letter, resumes and examples of previous related work.

B. Delivery of Proposals

Proposals (hard copy and electronic PDF) must be received at LSC no later than 5:30 P.M., EDT, on Thursday, April 19, 2012. Proposals should be clearly marked as such and should be addressed to the attention of Janet LaBella, at the address/email address noted in Paragraph D, below. Hard copies of proposals may be hand-delivered or delivered by first class or overnight/express mail delivery service, with the electronic PDF copy submitted via email. Proposals submitted by fax are not permitted.

Submitters are solely responsible for ensuring that both hard copy and electronic proposals are delivered on time. Delays caused by any delivery service will not be grounds for extension of the proposal due date and time. Late received proposals (either the hard copies or the PDF) will be returned unopened to the Submitter.

C. Cost of Proposal

All costs incurred in preparing proposals shall be borne by the Submitter. Any final contract awarded will not provide for costs of the proposal to the selected Contractor.

D. Communications with LSC

All communications concerning this RFP must be directed to:

Janet LaBella
Director, Office of Program Performance
Legal Services Corporation
3333 K Street, NW
Washington, DC 20007
(202) 295-1566
labellaj@lsc.gov

E. Freedom of Information Act

The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and the associated LSC regulations may require the release to the public, upon request, of certain documents held by LSC, including portions of proposals submitted to LSC by third parties. In general, LSC will not release any documents that are exempt from disclosure because their release would cause competitive harm to the Submitter. If a FOIA request for such documents is received, LSC will contact the Submitter prior to any release of material. Nonetheless, Submitters are encouraged to label information considered confidential as such in proposals at the time of submission.

F. Miscellaneous

Minor procedural or administrative exceptions to the requirements contained in this RFP may be accepted by LSC during the proposal review process.

LSC may disqualify or reject any or all proposals.

LSC reserves the right to have and retain all original data and working papers generated during the project.