



**Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for
Government Relations and Lobbying Services**

Issue Date: July 25th, 2024
Response Date/Time: August 26th, 2024 (2:00PM ET)
Response Location: Electronic only to pyoder@crcog.org
Pauline Yoder
Chief Operating Officer
Capitol Region Council of
Governments
350 Church St., 3rd Floor
Hartford, CT 06103

CAPITOL REGION COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for Government Relations and Lobbying Services

I. INTRODUCTION

The Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) is soliciting responses from qualified and experienced individuals, firms, or teams (hereto referred to as Consultants) to assist CRCOG with the development of its annual Legislative Agenda and related advocacy.

Respondents should have experience performing government relations, lobbying, advocacy, and related work with the Connecticut General Assembly and executive branch. Experience with Connecticut's federal representatives and executive branch agencies is also desirable.

It is CRCOG's intent to award a contract for a term beginning November 1, 2024 for an initial three-year term, with options for renewal.

II. ABOUT CRCOG

The Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) leads as a catalyst to enhance the quality of life, vibrancy, and vitality of the Greater Hartford region. CRCOG provides planning, programs, and services to its member municipalities and is the region's designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and Economic Development District (EDD). CRCOG is a strong advocate for the region and regional solutions.

CRCOG functions as a voluntary Council of Governments formed in accordance with state law to initiate and implement regional programs and initiatives to benefit the member towns and the region. It is guided by the chief elected officials of our 38 Metro Hartford municipalities who recognize that the future of our individual members is tied to the future of our region as a whole. Our members have collaborated for more than 50 years on a wide range of projects, services, and initiatives.

CRCOG is the largest of Connecticut's regional planning organizations with a population of 976,248 and a land area of 1,047 square miles. The CRCOG region is well-situated between New York City and Boston, and is rich in diversity, history, and natural resources. CRCOG's team of professional staff work to promote responsible land use, sustainable transportation systems, economic vitality, and quality of life. The organization also advocates for its capital city and member towns and provides various shared services to facilitate governmental efficiency.

III. SCOPE OF SERVICES

The overall goal of this engagement is to help CRCOG develop and actively pursue the proposals outlined in its annual Legislative Agenda, as prepared by CRCOG’s Legislative Committee and staff. The Legislative Committee is an ad hoc committee of CRCOG’s Policy Board and is charged with preparing the annual Legislative Agenda for approval by the full Board. The Legislative Agenda historically has been focused on the General Assembly and consists of a priority list of policy issues and initiatives that are important to CRCOG as a region.

The Legislative Committee typically begins its work in the fall and develops a proposed Legislative Agenda for the Policy Board’s consideration in December/January. To prepare the agenda, the Committee draws on the policy proposals outlined in CRCOG’s core plans and strategic priorities, as well as other issues of importance to CRCOG members.

The following links to documents and plans provide important context. Respondents are encouraged to review the executive summary of each document.

- [Legislative Committee | Capitol Region Council of Governments](#)
- [Strategic Playbook - CRCOG | Capitol Region Council of Governments](#)
- [CRCOG Metropolitan Transportation Plan 2023-2050](#)
- [Regional Plan of Conservation and Development \(POCD\) - CRCOG | Capitol Region Council of Governments](#)
- [ACT GREATER HARTFORD \(crcog.org\)](#)

Some important elements of CRCOG’s recent Legislative Agendas include legislation to promote the following:

- Service sharing between municipalities, COGs, and school districts
- Grants for municipal infrastructure
- Funding for public transportation and transit (e.g., Hartford Line, CTtransit)
- Funding to promote transit-oriented development and Safe Streets
- Protection of state formulary grants for municipalities (e.g., ECS, PILOT, LOCIP)

Once the Legislative Agenda has been adopted by the Policy Board, CRCOG staff and Legislative Committee members track relevant legislation throughout the session, meet with key legislators as needed, and testify on proposed legislation consistent with the priorities and positions outlined in the Agenda.

CRCOG anticipates that selected Consultant will conduct the following tasks:

- Advise CRCOG staff and Legislative Committee members on strategy and approach
- Identify and track related bills
- Facilitate meetings with legislators and executive branch agencies
- Ensure that CRCOG’s legislative priorities are elevated in appropriate spaces
- Assist CRCOG with state reporting requirements related to legislative advocacy

IV. PREPARING A RESPONSE

By submitting a response, respondents represent that they have thoroughly examined and are familiar with the Scope of Service outlined in this RFQ and are capable of performing the work to achieve the stated objectives.

CRITICAL DATES

Questions Deadline: August 12th, 2024 (2:00PM ET)

RFQ Deadline: August 26th, 2024 (2:00PM ET)

COMPLETENESS AND FORMAT OF RESPONSE

Respondents are requested to prepare a single response document, referred to as a Statement of Qualifications. Respondents are asked to organize their responses in the order requested, in accordance with the following format:

1. **Respondent name and background** - Include complete name, business address, website, and phone and email address of main contact person. Include brief overall description of the responding organization, including size, geographic scope, location of office from which work will be performed, length of time in business, summary of services, involvement in the community, etc.
2. **Summary of relevant experience and references** – Explain why the respondent is qualified to perform this work, including a summary of experience, training and education in the public sector. As a part of your response, please specifically note key relationships you have in both the executive and legislative branches you believe will be helpful to the scope of this engagement. Please also provide at least three (3) references for similar engagements, including organization name, contact name, title, phone number and email address; and length of time on engagement.
3. **Resumes of personnel assigned** – Provide resumes of the key personnel to be assigned to this engagement.
4. **Approach to engagement** – Explain in detail the services to be provided. Provide a description of the consultant’s overall lobbying and government relations philosophy and approach.
5. **Cost** – Include the estimated cost to complete the work. Please provide the hourly rates and number of hours for each category of personnel to be assigned. State the maximum fee for the engagement. Include information about expected cost increases, if any, at least through the year ending 6/30/27.

6. **Record of success-** Include any examples of successful efforts to secure legislative priorities of similar clients.
7. **Ideas for consideration** – Please include your thoughts about these questions and issues:
 - How would you help the Legislative Committee and CRCOG staff *develop* and *limit* the focus of its annual Legislative Agenda for maximum impact?
 - How would you seek to build *bipartisan* support for key legislative objectives?
 - How and when would you engage *Executive Branch agencies* in pursuit of CRCOG’s legislative priorities?
 - How and when would you suggest that CRCOG seek to build a *coalition* of partners to support key legislative goals?
8. **Required Forms.** Include signed copies of Exhibit A: CRCOG Equal Employment Opportunity and Minority/Female Business Enterprise Certification Form.

Only electronic submissions are being accepted in response to this RFQ. Statements of Qualifications should be prepared as a single PDF and may be transmitted to pyoder@crcog.org or via USB drive mailed to: Pauline Yoder, CRCOG, 350 Church Street, 3rd Floor, Hartford, CT 06103. Submissions should be marked in the email subject line with ***Response to Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for Government Relations and Lobbying Services.***

Statements of Qualifications must be received by CRCOG no later than **2:00pm on August 26th, 2024. Statements received after that time or day will not be considered.** Arrangements for transmission of large files should be made in advance, as technical difficulties in sending or receiving a submission shall not be a valid reason for missing the deadline.

V. TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Questions

General questions should be directed to Pauline Yoder, at pyoder@crcog.org.

However, **no oral interpretations shall be made to** any respondent as to the meaning of any of the documents. Every request for an interpretation shall be made in writing, addressed and forwarded either to the address above, **or emailed to pyoder@crcog.org.** To receive consideration, such questions must be received by **2:00 p.m. on August 12,**

2024.

CRCOG staff will arrange an addendum, which shall be made a part of this Request for Qualifications and any resulting contracts, including all questions received as above provided and the decisions regarding each. At least seven (7) days prior to the submission deadline, CRCOG staff will post a copy of any addenda to CRCOG's website, located at:

<http://crcog.org/rfp-rfq/>.

It shall be the responsibility of each respondent to determine whether any addenda have been issued and if so, to download copies directly from the agency's website.

Contracting

CRCOG will negotiate a Professional Services Agreement with the selected consultant. Selection for this engagement will not preclude a consultant from pursuing other public sector clients within the region.

Freedom of Information

Respondents are advised that any and all materials submitted in response to this RFQ shall become the sole property of CRCOG and shall be subject to the provisions of Section 1-210 of the Connecticut General Statutes (re: Freedom of Information).

Incurred Costs

This request for qualifications does not commit CRCOG or any of its municipalities to award a contract or to pay any costs incurred in the preparation of a response to this request. Neither CRCOG nor its member municipalities will be liable in any way for any costs incurred by respondents in replying to this RFQ.

Severability

If any terms or provisions of this Request for Qualifications shall be found to be illegal or unenforceable, then such term or provision shall be deemed stricken and the remaining portions of this document shall remain in full force and effect.

Oral Presentation/Interview

Respondents who submit a response to this RFQ may be required to give an oral presentation or interview with CRCOG. This provides an opportunity for the respondent to clarify or elaborate on the response. These are fact-finding and explanation sessions only. CRCOG will schedule the time and location of these presentations. Oral presentations are an option of CRCOG and may or may not be conducted.

Compliance with Local, State, and Federal Law

The selected consultant shall comply with CRCOG's purchasing policies and all applicable laws of the Federal Government and/or the State of Connecticut.

Assigning/Transferring of Agreement

Any selected consultant is prohibited from assigning, transferring, conveying, subletting, or otherwise disposing of the resulting agreement or its rights, title, or interest therein or its power to execute such an agreement to any other person, company, or corporation without prior consent and approval in writing from CRCOG.

Acceptance or Rejection by the Capitol Region Council of Governments

CRCOG reserves the right to accept and or reject any or all responses submitted for consideration. CRCOG shall notify in writing any respondents whose responses are not accepted.

Amending or Canceling Request

CRCOG reserves the right to amend or cancel this RFQ, prior to the due date and time, if it is deemed to be in its best interest to do so.

Waiver of Informalities

CRCOG reserves the right to accept or reject any and all responses to this Request for Qualifications, or any part thereof, and to waive any informalities and/or technicalities that are deemed to be in its best interest.

Collusion

By submitting, the consultant implicitly states that the response has not been made in connection with any other competing firm submitting a separate response to this RFQ; is in all respects fair; and has been submitted without collusion or fraud. It is further implied that the firm did not participate in the RFQ development process, had no knowledge of the specific contents of the RFQ before its issuance, and that no employee of CRCOG either directly or indirectly assisted in the consultant's response preparation.

Termination

CRCOG may terminate a consultant's status due to cause, default or negligence on the part of the consultant; or if the consultant fails, in the opinion of CRCOG or its member municipalities, to meet the general terms and conditions of any resulting contract or to provide a level of service that is deemed to be in the best interest of CRCOG or its member municipalities.

Ethics

The conduct of any consultant shall be subject to the CRCOG Ethics Policy, which can be found online at: <http://crcog.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/CRCOGEthicsPolicy.pdf>

Affirmative Action

Per Federal Order 11246, CRCOG is an equal opportunity employer and requires an affirmative action policy from all consultants as a condition of doing business with CRCOG.

By responding to this RFQ, all consultants agree to this condition of doing business with CRCOG and should the agency choose to audit for compliance, the consultant agrees to cooperate fully.

Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE)/Small Business Enterprise (SBE)

It is the policy of CRCOG to practice nondiscrimination based on race, color, sex, or national origin in the award or performance of this contract. All firms qualifying under this solicitation are encouraged to submit. Award of this contract will be conditioned upon satisfying the requirements described in this RFQ. These requirements apply to all respondents/offerors, including those who qualify as a DBE or SBE. Selection for this engagement will not be subject to DBE or SBE requirements.

Professional Services Agreement Required Before Work

No delivery of services shall start without a written professional services agreement executed by CRCOG in accordance with its policies and procedures.

Insurance

Selected consultants shall at their own expense and cost, obtain and keep in force, insurance during the duration of this engagement. Insurance coverage shall cover the consultant, all of its agents, employees, subcontractors and providers of services, in the amount specified by CRCOG. Requirements may include, but may not be limited to, insurance for Errors and Omissions, General Liability and Property Damage, Worker's Compensation, and Auto Liability and Property Damage.

VI. EVALUATION AND AWARD

Responses shall be evaluated by CRCOG after the response deadline. All information will remain confidential until the consultant selection process is finalized.

CRCOG anticipates selecting one prime consultant for this engagement. The selected consultant shall be deemed to be fully qualified and best suited among those submitting responses for the scope of services in the response format requested in this Request for Qualifications.

Evaluation Criteria:

1. Accuracy, overall quality, thoroughness, and responsiveness to the requirements outlined in this RFQ;
2. The qualifications and experience of the firm, the principal(s) assigned to this engagement, and other key personnel to be assigned to work tasks;
3. Demonstrated ability to respond to requests for assistance in a timely manner;
4. Performance with similar work engagements;
5. Expertise in providing government relations services to a public sector client;
6. Overall approach to providing the services requested.

Selection Process:

1. An Evaluation Committee will evaluate all responses received for completeness and the respondent's ability to meet all requirements outlined in this RFQ.
2. Additional information may be requested from any respondent prior to, during, or after interviews (if conducted) for clarification purposes, however, provided information will in no way revise original submitted responses.
3. After reviews of responses, the Evaluation Committee may decide to interview some or all respondents.
4. Based on results of the review of the Statements of Qualifications, interviews (if conducted), and other provided supplemental information, the Executive Director with the advice of the Evaluation Committee will select the preferred consultant. The Executive Director and Evaluation Committee shall determine in their sole discretion which respondents are fully qualified, or that one respondent is clearly more highly qualified than the others under consideration.
5. The Executive Director, in his/her sole discretion and in accordance with CRCOG's purchasing policies, shall negotiate a Professional Services Agreement with the preferred consultant.

EXHIBIT A
CRCOG Equal Employment Opportunity and
Minority/Female Business Enterprise Certification
Form

The undersigned certifies that _____ is an Equal
(Name of Company)

Opportunity Employer and is in compliance with federal and State rules and regulations pertaining to Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action.

(Consultant's Signature)

(Today's Date)

ONLY IF APPLICABLE:

The undersigned certifies that _____ is a
(Name of Company)

Disadvantaged (Minority/Female) Business Enterprise (DBE) and is in compliance with federal and state rules and regulations pertaining to Disadvantaged Business Enterprise designations.

(Consultant's Signature)

(Today's Date)