NEBRASKA
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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Request for Qualifications

Professional Services for Accelerating Critical Connections for Elevating Livability in Nebraska (ACCEL-NE) Regional Infrastructure Accelerator

August 7, 2026

Statements of Qualifications are due Wednesday, August 26, 2026, 1:00 P.M.

GENERAL

In accordance with Nebraska Consultants' Competitive Negotiation Act (Neb. Rev. Stat. §81-1702), the Brooks Act (40 USC 1101), and 23 CFR 172.5, the State of Nebraska, Department of Transportation (NDOT), is issuing a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for ACCEL-NE, funded under the U.S. Department of Transportation's Build America Bureau (BAB) Regional Infrastructure Accelerator (RIA) Grant Program. Qualified consultants are invited to submit a statement of qualifications as outlined below. NDOT's website referred to in this document is located at:
http://www.dot.nebraska.gov/business-center/consultant/

All consultants interested in providing professional services for NDOT are strongly encouraged to review NDOT's template *Standard Professional Services Agreement*, *Sample Fees and Payments Exhibit*, and *Insurance Requirements for Professional Service Providers*, as well as the RIA Cooperative Agreement included in Attachment A of this RFQ prior to responding to this RFQ. By submitting a statement of qualifications in response to this RFQ, Consultant, and all subconsultants, agree to meet the substantive requirements of these documents. These documents can be found on NDOT's website. An agreement will not be executed unless consultant provides a current overhead (indirect cost rate) schedule and proof of meeting the insurance requirements in the form of an Insurance ACORD. Further information regarding insurance, including a checklist to assist in submitting an acceptable insurance certificate, can be found at https://dot.nebraska.gov/business-center/consultant/insurance/.

This RFQ does not commit NDOT to award a contract, to pay any costs incurred in the preparation of a response to this request, or to procure or contract for services. NDOT reserves the right to award contracts to more than one qualified consultant, to accept or reject any or all responses received as a result of this request, to negotiate with any qualified consultant or to modify or cancel in part or in its entirety the RFQ, if it is in the best interest of NDOT to do so.

Nebraska Public Records Act
In accordance with Nebraska Revised Statute 84-712 et.seq., Nebraska Public Records Act, documents provided to NDOT are public records subject to disclosure unless consultant requests in writing that documents must be kept confidential and can demonstrate that such records are confidential under federal or state law.

Required Title VI Non-discrimination General Assurance

The Nebraska Department of Transportation, in accordance with the provisions of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (78 Stat. 252, 42 U.S.C. §§ 2000d to 2000d-4) and the Regulations, hereby notifies all bidders/offerors that it will affirmatively insure {ensure} that any contract entered into pursuant to this advertisement, disadvantaged business enterprises will be afforded full opportunity to submit bids in response to this invitation and will not be discriminated against on the grounds of race, color, or national origin in consideration for an award.

BAB RIA Cooperative Agreement Requirements and Certifications

This procurement is funded through a U.S. Department of Transportation BAB RIA Grant Program Cooperative Agreement. The selected Consultant and all applicable subconsultants shall comply with the terms of the Cooperative Agreement that apply to contractors and consultants, including applicable provisions of 2 CFR part 200 and Appendix II thereto, debarment and suspension requirements, delinquent federal tax liability and federal felony certifications, restrictions on lobbying, text-messaging-while-driving requirements, Title VI and nondiscrimination requirements, access to records, record retention, and other applicable federal provisions. The Consultant shall incorporate all required provisions into applicable subcontracts and lower-tier agreements. Required certifications and contract clauses will be included in or attached to the final professional services agreement.

STANDARD WORK CATEGORIES

Standard Work Categories anticipated on this project are listed below. Consultant/team must be certified in the following Standard Work Categories. Information regarding the Standard Work Categories can be found on NDOT's website.

102 Transportation Planning
250 Public Involvement

SCOPE OF SERVICES

Overview of the work

The Nebraska Department of Transportation (NDOT) is seeking a qualified consultant team to provide comprehensive management and support services for the **Accelerating Critical Connections for Elevating Livability in Nebraska (ACCEL-NE) Regional Infrastructure Accelerator (RIA)**. Housed within NDOT's newly created Office of Innovative Finance, ACCEL-NE is a proactive initiative to accelerate key transportation projects within a seven-county region in Eastern Nebraska. The program will establish a project delivery framework that evaluates and uses alternative delivery and innovative financing approaches, such as the Build America Bureau's (BAB) TIFIA program, public-private partnerships (P3s), and the establishment of a State Infrastructure Bank (SIB).

The Consultant will be procured to support NDOT throughout the anticipated 36-month grant period of the ACCEL-NE RIA program. This procurement is issued on a subject-to-funding basis; NDOT's obligation to execute a contract, and the scope and terms of any resulting agreement, are contingent upon final grant award execution and the availability of federal funds. NDOT reserves the right to modify, delay, or cancel this procurement if award terms

change or funding is not finalized. The work will follow the four-stage workplan outlined in NDOT's RIA application:

1. **Stage 1: ACCEL-NE Start-Up, Planning, and Management**

   Support NDOT in the initial start-up, planning, and management of the ACCEL-NE program, consistent with Stage 1 of the workplan. Key duties include:

   • Partnership Formalization: Assist NDOT and its partners in drafting and executing the ACCEL-NE charter, Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs), and other accountability mechanisms to formalize the RIA's governance structure, roles, and responsibilities.

   • Strategic and Operational Planning: Develop a comprehensive Strategic Plan and a detailed operational work plan that outlines key milestones, performance metrics, and a project tracking system for the 36-month RIA grant period.

   • Program Management and Compliance: Provide ongoing programmatic support, including managing timelines, coordinating stakeholder communications, ensuring quality control, and preparing reports to meet federal and USDOT requirements.

2. **Stage 2: Project Pipeline Assessment and Strategy**

   Lead the assessment of the initial project pipeline (i.e. supply) to create a strategic roadmap for implementation, aligning with Stage 2 of the workplan. Key duties include:

   • Project Pipeline Screening and Analysis: Develop and apply detailed screening criteria to assess projects in the initial ACCEL-NE project candidate list, including a financial asset scan to evaluate current value, revenue potential, and monetization or leveraging opportunities of existing infrastructure assets. Conduct cost-benefit analyses, qualitative risk assessments, and financial feasibility analyses for each project to verify regional significance and readiness.

   • Project Prioritization: Categorize projects as short-, medium-, or long-term priorities based on readiness, regional impact, and alignment with ACCEL-NE and asset owner goals. This process will also involve collaboration with Metropolitan Area Planning Agency (MAPA) and its Transformative Regional Investment Prioritization System (TRIPS), when applicable and practicable.

   • Strategy Reporting: Prepare a detailed project pipeline strategy report that focuses on approximately 10 top-ranked projects, providing refined cost estimates, updated schedules, and a high-level assessment of financial feasibility and delivery options for each. The report must identify at least one project for submission to USDOT for TIFIA credit assistance.

3. **Stage 3: Technical Assistance**

   Provide targeted technical assistance and educational resources to project sponsors and regional stakeholders to increase project readiness, as outlined in Stage 3. Key duties include:

   • Innovative Finance Education: In partnership with the University of Nebraska, develop and deliver training programs, workshops, and educational materials on innovative financing mechanisms, alternative delivery methods, and federal credit assistance programs (e.g., TIFIA, PABs, P3s, SIB, etc.).

   • Project-Specific Technical Support: Provide tailored assistance to advance projects identified in the project pipeline strategy report. This may include support for any of the following activities:

   ◦ Project planning, feasibility studies, and environmental reviews.

   ◦ Revenue forecasting and Value for Money (VfM) analysis.

   ◦ Statutory, regulatory, and procurement compliance analyses.

   ◦ Initial development of an application(s) for financing from BAB, including TIFIA and other available programs.

   • Public Benefit Documentation: Document the short- and long-term public benefits of proposed infrastructure investments, covering economic, mobility, safety, and environmental impacts.

   • Nebraska Infrastructure Hub Collaboration: Identify opportunities to leverage the Nebraska Infrastructure Hub team and enhance its assistance to local partners in Nebraska.

4. **Stage 4: Long-Term Sustainability and Expansion**

   Assist NDOT in developing a framework to ensure the long-term sustainability of ACCEL-NE beyond the initial 36-month grant period, in line with Stage 4 of the workplan. Key duties include:

   • Financial and Strategic Planning: Create a long-term financial strategy to secure sustainable long-term future funding for ACCEL-NE, including a plan for expansion of the program statewide.

   • Stakeholder and Legislative Engagement: Develop a legislative and stakeholder engagement plan, including political messaging, to secure long-term political and financial support for ACCEL-NE operations.

In summary, duties will include program management, project pipeline assessment, providing technical and financial expertise to project sponsors, developing educational materials, and

creating a strategy for the long-term sustainability of the ACCEL-NE program and its expansion statewide.

Qualifications, Knowledge and Experience

The Consultant team must demonstrate substantial experience and knowledge in the following areas:

- **Required Experience, Licenses, and/or Certifications:**
    - Demonstrated experience (preferably 10 years or more) in the development and delivery of major transportation projects, including the use of alternative delivery methods such as design-build, P3s, and progressive design-build.
    - Proven experience assisting public agencies in transportation infrastructure planning, innovative finance, stakeholder engagement, and federal grant compliance.
    - A demonstrated track record of successfully achieving financial close for complex infrastructure projects.
    - Experience working with a broad range of public, private, and academic stakeholders on regional transportation initiatives.
    - Experience deploying predevelopment capital programs to build a project pipeline of projects for investment.
- **Required Knowledge of Relevant Manuals, Guidelines, and Regulations:**
    - **Innovative Financing:** Deep understanding of innovative financing mechanisms, including USDOT credit assistance programs like **TIFIA** and **RRIF**, Private Activity Bonds (PABs), value capture, and project bundling.
    - **Federal/State Regulations:** In-depth knowledge of federal, state, and local laws related to project delivery and financing, including statutory and regulatory compliance analyses. Familiarity with federal requirements for grant-funded projects and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) is essential.
    - **Industry Standards & Guidelines:** Expertise in project evaluation methodologies such as **cost-benefit analysis**, **Value for Money (VfM) analysis**, qualitative risk assessments, and revenue forecasting. Knowledge of the Build America Bureau's Credit Programs Guide is required.

Software and Equipment Requirements

The Consultant shall be responsible for providing all necessary software, hardware, and equipment to perform the required services. Software must be compatible with NDOT systems. The Consultant should have proficiency in software related to financial modeling,

project management and scheduling, risk analysis, and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) for transportation planning and analysis.

Expectations for the Deliverables

The Consultant will produce a series of key deliverables corresponding to the four stages of the ACCEL-NE workplan. NDOT retains the right to review all draft and final work products prior to final submission. All deliverables must be provided in professionally formatted electronic files compatible with NDOT standards.

- **Stage 1 Deliverables:**
    - Executed charter agreement and Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with partner infrastructure owners.
    - A comprehensive Strategic Plan detailing program structure, roles, responsibilities, and procedures.
    - A detailed operational Work Plan with key milestones and performance metrics for the 36-month period.
    - Project management through the project.
- **Stage 2 Deliverables:**
    - A detailed project screening process, including screening criteria and business case requirements.
    - Asset scan of initial ACCEL-NE project candidate list evaluating current value, revenue potential, and monetization or leveraging opportunities of existing infrastructure asset.
    - A comprehensive **Project Pipeline Strategy Report** focusing on approximately 10 top-ranked projects. This report must include a high-level benefit-cost analysis, qualitative risk assessment, financial feasibility and delivery assessment, refined cost estimates, and an updated project schedule for each project. It must also identify at least one project for submission to USDOT for TIFIA credit assistance.
- **Stage 3 Deliverables:**
    - Up to seven educational pieces (e.g., one- to two-page handouts) and related materials for up to seven educational workshops on innovative financing and delivery tools.
    - Technical assistance documentation for projects identified in the Stage 2 report, including detailed project delivery plans and support for developing applications to the BAB for innovative financing.

- **Stage 4 Deliverables:**
    - In collaboration with the Build America Center, a completed **TIFIA loan application** for the capitalization of a new NDOT-managed State Infrastructure Bank (SIB).
    - A long-term financial strategy for the sustainability and management of ACCEL-NE.
    - A legislative and stakeholder engagement plan, including a political messaging strategy to secure sustainable long-term support for ACCEL-NE operations.

  The work will be completed as arranged and agreed upon by the parties, following the 36-month Work Plan. The final work products will be used by NDOT and its partners to implement the ACCEL-NE program, advance projects through the development pipeline, and secure innovative financing.

DETAILS

It is anticipated that three (3) consultants will be short-listed for interviews, with one (1) consultant awarded the contract for the work. The evaluation criteria to be used for the short-listing and final selection is outlined below. The payment method for the contract may be Lump Sum, Cost Plus Fixed Fee, or Specific Rates of Compensation.

NDOT reserves the right to abandon or terminate any contract at any time and either re-advertise services or utilize its own forces. NDOT also reserves the right to accomplish services for future phases on all projects with the selected consultant, select another consultant, or utilize its own forces.

NDOT will not hold a briefing. All information is contained within this RFQ and on NDOT's website. If additional information is deemed necessary, it will be posted on the same web page as this RFQ and will be labeled as an update. Consultants interested in this RFQ are responsible for checking for updated information.

Interested consultants must be certified by NDOT or have a completed certification form on file with NDOT prior to the deadline identified in the Schedule of Activities. Instructions for completing the NDOT Annual Consultant Certification form is available at: https://dot.nebraska.gov/media/g1qb344b/cert-instruc-annual-certification.pdf

Please submit your Drug-Free Workplace Policy (DF Policy) separate from the response to this RFQ (DF Policy Example). The DF Policy is a one-time submittal to NDOT. Please do not re-submit unless your DF Policy has changed or you never have previously submitted a DF Policy. While the DF Policy is not a submittal requirement, all consultants must have an acceptable DF Policy on file prior to the deadline identified in the Schedule of Activities. If necessary, the consultant's DF Policy may be submitted via email to: NDOT.PDAnnualCertification@nebraska.gov

Please do not call or write NDOT staff for information regarding the services in this RFQ. Email all inquiries/questions to NDOT Procurement Engineer, at: ndot.pdRFQinfo@nebraska.gov or call (402) 479-4778.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Short List (70 pts)

A. QUALIFICATIONS (30 PTS)

1. Qualifications of the project manager and key team members to perform the work.
2. Qualifications and capability of key subconsultants to perform the work.
3. Applicability and relevance of comparable projects provided by the Consultant and key subconsultants.

B. PERFORMANCE DATA (20 PTS)

1. Performance evaluations by NDOT regarding the past work of the Consultant.
2. Adherence to applicable standards and completeness of previous submittals to NDOT.
3. Project schedule adherence on previous work performed for NDOT.
4. Cooperation with NDOT staff on previous projects.
5. If firm has no experience with NDOT, review information obtained from Consultant's references for Consultant's performance with other states, local governments, or appropriate clients. The team should list a minimum of two (2) references in their proposal.

C. UNDERSTANDING OF THE SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED (20 PTS)

1. Consultant demonstrated they understand nature and scope of the work to be performed under this agreement.
2. The consultant has recognized and identified special circumstances to be considered.
3. Consultant provided a logical approach to complete tasks and resolve issues.

Final Selection (30 pts, 100 pts total)

D. DISCUSSION OF FOCUS AREA TOPICS (20 PTS)

1. Consultant's interview presentation was clear and concise.
2. Consultant showed knowledge and understanding of topics.

E. COMMITTEE Q&A SESSION (10 PTS)

1. Consultant answered committee questions logically and thoroughly.

SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES	Date (2026)	Time (CST)
RFQ posted	August 7	
Last day questions will be accepted	August 14	4:00 PM
Last day Q&A or updates to RFQ may be posted	August 19	4:00 PM
NDOT Form 497 & Drug-Free Workplace Policy on file at NDOT	August 26	1:00 PM
Statement of Qualifications Due	***August 26***	***1:00 PM***
Post Short-List Consultants & Interview Schedule	September 3	4:00 PM
Interview	September 10	1:00pm-4pm
Post Final Selections	September 14	4:00 PM

NOTE – Shortlisted Firms may be asked to provide verification that they and all subconsultants have submitted their indirect cost rates and certifications for their latest fiscal year. Latest fiscal year means the last fiscal year with an end date no more than 6 months in the past.

SUBMITTAL OF QUALIFICATIONS

All information must be received by the deadline identified* in the Schedule of Activities. *No exceptions to this deadline will be given.

One (1) electronic copy (PDF format) of your firm's statement of qualification (SOQ) must be submitted using the Online "SOQ Submittal Form" link found on the Consultant Services Business Opportunities page. Please "reduce file size" of PDF before submitting.

Submittals are to include the following in the order given below:

1. Front cover to include the consultant, subconsultants (if applicable), and number and title of the RFQ.
2. A letter of interest not to exceed one (1) page.
3. Organizational Chart not to exceed one (1) page.
4. A narrative responding to the established evaluation factors not to exceed five (5) pages.
5. A maximum of five (5) pages of additional supportive material such as charts, tables, resumes, or photos.
6. NDOT Form 498, "Architect, Engineer, & Related Services Supplement to Statement of Qualifications" (MS Word version) not to exceed six (6) pages for the consultant and six (6) pages for each subconsultant. A separate NDOT Form 498 must be submitted for each subconsultant to be used.

Additional submittal requirements are:

1. All narrative-related material in the submittal must be formatted for 8½ x 11 paper, single or double spaced. Font size for narrative text no smaller than 11 point.
2. Submittal covers and dividers between the sections are allowed and not included in the page limit.

INTERVIEWS

NDOT's selection committee will conduct interviews with the short-listed consultants at the Department of Transportation, Central Complex, Conference Room 105.1, 1500 Nebraska Parkway, Lincoln, Nebraska on the date and time specified in the Schedule of Activities. Interviews will be capped at 30 minutes, followed by up to 15 minutes of Q&A. Consultant may contact the Procurement Engineer to make any special arrangements.

NDOT will make every effort to post the short-listed consultants and interview schedule on NDOT's website prior to the deadline identified in the Schedule of Activities.

Upon completion of scoring and approval of the Deputy Director, NDOT will post the final selections on NDOT's website prior to the deadline identified in the Schedule of Activities, or as soon as possible.

Vicki Kramer, Director
Nebraska Department of Transportation

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER