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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

# Request for Qualifications

## Professional Services for Strategic Communications and Transportation Policy Support

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June 19, 2024

**Statements of Qualifications are due Wednesday, July 3, 2024, 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 Strategic Communications and Transportation Policy Support Services. 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](#) 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 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 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.

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.

## **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.

211 Public Involvement

## **SCOPE OF SERVICES**

### **A. OVERVIEW OF THE WORK:**

The services are primarily for high level, Nebraska communication and public policy support for the state's first Infrastructure Hub. The Nebraska Department of Transportation (NDOT) established the Infrastructure Hub which will be focused on identifying the transportation needs across the state that will support economic development, improve safety, and enhance quality of life for all Nebraskans. Services may include tasks similar to the following:

1. Assist setting up Infrastructure Hub and grant application processes.
2. Engage with NDOT Director and identified community stakeholders to establish a strategic plan (with timelines) for setting up Nebraska's Infrastructure Hub.
3. Prepare job descriptions as necessary to meet the Infrastructure Hub needs.
4. Identify the initial scope of transportation projects that will be included in the Infrastructure Hub's plan and the initial associated contracts that should be pursued.
5. Identify what transportation services would be provided in-house versus through partnerships.
6. Identify what programming will be provided to local communities.
7. Assess the extent of services available online – and vendor estimates.
8. Collaborate with NDOT Local Assistance Division on effective strategies for community outreach.
9. Monthly planning meeting to develop and deliver monthly strategic communications plans for NDOT communications team to execute. Will include suggestions around written communications, community engagement, media engagement, and key message points.
10. Collaborate with the Infrastructure Hub team and Local Assistance Division to provide consultation on public policy to include tax and economic development policies impacting the state's transportation network. The consultant is expected to have knowledge of Nebraska's development community, state and local transportation networks, and revenue and tax statutes.
11. Assess Nebraska's tax structure to identify potential revenue sources and provide analysis to infrastructure owners on potential financing and funding opportunities.

12. Weekly call with NDOT Director/external affairs director and other department leadership to check in on communications goals and address iterations depending on emerging events.
13. Monthly communications plans will include suggestions for Governor-level engagement.
14. Monthly key message points for department leadership to use for sake of consistency and clarity with the public.
15. Director-level speeches, opinion pieces, and thought leadership – opportunity to enhance Director updates to constituents.

**B. QUALIFICATIONS, KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE:**

The selected consultant should provide professional individual(s) with a diverse, experienced and successful background that might best benefit and communicate to NDOT the current practices in transportation economic analysis, performance-based planning and management, and public and stakeholder engagement.

**C. SOFTWARE AND EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENTS:**

Documents generated by consultant and delivered to NDOT must be in Microsoft Office and Adobe Acrobat formats.

**D. EXPECTATIONS FOR THE DELIVERABLES:**

Consultant will submit reports outlining the research, studies, and process and policy recommendations and development, public and stakeholder engagement efforts, and training described above and as defined in the detailed scope of services after the consultant team is selected.

The research and studies conducted may lead to defining additional documentation and deliverables as necessary to complete the work.

**E. SCHEDULE:**

1. First phase: A significant portion of the work will be completed within the first 3-6 months after notice to proceed. This may include the research, studies, evaluations, and development of the Infrastructure Hub, as well as the necessary public and stakeholder engagement strategies. Additional work will be ongoing for the duration of the contract period at the direction of NDOT.
2. The duration of the first phase contract is expected to be 12 months.
3. The selected consultant may perform subsequent phase(s) for up to 12 months of additional services to support NDOT public policies and key strategies or guidance defined during the first phase. Subsequent phase(s) could include services in transportation economic analysis and public and stakeholder engagement.

**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 initial one-year contract term will have a maximum value of \$100,000. The contract term may be extended up to 12 months and an additional \$100,000 to accommodate subsequent phases of the work.

The evaluation criteria to be used for the short-listing and final selection is outlined below. The payment method for the contract(s) 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](mailto: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](mailto:ndot.pdRFQinfo@nebraska.gov) or call (402) 479-4778.

## **EVALUATION CRITERIA & SCORING**

### **A. QUALIFICATIONS (40 PTS)**

1. Qualifications of the project manager and key team members to perform the services.
2. Consultant's knowledge and the strategic communications and transportation policy services outlined in this RFQ.
3. Applicability and relevance of comparable projects provided by the Consultant.

### **B. UNDERSTANDING OF THE SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED (40 PTS)**

1. Consultant's demonstrated understanding of the nature and scope of work assigned under this RFQ.
2. The consultant has recognized and identified special circumstances to be considered for these types of services.
3. Consultant provided a logical approach to complete tasks and resolve issues related to these services.

**C. PERFORMANCE DATA (20 PTS)**

1. Performance evaluations by NDOT regarding the work of the Consultant.
2. Adherence to applicable standards and completeness of previous plan submittals to NDOT.
3. Project schedule adherence on previous projects with 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.

**FINAL EVALUATION SCORING**

The Department may conduct discussions with the short-listed firms to further understand the evaluation criteria responses, and to hear how each firm can best meet the needs of NDOT related to these services. A final tally of evaluation criteria scoring will occur at the conclusion of discussions. NDOT will coordinate discussions with each short-listed firm to occur within the scheduled dates shown below.

<b>SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>Date (2024)</b>	<b>Time (CST)</b>
RFQ posted	June 19	
Last day questions will be accepted	June 25	4:00 PM
Last day Q&A or updates to RFQ may be posted	June 27	4:00 PM
NDOT Form 497 & Drug-Free Workplace Policy on file at NDOT	June 27	4:00 PM
<b><i>Statement of Qualifications Due</i></b>	<b><i>July 3</i></b>	<b><i>1:00 PM</i></b>
Post Short-List Consultants	July 16	4:00 PM
Interview Discussions	July 18	2:30-4 PM
Post Final Selection	July 25	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 material in the submittal must be formatted for 8½ x 11 paper, single or double spaced.
2. Submittal covers and dividers between the sections are allowed and not included in the page limit.

## **INTERVIEWS**

NDOT will conduct interview discussions with the short-listed consultants during the time period specified in the Schedule of Activities.

Upon completion of final 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*