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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

# Request for Qualifications

## Professional Services for Broadband Deployment – Grant Management, Subgrantee Compliance and Monitoring

July 17, 2024

**Statements of Qualifications are due Wednesday, August 7, 2024, 1:00 P.M.**

### GENERAL

In accordance with Nebraska Consultants' Competitive Negotiation Act ([Neb. Rev. Stat. §81-1702](#)) and the Brooks Act ([40 USC 1101](#)), the State of Nebraska, Department of Transportation (NDOT), is issuing a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for Broadband Deployment – Grant Management, Subgrantee Compliance and Monitoring. 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 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 certificate, can be found at <https://dot.nebraska.gov/business-center/consultant/insurance/>.

NDOT is seeking a statement of qualifications from consultants who wish to be considered to provide these services.

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.

- 102 Transportation Planning
- 110 NEPA Studies
- 115 Other Environmental Studies
- 150 Construction Engineering & Inspection (CE&I)

**SCOPE OF SERVICES****A. OVERVIEW OF THE WORK:**

This scope of work and the assumption about tasks is based on a 5-year project timeline or as needed by the Nebraska Broadband Office (NBO). NBO is requiring the below tasks to be met in order to properly, efficiently, transparently, and objectively execute the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) program as prescribed through Nebraska's Initial Proposal and through guidance from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA). All tasks are understood to be required to be in compliance with NTIA guidelines and protocols such that information is readily available to be submitted per such guidelines and protocols. Tasks 2 and 3 require a front-end review of prospective subgrantee submissions, and a back-end compliance assessment of the buildouts conducted by awarded subgrantees as outlined in the task description.

**B. TASK 1 – GRANT PORTAL**

Task 1 will need to be completed prior to the anticipated date of September 1, 2024, to ensure timely registration of potential subgrantees.

1. Provide a technology platform capable of the following;
  - a. Enable automation and assist workflow for the Letter of Intent (LOI) process and Request for Application (RFA) process; and
  - b. Execute intake and processing of LOIs and applications for funding; and
  - c. Process large and numerous documents in a variety of formats (e.g. hexagonal GIS files).
2. Ensure security of Services through the following;
  - a. Capacity to hold materials confidential as necessary; and
  - b. Securely store LOI and application materials, while ensuring the availability of individual and batch data download capability.

3. Establish a help desk function to support intake and processing of applicant inquiries and to provide technical assistance to both the State of Nebraska and potential subgrantees.

**C. TASK 2 – PERFORMANCE AND COMPLIANCE ENGINEER MONITORING**

Task 2 will be on-going work following the anticipated date of September 1, 2024. NBO will require expert telecommunications engineering assistance with ensuring subgrantee compliance throughout the BEAD program. Such expert assistance includes the following task items.

1. Ensure that the engineering designs associated with NBEAD applications are congruent with the funding ask associated with such applications prior to approval by;
  - a. Review engineering designs associated with applications; and
  - b. Evaluate invoices to ensure they are reasonable; and
2. Ensure that the engineering designs can be completed within the allotted timeframe for NBEAD work through:
  - a. Advising NBO on monitoring timelines; and
3. Monitor the subgrantee’s performance on attaining agreed upon milestones and deadlines, while adhering too the approved engineering design as needed on an “on-call” basis through:
  - a. Documenting field reporting; and
  - b. Evaluating project reporting; and
  - c. Regular communication with NBO staff including written progress reporting.
4. Provide assistance to NBO and subgrantees as buildouts progress and unforeseen issues arise by:
  - a. Recommending corrective actions as necessary to keep projects on track; and
  - b. Assisting with local and State permitting challenges as necessary; and
  - c. Serving as intermediary to ensure projects meet deadlines.

**D. TASK 3 – NEPA AND SECTION 106 COMPLIANCE AND MONITORING**

Task 3 will be on-going work following the anticipated date of September 1, 2024. NBO will require expert National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) assistance with ensuring subgrantee quality control compliance throughout the BEAD program. Such assistance includes the following task items.

1. Review and evaluate NEPA documentation submitted by prospective subgrantees for compliance with NTIA guidelines by accomplishing the following:
  - a. Developing a schedule for environmental NEPA review and other environmental permitting for the office to communicate to stakeholders which is appropriate for the timeline of the NBEAD program;
  - b. Review all draft NEPA documentation and verify that they meet the requirements of NEPA prior to transmission to NTIA. It is anticipated that only categorical exclusions (CatEx) will be submitted by subgrantees.

2. Monitor subgrantees to ensure they understand and comply with relevant State and federal environmental laws, including but not limited to NEPA and the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA).
  - a. Ensure that project implementation (site preparation, demolition, construction, ground disturbance, fixed installation, or any other project implementation activities) does not begin prior to NEPA completion.
  - b. Monitor the development and implementation of NEPA compliance actions (wetland mitigation and design, wildlife, or other mitigation actions).
  - c. Coordinate and assist federal agencies in arranging and conducting NEPA monitoring reviews or audits as applicable.
3. Provide NBO with sufficient guidance to navigate the BEAD EHP requirements surrounding historic preservation review specifically concerning Section 106.
  - a. Assist NBO with contacting relevant Nebraska base tribes with information regarding grant funded activities via their preferred communication means as identified in the FCC's Tower Construction Notification System
  - b. Ensure that NBO is sufficiently assisted in adhering to and ensuring that all Subgrantees adhere to the provisions of the NTIA memorandum to SHPOs, Tribal Historic Preservation Officers, and Internet For All grant recipients.
  - c. Assist NBO in preparation of documents ahead of any Tribal requests for government-to-government consultations.

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

In order to be considered for eligibility, applicants must provide qualifications as well as experience information on key personnel related to grant management systems, broadband design review, NEPA compliance, and administration. Applicants should list any similar projects which have been completed in the last five years. Proposals will be considered only from applicants who have experienced personnel and necessary equipment to provide the required services. NDOT and the NBO may request information substantiating the requirements.

Furthermore, such tasks will be required to be signed off on by a Professional Engineer for Task 2, and by a NEPA certified individual for Task 3.

**DETAILS**

It is anticipated that three (3) consultants will be short-listed for interviews, with one (1) consultant will be 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 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

### Short List (70 pts)

#### **A. QUALIFICATIONS (30 PTS)**

1. Qualifications of the project manager and key team members to perform the work.
2. Firm's demonstrated capacity to manage project teams with multiple consultants.
3. Applicability and relevance of comparable work provided by the Consultant.

#### **B. PERFORMANCE DATA (20 PTS)**

1. Performance evaluations by NDOT regarding the work of the Consultant.
2. Completeness and schedule adherence of previous submittals to other clients.
3. Documented performance by clients for work of a similar nature. If no documented performance evaluations are provided, firm shall list a minimum of two (2) references for work completed of a similar nature for other clients.

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

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

**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.

<b>SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>Date (2024)</b>	<b>Time (CST)</b>
RFQ posted	July 17, 24, 31	
Last day questions will be accepted	July 24	4:00 PM
Last day Q&A or updates to RFQ may be posted	July 31	4:00 PM
NDOT Form 497 & Drug-Free Workplace Policy on file at NDOT	August 7	1:00 PM
<b>Statement of Qualifications Due</b>	<b>August 7</b>	<b>1:00 PM</b>
Post Short-List Consultants & Interview Schedule	August 14	4:00 PM
Interview	August 19	1:30pm-4pm
Post Final Selections	August 24	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.
3. Fold-out or oversized pages are not allowed.

## **INTERVIEWS**

NDOT’s selection committee will conduct interviews with the short-listed consultants via WebEx on the date and time specified in the Schedule of Activities. Interviews will be capped at 20 minutes, followed by up to 10 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*