



**REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS (RFQ)
Professional Environmental Services for
Acadiana Planning Commission
EPA FY25 Brownfield Coalition Assessment Grant**

Submittal Due Date and Time:

September 20, 2024 by 12:00 pm CT

Question Submittal Deadline:

September 6, 2024 by 12:00 pm CT

Mail or deliver documents to:

Kade Jones

Acadiana Planning Commission

101 Jefferson St. Ste 201

Lafayette, LA 70501

kjones@planacadiana.org

(337) 806-9376

Introduction

The Acadiana Planning Commission, hereafter known as “APC” is soliciting qualifications for professional services from qualified environmental consulting firms (Respondents) to provide grant writing services to APC with the needs outlined in the RFQ. APC plans to select a single Respondent that meets the threshold and selection criteria outlined in this RFQ.

The RFQ is open to all qualified environmental professionals (QEPs) capable and qualified to meet the objectives and requirements described in this document. Qualified Woman-owned businesses (WBE) Minority-owned businesses (MBE) and/or Veteran-owned businesses (VBE) organizations are encouraged to respond.

Only proposals received no later than **12:00 pm CT on September 20, 2024** will be considered. Upon receipt, all RFQ submissions will be reviewed for completeness in accordance with the threshold and selection criteria contained herein. If threshold criteria are satisfied, APC will assess each Respondent’s qualifications based upon the selection criteria. Once the selection committee has reviewed and ranked all Respondent proposals, if determined necessary, the top 3 scoring Respondents will be selected for an interview with the selection committee. Interviews will be held **during the week of September 30, 2024** with specific date and time to be determined.

Questions must be submitted via email to Kade Jones, kjones@planacadiana.org, by **12:00 pm CT September 6, 2024**. Questions and written responses will be provided to all interested Respondents, via email. It is the Respondent’s responsibility to provide a current email address.

Background

APC intends to apply for an U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Brownfields Community-Wide Assessment Grant in the Fall 2024. APC has a proven track record of successfully managing environmental and Brownfield-related grants. Over the years, APC has secured several grants from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), including the 2017 EPA Environmental Justice Grant, which awarded \$300,000 for the revitalization of the Four Corners University area in Lafayette, LA. This project focused on assessing hazardous substances and petroleum sites, developing cleanup plans, and conducting community outreach to foster redevelopment in a historically industrial region. Additionally, APC has benefited from Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ) Technical Assistance to Brownfield grants, further demonstrating our commitment to advancing environmental justice and economic development in the Acadiana region. As a seasoned applicant, APC is seeking to build on this experience by collaborating with an environmental consultant to pursue another EPA Brownfield Coalition Assessment Grant, aiming to continue our efforts to transform vacant and underutilized sites into productive community assets. Grant writing services are expected to begin in October 2024.

APC anticipates the selected Respondent will achieve the following goals.

Grant Writing

- Assist APC to develop a grant proposal strategy and overall grant project:
- Work with APC to draft a Brownfields Assessment Grant application that addresses the grant guidelines.
- Timely submission of a grant application package to APC for routing, approval, and submittal through grants.gov.

Scope of Work

The proposed scope of work under this RFQ consists of working with APC to provide:

- **Grant Writing Services** – Develop an appropriate grant strategy for APC. Activities may include:
 - identify target area for assessment activities,
 - site identification and potential reuse opportunities,
 - community involvement plan,
 - budget development,
 - research demographic data to address grant criteria for the community and incorporate into the grant application,
 - identify and coordinate with key community partners, and,
 - identify leverage resources for cleanup and redevelopment.
- **Grant Writing Training** - Attend grant writing training offered by the K-State Technical Assistance to Brownfields (KSU TAB) program.
- **Grant Review** - Coordinate a review of the draft application with the KSU TAB.
- **Timely Submission of a Completed Application to APC** – Submit a final grant application package to APC five (5) days prior to the grant deadline to allow time for routing, approval and submission through grants.gov.

Terms, Conditions and Exceptions

- a. APC does not create any obligation, expressed or implied, of any kind or description in issuing this RFQ or receiving a response. Neither this RFQ nor the response shall be construed as a legal offer.
- b. APC reserves the right to alter, amend, or modify any provisions of this RFQ, or to withdraw this RFQ, at any time prior to the award of the contract resulting from qualification under this process, if it is in the best interest of APC to do so.
- c. APC reserves the right to reject any and all responses without cause, waive irregularities in all procedures related to this RFQ, make inquiries of Respondents and their references and clients regarding qualifications or information submitted as part of their responses as deemed necessary, conduct personal interviews of any or all Respondents, and request and receive additional information as APC deems necessary.
- d. Work performed under agreements resulting from this RFQ may be subject to federal contractual provisions. APC hereby puts Respondents on notice that a successful award at the end of this process may be contingent upon an agreement between APC and the Respondent to comply with standard federal contractual provisions, including but not limited to, minimum Federal wage rates (Davis-Bacon).
- e. In the event the selected Respondent does not enter into the required agreement with APC to carry out the purposes described in this RFQ, APC may, in addition to any other rights and remedies available at law or in equity, commence negotiations with another person or entity.
- f. In no event shall any obligation of any kind be enforceable against APC unless a written agreement has been entered into.
- g. By submitting a response to the RFQ, each Respondent waives all rights to protest, or seek remedies whatsoever regarding any aspect of this RFQ, the selection of a Respondent or Respondents with whom to negotiate, the rejection of any or all offers to negotiate, or a decision to terminate negotiations.
- h. APC will not assume any responsibility or liability for any expenses incurred by a Respondent, or prospective Respondent, in connection with the preparation or delivery of a response, requested interview, or any action related to the process of completing and submitting a response to this RFQ.
- i. Respondent shall disclose any existing or potential conflict of interest relative to the performance of the contractual services resulting from this RFQ. Any such relationship that might be perceived or represented as a conflict should be disclosed. By submitting a qualification in response to this RFQ, Respondents affirm that they have not given, nor intend to give at any time hereafter, any economic opportunity, future employment, gift, loan, gratuity, special discount, trip, favor, or service to a public servant of APC or any employee or representative of same, in connection with this qualification process. Any attempt to intentionally or unintentionally conceal or obfuscate a conflict of interest will automatically result in the disqualification of a Respondent's qualification. APC will determine whether a conflict of interest exists and whether it may reflect

negatively on APC's selection of a Respondent. APC reserves the right to disqualify any Respondent on the grounds of actual or apparent conflict of interest.

- j. APC will own all documents, including electronic media presentations, produced as a result of the contract. The QEP may use generated documents under the signed contract only with expressive permission from APC.

RFQ Submission Requirements

Responses must be received no later than **12:00 P.M, Central Time, Friday, September 20, 2024** to be considered. Respondents must submit one original written single sided response, plus three (3) paper copies, and one (1) electronic copy in PDF of qualifications, and one (1) separate, sealed cost proposal with Respondent's current rate schedule and clearly identified cost of services for each outlined task. The proposal must include the following information.

- a. Cover Letter describing the Respondent's general understanding of the scope of work and any key issues associated with performing the required services. The cover letter shall not exceed one page, must be signed by an individual(s) authorized to bind the Respondent contractually, and include the name, title, address, email address and telephone number of one or more individuals who can respond to requests for additional information.
- b. Resumes of primary personnel assuming responsibilities for this project, not to exceed one (1) pager per resume.
- c. Detailed description of Respondent's approach to the scope of work and relevant experience, not to exceed 15 pages including:
 - i. Experience in grant writing including applying for and securing federal grant dollars.
 - ii. Description of the history, experience, and qualifications of the Respondent including key personnel and their respective responsibilities.
 - iii. If relevant, a listing of subcontractors to be used for activities identified in the Scope of Work along with their services they will provide and a description of Respondent's process to select and oversee subcontractors. The use of WBE/MBE¹ organizations are encouraged.
 - iv. Strategy and timeline for completing the project including key milestones.
 - v. List of other projects along with references for up to three (3) similar projects.
- d. Cost proposal including rate schedule in a separate, sealed envelope. The cost proposals for the at least three (3) top ranked Respondents will be opened prior to the interviews.

Note that the cover letter, resumes, and cost proposal are not included in the 15-page limitations. Complete RFQ packages shall be submitted to:

Kade Jones, Principal Planner II
Acadiana Planning Commission
101 Jefferson St. Ste 201
Lafayette, LA 70501

¹If Minority or Women's Business Enterprise firms (MBE/WBE) are to be included in the project team, please attach a one-page letter from each firm indicating their desire to be included in the project team.

kjones@planacadiana.org

Responses not received by **12:00 P.M, CT, Friday, September 20, 2024** WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED FOR CONSIDERATION. To reduce waste, cost, and size of submittals, basic stapled or spiral-bound proposals are preferred rather than submittals with three-ring or other binding mechanisms.

APC will not be held responsible for response envelopes mishandled, misrouted, or delivered late as a result of the envelope not being properly prepared. Faxed responses will not be accepted. Any questions regarding this RFQ must be submitted in an **e-mail to Kade Jones at kjones@planacadiana.org no later than 12:00pm CT, Friday, September 6, 2024**. A timely written response, which includes electronic transmittal, to all e-mail questions will be provided to the Respondent and all firms who received the RFQ. Inquiries pertaining to the RFQ are NOT to be directed to any other member of APC. Any such action may disqualify the Respondent from further consideration. Respondents may not rely upon verbal responses to any inquiry.

Selection Process

Responses will be evaluated based upon the documented ability of the Respondent to satisfy the threshold criteria and the requirements of this RFQ. Respondents passing the threshold requirements will be further evaluated against the selection criteria. Both the Threshold and Selection criteria are detailed below. It is expected that the review committee will include three (3) people. Each reviewer will complete the scoring independently. Ratings will be assigned by reviewers and multiplied by the weight to determine the score. All of the scores will be combined for each Respondent to determine a total score. If determined necessary by the selection committee, the top three (3) scoring Respondents will be invited to participate in an in-person (or virtual) interview **during the week of September 30**, specific date and time to be determined.

Threshold Eligibility

- a. Respondent has at least one (1) full-time Louisiana licensed professional geologist in good standing.
- b. Respondent has at least one (1) full-time Louisiana professional engineer in good standing.
- c. Respondent has at least one (1) full-time Environmental Professional as defined in ASTM 1527-21.
- d. Respondent has a minimum of ten (10) years' environmental professional experience.
- e. Respondent must have knowledge of and experience with development of Quality Assurance Project Plans.
- f. Respondent must have a minimum of \$1,000 in Professional Errors and Omissions insurance and \$1,000,000 in General Liability Insurance.
- g. Respondent must have demonstrated experience in conducting community outreach and public meetings.

If a Respondent does not satisfy the threshold eligibility requirements above, the response will not be further evaluated and scoring will not be completed.

Insurance

During the term of this contract, the Consultant(s) shall meet insurance requirements established by the APC. This coverage shall include professional liability, workman's compensation insurance, general liability and automobile liability. The required amounts will be dependent on the contract amount.

A copy of the certificate of insurance shall be furnished to the APC within ten (10) days of the notice of award.

Audit

Both pre-award and post-project audits, as well as interim audits, may be required. For audit purposes, the selected Consultant will maintain accounting records for a minimum of five years after final contract payment.

Miscellaneous Provisions

The Consultant(s) should be aware of the following provisions under which the RFQ will be evaluated and processed along with the resulting deliverables when the project is completed.

- 1. Rights of Negotiation** – The APC reserves the right to waive any and all irregularities in submittals, and to negotiate with any party.
- 2. Cancellation of RFQ** – The APC reserves the right to cancel the RFQ at any time. All costs incurred by the Proposer in preparing and responding to this solicitation are the sole responsibility of the Proposer and shall not be reimbursed by the APC.
- 3. Further Process** - The APC reserves the right to interview only those respondents it determines shall provide the most advantageous services and to negotiate with one or more respondents to contract terms acceptable to the APC.
- 4. Nondiscrimination** - The APC notifies all possible Proposers that no person shall be excluded from participation in, denied any benefits of, or otherwise discriminated against in connection with the award and performance of any contract on the basis of race, religious creed, color, national origin, ancestry, physical disability, sex, age, ethnicity, sexual identity, or on any other basis prohibited by law or executive order. Consultants and their subcontractors will be subject to related Federal laws and executive orders for work related to this project.
- 5. Distribution of Proposals** - All documentation, information or data provided by the Proposer as part of its submission (whether in writing and/or digital format) shall become the property of the APC. The APC is subject to Louisiana Public Record Law.

6. **Public Disclosure** - The APC may publish the names of all Proposers on its Website. Proposals will be distributed to members of the APC’s evaluation team. The APC reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to use without limitation any and all information and data submitted in response to the RFQ or derived from further investigation of any submittal.

7. **Notice Conflicts of Interest** - The Proposer shall identify any group, individual or organization that they may have worked for, or currently work for, that has had ownership, lease, development, related or similar interest in the APC and shall disclose such potential conflicts of interest to the APC. The APC reserves the right to reject any proposal or Proposer who it feels has a conflict of interest.

8. **News Release** - Proposer shall make no new/press release pertaining to this RFQ or anything contained or referenced herein without prior written approval from the APC.

9. **Application Law** - This RFQ and any contract or agreements resulting herein are subject to all applicable Federal, state and local laws, rules, regulations and executive orders.

10. **Acknowledgement** - The Consultant shall acknowledge that the work completed as part of the project is a collaborative effort with the APC in future statement of qualifications, advertisements, and presentations.

Evaluation Process

Respondents will be ranked based on qualifications and project understanding as determined to be in the best interests of APC. Those that satisfy the threshold eligibility requirements above will be evaluated against the additional selection criteria listed below.

Written Proposal Criteria	Rating Score (1-5)	Weight	Comments
Identification of key personnel and experience/capability		3	
Resources and key personnel available to perform work in reasonable time frame		2	
Respondent’s approach to successfully complete each scope of services task		4	
Ability to handle multiple projects simultaneous and meet deadlines		4	
Specific experiences, references and/or considerations the Respondent has that makes it uniquely qualified		4	
Interview Criteria		Weight	
Participation from project manager and other key personnel		4	
Presentation specific to applicable scope of work tasks		3	
Responses to questions		3	
Reasonable overall costs/hours/rate schedule		1	
Ratings:			
Clearly Outstanding in this item	5		

Well qualified in this item	4
Average in this item	3
Weak in this item	2
Unsatisfactory in this item	1
Insufficient Response	0

Project Timetable

August 30, 2024	RFQ materials e-mailed to potential Respondents and posted on/in the https://www.planacadiana.org/about/request-for-proposals , social media outlets, notices through the LA Brownfields Association, and any other relevant avenues for marketing the RFQ.
September 6, 2024	RFQ questions received no later than 12:00pm CT
September 20, 2024	Proposals received by APC no later than 12:00pm CT
September 20, 2024	Respondents’ materials provided to Selection Committee for individual evaluation
September 27, 2024	Selection Committee evaluations returned to APC for compilation; Finalists contacted to schedule interviews; Recommendations of Respondents for approval;
September 30-October 4, 2024	APC Finalist Interviews
October 7, 2024	Intent to Award sent to final selection

Disadvantaged Business Enterprises - The Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) Program was created to remedy past and current discrimination against DBE firms. The intention is to level the playing field for socially and economically disadvantaged individuals wanting to do business with the local, state, and federal government. The DBE Compliance Programs Section, Certification Unit, certifies businesses capable of performing services and/or products which can be credited toward DBE goals. The certification process ensures that only qualified small business firms that are independently owned and controlled by one or more socially and economically disadvantaged individuals are certified for this program. The first step in the certification process is to complete and submit a DBE application. If a Proposer is not a certified DBE as described herein, but plans to use certified DBE(s), Proposer shall include in their proposal the names of their certified DBE subcontractor(s), a description of the work each will perform, and the dollar value of each subcontract.

All eligible vendors are encouraged to become certified. Qualification requirements and online certification are available at [UCPHome \(la.gov\)](http://ucphome.la.gov)

To verify a certified DBE use the search criteria accessed at the State of Louisiana Unified Certification Program available: <http://www8.dotd.la.gov/UCP/UCPSearch.aspx>

Veteran and Hudson Initiative Programs Participation - The State of Louisiana Veteran and Hudson Initiatives are designed to provide additional opportunities for Louisiana-based small entrepreneurship (sometimes referred to as LaVet's and SE's respectively) to participate in contracting and procurement with the state. A certified Veteran-Owned and Service-Connected Disabled Veteran-Owned small entrepreneurship (LaVet) and a Louisiana Initiative for Small Entrepreneurships (Hudson Initiative) small entrepreneurship are businesses that have been certified by the Louisiana Department of Economic Development. All eligible vendors are encouraged to become certified. Qualification requirements and online certification are available at <https://smallbiz.louisianaeconomicdevelopment.com>

If a Proposer is not a certified small entrepreneurship as described herein but plans to use certified small entrepreneurship(s), Proposer shall include in their proposal the names of their certified Veteran Initiative or Hudson Initiative small entrepreneurship subcontractor(s), a description of the work each will perform, and the dollar value of each subcontract.

During the term of the contract and at expiration, the Contractor will also be required to report Veteran-Owned and Service-Connected Disabled Veteran-Owned and Hudson Initiative small entrepreneurship subcontractor or distributor participation and the dollar amount of each.

In RFQ's requiring the compliance of a good faith subcontracting plan, the APC may require Proposers to submit information on their business relationships and arrangements with certified LaVet or Hudson Initiative subcontractors at the time of proposal review. Agreements between a Proposer and a certified LaVet or Hudson Initiative subcontractor in which the certified LaVet or Hudson Initiative subcontractor promises not to provide subcontracting quotations to other Proposers shall be prohibited.

If performing its evaluation of proposals, the State reserves the right to require a non-certified Proposer to provide documentation and information supporting a good faith subcontracting plan. Such proof may include contracts between Proposer and certified Veteran Initiative and/or Hudson Initiative subcontractor(s).

If a contract is awarded to a Proposer who proposed a good faith subcontracting plan, the using agency, the Louisiana Department of Economic Development (LED), or the Office of State Procurement (OSP) may audit Contractor to determine whether Contractor has complied in good faith with its subcontracting plan. The Contractor must be able to provide supporting documentation (i.e., phone logs, fax transmittals, letter, e-mails) to demonstrate its good faith subcontracting plan was followed. If it is determined at any time by the using agency, LED, or the OSP Director that the Contractor did not in fact perform in good faith its subcontracting plan, the contract award or the existing contract may be terminated.

The statutes (La. R.S. 39:2171 *et. seq.*) concerning the Veteran Initiative may be viewed at: <http://www.legis.la.gov/Legis/Law.aspx?d=671504>.

The statutes (La. R.S. 39:2001 *et. seq.*) concerning the Hudson Initiative may be viewed at:
<http://www.legis.la.gov/Legis/Law.aspx?d=96265>.

The rules for the Veteran Initiative (LAC 19:VII. Chapters 11 and 15) and for the Hudson Initiative (LAC 19:VIII Chapters 11 and 13) may be viewed at:
<http://www.doa.la.gov/pages/osp/se/secv.aspx>.

A current list of certified Veteran-Owned and Service-Connected Disabled Veteran- Owned and Hudson Initiative small entrepreneurship may be obtained from the Louisiana Economic Development Certification System at: <https://smallbiz.louisianaeconomicdevelopment.com>

Additionally, a list of Hudson and Veteran Initiative small entrepreneurship, which have been certified by the Louisiana Department of Economic Development and who have opted to register in the State of Louisiana LaGov Supplier Portal:
https://lagoverpvendor.doa.louisiana.gov/irj/portal/anonymous?guest_user=self_reg.

This may be accessed from the State of Louisiana Procurement and Contract (LaPAC) Network: <https://wwwcfprd.doa.louisiana.gov/OSP/LaPAC/vendor/VndPubMain.cfm>.
When using this site, determine the search criteria (i.e. alphabetized list of all certified vendors, by commodities, etc.) and select SmallE, VSE, or DVSE.

REVISIONS TO THE RFQ

The APC reserves the right to revise any part of the RFQ by issuing an addendum to the RFQ at any time. Issuance of this RFQ in no way constitutes a commitment by the APC to award a contract. The APC reserves the right to accept or reject, in whole or part, all Qualification Statements submitted, and/or cancel this announcement if it is determined to be in APC's best interest. All materials submitted in response to this announcement become the property of the APC, and selection or rejection of a submittal does not affect this right. The APC also reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to waive administrative informalities contained in the RFQ.

Thank you for your interest and we look forward to reviewing your submission.

August 30, 2024

Sara Fawcett-Gary, CEO/Transportation Director

Attachments:

- FY 2024 EPA Grant Guidelines (for context since the 2025 NOFA has not been published).