REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

State Legislative Lobbying Services

Introduction

The City of Kelso ("City") is seeking proposals from qualified consultants/firms/individuals ("consultant") to represent the City on legislative issues during the 2015 State Legislative Session in Olympia.

The consultant must have demonstrated experience in lobbying the Washington State Legislature, with extensive experience on behalf of similar public sector clients preferred. At least five (5) years' experience in providing legislative and intergovernmental services before the legislative and executive branches is required. The consultant should have demonstrated experience in bipartisan relationships with a network of access to legislators, administrative executives, and staff. The City seeks a strong lobbyist with sound knowledge of public policy, clear understanding of the legislative process and effective communication skills.

Background

The City of Kelso (pop. 11,940), incorporated in 1889, is located in southwestern Washington on the Interstate 5 corridor in Cowlitz County along the Cowlitz, Columbia, and Coweeman Rivers. Kelso shares its western border with the City of Longview. The City is the state's only "chartered" code city and is governed by a city charter as well as RCW Title 35A, a.k.a. the Optional Municipal Code. The City operates under the Council-Manager form of government where legislative authority is concentrated in the elected City Council, which hires a professional administrator to implement its policies.

The City directly provides the following municipal services: law enforcement, water treatment & distribution, wastewater collection, parks, stormwater and street maintenance, engineering & public works, general administration, planning and community development, and library. The City contracts for solid waste collection, animal control, and court services. Wastewater treatment is provided by an outside agency.

The City is seeking professional services in the development and execution of a legislative advocacy program with capital funding solutions for both aging and substandard critical and transportation infrastructure within the City's boundaries. Additionally, the program will complement the efforts of

other municipal advocacy programs that identify and take action on legislation and regulations that positively and negatively impact the City's interests.

Scope of Work

The consultant will be responsible for monitoring, identifying and prioritizing challenges and opportunities for the City with respect to issues under consideration by the State Legislature and state and regional agencies.

It is anticipated that the duration of this scope of work will be in advance of and throughout the 2015 legislative session and the period during which the Governor may take action on bills passed during the session.

The following is to be used as a general guide, and is not intended to be a complete list of all work necessary to complete any efforts:

1. Identify state legislation and legislative proposals that may impact the City;
2. Identify proposed state regulatory changes that may impact the City;
3. Work with the City Council and City Manager's Office to develop positions on relevant legislation, as appropriate;
4. Provide assistance to the City Council and City Manager's Office in arranging lobbying visits to Olympia to help ensure productive meetings;
5. Draft legislation and amendments, as necessary;
6. Lobby for the City's position on legislation and regulatory matters of interest, including:
    a. Direct contact and communication with state legislators and staff on behalf of the City;
    b. Direct contact and communication with state agencies on behalf of the City;
    c. Direct contact and communication with other cities, counties and special districts on behalf of the City;
    d. Direct contact and communication with associations and other special interest groups, including but not limited to the Association of Washington Cities and other associations that may have similar interests or interests that conflict with those of the City;
    e. Drafting letters and talking points on legislation as necessary;
    f. Testifying on behalf of the City at hearings before legislative and interim legislative committees;
    g. Maintain close working relationships with the City Manager and designated members of City staff;
    h. Provide weekly written briefing reports for the City Council and City Manager on key issues and legislative committee activity during the legislative session;
    i. Provide briefings in person and periodically as requested, to the City Council and City Manager on key issues, legislative committee or legislative session status.

Required Respondent Information

1. Letter of interest.
2. Proposed plan including plan for briefing the City Manager and Councilmembers on the issues prior to and during the legislative session, maintaining continuous communications during the session and implementing a decision-making process on issues that demand a quick turnaround time.
3. A summary of relevant experience in the last five (5) years; specifically, please describe the outcome of lobbying efforts you conducted.
4. A complete list of current clients and those served during the twelve (12) months preceding the submission date and a declaration of any potential incompatibility or conflicts of interest between those clients and the City of Kelso.
5. A list of five (5) references.
6. Each question should be repeated with the response following:
    a. The legal name of consultant/firm/individual, address, telephone number, number of years in business, and current number of full-time professional and technical personnel with the consultant/firm;
    b. Name and telephone number of the consultant who will be in charge of the actual work performed for the City;
    c. The address and telephone number of the office(s) where the work is to be undertaken;
    d. Outline approach with a proposed project schedule to conducting the work detailed under "Scope of Work;"
    e. Itemized cost of services and any customary charges for services to be rendered. Include staff hourly rates, alternative retainer proposals, a description of the process used to fairly allocate costs among consultant's/firm's/individual's multiple clients to avoid double-billing for time spent in legislative activities; and
    f. Estimate of expenses incurred that will be billed to the City.

Selection Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

1. Thoroughness and understanding of work to be completed;
2. Overall experience of staff assigned to the work;
3. Recent public sector experience conducting similar lobbying efforts;
4. Interpersonal compatibility with City officials; and
5. Cost.

Selection Process

The City Manager's Office will review the submitted proposals for completeness and qualifications to determine those consultant(s) to be invited to an interview and oral presentation.

Upon completion of all interviews, the City will advise the respondents of its selection.

Professional Services Agreement for the work will be prepared and executed.

Discretion and Liability Waiver

1. Company personnel signing the cover letter of the proposal must be an authorized signer with the authority to represent the firm and to enter into a binding contract with the City.
2. Proposed services and related pricing contained in the proposal must be valid for a period of one (1) year after the deadline for submission of the proposal, June 6, 2014.
3. The City will make every effort to administer the proposal in accordance with the terms and dates outlined in the RFP; however, the City reserves the right to modify the activities, timeline, or any other aspect of the process at any time as deemed necessary by City staff.
4. By requesting proposals, the City is in no way obligated to award a contract or pay the expenses of consultant(s) in connection with the preparation or submission of a proposal.
5. The awarding of a contract shall be contingent on the availability of funds and the necessary staff and City Council approvals.
6. The City reserves the right to request and obtain from one or more of the consulting firms submitting proposals, supplementary information as may be necessary for City staff to analyze the proposals pursuant to the consultant selection criteria contained herein.
7. The City may require consultant(s) to participate in additional rounds of more refined submittals before the ultimate selection of a consulting team is made. These rounds could encompass revisions of the submittal criteria in response to the nature and scope of the initial proposal.
8. The City reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, to waive any non-material irregularities or informalities in any proposal, and to accept or reject any item or combination of items.
9. Additionally, factors such as, but not limited to, the following may disqualify a proposal without further consideration:
    a. Evidence of collusion among respondents.
    b. Any attempt to improperly influence any member of City staff or any elected official of the City of Kelso.
    c. A respondent's default under any type of agreement, which resulted in the termination of that agreement.
    d. Existence of any unresolved litigation between the respondent and the City.

Proposal Format and Submittal Instructions

Please submit one (1) original proposal and three (3) copies of all materials submitted. The proposal should include the following information:

1. Letter of interest.
2. "Required Respondent Information" as listed above.
3. Attachments: Resumes

Deliver proposals to:

Brian Butterfield, City Clerk
City of Kelso
P.O. Box 819
203 S. Pacific #217
Kelso, WA 98626

Proposals are due no later than 4:00pm on June 20, 2014. Any proposal received after the deadline will not be considered. Faxed or electronic (e-mail) submittals will not be accepted.

Should you have any questions about this request for proposal or for questions concerning the scope of work, please contact Amy Mullerleile at (360) 577-3301 or e-mail amullerleile@kelso.gov.