



Appalachian Council of Governments

Request for Proposals (RFP): ACOG-2024-3

Brownfield Consulting Services

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| RFP Issue Date: | 06/20/2024 |
| RFP Contact(s): | Jill Francisco Senior Project Manager jfrancisco@scacog.org |
| Send RFP Submission To: | Appalachian Council of Governments Request for Proposals: Brownfield Consulting 30 Century Circle Greenville, SC 29607 |
| RFP Closing Date & Time: | 7/25/2024, Thursday, by 2:00 PM |
| Number of Sealed Submissions: | One (1) original sealed submission and One (1) electronic copy on a CD or flash drive or capable of being emailed or downloaded. |
| Important Information: | Please carefully review all addenda and additional instructions in the "RFP Portal" on ACOG's website https://www.scacog.org/rfp-portal |

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Appalachian Council of Governments (ACOG) is a voluntary organization of local governments in Anderson, Cherokee, Greenville, Oconee, Pickens, and Spartanburg counties of Upstate South Carolina. The organization began in 1965 as the Appalachian Advisory Commission, a 12-member board created to advise the Governor on the use of Appalachian Regional Commission funds.

Authorized by referendum, the Council of Governments system emerged in 1971. A 44-member Board of Directors sets policy for the Council of Governments. Two-thirds of the members are local elected officials, including state legislators, county council members, and mayors or ACOG council members. County councils appoint the remaining citizen and minority members. The Executive Director is responsible for the overall management, running the day-to-day operations, and delegating specific responsibilities to department directors and staff.

In the years since 1971, the ACOG has evolved into a multifaceted service organization for local governments, providing public administration, planning, information systems and technology, grants, workforce development, and services for the elderly population. The ACOG works in close collaboration with our community partners towards building a competitive economy and promoting healthy, livable communities that preserve our residents' quality of life.

II. PURPOSE OF REQUEST

The Appalachian Council of Governments (ACOG) is seeking professional services from a qualified firm with experience in providing comprehensive Brownfield Consulting services to prepare our organization and our local government members for a 2024 U.S. EPA Brownfield Assessment Coalition Grant.

Qualifications include expertise in environmental assessment and cleanup activities, including Phase I and II Environmental Site Assessments, inspections, cleanup and redevelopment planning, community outreach, grant programmatic assistance and other components of the EPA and State of South Carolina Brownfield Program. Additional qualifications include technical grant writing experience related to Brownfields; whereby funding is to be secured.

This solicitation is being issued to comply with federal procurement standards outlined in CFR §200.318 - CFR §200.327 related to non-federal entities.

ACOG seeks to select a firm or team with documented experience providing:

- Technical Grant writing services, related to Brownfields
- Phase I & II Environmental Site Assessments (ESAs)
- Inspections evaluating environmental contamination within site structures (Asbestos, Lead Paint, etc.)
- Cleanup, planning and remediation design
- Brownfield property inventory and property prioritization
- Community outreach and engagement support
- Grant programmatic assistance
- Other services related to EPA Brownfield Programs, State of South Carolina Brownfield Program, Cleanup and Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) Grants

III. PROJECT TIMELINE

ACOG expects to begin work with the Contractor soon after the contract is awarded. It is ACOG's expectation that the Contractor will prepare an EPA Assessment Coalition grant application with target areas across the six County

region; to be submitted by ACOG during the next EPA application period. The EPA award is expected to be announced late 2024 early 2025, and therefore, ACOG is expecting a partner throughout the award term and closeout. Brownfield programmatic activity is expected to be on-going.

IV. SCOPE OF WORK EXPECTATION

The Contractor is expected to assist in decisions around which areas are the best target areas and priority site areas to produce the most competitive application and garner the most value-added projects around the region. The scope of work is outlined below to guide the Respondent in understanding ACOG's expectations of this work engagement.

Task 1: Grant and Program Assistance:

- a) Provide technical grant writing services necessary to prepare applications for EPA grants, including, but not limited to U.S. EPA Brownfield Assessment Coalition Grants
- b) Acquire the necessary data for grant applications and project reports
- c) Assist ACOG with quarterly and annual EPA reporting requirements
- d) Prepare presentations to provide information for partners, organizations, and communities
- e) Participate and coordinate public engagement and community outreach activities
- f) Attend at least monthly check in meeting with ACOG Staff throughout the contract term

Task 2: Assessment Planning and Site Selection

- a) Prepare and maintain schedules and budgets for assessment and/or cleanup activities
- b) Develop a Brownfield property inventories including prioritization of properties
- c) Conduct other assessments activities including, but not limited to, asbestos surveys, mold surveys, lead paint surveys, and wetlands and natural resources surveys.

Task 3: Site Assessments and Plan Preparation

- a) Prepare Generic and Site Specific QAPPs that comply with EPA procedures.
- b) Prepare Phase I and Phase II Site Assessments applicable to State of SC and ASTM standards
- c) Prepare QA/QC Plans for submission to EPA
- d) Other related activities

Task 4: Risk Assessment, Corrective Action Plan and Regulatory Support

- a) Provide regulatory support as required
- b) Prepare corrective action plans, if necessary
- c) Prepare risk assessments, if necessary
- d) Assist with updating ACRES database

V. PROPOSAL FORMAT

The submission narrative shall be no longer than 25 pages and shall include the information outlined below. To ensure fair and equitable evaluation, submissions must be organized into the following sections. Additional details about each Proposal section are provided below.

Section 1: Cover Letter

Provide a cover letter not to exceed two (2) pages, which is signed by an officer of the firm who is responsible for committing the firm's resources.

The cover letter should provide the following:

- Respondent's name, primary contact name, business address, phone number and email address;
- Name and title of the individual with responsibility for the response and who will receive correspondence regarding this RFP;
- A brief statement of the Respondent's understanding of the services required and qualifications to provide brownfield services, including years of service;
- A list of any subcontractors and reason for teaming on the RFP; also include the subcontractor's primary contact name, business address, phone number, email;
- Such other information as the Respondent deems appropriate.

Section 2: Firm Qualifications and Experience

In this section, Respondent shall provide firm and staff qualifications and demonstrate prior experience in providing brownfield services. Discuss your firm's environmental services approach including years of experience as well as the variations of service type, as it relates to this RFP. Include related experience in grant writing and successful project execution. State experience with key initiatives related to brownfield site selection and subsequent projects. Also comment on history of Quality Assurance and ensuring EPA and OSHA health and safety requirements while conducting project activities. Considering the past three years, describe the firm's success in:

- Effective Technical Grant Writing Assistance
 - Experience with successfully funded applications, provision of writing samples is encouraged;
 - Grant programmatic experience/capacity to support projects that address contaminated properties;
 - Documented experience working with federal and state regulatory agencies;
- Full-Service Brownfield Assessment and Activities
 - Property Identification and Inventory
 - Site Assessments and Inspections
 - Cleanup and Development Planning
- Community Outreach/Engagement Planning and Activities
 - Conducting public meetings and hearing
 - Facilitating a Brownfield working group
 - Developing and implementing effective methods of communicating information about Brownfield programs to the public (website, information sheets, mailings, etc.)
 - Preparing presentations
- Reporting and Closeout of Grant upon completion
 - Preparing quarterly and annual EPA required reports
 - Preparing and maintaining schedules and budgets for assessments and/or cleanup design
 - Preparing Grant Closeout reports

Section 3: Proposed Strategy and Technical Approach

In this section, Respondent shall provide the firm's proposed strategy and technical approach to meet the Scope of Work requirements outlined below, including any procedures, methodologies, resources, systems, etc. Specific areas of the approach that the Respondent should address include:

- Program and Grant Application Assistance;
- Community Outreach and Education Assistance;
- Candidate Site Selection;
- Regulatory Support;
- Assessment Planning;
- Phase I and Phase II Site Assessments;
- QA/QC Plan Preparation;
- Risk Assessment and Corrective Action.

Section 4: Proposed Pricing

Respondents shall provide a detailed price proposal based on the general approach to delivering the scope of services in this RFP based on the information available at the time of this RFP. ACOG recognizes that specific pricing elements may require the knowledge of the sites to be assessed. Respondents are asked to propose a pricing approach that would enable ACOG to effectively develop a budget for an EPA Brownfield Program application. The format of the proposed pricing is flexible but should include sufficient details if known including the name and position of each staff member assigned to the project, number of hours per assigned staff member and their associated hourly rate. Note that. Any proposed reimbursable expenses must be capped in the price proposal.

The budget for any future related grants executed under this contract will be negotiated with the consultant, if and when, such funding becomes available. It will be the Appalachian Council of Government's option to utilize this contract for future brownfield grants beyond the initial EPA assessment grant application and implementation.

Section 5: Key Personnel Experience

Respondents shall provide a summary of qualifications for key personnel and any subcontractors proposed to work on the scope of work under this contract. Summary of qualifications should not replicate details to be provided in resumes in the appendix, rather highlight how the individuals' experience is relevant for this scope of work.

Section 6: References

The response shall include at least five (5) references for similar services, from within the last three (3) years, that have been provided by your firm and the dates of service. Please include the following:

- Reference Name
- Reference Email Address
- Reference Phone Number
- Description of similar services provided

Section 7: Appendices

Respondents can include other relevant information in this section to be considered in the proposal review. Please note the 25-page limit includes additional materials in this section.

VI. SELECTION CRITERIA

The responding firms will be evaluated on the following criteria, each holding a possible score of 10 points*.

- Approach and understanding of the scope of work;
- Demonstrated experience and abilities in technical grant writing related to Brownfields;
- Demonstrated experience in addressing contaminated properties;
- Demonstrated experience in supporting entities in grant administration along with a demonstrated ability to work with federal and State Agencies;
- Experience of project team/ personnel;
- Capacity of the firm to complete tasks in a timely way;
- Demonstrated experience in effectively engaging with community members;
- Demonstrated experience on similar tasks and projects;
- Reasonableness of cost/pricing for services (e.g., rates) based on a comparison of process among competing offerors and other available information on market rates for consulting services and;
- References

*Notes of scoring criteria:

1 to 10 scale evaluation

1 being "below expectations/qualifications/experience"

10 being "exceeds expectations/qualifications/experience" 100 is the highest score and 10 is the lowest.

ACOG may request oral presentations. The request for an oral presentation shall in no way constitute acceptance or imply that an agreement is pending. ACOG reserves the right to award this opportunity based on the initial RFP response without oral presentations.

VII. TERM

The ACOG anticipates contracting with the selected firm for an initial term of three (3) years. The Appalachian Council of Governments may amend or extend this contract beyond the initial 3 years to accommodate the terms and conditions of future EPA grants awarded to the Appalachian Council of Governments within this three-year period.

VIII. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

1. General Proposal Requirements

It is requested that proposals be prepared in a comprehensive manner as to content. Although permissible, there is no necessity for expensive binders, color displays or other promotional material.

The proposal should be prepared in a format that will allow for identification of your response to each component of this RFP in a concise manner.

The proposal must be signed by the duly authorized partner or officer who will have overall responsibility for work under the proposal.

All pricing proposals must remain in effect for at least one hundred twenty (120) days beginning the next business day after the proposals is due to ACOG. ACOG is not responsible for any costs incurred in the preparations and presentation of your proposal. The selected proposer will be expected to enter into a contract or engagement letter with ACOG in a form acceptable to ACOG.

2. Delivery Method

Submissions must be delivered by 7/25/2024, Thursday, by 2:00 PM. Electronic copies will be accepted via email to the contact listed in the RFP document. If emailing proposal, emails must also be received no later than the date specified in the schedule below. It is the responsibility of the Proposer to ensure that emails are successfully delivered to the RFP contact. Request for proposal submissions should be labeled “Request for Proposals: Brownfield Consulting” to the mailing information detailed below. Late submissions will not be considered or accepted after the deadline.

Request for Proposals must be sealed and addressed to the following:

Request for Proposals: Brownfield Consulting
 Jill Francisco, Appalachian Council of Governments
 30 Century Circle, Greenville, SC 29607
 (864) 242-9743

Request for Proposals must include the following sealed documentation.

- One (1) original sealed submission and
- One (1) electronic copy on a CD or flash drive or capable of being emailed or downloaded.

The ACOG reserves the right to reject any and all submissions, to waive any information or irregularities and to make the selection among the submissions as are deemed in the best interest of the ACOG. The ACOG is not liable for any incurred costs to prepare or present a response to this RFP.

IX. RFP SUBMISSION INFORMATION

1. Schedule

| | |
|--|--------------------|
| Request for Proposals Issued | June 20, 2024 |
| Notice of Intent to Respond/ Questions Due | July 5, 2024 |
| Response to Questions Distributed | July 12, 2024 |
| Proposals Due | July 25, 2024 |
| Interview of Selected Firms | August 5-8, 2024 |
| Selection and Notification | August 12, 2024 |
| Contract Award & Negotiations | August 12-16, 2024 |
| Kickoff Meeting | August 20, 2024 |

The ACOG reserves the right to cancel and/or modify the RFP dates at any time.

2. Intent to Propose & Questions

The ACOG has elected not to conduct a pre-proposal conference prior to the receipt of proposals. However, prospective proposers that have questions and are interested in receiving addenda to this RFP, including responses to submitted questions from all participating firms, should complete Attachment 1: Notice of Intent to Respond and submit it to jfrancisco@scacog.org no later than the date specified in the Schedule above. This will allow the ACOG to provide timely information to interested parties. Submitting the Notice of Intent to Respond form does not obligate the prospective proposer in any way.

The effect of all addenda to the RFP documents shall be considered in the proposal and said addenda shall be made part of the RFP documents. Before submitting a proposal, each proposer shall ascertain whether or not any addenda have been issued. Failure to include information provided on any such addenda in Respondent proposal

may render the proposal invalid and result in its rejection. **All addenda and additional information will be available at <https://www.scacog.org/rfp-portal>.**

3. Submittal Instructions

One (1) sealed original paper proposals and any required forms along with one (1) searchable electronic copy on a CD or USB flash drive in Microsoft Word or PDF format. Electronic copies will be accepted via email to the contact listed in the RFP document. If emailing proposal, emails must also be received no later than the date specified in the Schedule above. It is the responsibility of the Proposer to ensure that emails are successfully delivered to the RFP contact. Proposals should be clearly marked "Request for Proposals: Brownfield Consulting" as shown on the title page of this formal solicitation.

X. COMPETENCY OF PROPOSER

The proposer, if requested, must present within a reasonable time evidence satisfactory to the RFP Evaluation Committee of ability to successfully perform comprehensive professional services, and the possession of necessary facilities, labor, materials, equipment, software, supplies, expertise, financial resources, and adequate insurance to comply with all of the terms of the professional services agreement. No contract will be awarded to any firm that is in arrears or is in default with the ACOG upon any contract or has failed to perform faithfully on any previous contract with the ACOG.

XI. WITHDRAWAL OF PROPOSAL

Submitters may withdraw their submitted Proposal at any time by giving written notice to the RFP Contact.

XII. PROPOSAL ERRORS

Submitters are cautioned to verify their Proposal prior to submission. Negligence on the part of the submitter in preparing the Proposal confers no right of modification of the Proposal after the closing time for its receipt. Inadvertent errors (such as the omission of one page of a multi-page document) that have a correction submitted after the designated submission time may be considered at the sole discretion of the ACOG if the submitter submits with the correction sufficient information to prove that the error was inadvertent. Such amendments are not favored, and, in the case of doubt, requests will be denied.

XIII. LATE PROPOSALS; MISREPRESENTATIONS

Late Proposals will not be accepted. ACOG does not specify the method by which Proposals are to be delivered; therefore, it cannot be held responsible for any delay, regardless of reason, in the receipt of Proposals. Proposals delivered by mail or messenger will be considered only when said Proposals are received on or before the due date and time. ACOG does not guarantee that Proposals received in the building by mail or messenger will be delivered at or before the time the proposal is due. Any material misrepresentations made by the submitter(s) will void the response and eliminate the submitter(s) from further consideration. The ACOG reserves all rights with regard to this solicitation.

XIV. GROUNDS FOR PROTESTS

Protest of this RFP Solicitation: Any Proposer who is aggrieved in connection with a solicitation document shall file a written protest to Jill Francisco, Senior Project Manager, jfrancisco@scacog.org, within four (4) calendar days of the date of posting of the solicitation, RFQ, RFP, or other solicitation document or any addendums to it on the ACOG's website.

Exclusive remedy: The rights and remedies granted in this section to Proposers, either actual or prospective, are to the exclusion of all other rights and remedies of Proposers against the ACOG.

Failure to file a timely protest: If the Proposer fails to request a protest within the four (4) calendar days, the solicitation or award shall be final.

XV. PROCEDURES FOR PROTESTS

Protest: A protest must be in writing, filed with ACOG, and set forth the grounds of the protest and the relief requested with enough specificity to give notice of the issues to be decided. The protest must be received by the ACOG within the time provided.

Burden of Proof: The protestant bears the burden of proving the validity of the protest or claim against the ACOG.

Administrative Review and Decision: ACOG will conduct an administrative review of all claims set forth within the protest document and shall issue a decision in writing within four (4) calendar days of receiving the protest.

Appeals of Decision: Any appeal of the ACOG's decision pursuant to the above paragraph must be filed with the ACOG, in writing, within four (4) calendar days of the date of the decision. ACOG shall hear and decide any appeals at its next regular or special council meeting.

Stay of Award: The contract award is stayed until issuance of a final decision by the ACOG. Once a final decision is issued, the filing of a petition to appeal that decision does not stay enforcement of the ACOG's decision to award the contract.

XVI. INCURRED COST

All costs incurred in the preparation and submission of Proposals shall be borne by the submitter.

XVII. RECORD RETENTION

All working papers and reports must be retained, at the consultant's expense, for a minimum of three (3) years unless the firm is notified in writing by the ACOG of the need to extend the retention period. In addition, the firm shall respond to the reasonable inquiries to review documents relating to the matters of this grant.

XVIII. RETURN OF PROPOSALS

The ACOG is under no obligation to return any Proposals or materials submitted by the submitter as a response to this RFP.

XIX. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Issuance of this RFP and receipt of submissions does not commit ACOG to award a contract. The ACOG reserves the right to postpone receipt or selection date, accept or reject any or all submissions received in response to this RFP, or to negotiate with any of the firms submitting an RFP, or to cancel all or part of this RFP process.

XX. TERMINATION

The ACOG reserves the right to cancel the contract, at any time, without cause and without penalty with a minimum of thirty (30) days written notice.

Termination or cancellation of the contract will not relieve the Proposer of any obligations for any deliveries entered into prior to the termination of the contract (i.e. reports, statements of accounts, etc., required and not received).

Termination or cancellation of the contract will not relieve the Proposer of any obligations or liabilities resulting from any acts committed by the Proposer prior to the termination of the contract.

XXI. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

All proposals will be treated as public information unless it is specifically requested that portions of the bid be exempt from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act, SC Code of Laws Section 30-4-40 (a) (1). It is the Proposer's responsibility to notify ACOG of any proprietary information listed in proposals submitted. Any information which the proposer considers proprietary MUST be clearly marked "proprietary" next to the relevant part of the text in order for it to be treated as such.

ATTACHMENT 1 (NOT REQUIRED): NOTICE OF INTENT TO RESPOND & QUESTIONS

In order to provide timely updates to this Request for Proposals, including responses to questions submitted, we ask that potential bidders complete the following form and return it by e-mail to Jill Francisco at jfrancisco@scacog.org by July 5, 2024.

Section 1: Contact Information

Business Name:

Contact Person:

Contact E-mail:

Physical Address:

Mailing Address:

Phone #:

Section 2: Questions

If you have a question about ACOG-2024-3, please provide them below:

Section 3: Notice of Intent

Yes, we plan to submit a proposal to provide Brownfield Consulting services to ACOG.

No, we do not plan to submit a proposal at this time.

Reason: