

**EL PASO WATER - PUBLIC SERVICE BOARD  
REQUEST FOR SUBMITTALS (RFS)**

**for**

**Professional Government Relations Advocacy Services**

**RFS 07-18**

January 5, 2018

**SERVICE:**

Provide professional government relations advocacy services on behalf of El Paso Water (EPWater) and represent EPWater in legislative, and regulatory and funding-related issues and pursuits. See Scope of Services (page 5) for details on government affairs priorities.

**ATTENTION:**

RESPONSE SUBMITTALS to the Scope of Services are being accepted by EPWater to provide professional federal government relations services.

The selected consultant will primarily provide advocacy support at the federal level. Secondly, we are requesting the firm to provide federal grant preparation assistance or to partner with another consultant who can provide such services.

The selected firm will work directly with EPWater's Chief Communications and Government Affairs Officer and the Utility's Government Affairs Manager. The Response Submittal for these services shall include sufficient but brief information as enumerated below, which will be used to evaluate each firm.

**SELECTION:**

The chosen firm shall be selected on the basis of the responsiveness to the submittal and in accordance with the Professional Services Procurement Act, Texas Government Code, Chapter 2254, which addresses selection of a professional services provider. The Selection Committee will follow the basic principles of a qualifications-based selection.

The selection shall be based on the following information required to be submitted and which shall comprise of evaluation criteria with associated weighted point scores:

- 1. Experience and Competence – Government Relations (30 points)** – Government affairs firms are to outline any similar or related legislative, regulatory and funding-related experience with comparably-sized or larger municipal water utilities. Please include prior experience and success in assisting clients in obtaining federal funding

for water, wastewater, stormwater projects and/or other utility infrastructure needs along with assistance to include securing legislation and/or federal policy or regulatory changes related to infrastructure. Reference information shall be included for a minimum of two (2) and not more than five (5) similar contracted services within the past five (5) years. For each reference, we are looking for the name of a contact person(s), organization, and telephone number(s). A complete history of clients, projects and services shall not be necessary. *EPWater will evaluate the experience in working on municipal water-related legislative and regulatory issues, track record of influence on authorizations and appropriations, leading to positive outcomes (i.e., federal funding of municipal water projects.)*

- 2. Approach/Capability/Expertise for Preparing Federal Grant Applications (20 points)** – Provide a brief discussion on your in-house capability for preparing federal grant applications or whether your firm would partner to perform such services. If engaging a partner approach, please provide partner contact name(s) and organization. Please describe capabilities and expertise in federal grant funding applications and specifically mention track record of successful funding obtained from the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Development Administration and/or Federal Emergency Management Agency. Please share your insights and understanding of federal funding issues, challenges and problem solving skills that you could offer. *EPWater will evaluate capabilities, expertise and track record of obtaining federal grant dollars from designated federal agencies.*
- 3. Team Member Expertise, Availability, Connections (20 points)** – Provide names, titles and brief bios on the individuals that would be directly involved in providing professional services for EPWater. Please include each person’s area of relevant water expertise; relevant professional relationships with key congressional members/staff, committees, funding agencies, or influencers; and expected time commitment to service the needs of this contract. If a team is involved, please provide an organizational chart. If a partner organization has been identified to help with the grant applications, please provide similar information on partner personnel. *EPWater will evaluate the firm’s talent and qualifications, including background, work on relevant legislative and regulatory water issues and grant funding projects, and relationships, such as with key congressional committees and trade associations.*
- 4. Strategy and Project Management (20 points)** – Provide a brief discussion of how you work with your clients to shape strategy along with processes in place to manage services and ensure progress against a plan. Discuss approach for collaborating with client to prepare a successful grant application. Discussion may include timelines, activities, challenges to be navigated, reporting, and/or problem-solving processes. *EPWater will evaluate proposal based on strategic approach, processes proposed for accountability, solutions for effective advocacy in legislative, regulatory and funding matters.*

5. **Cost of Services (10 points)** – Provide a schedule of proposed monthly and annual fees and estimated expenses along with a schedule of costs associated with grant application assistance. Assume for planning and cost estimation purposes that we will require assistance for two U.S. Bureau of Reclamation grant applications per year. The real number could be lower or higher, and applications may be with different agencies. We realize the length and technical nature of the grants can vary greatly. *EPWater will evaluate proposal based on competitive pricing, modest expenses, and pricing for grant assistance with flexibility from no grant applications to multiple grant applications to meet utility needs.*

**RESPONSE SUBMITTAL CONTENT:**

The entire Response Submittal shall be limited to **10-12 pages (front only, no double sided)** of information on 8.5” by 11” sheets. A suggested page count for each category of information follows but may vary by firm:

1. Cover letter (1 page)
2. Experience and Competence – Government Relations (2-3 pages)
3. Approach/Capability/Expertise for Federal Grant Funding (2-3 pages)
4. Team Expertise, Availability, Connections with Agencies, Hill Staff (1-3 pages)
5. Strategy and Project Management (2-3 pages)
6. Proposed cost for services on a monthly and annual basis with a separate schedule of charges for grant applications (1 page).

**PROCEDURE:**

Review and selection process will include members of EPWater’s Public Service Board (PSB). All submittals will go through an initial screening process. Candidate submissions will be narrowed to approximately three finalists, and firms will be asked to participate in an in-person or Skype interview. Upon award of contract, the selected firm(s) may be asked to attend a Public Service Board meeting in March 2018 (usually scheduled for second Wednesday of the month).

Respondents shall submit ten (10) hard copies **and** two (2) electronic files on a thumb drive of their proposal by express mail or similar means no later than **5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, January 31, 2018** to:

Ms. Rosemary Guevara  
Senior Purchasing Agent  
El Paso Water - Public Service Board  
1154 Hawkins Boulevard  
El Paso, Texas 79925

After the selection by the Selection Advisory Committee, but prior to recommendation to the Public Service Board, contract negotiations shall be conducted with the selected firm. In the

event a mutually agreeable contract cannot be negotiated with the selected firm, negotiations shall be conducted with the next highest ranked firm.

Firms are directed not to contact any member of El Paso Water's Public Service Board. See "Cone of Silence" rules below. After the selection, each responding firm will be notified of their selection status.

## **CONE OF SILENCE**

The "Cone of Silence" will apply from the time of issuance of this Request for Services until it is posted on the Public Service Board Agenda for award. The Cone of Silence prohibits communications with El Paso Water employees to attempt to influence the purchasing decision. As such, communication is prohibited between, among others, including service providers, consultants and El Paso Water employees, and any member of the Board, the President/CEO or respective staff and members of the respective selection committee.

The provisions do not apply to, among other communications:

- ) Oral communications with Purchasing Agent(s) or Procurement Analyst, provided the communications is limited strictly to matters of process or procedure already contained within the solicitation document;
- ) The provisions of the Cone of Silence do not apply to oral presentations before selection committees, contract negotiations, public presentations before an officially noticed Public Service Board meeting or communications in writing at any time.

In addition to any other penalties provided by law, violation of the Cone of Silence by any proposer shall render that proposer's Request for Services award voidable. Any person having personal knowledge of a violation of these provisions shall report such violations to EPWater's General Counsel and the Purchasing Agent.

The "Cone of Silence" applies to any and all potential subcontractors as well.

## **CONTACTS:**

Consistent with Cone of Silence rules, please direct questions in writing to Purchasing Agent Levi Chacon at [LJChacon@epwu.org](mailto:LJChacon@epwu.org) or at (915) 594-5625. Any and all questions must be submitted by 5:00PM MST, **Thursday, January 25, 2018** to ensure sufficient time for response prior to deadline for proposal submission.

## **SCOPE OF SERVICES (Government Relations Priorities)**

This Scope of Services provided by EPWater provides government affairs firms with context of key priorities to take into consideration when preparing a proposal submission for a Government Affairs Services Agreement.

The scope consists of providing professional federal legislative lobbying services to include assistance with legislative and regulatory issues as well as assistance with the preparation of funding application(s), and other policy related assignments as requested by EPWater. The selected firm(s) shall work as independent contractors and not under the direct supervision and control of the Public Service Board.

Such advocacy may involve coordination and collaboration with various water-related trade associations and include the following:

- J Advocacy for interests and funding solutions related to water, wastewater and stormwater infrastructure needs, including energy and wetlands projects for the City of El Paso and its surrounding areas within El Paso County. Lobbyists will use their best efforts to assist in obtaining congressional authorizations, appropriations, assist with specific federal agency funding requests needed for obtaining infrastructure funding for EPWater, to include partnering with other public and private entities.
- J Provide assistance in preparing federal grant applications to obtain water/wastewater/stormwater infrastructure funding. Selected firms will prepare (directly or through a partner) at least two (2) grant applications per year with options for more (at an additional cost). Services will include writing and technical expertise needed for grant applications to effectively convey EPWater's needs and meet agency criteria necessary to compete for grant funding.
- J Advocacy for funding priorities through the **U.S. Army Corps of Engineers**. Firm will use its best efforts to seek a new authorization and/or appropriations through the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for environmental infrastructure and flood protection projects and seek ways to include such projects within the Corps annual work program.
- J Advocacy for funding from the **U.S. Department of Interior's Bureau of Reclamation**, especially through the Bureau's Title XVI Wastewater Reclamation Program, the Water Desalination Act of 1996, and the Water Infrastructure and Improvements Act for three major water supply projects: 1) Expansion of the Kay Bailey Hutchison Desalination Plant; 2) Design and Construction of the Advanced Purified Water Facility (direct potable reuse); 3) Design and construction of a future Aquifer Storage and Recovery project.

- J Work with the **International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC)** in an effort to direct more funding to channel maintenance and removal of silt in the Rio Grande.
- J Work with the **U.S. Department of Agriculture** to obtain a policy change(s) with regard to allowing entities such as EPWater to be able to apply as fiscal agent for federal funding as means to help unincorporated areas of El Paso County.
- J Explore opportunities for stormwater infrastructure funding opportunities in El Paso through the **Federal Emergency Management Agency**;
- J Work with the **U.S. Department of Defense** to advance a sustainable water management strategy; work with the Federal Emergency Management Agency on stormwater funding options for El Paso
- J Work with the **U.S. Department of Agriculture** in obtaining a policy change(s) with regard to allowing entities such as EPWater be able to apply for needed funding.
- J Assist with federal funding opportunities related to energy efficiency projects, onsite power generation projects and/or costs for electric power-intensive water projects through **U.S. Department of Energy** or other agencies.
- J Pursue possible funding from the **U.S. Environmental Protection Agency** or other agencies for purchases of land related to the development/protection of wetlands or to assist with enhancements to existing wetlands.
- J Engagement and coordination with water sector trade associations, including AWWA, NACWA and WateReuse, on policy issues of shared interest and importance.
- J Regular consultation with EPWater's Chief Communications & Government Affairs Officer and Government Affairs Manager regarding planning, strategy and implementation, and reporting.
- J Annual presentation (in-person) to El Paso Water's Public Service Board, providing an update on strategy, priorities, and funding, and related issues.
- J Additional services related to the matters outlined herein as may be requested by the PSB through its President/CEO and/or EPWater government affairs staff.
- J **Term:** The services of Lobbyists shall commence upon Public Service Board approval and completion of a signed contract. The contract shall be for three years with the option of two three-year extensions. The Agreement may be sooner terminated in accordance with the contract provisions.