



## **Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency**

### **NOACA**

1299 Superior Avenue  
Cleveland, Ohio 44114-3204  
(216) 241-2414  
[www.noaca.org](http://www.noaca.org)

**Request for Proposals (RFP) for**  
Compensation Study Services  
and  
Human Resources Solution (optional)

**Issue Date: October 26, 2023**  
**Deadline: November 16, 2023, 5:00 p.m.**

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# 1. NORTHEAST OHIO AREAWIDE COORDINATING AGENCY (NOACA)

The Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA) is a Cleveland-based transportation and environmental planning organization that serves as the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) and designated areawide water quality management agency for the counties of Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake, Lorain, and Medina in Ohio.

In these capacities it:

- Works with other organizations to help address northeast Ohio's transportation, air quality, and water quality needs
- Conducts metropolitan planning for various modes of transportation, including vehicles, freight, transit, bicycle, pedestrian, etc., while considering the transportation system's impact on the environment and land use
- Prepares the region's long-range transportation plan and short-range transportation improvement program, which is the region's capital budget for federally funded transportation projects
- Conducts studies that address congestion, improve safety and strengthen community livability

The vision of NOACA is as follows: NOACA will **STRENGTHEN** regional cohesion, **PRESERVE** existing infrastructure, and **BUILD** a sustainable multimodal transportation system to **SUPPORT** economic development and **ENHANCE** quality of life in Northeast Ohio.

NOACA is directed by a 48-member Board of Directors, representing the City of Cleveland and all five NOACA counties and their communities, plus transit agencies, the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District (NEORS), the Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Port Authority, the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (Ohio EPA), the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT), and the Ohio Turnpike Infrastructure Commission.

The NOACA region is home to 2.1 million people and over 150 units of government. The region is anchored by several urban core cities with the largest being Cleveland.

More information about NOACA is available on our website at [www.noaca.org](http://www.noaca.org).

## **2. BACKGROUND**

This RFP contains a base scope and an optional secondary scope of work. Under the base scope, NOACA invites proposals from qualified consulting firms to conduct a compensation study for the organization. Under the optional secondary scope of work, NOACA is seeking a qualified firm to provide a comprehensive human resources solution.

NOACA is comprised of forty-seven (47) staff positions that work across six operational divisions: Executive Office; Administrative Services; Comptroller/Finance; Programming; Public Affairs; Strategic and Environmental Planning; and Transportation Planning and Engineering.

### **PROJECT DETAILS AND SCOPES OF WORK**

Under this solicitation, vendors shall respond to the Base Scope of Work. Response to the Secondary Scope of Work is optional. At this time, NOACA is not accepting stand-alone proposals for the Secondary Scope of Work.

#### **A. Base Scope of Work – Compensation Study**

The consultant selected to lead this effort will be expected to thoughtfully consider how to develop a competitive and equitable compensation structure for existing and future staff. In response to this solicitation, the consultant shall submit a proposal that addresses the following base scope of work, which includes:

- *Compensation philosophy: Identifying and consulting with internal stakeholders to assess and develop the organization's compensation philosophy, or guiding principles for determining employee compensation*
- *Salary Survey: conducting a salary survey by collecting data on compensation levels, including benefits, from metropolitan planning organizations that cover comparable geography, and from other local public-sector agencies and private-sector organizations that are engaged in similar professional activities (e.g., regional planning, transportation planning and engineering, environmental planning)*
- *Market Analysis: assessing salary levels and benefits (i.e., health insurance, paid time off) for similar positions employed by other entities in the same industry, located in comparable metropolitan regions*
- *Salary Levels: Assessing the relative worth of different job positions within the organization to determine appropriate job-specific compensation levels*
- *Salary Range: reviewing and recommending the minimum and maximum salary for each of NOACA's existing job classifications*
- *Salary Increases: comparing NOACA's compensation practices to similar organizations with regard to merit increases and COLA (cost of living adjustment)*

The consultant shall prepare a draft report that summarizes the following deliverables, in addition to any other information relevant to the project. Following NOACA input on the draft, the consultant will finalize all activities and data into a final report.

1. Survey methodology and results
  - a. Outreach methodology
  - b. Number of participants
  - c. Organizations reached
  - d. Data and input received on positions, organizational structure, salary levels and compensation practices
2. Market Analysis of salary levels and benefit packages
3. Recommendations on NOACA's job-specific compensation levels
4. Recommendations NOACA's salary ranges
5. Recommendations regarding annual merit-increase and COLA practices

B. Secondary Scope of Work (Optional) – Recommendations for Human Resources Solution

Under this portion of the solicitation, consultants may also respond to the secondary scope of work. Through the Secondary Scope, NOACA seeks services to implement and administer an outsourced, full-service human resources solution that is appropriate for a small government agency. Areas of service to be included in the recommended solution shall include, but are not limited to:

- Recruitment, hiring, onboarding and training
- Employee relations
- Policy and compliance
- Discipline and termination
- Timekeeping and payroll
- Federal and state leave procedures (e.g., FMLA, disability, unemployment, etc.)

In carrying out the scope of work, the selected consultant will work directly with staff identified by the Executive Director. It is expected that the consultant will provide support in the form of labor, direct cost items, or a combination thereof.

### **3. QUALIFICATIONS**

The selected vendor (or any of the selected vendor's subcontractors) cannot currently, or at the time of contracting, be included on the current Excluded Parties List System maintained by the United States General Services Administration, or on comparable lists of suspended or debarred firms maintained by the State of Ohio or jurisdictions within NOACA's service area, are not eligible for selection.

NOACA will select a consultant based on the contents of the submitted proposal in response to the tasks identified in this document. Proposals should demonstrate:

Base Scope Qualifications

- Direct working knowledge, understanding and practice of MPOs
- Experience with compensation studies in the public sector
- Proven experience in conducting compensation studies
- Proficiency in developing materials in non-technical language to effectively communicate results and findings to a variety of audiences
- Experience with presenting to public-sector governing bodies

#### Secondary Scope Qualifications

- Experience in implementation and provision of human resource consulting services

Any combination of skills and experience that can successfully and effectively address the scope of services will be considered.

## **4. PROCUREMENT TIMELINE**

NOACA's process and *estimated* timeline for the selection of a consultant are as follows. Any contract that exceeds \$50,000 in cost must be reviewed and approved by NOACA's Finance Committee, Executive Committee and Board of Directors (\*). Contracts that cost \$50,000 or less may be authorized and executed by the Executive Director.

### **November 16, 2023 - Deadline for RFP Submittals**

Proposals must be received by NOACA by the above deadline. Proposals shall be submitted in PDF format via email to [procurement@mpo.noaca.org](mailto:procurement@mpo.noaca.org). Proposal file size shall not exceed 35 MB. NOACA assumes no responsibility for formatting or transmission errors. Submittals received after the deadline will not be considered. Please reference "RFP – Compensation Study" in the email subject line.

### **November 2023 - Consideration of Proposals**

An evaluation team will select candidate vendor(s) from submittals received. This process will include review and scoring of proposals, and review of references and other information as necessary. Candidate vendors may be interviewed by the team and asked to enter into negotiations as part of the selection process. At the end of this process, NOACA will select the proposal it considers the most highly qualified, price and all other factors considered.

### **December 2023 – Recommendation of award**

#### **\*February 2024 – NOACA Finance and Audit and Executive Committees**

If necessary, proposed award submitted to NOACA Finance and Audit and Executive Committees for review

#### **\*March 2024 – NOACA Board of Directors**

If necessary, proposed award submitted to NOACA Board of Directors for final approval

### **March 2024 – Prepare and execute contract**

### **March/April 2024 – Commence work**

## **5. REQUIREMENTS FOR PROPOSALS**

### **A. General Instructions**

NOACA will not reimburse proposers for any costs incurred prior to award and execution of a contract, including but not limited to the preparation and submittal of proposals or participation in the evaluation and negotiation process.

Proposals should be submitted in PDF format.

Proposals shall clearly address the evaluation criteria and information requested herein. Overly elaborate proposals and proposals containing only generalized marketing information are discouraged and may result in a lower evaluation score.

The selected vendor (or any of the selected vendor's subcontractors) cannot currently, or at the time of contracting, be included on the current Excluded Parties List System maintained by the United States General Services Administration, or on comparable lists of suspended or debarred firms maintained by the State of Ohio or jurisdictions within NOACA's service area, are not eligible for selection.

### **B. Requirements for Proposals**

Prospective vendors shall submit separate proposals for the base and secondary scopes of work that contain the following components:

1. Provide a cover letter identifying the prime consultant and all subcontractors, if applicable. The cover letter shall identify the executive or other responsible individual of the firm authorized to negotiate and agree to a contract by name, title, address, telephone and email. This individual shall serve as NOACA's point of contact for all communications regarding this solicitation. The letter should also contain a commitment that the proposed pricing will be valid for not less than 120 days.
2. Provide general information about the firm including location of office(s), number of years in business and areas of service expertise. Identify key management staff and a brief description of their qualifications and experience. Summarize the firm's number of full-time staff by discipline.
3. Describe the proposer's approach to each scope of work, including a detailed description of services that reflects understanding of the objectives of the Compensation Study and, if applicable, the secondary scope of work for provision of a human resources solution. If appropriate, the proposer shall expand on the scope(s) of work and provide suggestions that will enhance the outcomes of the requested deliverables. This section should detail the tasks needed to accomplish all goals and objectives. The project approach should highlight innovation and creativity, as appropriate. Provide a table(s), attached to the submission as Appendix A that summarizes and breaks down the project's deliverables, percentage of work, and estimated time to complete. A table template is attached to this RFP as *Exhibit A*.
4. Identify key staff to be assigned to each scope of work, as applicable, and the deliverables for which each individual will be responsible. Attach resumes that describe the education, experience and any professional certifications for each key staff person. Highlight experience and education relevant to the project. NOACA

- reserves the right to approve or reject any staff members assigned by primary vendor to this project.
5. Describe the capacity of your team and their ability to perform the work in a timely manner, relative to the firm's present workload and the availability of the assigned staff. Include an organizational chart that illustrates the proposed project management structure, and its position within the overall organization.
  6. List all subcontractors. Include description(s) of subcontractor(s) qualifications, identify key personnel, and provide contact person with respective email and telephone number for any subcontractor(s). NOACA reserves the right to approve or reject any subcontractors proposed by vendor for this project. NOACA expects the prime consultant to perform a minimum of thirty percent (30%) of the work with its own personnel.
  7. Provide a listing of prior work undertaken by primary and sub-contractors, if applicable, on other projects that are similar in scope to this project. Examples should describe the scope of work and demonstrate successful performance in project completion. The list of prior projects should include assignments undertaken in the past five (5) years, and also identify the duration of the project and the client. Provide contact information (name, title, mailing address, email, and telephone) for each client on prior work examples. NOACA may contact references as well as other resources to verify a firm's qualifications, experience, professionalism, and ability to perform the work. If any such projects were not satisfactorily completed, provide an explanation of the circumstances.
  8. Provide a pricing proposal in the submission as Appendix B. The pricing proposal form to be utilized is attached to this RFP as Exhibit B for illustration, and can be downloaded in editable form at [this link](#). In the pricing proposal, staff hourly rates should be broken down according to base hourly rate, overhead (%), and burdened hourly rate, which are listed separately on Exhibit B. Profit should also be broken out as a fixed amount (not as a percentage of cost) separately in the pricing proposal. Direct costs such as travel expenses, fixed-price payments to subcontractors or other vendors, supplies, and equipment rental will be reimbursed at cost. NOACA will reimburse travel and living expenses only for travel more than 50 miles from the traveler's ordinary work location, at the rates specified in the General Services Administration's most current per diem rates for the locality involved.
  9. Provide in the Base Proposal copies of the firm's worker's compensation, general liability, professional liability and automobile insurance certificates.
  10. Provide in the Base Proposal completed form "Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension & Other Responsibility Matters" attached to this RFP.

The proposer may identify any proposed exceptions to NOACA's Terms and Conditions as contained in this RFP or propose any additional terms it considers appropriate. Such proposed exceptions or additional terms must be specific and include a clear explanation of the reasons for the exception or addition. Please note that certain terms contained herein are required by law or regulation and cannot be modified. Proposed exceptions will not affect the scoring of the proposal.

## **6. EVALUATION CRITERIA AND PROCEDURES**

### **A. Evaluation Criteria**

#### **1. Qualifications and Experience (up to 30 points)**

The Proposal must demonstrate that the Consultant has the organizational capability and experience to complete the project and provide requested services. Describe the roles of the prime consultant and any subconsultant(s), as applicable, along all respective project team members. Scoring will be based on the consulting firm and proposed personnel's experience on similar projects and past performance for other clients, particularly for public sector agencies.

#### **2. Project and Service Approach (up to 40 points)**

Each consultant will be evaluated based on the approach presented in the Technical Proposal to complete the project and deliver services requested. Factors to consider include:

- i. Demonstration of understanding the goals and objectives of the proposed project
- ii. Quality and completeness of a projected table of deliverables included in the Proposal, including identification of project components that will achieve the objectives of the project
- iii. Methods and strategies to best accomplish all deliverables of the project, including the proposed schedule.
- iv. Creativity and innovation

#### **3. Project Management (up to 30 points)**

Each consultant will be evaluated based on the presentation of a management plan that ensures services are successfully completed. Factors to consider include:

- i. Demonstration of effective past project management, resulting in the delivery of a high-quality work product
- ii. Capacity to manage the project and meet deliverables according to defined timeline
- iii. Description of performance evaluation methodology that monitors for achievement of project goals and objectives throughout the duration of the project
- iv. Description of status reporting methodology, including details of both written and oral reporting
- v. Project approach that demonstrates how tasks or parts are coordinated, staffed, and completed
- vi. Identification of potential risks, and steps that can be taken to prevent or mitigate those risks

#### **4. Cost**

Total cost will be evaluated on the basis of reasonableness of the pricing for the services proposed. The selection team shall review cost factors, such as billable hours, rates of pay and appropriate staff assignment relative to the complexity of each task.

## **B. Evaluation Procedures**

NOACA intends to award a contract to the vendor whose proposal, including negotiated modifications, is considered to provide the best combination of technical quality and cost. Proposals timely received by NOACA will be evaluated by a team comprised of NOACA staff and consultants. The evaluation team will first evaluate the proposals according to the technical criteria stated above. NOACA may ask vendors for clarification of their proposals, including conducting interviews and/or requesting that the proposers give oral/visual presentations. Such interviews may be conducted in person and/or by telephone or video conference. If such interviews are held, the evaluation team will re-evaluate the proposals, at which time some vendors may be eliminated from further consideration.

NOACA will then evaluate the remaining firms' pricing proposals. Additional firms may be eliminated at this point if pricing is considered inconsistent with their technical proposals. An excessively low price may be considered as unreasonable as an excessively high price.

NOACA may also negotiate with proposers remaining in the competitive range. Following such negotiations, NOACA may request that the remaining firms submit a Best and Final Offer, which will be evaluated by the team, with a firm then selected to be recommended for award. Depending on the cost of the contract, the award recommendation may be subject to final approval by the NOACA Board of Trustees.

NOACA reserves the right to accept proposals other than the lowest cost offered, reject any and all proposals, or to negotiate separately with any proposer or proposers as deemed to be in NOACA's best interest. NOACA also reserves the right to waive minor informalities, irregularities or errors which do not affect the substance of the proposal or may award on the basis of initial proposals received without discussions or negotiations with proposers. The original proposal, therefore, should represent the vendor's best effort to meet NOACA's needs at a reasonable price.

## **7. ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES AND CONDITIONS**

- A. Consultants agree not to discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, color, religion, age, creed, sex, sexual orientation or national origin. Such action shall include, but not be limited to, the following: employment, upgrading, demotion or transfer, recruitment or recruitment advertising, layoff or termination; rates of pay or other forms of compensation; and selection for training, including apprenticeship. Consultants further agree to comply with all requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. § 2000d et seq., 49 C.F.R. Part 21.
- B. The proposal, including price, shall be valid for at least 120 days from the date of submission.
- C. An RFP does not constitute an offer or a contract. No contract may be awarded without a resolution by the NOACA Board of Directors.

- D. NOACA reserves the right to amend, cancel or reissue the RFP or to revise the timeline at any time.
- E. NOACA reserves the right to reject any and all proposals and to waive minor irregularities in the proposal process. NOACA may accept any proposal if such action is believed to be in the best interest of the agency.
- F. NOACA is not liable for any cost incurred by the proposer prior to execution of a contract.
- G. The contract between the successful proposer and NOACA shall include all documents mutually entered into including the contract instrument, relevant portions of the RFP and the proposer's response to the RFP. The contract must include and be consistent with the provisions stated in the RFP, as may be modified by negotiations.
- H. The prime consultant or system provider will assume the responsibility for all services offered in the proposal regardless of whether directly performed by the prime consultant. Further, the prime consultant will be the sole point of contact for NOACA with regard to contractual matters.
- I. The consultant project team shall be approved by NOACA. NOACA must approve any changes in the project team.
- J. Any award of contract will be to the consultant that provides the highest value relative to costs.

## **8. QUESTIONS**

For questions regarding the RFP, please contact [procurement@mpo.noaca.org](mailto:procurement@mpo.noaca.org). All answers will be publicly posted on [NOACA's website under About-Contact Us-Doing Business with NOACA](#).

**EXHIBIT A - Example Table of Deliverables**

<b>Deliverable</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>% Work</b>	<b>Time to Complete (weeks)</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>100%</b>	



## CERTIFICATION REGARDING DEBARMENT, SUSPENSION & OTHER RESPONSIBILITY MATTERS

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This Certification is required to be submitted to NOACA on behalf of the principal bidder/proposer and all subcontractors whose subcontracts are reasonably anticipated to exceed \$25,000 in value.

- A. The undersigned Bidder/Proposer/Subcontractor ("Attester") certifies to the best of its knowledge and belief that the Attester and/or any of its principals or subcontractors:
1. Are not presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible or voluntarily excluded from covered transactions by any Federal department or agency;
  2. Have not, within a three-year period preceding this bid/proposal, been convicted of or had a civil judgment rendered against them for commission of fraud or a criminal offense in connection with obtaining, attempting to obtain or performing a public (Federal, State or Local) transaction or contract or subcontract; violation of Federal or State antitrust statutes, or commission of embezzlement, theft, forgery, bribery, falsification or destruction of records, making false statements or receiving stolen property; and
  3. Are not presently indicted for or otherwise criminally or civilly charged by a governmental entity (Federal, State or local) with commission of any of the offenses enumerated in Paragraph 2 above; and
  4. Have not, within a three-year period preceding this bid/proposal, had one or more public transactions (Federal, State or local) terminated for cause or default by any federal, state or local agency.

"Principals" for the purposes of this certification, means officers, directors, owners, partners, and persons having primary management or supervisory responsibilities within a business entity (e.g., general manager, plant manager, head of a subsidiary, division, or business segment, and similar positions).

This certification concerns a matter which may be within the jurisdiction of an agency of the United States and the making of a false, fictitious, or fraudulent certification may render the maker subject to prosecution under Section 1001, Title 18, United States Code.

- B. The Attester shall provide immediate written notice to NOACA's Procurement Officer if, at any time the Attester learns that its certification was erroneous when submitted or has become erroneous by reason of changed circumstances.
- C. A certification that any of the items in Paragraph A exists will not necessarily result in withholding of an award under this solicitation. However, the certification will be considered in connection with a determination of the Attester's responsibility. Failure of the Attester to furnish a certification or provide such additional information as requested by NOACA may render the Attester non-responsible, and the Attester shall not be considered for award.
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- D. Nothing contained in the foregoing shall be construed to require establishment of a system of records in order to render, in good faith, the certification required by Paragraph A. The knowledge and information of an Attester is not required to exceed that which is normally possessed by a prudent person in the ordinary course of business dealings.
- E. The certification in Paragraph A is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when making award. If it is later determined that the Attester rendered an erroneous certification, in addition to other remedies available to NOACA, NOACA may terminate the contract resulting from this solicitation for default.

If the Attester is unable to certify to any of the statements in this certification, it shall attach an explanation to this certification.

THE UNDERSIGNED CERTIFIES OR AFFIRMS THE TRUTHFULNESS AND ACCURACY OF THE CONTENTS OF THE STATEMENTS SUBMITTED ON OR WITH THIS CERTIFICATION AND UNDERSTANDS THAT THE PROVISIONS OF 31 U.S.C. SECTIONS 3801 ET. SEQ. ARE APPLICABLE THERETO.

Executed this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_.

Name of Bidder/Proposer: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Authorized Official: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name of Official \_\_\_\_\_ Title of Official \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

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