



**Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA)**

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**Request for Quote (RFQ)  
Financial Advisory Services**

**Issue Date: December 21, 2023  
Closing Date: December 28, 2023**

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## **1. ABOUT 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 the counties and municipalities of Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake, Lorain and Medina, 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.

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

## 2. PROJECT BACKGROUND

In 2022, a Coalition comprised of NOACA and Vibrant NEO (a 501(c)3 organization) were awarded \$1.0 million in grant funding by the U.S. EPA. Under the program, the Coalition is administering a Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) that provides loans and sub-grants for the clean-up and subsequent redevelopment of brownfield sites. NOACA is the fiscal agent for the RLF and is bound by a Cooperative Agreement with USEPA.

Brownfields are defined as real property, the expansion, development, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant. Under the NOACA-Vibrant NEO Program, funds will be utilized to clean up properties located in a 12-county region of Northeast Ohio that includes Ashtabula, Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake, Lorain, Mahoning, Medina, Portage, Stark, Summit, Trumbull, and Wayne Counties.

The Program guidelines for loans and sub-grants made under the program, as approved by the NOACA Board of Directors at their meeting on December 1, 2023, are as follows:

- 0% interest rate
- Repayment period: up to 10 years
- Recipient's contribution: 20%
- Fees: the lower of 0.5% of loan or \$1,000
- Grants and forgivable loans will be available to applicants only when the RLF balance exceeds \$1,000,000.
- The amount of forgivable loans is limited to 25% of total RLF balance.

Applications for funds from the NOACA - Vibrant NEO Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund are evaluated by a Brownfields Steering Committee which is responsible for reviewing loan applications against program qualifications, conducting due diligence of prospective borrowers, drafting loan and subgrant agreements, and recommending projects for approval by the NOACA Board of Directors.

## 3. SCOPE OF WORK

This RFQ seeks a financial advisor to provide technical assistance to NOACA in ensuring that loans made under the RLF follow prudent lending practices including but not limited to:

- 1) Identifying financial and legal documents to be requested from each RLF applicant to determine financial capability to fulfill loan repayment obligations
- 2) Examining and evaluating submitted financial and legal documents to determine the applicant's financial capability to fulfill loan repayment obligations
- 3) Conducting a review of and ensuring that appropriate financial terms and conditions are included in each loan or subgrant agreement;
- 4) Ensuring that borrowers comply with the internal control requirements specified in [2 CFR §200.303](#), [2 CFR Part 200, Subpart F, Audit Requirements](#), and others as required by USEPA;
- 5) Other general assistance on financial matters related to the RLF, as needed

Work shall be conducted by the Consultant on a task-order basis, as requested by NOACA.

#### **4. QUALIFICATIONS**

The qualified consultant shall have the following knowledge and experience:

- Bachelor's degree in business, finance, accounting, or related field
- Chartered financial analyst (CFA), Certified Public Accountant (CPA), Certified Lender Business Banker (CLBB) or other relevant certification strongly preferred
- Knowledge of and experience with prudent loan and underwriting criteria and practices applicable to private sector borrowers
- Ability to analyze project pro-forma and/or other project financial information
- Experience working with revolving loan funds supported by Federal funding programs is advantageous.

#### **5. PROCUREMENT TIMELINE**

NOACA's suggested timeline for selection of a consultant is as follows:

RFQ Distributed	December 21, 2023
RFQ submissions due	December 28, 2023
Vendor Selection	December 2023
Execute Agreement	Dec 2023/Jan 2024

#### **6. SELECTION PROCEDURES**

NOACA will select a consultant based on review of the vendor's qualifications and experience and price quote.

Information provided on qualifications shall demonstrate that the Consultant has the education, credentials, experience, and organizational capability to provide the level of service specified in the scope of work.

Total cost will be evaluated on a scale relative to the cost of all quotes received. NOACA shall review cost factors such as identified budget items, billable hours, rates of pay and appropriate staff assignment relative to the complexity of each task.

The total cost of the contract shall not exceed \$50,000.

#### **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. All proposals received by NOACA in response to this RFQ shall remain valid for 90 days from the date of submittal.
- C. An RFQ does not constitute an offer or a contract.
- D. NOACA reserves the right to cancel or reissue the RFQ or to revise the timeline at any time. NOACA reserves the right to reject all quotes and to waive minor irregularities in the proposal process which do not affect the substance of the quote. NOACA may accept any quote if such an action is believed to be in the best interests of the agency.
- E. NOACA is not liable for any cost incurred by the proposer prior to execution of a contract.
- F. The contract between the successful proposer and NOACA shall include all documents mutually entered specifically including the contract instrument, applicable portions of the RFQ, and the response to the RFQ. The contract must include, and be consistent with, the provisions stated in the RFQ. The contract shall be deemed to incorporate and is subject to all applicable federal and state laws and regulations.
- G. The prime consultant will be required to assume responsibility for all services offered in the proposal whether directly performed by the prime consultant or a subconsultant. Further, the prime consultant will be the sole point of contact for NOACA regarding contractual matters.
- H. The consultant project team shall be approved by NOACA. NOACA must approve any changes in the consultant's project team.
- I. Consultants must show proof of professional liability insurance, comprehensive general liability insurance, and Ohio Workers' Compensation insurance.
- J. Firms included on the current Federal list of firms suspended or debarred are not eligible for selection.
- K. In the event that the selected consultant has a potential conflict of interest (by having a financial interest in the project or the loan applicant, for example), the consultant shall promptly advise NOACA and propose methods of mitigating the conflict, if available. If NOACA determines the conflict cannot be mitigated to the extent necessary, NOACA reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to assign the project to another consultant.

## **8. SUBMISSION OF QUOTE FOR SERVICES**

Submit a quote of up to three (3) pages in length that provides the following information:

- A Summary of qualifications that relate to the credentials, knowledge and experience listed in *Section 4* of this RFQ
- A pricing proposal that provides the unit cost of services as described in *Section 3 – Scope of Work*. The pricing proposal shall include itemized costs by task with

estimated respective hours and rates. The total cost of the contract shall not exceed \$50,000.

Attach resume(s) of professional(s) to be assigned to this engagement.

Quotes shall be emailed in PDF format to [procurement@mpo.noaca.org](mailto:procurement@mpo.noaca.org) by **5:00 p.m. on Thursday, December 28, 2023**. Please state "BFRLF Financial Advisor" in the subject line of the transmittal email.

## **9. QUESTIONS**

For questions regarding the RFQ, please contact [procurement@mpo.noaca.org](mailto:procurement@mpo.noaca.org).