



**Request for Proposals (RFP) for
Irishtown Bend Stabilization Project
Crowdfunding Consultant**

**Issue Date: May 23, 2025
Deadline to Submit: June 24, 2025**

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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 .

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Shipping is a vital part of the freight system and the regional and national economy. Maritime commerce in Cleveland Harbor provides over 22,000 jobs in the region. Businesses relying on the Cuyahoga River for the movement of goods and materials form a key manufacturing hub in Northeast Ohio that generates \$4.7 billion of total economic value as well as \$1.8 billion in personal income and local consumption. The river and Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Port, which is part of the M-90 Marine Highway Corridor, is a key piece of the Great Lakes shipping system, facilitating the exchange of goods with several other ports in the Great Lakes region.

In 2019 NOACA was awarded funding from the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) INFRA Grant Program for the Irishtown Bend (IB) Bank Stabilization project. Due to wear and tear and lack of existing functional bulkheads, a section of hillside along the Cuyahoga ship channel, known as Irishtown Bend, was determined to be at high risk of failure. Collapse of the hillside would block movement by freighters that deliver bulk commodity cargo to manufacturing sites located upriver. This reduction in access for freighters would also result in a shift to other modes of freight, potentially adding an estimated 473,000 trucks to the region's road network.

The Stabilization Project entails installing approximately 2,000 linear feet of sheet steel bulkheads along the Irishtown Bend section of shoreline of the Cuyahoga River ship channel. The project will restore the riverbank, ensuring the continued shipment of materials such as iron ore, limestone, cement, aggregate, and salt, which comprise millions of tons of cargo transiting the ship channel. This in turn supports the area's manufacturing sector.

In its original application to the US DOT INFRA grant program, to help close the Stabilization Project's funding gap NOACA committed to pursuing innovative financing through a public-private crowdfunding investment model. The amount of the funding gap that needs to be raised through this crowdfunding initiative is \$1 million. The crowdfunding model will generate funding through internet-based securities offerings to private individual or organizational investors.

3. SCOPE OF WORK

NOACA is seeking professional services to develop and implement a crowdfunding strategy and financing model. The consultant will lead the following tasks, and any additional tasks identified as necessary to implement the strategy and achieve funding goals.

Specific tasks include:

- Development of a crowdfunding investment strategy and implementation plan to raise \$1 million for the Irishtown Bend Stabilization project.
- Development or purchase of a web-based fundraising platform best suited for the Irishtown Bend Stabilization project
- Implementation and management of the web-based fundraising platform for the project

- Development and implementation of a campaign strategy to generate interest by prospective investors
- Identification and selection of investment partner(s) to advance, and/or guarantee funding as part of the process
- Guiding NOACA and project partners through the process of collection and transfer of funding generated through the project.
- This project must be completed no later than December 31, 2026.

4. QUALIFICATIONS

The selected Vendor (or any of the selected Vendor’s subcontractors) cannot currently, or at the time of contracting, be listed on any federal, state, or local government jurisdiction debarment or suspension lists.

The qualified consultant shall have experience creating, implementing, and managing successful crowdfunding campaigns, including but not limited to creation of strategies to target potential donors; knowledge of and ability to execute innovative marketing strategies; financial literacy and analytical skills; experience with donation-based campaigns; and knowledge of procedures for secure collection and transfer of funds raised through the campaign.

5. TIMELINE & SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

NOACA’s process and *estimated* timeline for the selection of a consultant are as follows:

May 23, 2025: Request for Proposals (RFP) posted

June 23, 2025, 5:00 p.m. - Deadline for RFP Submittals

Proposals shall be submitted by the deadline in PDF via email to procurement@mpo.noaca.org. NOACA assumes no responsibility for formatting or transmission errors. Submittals received after the deadline will not be considered. Please reference “Irishtown Bend Crowdfunding Services” in the subject line of the transmittal email.

July 2025 - Consideration of Proposals

An evaluation team will conduct review and scoring of proposals, and review of references and other information as necessary. At the end of this process, NOACA will select the proposal it considers the most highly qualified, price and all other factors considered.

August 2025 – Consideration of recommendation of award by NOACA Finance & Audit and Executive Committees

September 2025 – Consideration and approval of award by NOACA Board of Directors

September 2025 – Execution of contract between NOACA and Vendor

October 2025– commence work

6. REQUIREMENTS FOR PROPOSALS

A. General Instructions

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

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. No pricing or price-related information shall be included in the Technical Proposal (Volume I).

Firms included on the current Excluded Parties List System maintained within the System for Award Management 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 Technical Proposal (Volume I)

The Technical Proposal shall include the following components:

1. A cover letter that identifies the prime consultant and any subcontractors. The cover letter shall identify the officer or other responsible executive of the organization authorized to negotiate and agree to a contract by name, title, address, telephone, and email. This individual, or a designee, 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. General information about the organization including: 1) location of office(s); 2) number of years in operation and 3) areas of service expertise.
3. Description of the proposer's approach to the project, including a detailed scope of services that reflects understanding of the objectives of the Irishtown Bend Crowdfunding Project. If appropriate, the proposer shall expand on the scope of work and provide suggestions that will enhance the outcomes of the project. This section should detail the tasks needed to accomplish all the objectives of the project, and an estimated timeline (in terms of weeks from contract execution) tied to the tasks in the scope of work. The project approach should highlight innovation and creativity, as appropriate. Provide a table, attached to the submission as Appendix A, that summarizes and breaks down the project's deliverables, percentage of work, and estimated time to complete. The timeline for the project must indicate a date of completion of December 31, 2026. A table of deliverables template is attached to this RFP as *Exhibit A*.

4. Identification of key staff to be assigned to this project 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 personnel assigned by the Vendor or subcontractors to this project.
5. Description of the capacity of Vendor to perform the work in a timely manner, relative to the organization's present workload and the availability of the assigned staff.
6. Listing of prior work on other projects that are similar in scope to the Irishtown Bend Crowdfunding project. Examples should describe the scope of work and demonstrate successful performance in project completion. The list of prior projects should include engagement undertaken in the past five (5) years and identify the duration of the project and the client. Provide contact information (name, title, organization, email, and telephone) for each client on prior work examples. NOACA may contact references as well as other resources to verify an organization's qualifications, experience, professionalism, and ability to perform the work. If any such projects were not satisfactorily completed, provide an explanation of the circumstances.
7. There is no Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) Goal for this contract, but DBE-certified entities are encouraged to apply, and others are encouraged to subcontract a portion of work to certified DBE firms.

The link to the Ohio Department of Transportation's (ODOT) Unified Certification Program, which identifies certified DBE firms, can be found at the following location:

<http://www.dot.state.oh.us/Divisions/ODI/SDBE/Pages/DBE-Directory.aspx>

8. List of all known subcontractors, identifying those that are certified as Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE) by the State of Ohio, along with the type and percentage of work to be performed by each subcontractor. Include description(s) of subcontractor(s) qualifications, and identification of key personnel. 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.

C. Requirements for Business Proposal - Volume II

The Business Proposal shall include the following components:

1. A copy of the cover letter included in Volume I
2. A pricing proposal, included in the submission as Appendix B. The pricing proposal form is attached to this RFP for illustration as Exhibit B and can be downloaded in editable form [at this link](#). **Price quotes shall include a base fee that shall not exceed the budget of \$50,000.** The proposal should include the methodology used to calculate the base fee, identifying the service components that comprise the fee. Consultants should also include in their pricing proposal an additional percentage to be paid as commission from the funds generated through the campaign.
3. Copies of the proposer's worker's compensation certificate for the jurisdiction where work will be performed and general liability, professional liability and automobile insurance certificate(s).
4. Completed form "Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension & Other Responsibility Matters," attached to this RFP as Exhibit C.

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.

7. EVALUATION CRITERIA AND PROCEDURES

A. Evaluation Criteria

1. Experience/Qualifications (up to 30 points)

Each proposer will be evaluated regarding their experience and qualifications appropriate to the proposed project. Factors to consider include:

- i. Experience developing and executing crowdfunding campaign strategy
- ii. Experience identifying and connecting with target donors for crowdfunding campaigns
- iii. Experience with building/selecting, launching, and maintaining web-based application for crowdfunding campaign
- iv. Experience developing and implementing innovative marketing strategies for crowdfunding campaigns
- v. Experience with procedures for secure collection and transfer of funds raised through campaign

2. Project Approach (up to 40 points)

Each consultant will be evaluated based on the approach presented in the Technical Proposal to complete the project. 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 Technical 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 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. Project Budget and Cost (not scored)

Price quotes shall include a base fee that shall not exceed the budget of \$50,000.

The proposal should include the methodology used to calculate the base fee, identifying the service components that comprise the fee. Consultants should also include in their pricing proposal an additional percentage to be paid as commission from the funds generated through the campaign. Points are not awarded for this category, but NOACA may consider cost reasonableness during the evaluation process.

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. A team comprised of NOACA staff will evaluate any proposals received by the deadline. The evaluation team will first evaluate the proposals according to the technical criteria stated in this RFP. NOACA may ask Vendors for clarification of their proposals; conduct interviews; or request that proposers give presentations. Such interviews may be conducted in person, by telephone or through video conference. If such interviews are held, the evaluation team will re-evaluate the proposal(s), at which time they may eliminate some Vendors from further consideration.

NOACA may negotiate with proposers that remain in the competitive range. Following such negotiations, NOACA may request that the remaining firms submit a Best and Final Offer, which the team will evaluate. The team may then recommend that firm for award. Depending on Vendor's proposed cost, recommendation of award may be subject to final approval by the NOACA Board of Directors. Any contract that exceeds \$77,250 in cost is subject to Board approval.

NOACA reserves the right to accept proposals other than the lowest cost offered, reject 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.

8. ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES AND CONDITIONS

- A. This proposal does not include a specific DBE goal. However, consultants that are DBE-certified, others that subcontract with a DBE-certified business, or others that demonstrate a good faith effort to subcontract such firms, are encouraged. If a DBE-certified firm is the prime or sub-consultant, the price proposal should quantify the level of DBE participation as a percentage of the total contract.

A directory of certified DBEs in Ohio can be accessed on the UCP website at:

<https://www.dot.state.oh.us/Divisions/ODI/SDBE/Pages/DBE-Directory.aspx>.

- B. 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.
- C. The proposal, including price, shall be valid for at least 120 days from the date of submission.
- D. An RFP does not constitute an offer or a contract. No contract may be awarded without a resolution by the NOACA Board of Directors.
- E. NOACA reserves the right to amend, cancel or reissue the RFP or to revise the timeline at any time.
- F. 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.
- G. NOACA is not liable for any cost incurred by the proposer prior to execution of a contract.
- H. 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 response to the RFP. The contract must include and be consistent with the provisions stated in the RFP, as may be modified by negotiations.
- I. The prime Vendor will assume the responsibility for all services offered in the proposal regardless of whether directly performed by the prime Vendor. Further, the prime Vendor will be the sole point of contact for NOACA with regard to contractual matters.

- J. The consultant project team shall be approved by NOACA. NOACA must approve any changes in the project team.
- K. Any award of contract will be to the Vendor that provides the highest value relative to costs.

9. QUESTIONS

For questions regarding the RFP, please contact procurement@mpo.noaca.org. Submitting questions early in the process provides NOACA the opportunity to respond; questions received near the deadline may not receive a response. All answers will be publicly posted on [NOACA's website under About-Contact Us-Doing Business with NOACA](#).

Exhibit A - Example Table of Deliverables

Deliverable	Description	% Work	Time to complete (weeks)
Total		100%	

Exhibit B - Pricing Proposal

EXHIBIT B - PRICING	
BASE FEE	
Deliverable	Cost
Total Base Fee	\$0.00
COMMISSION (%):	
Signature:	
Name:	
Title:	
Company Name:	
Date:	

Exhibit C – Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension & Other Responsibility Matters

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.
- 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 the 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 attest to any of the statements in this certification, it shall attach an explanation.

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 _____