



RFP27007056 - AGENCY SOLICITATION SPECIFICATIONS

HEADER

TITLE: GOVERNMENT RELATIONS AND LEGISLATIVE LOBBYING SERVICES FOR THE RHODE ISLAND COUNCIL ON POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

DESCRIPTION: THE RHODE ISLAND COUNCIL ON POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION IS SEEKING FIRMS TO PROVIDE GOVERNMENT RELATIONS AND LEGISLATIVE LOBBYING SERVICES.

PRE-BID/ PROPOSAL CONFERENCE: NO
MANDATORY: NO

BONDING REQUIREMENTS:
BID SURETY BOND REQUIRED: NO
PAYMENT AND PERFORMANCE BOND REQUIRED: NO

CONTRACT TERMS:

The initial contract period will begin upon awarding of a supplier contract. Contracts may be renewed for up to four (4) additional 12-month periods based on vendor performance and the availability of funds.

SECTION A: BACKGROUND

The Council on Postsecondary Education was established as an independent public corporation pursuant to Rhode Island General Laws §16-59-1 and is vested with the responsibility of providing oversight for the system of public higher education in Rhode Island. This system consists of two public institutions of higher learning, Rhode Island College (RIC) and the Community College of Rhode Island (CCRI), along with the Rhode Island Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner (RIOPC).

RIOPC is the administrative and research arm of the Council on Postsecondary Education. The mission of RIOPC is to ensure, promote, and expand postsecondary attainment among all Rhode Islanders by providing an effective system of postsecondary education and workforce training that is high quality, equitable, accessible, affordable, and aligned to pre-kindergarten-12 education and the economy.

RIOPC, on behalf of the Council on Postsecondary Education, is soliciting proposals from qualified firms to provide government relations and legislative lobbying services. RIOPC is seeking a firm or firms with extensive expertise in government relations and legislative lobbying services in the State of Rhode Island.

SECTION B: SCOPE OF WORK AND REQUIREMENTS

The selected firm(s) shall meet the following requirements:

1. Experience and Relationships

The firm(s) shall have demonstrated experience providing government relations, legislative advocacy, and lobbying services in the State of Rhode Island, including established relationships with the Rhode Island General Assembly, executive branch officials and agencies, and other governmental stakeholders. When applicable, the firm(s) shall also demonstrate familiarity with Rhode Island's congressional delegation, relevant federal agencies, and federal legislative and governmental affairs.

2. Legislative and Governmental Monitoring

The firm(s) shall actively monitor legislative, regulatory, budgetary, and other governmental developments at the state and federal levels, as applicable, that may directly or indirectly affect RIOPC, the Council on Postsecondary Education, Rhode Island's public postsecondary education system, or other matters identified by RIOPC. Monitoring shall include, as applicable, proposed and enacted legislation, amendments, committee activities, appropriations, proposed regulations, executive actions, and other significant governmental developments.

3. Updates and Analysis

The firm(s) shall provide RIOPC with timely information and analysis regarding significant developments and provide legislative and governmental affairs updates on a schedule established in consultation with RIOPC during the Rhode Island General Assembly legislative session and periodically, as requested by RIOPC, outside of the legislative session. Matters requiring immediate attention shall be communicated to RIOPC promptly upon identification.

4. Strategy Development and Implementation

The firm(s) shall work in coordination with the Commissioner on Postsecondary Education (Commissioner) and designated RIOPC staff to develop and implement legislative, regulatory, budgetary, and governmental affairs strategies that advance RIOPC's approved priorities and interests.

5. Legislative Tracking and Issue Management

The firm(s) shall identify, obtain, review, and monitor legislation, regulations, budget provisions, amendments, committee activities, and other governmental actions that may affect RIOPC or matters within RIOPC's responsibilities. The firm(s) shall maintain an organized tracking system for significant matters identified in consultation with RIOPC.

6. Strategic Advice and Counsel

The firm(s) shall provide strategic advice and counsel regarding legislative, regulatory, budgetary, governmental, and public policy matters affecting RIOPC. The firm(s) shall assist in identifying emerging issues, risks, and opportunities and provide recommendations regarding appropriate responses, advocacy strategies, stakeholder engagement, and other actions that may advance or protect RIOPC's interests.

7. Governmental and Stakeholder Engagement

The firm(s) shall develop and maintain effective working relationships and communicate, as appropriate and as authorized by RIOPC, with members and staff of the Rhode Island General Assembly; the Office of the Governor; state departments, agencies, and officials;

Rhode Island's congressional delegation and staff; relevant congressional committees; federal agencies; and other governmental stakeholders concerning matters of interest to RIOPC. When requested by RIOPC or otherwise necessary to perform the services, the firm(s) shall arrange, facilitate, prepare for, and participate in meetings with governmental officials and staff and provide appropriate follow-up regarding significant issues.

8. Advocacy and Impact Analysis

The firm(s) shall communicate RIOPC's authorized legislative, regulatory, budgetary, and public policy priorities and positions to policymakers and other appropriate governmental stakeholders. The firm(s) shall provide information regarding the potential impact of proposed legislation, regulations, budget actions, and other governmental actions upon RIOPC and the areas within RIOPC's responsibilities.

9. Related Services, Compliance, and Conflicts of Interest

The firm(s) shall provide other reasonably related government relations, legislative advocacy, lobbying, governmental affairs, or strategic advisory services requested by RIOPC and within the scope of the resulting contract. Such services may include attendance at legislative hearings, committee meetings, regulatory proceedings, governmental meetings, and other events; preparation of testimony or briefing materials; coordination with designated institutional representatives or other stakeholders; and assistance with emerging legislative, regulatory, budgetary, or governmental matters. The firm(s) shall comply with the Rhode Island Lobbying Reform Act and all other applicable federal and state laws, regulations, registration requirements, reporting requirements, ethics requirements, and disclosure requirements applicable to lobbying and government relations activities performed under the contract. The firm(s) shall promptly disclose to RIOPC any actual or potential conflict of interest that arises during the term of the engagement.

10. Communication, Reporting, and Confidentiality

The firm(s) shall maintain regular and direct communication with the Commissioner and designated RIOPC staff concerning legislative, regulatory, budgetary, governmental, and other matters within the scope of the engagement. A written summary of legislative and governmental affairs activities and communications shall be provided to the Commissioner on a regular basis or as otherwise requested by RIOPC. The firm(s) shall protect confidential and non-public information obtained through the engagement and shall not disclose such information except as authorized by RIOPC or as required by applicable law.

SECTION C: PROPOSAL MATERIALS

1. Technical Proposal

Narrative and format: Bidders must submit a technical proposal which addresses each of the following elements:

- A. **Staff Qualifications** – Provide staff resumes/CV and describe qualifications and experience of key staff who will be involved in this project, including their experience in higher education and the Rhode Island legislative and executive branches.
- B. **Capability, Capacity, and Qualifications of the Vendor** - Please provide a detailed description of the Vendor's experience including:
 - Demonstrated expertise and experience as a government relations specialist or lobbyist. Experience in higher education is preferred.
 - List a minimum of three (3) relevant client references, to include client names, addresses, contact names with emails and phone numbers, dates of service and type(s) of service(s) provided.
- C. **Work Plan** – Please describe in detail the proposed framework and approach for performing the requested services outlined in the Scope of Work, including legislative, regulatory, and budgetary monitoring, strategic advice, communication, stakeholder engagement, and reporting. |

2. Cost Proposal

Detailed Budget and Budget Narrative:

Provide a cost proposal for the required services which includes the following information:

A fixed, not-to-exceed fee for the initial 12-month contract period. The proposal shall identify the total annual fee and proposed billing structure. The fee shall include all professional services, administrative costs, and other ordinary expenses necessary to perform the Scope of Work. Any additional services or expenses not included in this scope of work may be separately identified. |

3. Supplemental Bidder Attestation Form

See Appendix A on the “Overview” tab in Ocean State Procures™ for information. Vendors are required to complete, sign and submit this form with their overall proposal.

4. ISBE Proposal

See Appendix B on the “Overview” tab in Ocean State Procures™ for information and the MBE, WBE and/or Disability Business Enterprise Participation Plan form(s). Vendors are required to complete, sign and submit these forms with their overall proposal. Please complete separate forms for each MBE, WBE, and/or Disability Business Enterprise subcontractor to be utilized on the solicitation.

SECTION D: EVALUATION AND SELECTION - SOLICITATION SPECIFIC

Technical proposals must receive a minimum of 55 (78.5%) out of a maximum of 70 points to advance to the cost evaluation phase. Technical proposals scoring less than 55 points shall not have the accompanying cost or ISBE participation proposals opened or evaluated; such proposals shall not receive further consideration.

Technical proposals scoring 55 points or higher shall have the cost proposals evaluated and assigned up to a maximum of 30 points bringing the total potential evaluation score to 100 points. As total possible evaluation points are determined, vendor ISBE proposals shall be evaluated and assigned up to 6 bonus points for ISBE participation.

Proposals shall be reviewed and scored based upon the following criteria:

Criteria	Possible Points
Staff Qualifications	30 Points
Capability, Capacity, and Qualifications of the Vendor	25 Points
Work Plan	15 Points
Total Possible Technical Points	70 Points
Cost Proposal	30 Points
Total Possible Evaluation Points	100 Points
ISBE Participation	6 Bonus Points
Total Possible Points	106 Points

Additional evaluation criteria can be found at:

- For those with an OSP account, see the “Requirements” tab of this solicitation in OSP for additional information on the evaluation and selection process in the “RFP Standard Specification” section.
- For those without an OSP account, public access to the full bid can be found at <https://ridop.ri.gov/vendors/bidding-opportunities>. Search for this solicitation, open the record, click on the “Print/Download Solicitation Summary” button in the upper right corner for all the solicitation requirements and supporting documents are found at the bottom of the page in the “Solicitation Attachments” section.