



City of Austin

Founded by Congress, Republic of Texas, 1839

Capital Contracting Office, PO Box 1088, Austin, Texas 78767 Telephone 512/974-7181 Fax 512/974-7297

July 27, 2016

To: Consultants Requesting RFQ Package

SUBJECT: Request for Statements of Qualifications (RFQ) for providing Construction Materials, Geotechnical, and Forensic Engineering Services RL
Solicitation Number: CLMP200 – **Clarification No. 1**

This Clarification No. 1 is in response to questions received which warranted a clarification.

Clarification:

The City received several questions about the matter covered in Question #1, below:

Question 1: In lieu of having NICET Level II certification for the soils technician, would we be able to use technicians who are TXAPA SB102 Field Specialist certified?

Response: See Addendum 1.

Question 2: Currently, the City of Austin requires that testing labs make 6"x12" diameter cylinders. Would the City also begin allowing labs to make 4"x8" cylinders in addition to 6"x12" diameter cylinders?

Response: There is no change in this requirement at this time.

Question 3: I would like to suggest that there be some kind of tracking put into place so Consultants can track when the City receives and then approves invoices that are submitted. Consultants currently have no means of determining the duration of time it takes for the City to approve submitted invoices.

Response: We have noted this suggestion and are considering how to best address this concern as part of our new process improvement initiative for this contract. We will be sharing our process improvement recommendations with our Consultants at a meeting to be scheduled at a later date.

Question 4: Is the ASTM E543 laboratory accreditation, required under Category 3, mandatory or will other lab accreditations fulfill this requirement?

Response: ASTM 543 (Standard Specification for Agencies Performing Nondestructive Testing) is not required to qualify for this contract and this change has been addressed in Addendum 1. Note that ASTM 543 will be a required laboratory accreditation if nondestructive testing is required for a rotation list assignment.

Question 5: Why was the ASTM E543 accreditation added to this year's solicitation under Category 3?

Response: The ASTM 543 accreditation is critical for a firm performing nondestructive testing.

Question 6: It states that selected firms need to demonstrate 3 years of services prior to the date of the RFQ. Our firm will have reached the 3-year mark by the time the contracts are signed, but not by RFQ issuance date. Would a firm with close to 3 years be deemed "non-responsive," even though the owner/principal had been practicing geotechnical engineering in the Austin area for over 30 years?

Response: In this case, the firm will not have met the requirement of having provided services for a minimum of three (3) years prior to the date of the RFQ.

Question 7: Could a firm pursue Category 2 (Geotechnical Engineering) by subbing all drilling work to local subcontractors and subbing all lab work to local, accredited MBE/DBE laboratories, assuming all engineering work was performed by a registered PE with experience in Austin area?

Response: It would be acceptable to sub out all drilling work, but not the lab work. The City requires that selected firms "presently have a permanent, fully-operational, organized and fully-functional, established laboratory facility and offices that are located in the Austin Metropolitan Statistical Area..."

Question 8: The *M-WBE Procurement Program-No Goals Utilization Plan Form* states to "Attach Good Faith Efforts documentation if non MBE/WBE Firms will be used." This seems to conflict with directions given in the briefing. Please clarify is the GFE documentation would be required if we submitted a team comprised solely of the Prime and all MBE/WBE constituent firms.

Response: Per SMBR, if a prime firm intends to subcontract a scope of work, they should contact SMBR to obtain an availability list to identify the eligible MBE or WBE subcontractors who can perform the scope. If a prime firm selects an MBE or WBE firm from the availability list provided by SMBR, then a Good Faith Effort is not required.

If a Prime Consultant has pre-identified an MBE or WBE firm to subcontract, the City strongly encourages you to contact SMBR to ensure that the firm is: 1) certified as an MBE or WBE firm and 2) certified for the scope of work.

Question 9: Would it be possible for a geotechnical firm to pursue only geotechnical-related forensic assignments under Category 3? The requirement for accreditation via ASTM E543 seems not to apply to this scenario.

Response: A geotechnical firm may pursue only geotechnical-related forensic assignments under Category 3. The ASTM E543 laboratory accreditation does not apply to geotechnical testing and only pertains to nondestructive testing.

Question 10: We occasionally need to use traffic control when drilling on or around busy streets. Is traffic control considered a major scope of service that should be added a subconsultant at this time?

Response: This is not a required qualification for this contract. You may opt to add a subconsultant at a later time.

Question 11: Under Category 2 (Geotechnical Engineering), specialized testing such as hardness and abrasivity testing may be required. Should we select a subcontractor for these tests at this time? We would not want to be passed over because we do not self-perform specialty rock testing.

Response: This is not a required qualification for this contract. You may opt to add a subconsultant at a later time.

Question 12: Our firm opened a central Texas office to serve the Austin and surrounding municipalities. On page 4 of 11 of the "Scope of Services," it states that "The City requires laboratories to be certified/accredited by A2LA or AASHTO at the time of submittal of the Proposal." Our central Texas office is scheduled for our AASHTO certification on 8/11/16 and we expect to be accredited/certified prior to selection/awarding of this contract. Please advise if this is acceptable to submit our Statement of Qualifications.

Response: This would not meet the laboratory requirement of being certified/accredited "at the time of submittal of the Proposal."

Question 13: In the Pre-Response meeting, it was asked if an RPLS was required to locate boreholes and elevations.

Response: As part of this contract, borehole locations and elevations can be determined by non-RPLS personnel using GPS.

Question 14: Form 11 - MAJOR SCOPES OF WORK- COMPARABLE PROJECT EXPERIENCE is included in the solicitation but not referenced in the Evaluation Criteria or Consideration Items. Can we assume this form should be included with our submittal?

Response: Form 11 should not have been included in the RFQ. See Addendum 1.

Question 15: Our firm intends to provide testing services for Category 1 only and the testing services we have marked from the list are the ones we can do in house, without using an MBE/WBE firm. I have marked "No" on the no goals form. Are we supposed to fill in the "No goals plan" on the following page? I assume if we did, it would nullify the "No Goals Form" on the previous page. Also, do we have to include a write-up regarding a plan just in case the City of Austin has projects that require MBE/WBE goals?

Response: Per SMBR, if your firm is providing all testing services and does not plan to use an M/WBE subcontractor, then check the box "No" and do not list a firm in the section for Sub-Contractor/Sub-Consultant. If your firm decides to use an M/WBE subcontractor,

then check the box “Yes” and fill in the name of the firm. If you are not using a certified firm, you are required to do your Good Faith Efforts (GFE). This is a No Goals Contract so there are not any goals to meet, but SMBR still requires Good Faith Efforts. In your specific case, under the section for Prime Contractor that asks if your company is certified, your firm will check “NO,” but your firm is registered with the City of Austin to perform work.

Question 16: **The No Goals Utilization Plan asks if our firm is City Certified. I am assuming this is only intended for minority firms. Does “City Certified” specifically designate a firm is certified as a MBE/DBE or WBE?**

Response: Per SMBR, “City Certified” indicates that a firm is certified as MBE, WBE, or MWDBE.

Question 17: **Upon reviewing Table 1 in Addendum No. 1, there is a discrepancy in the TxDOT methods listed for Density of Soil by Nuclear Methods and Water Content of Soil By Nuclear Methods. The TxDOT test procedure for determining these values by nuclear methods is Tex-115-E, Part I. The addendum shows this test as Tex-115-E, Part II which is determining density and water content by sand cone method. Should this TxDOT test method be Tex-115-E, Part I?**

Response: See Addendum 2.

Question 18: **For Category 3, it states it may be acceptable for the firm to assign a Project Professional from another of the firm’s offices in the United States. Do we have to get approval before we submit or after being selected?**

Response: This approval would occur after being selected as a firm on this contract and approval would be discussed on a project-by-project bases.

Question 19: **Is it acceptable for a technician with 2 years’ experience that is certified with TxDOT and/or ACI for individual tests to perform those individual tests for this contract?**

Response: The City requires the technician to be certified in the tests they are going to perform.

Question 20: **Why is a NICET-certified technician not required to have 2 years’ experience post certification?**

Response: The National Institute for Certification in Engineering Technologies requires that candidates seeking NICET Level 2 certification have a minimum of two years of prior, relevant experience and those seeking NICET Level 3 certification must have a minimum of five years of prior, relevant experience.

The City received several, similar questions related to the City's TXAPA certification requirements for technicians. For example, see Questions 21 and 22 which have both been addressed with one response directly below:

Question 21: Per Addendum 1, the City will begin accepting Soils Technicians who have been certified in both TXAPA SB101 and SB102 for a minimum of two years. Would the City consider changing this requirement to say that field technicians must be certified in TXAPA SB102 and lab technicians must be certified in TXAPA SB101?

Question 22: Why does a technician have to be certified in both TXAPA SB101 AND SB102 concurrently for 2 years prior to that certification being recognized by the City of Austin?

Response: This combination of certifications and minimum years of experience most closely correlates with the City's competency requirements for technicians. There is no change at this time.

Question 23: Why does a technician have to be certified in SB101 to perform nuclear density tests?

Response: As stated in the response to Questions 21 and 22, this combination of TXAPA certifications and minimum years of experience most closely correlates with the City's competency requirements for technicians.

This document is for clarification purposes only. Please remember this solicitation is currently in a "No Contact" period and all inquiries must be directed to the appropriate contact persons listed in the solicitation. If you have questions regarding this process, please call me at (512) 974-7998. You may also contact Jay Ulary at (512) 974-7113 for project-related questions.

Sincerely,



Steve Cocke, Buyer II
Capital Contracting Office
Contract Procurement Division

cc: Jay Ulary, PE, Consulting Engineer, PWD
Tica Chitrarachis, Project Coordinator, PWD
Tamela Saldana, Division Manager, SMBR
Garrett Cox, Contract Procurement Supervisor, CCO