

PARISH OF ASCENSION



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR

INDEPENDENT CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANT SERVICES

September 12, 2024

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1. GENERAL INFORMATION

1.1 Purpose

The Ascension Parish Government (Parish) is seeking proposals from qualified Independent Certified Public Accountants (CPA) to provide comprehensive auditing and accounting services. The selected firm will be responsible for conducting annual financial audits, assist in preparing financial statements, and providing related professional services in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards (GAAS) and government auditing standards.

1.2 Background

- The Parish is located southeast of the City of Baton Rouge, which is the state capital of Louisiana. The Parish is located on the Mississippi River with most of its population on the east bank. The Parish was founded in 1845 when the county of Acadia was split into the parishes of Ascension and St. James. The Parish currently occupies a land area of 292 square miles and serves an estimated population of 131,632 as of December 2023
- The Parish adopted the provisions of the Ascension Parish Home Rule Charter, which was effective in January 1994. The Home Rule Charter established the Ascension Parish Council as the governing authority for the Parish of Ascension and as a political subdivision of the State of Louisiana. Policy-making and legislative authority are vested in a governing council consisting of 11 councilmen. The governing council is responsible, among other things, for passing ordinances, adopting the budget and appointing committees. The Parish President is the chief executive officer of the Parish. The Council members and Parish President are elected for four-year terms. The council members are elected by district while the Parish President is elected parish wide
- The Parish provides a full range of services to the public including infrastructure maintenance and construction, public safety, public works, fire protection, public health and social services, mental health services, planning and zoning, economic development, recreation, water/wastewater, libraries, general administrative services, and road lighting
- The Parish is governed by 11 Councilman who are elected by district. The Parish is administered by a Parish President who is elected parish wide
- The Parish operates approximately 85 separate funds for accounting purposes
- The Parish has approximately 675 employees
- The Parish has approximately 16 bank accounts, 15 investment accounts and 4 certificates of deposit

- Operations of the Parish are primarily funded by ad valorem and sales taxes, licenses and fees, governmental grants, and investment earnings

Primary Government
Statement of Net Position/
Statement of Net Activities

Revenues	\$189,530,000
Expenses	136,402,000
Net position	624,839,000
Capital assets	355,344,000
Total assets and deferred outflows of resources	785,213,000
Total liabilities and deferred inflows of resources	160,375,000

1.3 Scope of Services

Audit Services

Conduct an annual financial audit of the Parish's financial statements in accordance with GAAS and government auditing standards.

Accounting System: Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP)

Financial Statements: the Parish will provide a general ledger

Estimated start of fieldwork: March 15th

Engagement completion date: not later than June 30th

Special Requirements

- Interested parties will be expected to assist with preparation of the Parish's Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR), including related footnote disclosures and statistical section for submission to the Government Officer's Finance Association certificate of excellence in financial reporting program. Furthermore, the CPA will assist with the preparation of the letter of transmittal and management's discussion and analysis. Additionally, CPA will be responsible for the printing of the ACFR, including all related printing costs
- The successful CPA will assist with preparation of the Schedule of Expenditures of Federal Awards and Data Collection Form. Due to the volume of the federal awards expended by the Parish, a single audit in accordance with the Uniform Guidance is required annually. CPA will be expected to perform the audit in accordance with federal guidelines and prepare the Federal Data Collection Form

- The successful CPA will be required to test the Parish's compliance with the Parish Transportation Act
- The successful CPA will provide assistance relating to reconciling Parish financial records to required disclosures in the Parish's financial statements.
- The successful CPA will review the Parish current procedures for recommendation of improvements in financial practices
- The Parish has 14 component units that are included in the ACFR
- The Parish maintains a capital asset depreciation schedule, although the CPA assists with reconciliation to the annual financial statements, Parish internal general ledger activity, and infrastructure records maintained by the Department of Public Works
- The successful CPA will provide assistance in filing U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Section 8 Program documents to the HUD's Real Estate Assessment Center (REAC) system
- The successful CPA will also be engaged to perform specific procedures on the control and compliance areas identified in the Louisiana Legislative Auditor's State Agreed-Upon Procedures (SAUPs) for the fiscal year

Selection and Evaluation Criteria

The selection criteria are based on the following and related point system:

<u>Criteria</u>	<u>Points</u>
(1) Firm qualifications and experience	25
(2) Key personnel qualifications and experience	20
(3) Local project experience	10
(4) Past performance	10
(5) Oral presentations	10
(6) Proposal understanding	5
(7) Compatibility (first size vs. project size)	5
(8) Current workload	5
(9) Firm location	5
(10) Special conditions	5

Interested parties should submit a qualifications document to the Parish describing the interested firm as stipulated from the above criteria.

2. ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

2.1 Term of Contract

The period of any contract resulting from this RFP is tentatively scheduled to begin following conclusion of Parish evaluation, selection, and negotiation and to continue for one-year period with four (4) one-year options to renew. The Parish does reserve the right to discontinue the contract at any time and at their discretion.

2.2 RFP Inquiries

Written questions regarding RFP requirements or Scope of Services must be submitted to:

Ascension Parish Purchasing Department
ATTN: RFP Coordinator
Email: Purchasing@apgov.us

The Parish will consider written inquiries and requests for clarification of the content of this RFP received from potential respondents. Written inquiries must be received by 3:00 p.m. CST on the date specified in the Schedule of Events. The Parish reserves the right to modify the RFP should a change be identified that is in the best interest of the Parish.

Only the RFP Coordinator has the authority to officially respond to respondent's questions on behalf of the Parish. Any communications from any other individuals will not be binding on the Parish.

2.3 Schedule of Events

<u>EVENT</u>	<u>DATE & TIME (CST)</u>
Advertise RFP	September 12, 2024 September 19, 2024 September 26, 2024
Deadline for receipt of written inquiries	September 24 @ 3:00 p.m.
Issue responses to written inquiries	October 1, 2024 @ 3:00 p.m.
Deadline for receipt of Proposals	October 10, 2024 @ 3:00 p.m.

Upon receipt of proposal, a selection committee will be formed, and a scheduled public meeting will be held.

The selection committee will determine, and recommend to the Council, the winning Statement of Proposal. The winning Statement of Proposal under this RFP does not guarantee any respondent's selection to provide services.

3. RESPONSE INFORMATION

3.1 RFP Addenda

Parish reserves the right to change the schedule of events or revise any part of the RFP by issuing an addendum to the RFP at any time.

3.2 Waiver of Administrative Informalities

The Parish reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to waive administrative informalities contained in any proposal.

3.3 Proposal Rejection/RFP Cancellation

Issuance of this RFP in no way constitutes a commitment by the Parish to award a contract. The Parish reserves the right to accept or reject, in whole or part, all offers submitted and/or cancel this announcement if it is determined to be in the Parish's best interest.

3.4 Withdrawal of Proposal

A respondent may withdraw a submitted proposal submitted at any time up to the date and time the offer is due. To accomplish this, a written request signed by the authorized representative of the proposer must be submitted to the RFP Coordinator.

3.5 Subcontracting Information

The Parish shall have a single prime contractor as the result of any successful contract negotiation, and that prime contractor shall be responsible for all deliverables specified in the RFP and Proposals. This general requirement notwithstanding, respondents may enter subcontractor arrangements, however, they must acknowledge in their offer's total responsibility for the entire contract.

If the respondent intends to subcontract for portions of the work, the respondent must identify any subcontractor relationships and include specific designations of the tasks to be performed by the subcontractor. Information required of the respondent under the terms of this RFP is also required for each subcontractor.

Unless provided for in the contract with the Parish, the prime contractor shall not contract with any other party for any of the services herein contracted without the express prior written approval of the Parish.

3.6 Ownership of Proposal

All materials submitted in response to this request shall become the property of Parish. Selection or rejection of an offer does not affect this right.

3.7 Proprietary Information

Only information which is legitimate trade secrets or non-published financial data may be deemed proprietary or confidential. Any material within a proposal identified as such must be clearly marked in the offer and will be handled in accordance with the Louisiana Public Records Act, R.S. 44: 1-44 and applicable rules and regulations. Any offer marked as confidential or proprietary in its entirety may be rejected without further consideration or recourse.

3.8 Cost of Preparing Proposal

The Parish shall not be liable for any costs incurred by respondents prior to issuance of or entering into a contract. Costs associated with developing the offer, preparing for oral presentations, and any other expenses incurred by the respondent in responding to this RFP are entirely the responsibility of the respondent and shall not be reimbursed in any manner by the Parish.

3.9 Errors and Omissions in Proposal

The Parish will not be liable for any errors in proposals. The Parish reserves the right to make corrections or amendments due to errors identified in offers by Parish or the respondent. The Parish, at its option, has the right to request clarification or additional information from the respondent.

3.10 Contract Award and Execution

The Parish reserves the right to contract for all or a partial list of services described in this RFP. The Proposer should submit with its proposal any exceptions or exact contract deviations that its firm wishes to negotiate. Negotiations may begin with the announcement of the selected respondent.

If the contract negotiation period exceeds 30 days or if the selected respondent fails to sign the final contract within 30 business days of delivery, the Parish may elect to abrogate the selection.

3.11 Code of Ethics

Respondents are responsible for determining that there will be no conflict or violation of the Ethics Code if their company is awarded the contract. The Louisiana Board of Ethics is the only entity which can officially rule on ethics issues.

4. RESPONSE INSTRUCTIONS

4.1 Response Submission

Firms/individuals who are interested in providing services requested under this RFP must submit six copies of the information specified in this section. The information shall be received in hard copy (printed) version by: **Ascension Parish Government, Purchasing Department, 116 East Worthy Street, Gonzales, LA 70737** on or before 3:00p.m. Central Standard Time on the date specified in the Schedule of Events.

Electronic submittals are permitted via <http://www.centrauctionhouse.com>, however (6) hard copies must still be submitted within 24 business hours of the Proposal submission deadline (i.e. the Monday following the submission deadline since Parish buildings are closed on Fridays).

Proposal packages must be delivered at the proposer's expense. FAX or e-mail submissions are not acceptable. Respondents mailing their proposals should allow sufficient mail delivery time to ensure receipt of their proposal by the time specified. It is solely the responsibility of each respondent to ensure that their offer is delivered at the specified place prior to the deadline for submission. Offers received after the deadline will not be considered.

At least one copy of the proposal should contain original signatures of those company officials or agents duly authorized to sign proposals or contracts on behalf of the organization. A certified copy of a board resolution granting such authority should be submitted if proposer is a corporation. The copy of the offer with original signatures will be retained for incorporation in any contract resulting from this RFP. Please notate the word "**ORIGINAL**" in bold letters or stamp on the front cover of the document which contains the original signatures.

4.2 Certification Statement

The respondents must sign and submit the Certification Statement shown in **ATTACHMENT B**.

5. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION FORMAT

Responses should be prepared providing a straightforward and concise description of the firm's capabilities to satisfy the requirements of the RFP. Emphasis should be on completeness and clarity of content. Responses should be submitted in letter size (8-1/2"-11") format with a type font of Times-Roman or similar and a minimum font size of 12 points.

Responses should follow the format and order of presentation described below.

5.1 Project Title

The following project title shall be used for this submittal:

INDEPENDENT CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANT SERVICES

5.2 Specialized Knowledge

In addition to all other requested information, please provide any additional information for consideration.

6. EVALUATION AND SELECTION

6.1 Evaluation Team

The evaluation of responses will be accomplished by an evaluation team, to be designated by the Parish, which will determine the response most advantageous to the Parish, taking into consideration all evaluation factors set forth in the RFP.

6.2 Administrative and Mandatory Screening

All responses will be reviewed to determine compliance with administrative and mandatory requirements as specified in the RFP. Responses that are not in compliance will be rejected for further consideration.

6.3 Evaluation and Review

Responses will be evaluated based on information provided in the Proposal. The Evaluation Team will evaluate and score the responses using the criteria and scoring as listed in the attached Score Card (**ATTACHMENT A**). The most qualified competitor will be selected, subject to negotiation for fair and reasonable compensation.

6.4 Announcement of Contractor

The Parish will notify the successful responder(s) and proceed to negotiate terms for final contract. Unsuccessful respondents will be notified in writing accordingly. The award of a contract is subject to the approval of the Ascension Parish Council.

7. SUCCESSFUL CONTRACTOR REQUIREMENTS

7.1 Corporation Requirements

If the contractor is a corporation not incorporated under the laws of the State of Louisiana, the contractor shall have obtained a certificate of authority pursuant to R. S. 12:301-302 from the Secretary of State of Louisiana.

If the contractor is a for-profit corporation whose stock is not publicly traded, the contractor shall ensure that a disclosure of ownership form has been properly filed with the Secretary of State of Louisiana.

7.2 Invoices

Each invoice shall be processed and mailed to the **Ascension Parish Government Finance Department, P.O. Box 2392, Gonzales, La. 70707-2392** and contain all justification necessary to verify the task deliverable as applicable to each invoice.

7.3 Confidentiality

All financial, statistical, personal, technical and other data and information relating to the Parish's operation which are designated confidential by the Parish and made available to the contractor in order to carry out this contract, or which become available to the contractor in carrying out this contract, shall be protected by the contractor from unauthorized use and disclosure through the observance of the same or more effective procedural requirements as are applicable to the Parish. The identification of all such confidential data and information as well as the Parish's procedural requirements for protection of such data and information from unauthorized use and disclosure shall be provided by the Parish in writing to the contractor. If the methods and procedures employed by the contractor for the protection of the contractor's data and information are deemed by the Parish to be adequate for the protection of the Parish's confidential information, such methods and procedures may be used, with the written consent of the Parish, to carry out the intent of this paragraph. The contractor shall not be required under the provisions of the paragraph to keep confidential any data or information which is or becomes publicly available, is already rightfully in the contractor's possession, is independently developed by the contractor outside the scope of the contract or is rightfully obtained from third parties.

Under no circumstance shall the contractor discuss and/or release information to the media concerning this project without prior express written approval of the Parish.

ATTACHMENTS

ATTACHMENT A: SAMPLE SCORECARD

Ascension Parish Professional Selection Committee

Date of Meeting: _____

Firm Name: _____

SCORECARD FACTORS	Weight	Max Total
Firm/Team Qualifications and Experience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Firm/Team shall be evaluated based on project specific experience and resources • Primary focus should be on Prime Consultants Experience; however, the other team members must be considered 	0-25pts	
Key Personnel Qualifications and Experience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific Personnel Experience with Similar Projects must be considered • While Firm Principals are listed, they traditionally have little involvement in the design; Emphasis should be placed on the Project Managers and Project Engineers/Architect 	0-20 pts	
Project Experience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consideration must be given to Firms/Teams that can show experience with State/Federal regulations, codes, policies, procedures, and standards to successfully facilitate project completion and familiarity with government operations in general at parish/county or municipal levels. Letters or other documentation of successfully implementing projects or programs are acceptable 	0-10 pts	
Past Performance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Points will be awarded based on letters or other documentation of successfully implementing projects or programs are acceptable; special capabilities to accomplish this scope of work; ability to meet deadlines and budgets; and quality of work 	0-10 pts	
Oral Presentations	0-10 pts	
Proposal/Understanding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Firm/Teams RFQ should identify understanding of project scope, the past work experience for both the firm and personnel should properly reflect project scope and user agency specifications 	0-5 pts	
Compatibility (firm size versus project size) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consideration for the size of the firm and available key personnel must be considered relative to the size of the project. This must be evaluated concurrently with the firm's current workload 	0-5pts	
Current Workload <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number and size of projects currently under contract must be considered in relation to available staff 	0-5 pts	
Firm Location <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number and size of projects currently under contract must be considered in relation to available staff 	0-5 pts	
Special Conditions/Requirements Specified in RFP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As specified in Section 1.3 of the RFP 	0-5 pts	
95pts TOTAL		

Committee Member
(Print)

Committee Member
(Signature)

Date

ATTACHMENT B: CERTIFICATION STATEMENT

CERTIFICATION STATEMENT

The undersigned hereby acknowledges she/he has read and understands all requirements and specifications of the Request for Qualifications (RFQ) or Request for Proposals (RFP), including attachments.

OFFICIAL CONTACT. The Ascension Parish Government (Parish) requests that the Proposer designate one person to receive all documents and the method in which the documents are best delivered. Identify the contact’s name and fill in the information below: (Print Clearly)

Date: _____ Official Contact Name: _____

- A. E-mail Address: _____
- B. Phone Number: (_____) _____
- C. US Mail Address: _____

Proposer certifies that the above information is true and grants permission to the Parish or Agencies to contact the above-named person or otherwise verify the information provided.

By its submission of this proposal and authorized signature below, Proposer certifies that:

1. The information contained in its response to this RFQ/RFP is accurate.
2. Proposer complies with each of the mandatory requirements listed in the RFQ/RFP and will meet or exceed the functional and technical requirements specified therein.
3. Proposer accepts the procedures, evaluation criteria, mandatory contract terms and conditions, and all other administrative requirements set forth in this RFQ/RFP.
4. Proposer's quote is valid for at least 90 days from the date of proposal's signature below.
5. Proposer understands that if selected as the successful Proposer, he/she will have 30 business days from the date of delivery of final contract in which to complete contract negotiations, if any, and execute the final contract document.

Typed or Printed Name: _____

Title: _____

Company Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Signature of Proposer's Authorized Representative

Date

-----**END OF RFP DOCUMENT**-----