



REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

Federal Government Relations and Legislative Advocacy

Introduction

The San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors Water Authority (“Exchange Contractors”) is soliciting proposals from qualified individuals or firms to provide, under contract, services for federal government relations and legislative advocacy.

This Request For Proposals (“RFP”) is to invite all interested, qualified people and firms to submit proposals to provide professional services for representing the Exchange Contractors in Federal legislative and regulatory matters to further interests and objectives identified by the Exchange Contractors Board and staff. The primary focus is to assist the Exchange Contractors with improving its efforts to enhance government relations, influence legislation, capture revenues available to local government and assist the Exchange Contractors in identifying competitive grants and other discretionary funding available to the Exchange Contractors.

The Exchange Contractors will ONLY ACCEPT ELECTRONIC PROPOSALS in response to this RFP. Proposers must strictly comply with Exchange Contractors instructions with respect to submittal of proposals.

Deadline to submit is June 14, 2023, at 5:00 pm.

Critical Dates

- May 23, 2023 – RFP issued
- May 29—Deadline to submit a question or a request for clarification
- June 5 —Addendum issued, if necessary, addressing questions
- June 12, 2:00 p.m.—Last day to notify Exchange Contractors of email addresses authorized to submit proposal
- June 14, 5:00 p.m.—Proposals due by email
- June 19 through 21—Anticipated interview dates
- June 30 —Notice of intent to award
- July 7—Anticipated contract award

Proposals received after the deadline will be rejected and not scored.

Scope of Work

The Exchange Contractors is seeking proposals from qualified entities interested in representing the Exchange Contractors before the federal government, including without limitation the federal administration, the Legislature (including committees), and administrative agencies, including the United States Interior, Reclamation, and Fish and Wildlife Departments, on matters related to water and natural resources, water infrastructure, water management, and public agency governance. The following is an overview of the services expected to be provided by the individual or firm:

1. Identify proposed legislation and regulations that could impact the Exchange Contractors and/or its member agencies:
 - a. Analyze proposals for potential impact to the Exchange Contractors; and
 - b. Provide the Exchange Contractors with regular written reports and trackers on proposals.
2. Advise the Exchange Contractors on and, when needed, prepare:
 - a. Draft legislation and/or amendments to proposed legislation or regulations;
 - b. Position papers;
 - c. Testimony for hearings; and
 - d. Draft talking points for meetings.
3. Lobby and work with legislators and legislative staff, representatives and staff of federal offices and agencies, and other parties who may have similar or adversarial positions to the Exchange Contractors' position.
4. Arrange meetings for representatives of the Exchange Contractors with federal government officials and others, as may be advisable.
5. Participate in weekly meetings with Exchange Contractors' staff.
6. Communicate, as needed, with the Board of Directors, Executive Director, Director of Policy and Programs, and other staff.
7. Comply with all requirements of the Political Reform Act and the regulations of the Fair Political Practices Commission, including compliance with all lobbying reporting requirements by filing disclosure reports on behalf of the Exchange Contractors.
8. Provide a monthly written report to the Exchange Contractors' Board of Directors of monthly activities and outcomes.
9. Provide the Exchange Contractors with a written annual report, related to the Exchange Contractors' federal agenda, a summary of services provided on behalf of the Exchange Contractors, and outcomes of service provided.

About the Exchange Contractors

The San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors Water Authority is a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) formed in 1992 by its member agencies Central California Irrigation District, San Luis Canal Company, Firebaugh Canal Water District, and Columbia Canal Company. It is responsible for administering water conservation plans, water transfer programs, and water resource planning, as well as advocating for dependable water supplies for its organizations and the roughly 240,000 acres of agricultural land they represent.

The Exchange Contractors water rights date back to the early 1870's when San Joaquin and Kings River Canal Company and Miller and Lux constructed canals to divert water from the San Joaquin River and the

Kings River to allow for irrigation in the western portion of Fresno, Madera, Merced, and Stanislaus counties. These canals were essential to the creation of the agriculture industry in the Central Valley and were the beginning of what has come to be the most important agricultural region in the United States.

As the need for more irrigation and farmable land in the Central Valley increased, the United States Department of Interior in 1933 started the Central Valley Project, a vast undertaking to build dams throughout the Central Valley that utilized the Sacramento, American, and San Joaquin Rivers. One of the dams that was being considered at the time, the Friant Dam located north of Fresno, was dependent upon water being diverted into storage from the San Joaquin River with the goal of delivering it to the east side of the Valley.

This would impact the water supply from the San Joaquin River that farmers on the west side of the valley depended on. In order to allow the project to continue, the west side farmers agreed to an exchange contract, whereby they would instead receive a distribution of water from Sacramento River in “exchange” for water from the San Joaquin River. The Exchange Contractors, as they came to be known, also retained their rights to the San Joaquin River water. This means that if, in a given year, the water deliveries from the new Sacramento River water source are short of the amount they are guaranteed in the contract, the Bureau of Reclamation makes up the difference by receiving a distribution from their original water source, the San Joaquin River.

Proposal Contents

The proposal should include the sections detailed below in the following order and containing the following information:

<p>1. Cover Letter: The Cover Letter should constitute a letter of introduction, including identification of the proposing firm/individual, contact person, mailing address, physical address, email address, telephone number, and fax number and should be signed by the proposer (if an individual) or an officer of the firm submitting the proposal with Exchange Contractors to act on behalf of and bind the firm. Indicate contact person(s) for the project.</p>	Pass/Fail
<p>2. All issued addenda. It is the responsibility of proposers to ensure that they have received all addenda.</p>	Pass/Fail
<p>3. Proposers shall verify that they have no personal or organizational conflicts of interest, as prohibited by law, or which may interfere with the proposer's ability to vigorously represent the interests of the Exchange Contractors.</p>	Pass/Fail
<p>4. Resume for each identified key personnel.</p>	Pass/Fail
<p>5. Provide general information about yourself or your firm, including description and history of firm, years in business, name(s) of owner(s), home office location, local office location (if different), and number of employees. Provide a summary of the qualifications, credentials, types of services offered, and types of clients served.</p>	5 Points
<p>6. Discuss the proposer's experience providing the services requested. Be specific with respect to each type of service sought, as described in the scope of work above. Describe a particularly challenging project, and a particularly rewarding project, and why each was such. Please be specific in your descriptions.</p>	10 Points
<p>7. Identify the key personnel proposed to provide services to the Exchange Contractors, including their roles. Identify the individual who will be the lead on the contract. Specify each identified key personnel's background and experience, focusing on services they have provided similar to those sought by the Exchange Contractors. State a commitment that, if the proposer is selected, the firm will not substitute key personnel without notice to and authorization by the Exchange Contractors.</p>	10 Points
<p>8. Provide at least three references for the firm and key personnel. The references shall include a contact name and contact information (address, phone number and email address) for the Exchange Contractors to contact. At least one reference should be a public entity. If the Exchange Contractors are unable to reach at least two references for the proposer, then the person's or firm's proposal will be rejected as non-responsive.</p>	5 Points

9. Provide a discussion of your understanding of the Scope of Work and a detailed outline of the proposal to meet the Exchange Contractors' needs. Describe the special strengths that you or your firm can bring and how these set you or your firm apart.	30 Points
Total Technical Points	70 Points

Proposed Fees/Cost Proposal

Please provide the Proposed Fees/Cost Proposal in a separate, clearly labeled file. Identify the proposed monthly fee to perform the tasks identified in the Scope of Work. Submission of fees/cost information with other portions of the proposal will result in the proposal being rejected.

Electronic Proposal Submission and Evaluations

The Exchange Contractors will **ONLY ACCEPT ELECTRONIC PROPOSALS** in response to this RFP. Proposers must notify the Exchange Contractors at cwhite@sjrecwa.net no later than **2:00 p.m. on June 12, 2023** of up to two (2) individuals authorized to submit the proposal, with their email (electronic mail) addresses.

Instructions will then be emailed directly to those email addresses. Following receipt of the proposal, the Exchange Contractors will respond to the provided email(s) indicating the date and time that the proposal was received. Proposals will be maintained as confidential until the proposal opening time. Email and electronic systems may reflect some delay in delivery and upload, and the Exchange Contractors assumes no responsibility if the entire proposal is not received prior to the opening time.

Proposals must be submitted as **two separate** electronic files in PDF format, each no more than 10MB in size, one for the Cost Proposal and one for the other requirements. Proposals will be considered only if both files are delivered to the Exchange Contractors on or before the specified due date and time. Submittals from anyone other than those pre-authorized to submit a proposal will not be accepted and, as such, will not be considered. Proposals must be verified as authentic with delivery of the original of the electronic proposal with wet signatures by overnight delivery, confirmed to be sent on or before the bid due date to the following address:

San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors
Water Authority
Attn: Chris White
541 H Street
P.O. Box 2115
Los Banos, CA 93635

The hard copy proposal shall be enclosed in a sealed envelope plainly marked with the name and address of the proposer and "Proposal for Federal Government Relations and Lobbying Services" followed by the date of opening proposals. Within the sealed proposal envelope, the Cost Proposal shall be included in a **separately sealed** envelope labeled "Cost Proposal for Federal Government

Relations and Lobbying Services” and the name of the proposer.

Number of Copies

Submit a single electronic copy of the proposal in pdf format.

Submission Questions and Clarifications

If you have any questions regarding this request for proposals, you may contact Chris White, Executive Director at cwhite@sjrecwa.net. Proposers are requested not to contact other Exchange Contractors’ staff or Board members in any manner in connection with this RFP and selection process. Any applicants who violate this request may be disqualified from further consideration.

The Exchange Contractors will reply regarding substantive questions by addenda which will be emailed to any potential proposer who has requested such information. It is the responsibility of the proposer to check for updated information prior to the proposal due date. Questions received after the deadline noted in the RFP may not be answered.

Respondents shall submit questions regarding any ambiguity, uncertainty, or other perceived flaw in this RFP, as soon as the issue is identified, but no later than the deadline to submit questions on this RFP. Any such issue which is not raised prior to the deadline to submit questions shall be waived, and the Exchange Contractors will not consider any challenge based on the contents, structure, or terms of this RFP after the proposal deadline.

The Exchange Contractors shall not be obligated to respond to any question unless it is submitted in writing to the Exchange Contractors’ designated representative identified above. The Exchange Contractors shall be bound only by written responses to questions contained in an addendum to the RFP. Oral responses, or email responses, shall not be binding on the Exchange Contractors.

Proposal Evaluations

Proposals received after the deadline, June 14, 2023, will not be considered.

Evaluation Process

The purpose of this RFP is to enable the Exchange Contractors to select the person or the firm(s) offering the best value for award of a professional services contract. The Exchange Contractors will use the qualifications-based selection process outlined below.

1. A review and selection committee will review and evaluate all proposals based on the technical scoring criteria identified above. The evaluation team first will determine whether the proposal meets the format and content requirements and the standards specified in this RFP.
2. All compliant proposals will be scored using the technical criteria identified above. The evaluation team will not open the contents of the sealed price proposal during this part of the evaluation.
3. After the evaluation team scores all proposals, each proposal shall be assigned a technical score for each scored factor that is the average of the individual evaluators’ scores for the factor, and a sum of the total average factor scores.
4. After the technical scores are assigned, the price proposal will be opened. Compliant price

proposals will be scored in accordance with the price proposal standards identified above. Each proposer's price proposal score will be added to its technical score.

5. The Exchange Contractors will rank proposers from the highest to the lowest using the total score and will schedule interviews with the top three scoring proposers. If the score for the fourth-ranked proposer is within 10 points of the third-ranked proposer, then the Exchange Contractors may, at its sole discretion, schedule the fourth-ranked proposer for interview as well. Prior to the interviews, the Exchange Contractors will develop standard questions to ask of each presenter. The Exchange Contractors may or may not share its questions with the short-listed proposers prior to the interviews. Proposers may receive up to 50 additional points based on responses to those interview questions. All key personnel will be expected to participate in the interview.
6. After the interviews, the interview score will be added to the total of the technical score and the price proposal score for each interviewed proposer.
7. The Exchange Contractors will rank proposers by highest to lowest score. If the Exchange Contractors elect to proceed with award, then, in a Notice of Intent to Award, the Exchange Contractors shall publicly announce the intended awardee offering the best value and state the date of the Board meeting at which the award will be considered.

The Exchange Contractors reserve the right to investigate any proposal or proposer, including without limitation requesting clarification from the proposer or contacting other entities who have engaged the proposer or any of its personnel for additional information related to the proposer. The Exchange Contractors reserve the right to consider information relating to a proposer or proposal based on information obtained outside of the proposal available to the evaluators.

The Exchange Contractors reserve the right to waive any immaterial deviation in any proposal. A joint proposal from more than one firm will be considered by the Exchange Contractors.

Final Selection

Following the initial review and screening of all proposals submitted by the deadline, Exchange Contractors' staff may negotiate draft contract terms with the person or firm Exchange Contractors' staff will recommend to the Board for award of the contract. The Exchange Contractors' Board will make the final selection.

Issuance of this RFP does not guarantee that the Exchange Contractors will award a contract. The Exchange Contractors reserve the right to reject any or all proposals at its sole discretion, to re-bid the services, or to request that all proposers submit revised proposals to address new or different factors or criteria. The final award will not necessarily be made to the lowest bidder. Other factors will be considered in awarding this project.

Miscellaneous

The costs of preparing a proposal in response to this RFP are solely the responsibility of the proposing person or firm. The Exchange Contractors will not be responsible for any proposal costs, and the proposer shall not include any such expenses in its proposal.

The Exchange Contractors do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, age, ancestry, medical condition, disability or gender in consideration for an award of contract.

A proposer may withdraw its proposal at any time **before** the proposal due date. After the proposal due date, the proposal shall constitute an irrevocable offer to the Exchange Contractors for up to 120 days after the proposal due date.

The selected proposer shall execute a definitive and mutually acceptable engagement agreement with the Exchange Contractors within fifteen (15) business days of the award. If the proposer fails to execute the engagement agreement within the required timeframe, the Exchange Contractors may extend the timeframe or may award the contract to the next highest ranked proposer.

All proposals received on this RFP shall be public records under the California Public Records Act upon announcement of the intent to award a contract.