**REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATION FOR GRANT WRITING SERVICES**

**3/18/2014**

**Grant Consultant: Grant Research, Writing, and Management**

**Introduction**

The City of Duluth is seeking to develop a list of qualified Grant Consultants to assist in securing funds through various grant opportunities available through the Federal, State, and County as well as through private foundations on behalf of the City. Procured funding will help the City increase its ability to serve the community needs for infrastructure, capital, and community improvement projects. The City seeks grant writers with experience and measurable success.

**Background**

The Duluth Comprehensive Land Use Plan was adopted in 2006. The Comprehensive Plan recommends, as part of new development and redevelopment activities, the reuse of previously developed lands. This includes existing buildings and other resources which have the potential to perform at a higher level than at the current time. There is a commitment by the City to create integrated connections defined by natural features to make a trail and pedestrian network that not only links neighborhoods, parks, and open spaces but connects to the City’s numerous cultural resources and destination businesses.

A survey conducted for the Parks and Recreation department in 2009 found residents felt the number one recreational amenity in Duluth is its trails, walkways and bikeways. A consulting group was hired to develop a Parks and Recreation master plan which in part looked at the trail system in the city.

The Parks Master Plan was passed in January 2011. Strategies include improving the quality of and access to the park and trail system, ensuring stable and adequate funding, investing in existing park facilities and resources, and connecting the city thorough trail networks. Each park project area will have its own mini-master plan planning process. This includes utilizing professional and city staff and incorporating public participation.

In October, 2011, the city again contracted the services of a consulting group to develop a Trails and Bikeways Master Plan to guide the city in becoming the top trail destination center in the Midwest.

In November, 2011, Duluth voters approved the establishment of a special levy of $2,600,000 to support the Parks Fund. The fund is dedicated to the improvement and maintenance of local parks and trails. City staff utilizes the Parks Master Plan and Trails Master Plan as the guideline for establishing operational improvements and the implementation of the Parks Fund monies.

The Facilities and Property Division of the City of Duluth has historically coordinated all facility related projects including those of park related buildings. Funding for these projects has come from an annual budget of one or more city departments, grant funding, or in kind services.

As a result of the above mentioned plans a joint parks, maintenance, and facilities working group was formed to insure the coordination of projects in the city as they relate to the development and enhancement of parks and facilities. Through the direction of this group significant effort and time has been spent on the application, monitoring, and reporting processes for outside funding sources. A need now exists to create a working list of qualified grant writers/managers who can be recruited for specific grant proposal opportunities as they arise.

**Scope of Services**

The City is interested in developing a list of qualified grant writers/managers who can perform the following:

1. Serve as the City’s consultant to seek and secure funding.
2. Research, seek, identify and write Federal, State, County, and private grant proposals that are applicable to the City.
3. Develop strategies and prioritize schedules and timelines for each identified grant.
4. Manage the process of submitting required post-award reports to funder(s) and assure that ongoing compliance is met.
5. Manage and monitor the funding agency and file a progress report with the city staff assistance, as required.
6. Monitor the public and private grants to identify additional resources of potential financial and matching support and alert and coordinate with the appropriate department for program specifics.
7. Meet with appropriate city staff to evaluate departmental and resource needs as directed to meet the City’s objectives.

**Qualifications**

To be considered for a short list of qualified grant consultants the following qualifications must be met:

1. Demonstrated technical and grant writing skills with high success ratio
2. Experience writing government grants and responding to federal and local funding opportunities
3. Skills in Grant Management and Reporting
4. Ability to coordinate required meetings of city staff and other project stakeholders
5. Knowledge of city municipal systems, trends, and funding streams
6. Competitive rates

**Proposal Format/Submission Requirements**

Please limit submission to a standard 8 ½“x 11” format. Only completed submittals will be evaluated.

The following information should be included within the RFQ proposal.

1. Cover letter expressing interest
2. Summary of qualifications, relevant experience, results of previous government grant applications, and a range of award amounts
3. Process used for securing grant funding
4. Writing sample from a government grant application that was awarded
5. Rate schedule for writing and managing grants
6. Resume or CV

**Schedule/Selection Process**

All qualified RFQ responses will be reviewed by a city staff committee and a qualified list of candidates for grant consultants will be created by May 2, 2014

The City will invite some or all candidates from the qualified grant consultants to submit a Request for Proposal on an as needed basis. Detailed RFP’s will be required for each project contracted based on the specific scope of services sought.

The list of qualified grant consultants will remain active for three (3) years. At the discretion of the city the list may be added to at any time for any reason.

**Selection Criteria**

Qualifications received as part of this RFQ process will be evaluated based upon the following criteria.

* Quality and, completeness, and clarity of proposal
* Demonstrated understanding of project scope
* Organization, management and technical approach to project scope
* Demonstrated experience required to complete the project
* Demonstration of capacity to successfully complete the project
* Cost to provide the requested services
* Review of References
* Interview

The city may, in its sole discretion, expand or reduce the criteria upon which they base final decisions regarding selection of qualified applicants. The City of Duluth reserves the right to reject any and all qualifications and proposals and to negotiate any aspect of a proposal with a proposer.

**Submission Process:**

All responses to this RFQ shall be delivered to the City of Duluth Purchasing Department office on or before: April 10, 2014

Grant Consultant Services

Purchasing Department

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