

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL**

**OPC-2024-W-2**

**For**

**General Utility Legal Services Regarding District of Columbia  
Water and Sewer Authority (DC Water)**

**Sponsored by the**

**Office of the People’s Counsel for the District of Columbia**

RFP Issue Date: February 1, 2024

Proposal Due Date: February 29, 2024

**RFP No. OPC-2024-W-2**

## **SECTION 1 - SCOPE OF WORK**

### **I. Introduction**

The Office of the People’s Counsel for the District of Columbia (“OPC” or “Office”), the statutory representative for District of Columbia water ratepayers, pursuant to D.C. Official Code § 34-804, seeks legal services from qualified firms and individuals experience in public utility regulation, including handling issues typically arising in a municipal water distribution rate case (e.g., revenue requirement, cost allocation, capital structure, rate design, prudence of infrastructure maintenance, and customer service quality) to assist OPC in its representation of District of Columbia ratepayers and consumers. This request for proposal (“RFP”) is released pursuant to OPC’s contract and procurement authority as outlined in D.C. Code §§ 34-804(c) and 34-912.

### **II. Background**

For over 150 years, water service has been provided to the residents of the District of Columbia from a number of entities that had different names and grants of authority. In 1996, the District of Columbia Water and Sewer Authority (“DC WASA”) was created, with the approval of the United States Congress, as an independent authority to oversee the administration, delivery, and billing for water services in the District. In 2010, DC WASA changed its name to DC Water. There was neither a consumer advocate for water consumers, nor is there an independent regulatory agency to govern the rates and services of DC Water. Instead, DC Water is governed by a Board of Directors consisting of 11 principal and 11 alternate members. The Board is composed of six District of Columbia representatives, two each from Montgomery and Prince George’s counties in Maryland, and one from Fairfax County in Virginia.

On January 9, 2018, the Council of the District of Columbia introduced legislation that would authorize OPC to be the advocate for consumers of DC Water. Specifically, the legislation would allow OPC to represent individual consumers with complaints against DC Water and to participate in the rate setting process by submitting comments to the DC Water Board. However, this legislation would not establish an independent regulatory authority over DC Water. With the passage of the D.C. Water Consumer Protection Amendment Act of 2018, effective April 11, 2019, OPC is now the statutory representative authorized to represent District of Columbia ratepayers and consumers with complaints, participate in rate-setting processes, and participate in other proceedings related to water, sewer, and stormwater services of DC Water.

#### **A. General Tasks**

The Office of the People’s Counsel is seeking a contractor to provide legal services and analysis on utility matters pertaining to general water utility issues in furtherance of OPC’s representation of District ratepayers and consumers. OPC seeks legal services from firms and individuals that

can perform the tasks outlined in the Scope of Work. These services will be required on an ongoing basis until September 30, 2024.

### **Scope of Work**

OPC seeks legal services from qualified firms and individuals with the experience and expertise to inform and advise the Office on the general water utility issues by providing the following services:

- review and analyze all filing material;
- assist the technical experts with issuing discovery requests, if needed;
- as needed, attend all necessary hearings, meetings and conferences with the Office, DC Water, and other parties; and
- review DC Water 's substantive orders.

The successful offeror is expected to use professional judgment to develop a reasonable work plan for this assignment, resulting in the completion of the above tasks.

No work may be commenced until the Office and the successful offeror have executed a contract amendment for the additional compensation.

### **SECTION 2 – INDEPENDENT CAPACITY; NON-ASSIGNABILITY**

The successful offeror and any agents and employees thereof shall, in the performance of work under the proposal and this RFP, act in an independent capacity and not as officers or employees of the District of Columbia government. The successful offeror shall not assign nor transfer any interest under the contract resulting from this RFP without the prior written consent of OPC.

### **SECTION 3 – INDEMNIFICATION**

The successful offeror agrees to indemnify, defend, and hold harmless the Office of the People's Counsel and the District of Columbia government, its officers, employees and agents from any and all claims and/or losses accruing or resulting to persons, firms, or corporations who may be injured or damaged by the successful offeror in the performance of its duties and responsibilities under the proposal accepted by OPC and also from and against any liability, including costs and expenses, for violation of proprietary rights, copyrights, or rights of privacy or confidentiality arising out of the publication, translation, reproduction, delivery, performance, use or disposition of any data furnished pursuant to this engagement or based on any libelous or otherwise unlawful matter contained in such data.

### **SECTION 4 – ACCESS TO RECORDS**

The successful offeror agrees that OPC, through its authorized agents and employees, shall have the right to examine and audit such books, records, and other documents in the possession or control of the successful offeror as necessary to verify the fees, charges and expenses billed to the Office under this engagement.

#### **SECTION 5 – CONFIDENTIALITY OF PROPOSALS, WORK PAPERS AND MATERIALS**

The proposal filed in response to this RFP shall be considered a public document and will be available to the public pursuant to the District’s freedom of information laws. The successful offeror agrees that the Office shall own and have unlimited right to all interim and final written work product and that the successful offeror shall not assert any rights or establish any claim under existing copyright, patent, or data law as to such material or processes. The successful offeror further agrees that upon request it will submit to the Office original or legible copies of all work product created by the successful offeror during the course of this engagement.

#### **SECTION 6 – TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

This RFP does not bind or otherwise commit OPC to enter into a contract or to pay any cost incurred in the preparation of a proposal in response to this request. OPC reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals received, to negotiate with all qualified sources, or to cancel or modify this RFP in whole or in part. OPC reserves the right to request additional written data, information, oral discussion, or presentations in support of any written proposal or portion thereof, which is deemed necessary to clarify any aspect of a proposal.

#### **SECTION 7 – TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

It is understood and agreed that if, through any cause or for any reason, the successful offeror fails to fulfill in a timely and professional manner the obligations under the successful proposal or violates any of the terms of this RFP or contract entered into pursuant to this RFP, the Office shall have the right to terminate the contract by giving written notice of termination. In the event of such termination, all finished or unfinished documents, data, studies, exhibits, or other material prepared or being prepared pursuant to this engagement shall, at the option of the Office, become OPC’s property and the successful offeror shall be entitled to receive just and equitable compensation for any reasonably satisfactory work performed.

## **SECTION 8 – RFP AVAILABILITY**

A copy of this RFP may be obtained by e-mail or written request to:

Naunihal Singh Gumer

Director, Regulatory Finance

Office of the People’s Counsel for the District of Columbia

655 15<sup>th</sup> Street, N.W. Suite 200

Washington, D.C. 20005

ngumer@opc-dc.gov

## **SECTION 9 – PROPOSAL DEADLINE AND METHOD FOR SUBMISSION**

The times stated in this document refer to Eastern Time. The Office must receive proposals by **February 29, 2024**. All proposals received after this deadline will not be considered. Interested firms and individuals must submit **an electronic version (email attachment) in PDF format**.

**The electronic version must be emailed to:**

ngumer@opc-dc.gov

Faxed proposals will not be accepted under any circumstances.

## **SECTION 10– ELIGIBLE OFFERORS**

To be eligible, the offeror must demonstrate legal capabilities, competence, and resources to perform the duties as delineated in the Scope of Work in Section 1 of this RFP.

## **SECTION 11 – PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS**

Proposals must begin with a cover page that clearly states the name of the offeror and the name and address of the company, as well as the telephone number, fax number, and e-mail address of the person who may be contacted directly regarding the proposal. Proposals must be signed by a principal, officer or partner authorized to bind the offeror contractually. All parts of the proposal after the cover page must be filed under seal. OPC is interested in a qualitative approach for submitted proposals. Thus, a brief, clear, and concise proposal is more desirable than an unnecessarily large proposal.

## **SECTION 12 – SOURCE SELECTION**

The Office will award the contract to the offeror that, in light of all factors, best meets the requirements of this RFP. Each proposal will be evaluated in accordance with the procedures detailed in this RFP. OPC's selection of a successful offeror will be based on the special provisions and requirements in Attachment A.

## ATTACHMENT A

### SECTION A: SPECIAL PROVISIONS

#### **A.1 Preference for Local and Disadvantaged Business Enterprises or Businesses Operating in an Enterprise Zone**

**General:** Pursuant to the provisions of D.C. Code § 2-218.43, OPC gives a preference to offerors that are certified by the District of Columbia Department of Small and Local Business Development (“DSLBD”) as having resident business ownership, being in a Local Business Enterprise, being a Disadvantaged Business Enterprise, or as operating in an Enterprise Zone. A copy of the certification acknowledgment letter must be submitted with the offeror’s submission.

In accordance with this law, the following preferences are awarded in evaluating an offeror’s proposal:

- Three points shall be awarded if the offeror is certified as a small business enterprise;
- Five points shall be awarded if the offeror is certified as resident-owned business;
- Ten points shall be awarded if the offeror is certified as a longtime resident business;
- Two points shall be awarded if the offeror is certified as a local business enterprise;
- Two points shall be awarded if the offeror is certified as a local business enterprise with its principal office located in an enterprise zone;
- Two points shall be awarded if the offeror is certified as a disadvantaged business enterprise; and
- Two points shall be awarded if the offeror is certified veteran-owned business Enterprise.

A Certified Business Enterprise (“CBE”) is to be entitled to any or all of the preferences provided herein, but in no case shall a certified business enterprise be entitled to a preference of more than 12 points or a reduction in price of more than 12 percent.

**Information:** For information regarding the application process, contact DSLBD at the following address or telephone number:

Department of Small and Local Business Development  
One Judiciary Square Building  
441 - 4th Street, NW, 9th Floor, Suite 970 N

Washington, DC 20001  
(202) 727-3900 (Telephone Number)  
(202) 724-3786 (Facsimile Number)

Any offeror with Local Business Enterprise or Disadvantaged Business Enterprise certification as its joint venture or constituent entity, shall be entitled to the applicable preference points provided for in D.C. Official Code § 2-218.43 in direct proportion to the percentage of the effort to be performed by the Local Business Enterprise or Disadvantaged Business Enterprise. A copy of the certification acknowledgment letter must be submitted with the offeror's proposal.

#### **A.2 Time**

Unless otherwise specified in this RFP, time, if stated in number of days, shall include Saturdays, Sundays and holidays.

#### **A.3 Licensing, Accreditation, and Registration**

The selected offeror must comply with all applicable District of Columbia and federal licensing, accreditation, and registration requirements and standards necessary for the performance of the contract.

#### **A.4 Limitation of Authority**

Only the Office or a person with prior written authority from the Office will have the express, implied, or apparent authority to alter, amend, modify, or waive any clause or condition of the contract. Furthermore, any alteration, amendment, modification, or waiver of any clause or condition of this RFP is not effective or binding unless made in writing and signed by OPC or its authorized representative.

#### **A.5 Conformance with Laws**

It will be the responsibility of the selected offeror to perform under the contract in conformance with all statutes, laws, codes, ordinances, regulations, rules, requirements, orders, and policies of governmental bodies, including, without limitation, the U.S. Government and the District of Columbia government; and it is the sole responsibility of the selected offeror to identify the statutes, laws, codes, ordinances, regulations, rules, requirements, orders and policies that apply and their effect.

### **SECTION B: PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS**



### **B.1. List of Required Documentation**

Offerors will be required to submit the following information with their proposals:

- a. An executive summary that provides an overview
- b. A statement of the offeror's experience
- c. A list of key individuals and their resumes
- d. A list of credentials
- e. A list of area(s) of expertise
- f. A list of years of experience
- g. A detailed cost and price proposal
- h. A CBE Utilization Plan (if applicable)

### **B.2 Work Plan(s)**

Offerors must briefly describe clearly and specifically their proposals for carrying out the responsibilities associated with the Scope of Work in Section 1 of this RFP. Additionally, offerors should be prepared to clearly and completely describe in detail their proposals as soon as possible after the contract award, including a timeline for all deliverables. The timeline must identify the key milestones, tasks, activities and events outlined in the Scope of Work.

### **B.3 Prior Experience and Qualifications**

Offerors must describe their prior experience and qualifications with respect to experience in public utility rate proceedings.

### **B.4 Personnel**

Offerors must identify the persons who will perform tasks outlined in the Scope of Work set forth in this RFP and provide a detailed resume for each individual that describes the qualifications applicable to the performance of the tasks for which the individual will be responsible. Please include an organizational chart showing reporting relationships of team personnel. OPC must be notified of any personnel changes if individuals assigned to work on this project(s) are relieved of their responsibilities or reassigned. Offerors shall designate one individual as the project manager and this individual shall be responsible for project management, reporting, coordination, and accountability for the entire project.

### **B.5 Budget**

Offerors must justify all costs in terms of activities and objects of expenditure to ensure the costs are reasonable and necessary to the project as outlined in the Scope of Work in this RFP. Financial resources must be adequately and appropriately allocated among cost categories in a cost-effective and prudent business manner to accomplish the RFP objectives and activities.

Services to be purchased from other agencies; subcontractors, including any amounts subcontracted to CBEs, consultants, and others must be specified.

**Proposals must provide the total charges to be provided for the services rendered in the following format listing the hourly rate for every person.**

<u>NAME</u>	<u>BILLING RATE</u>	<u>HOURS</u>	<u>EXPENSES</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
-------------	---------------------	--------------	-----------------	--------------

**Partner/Principal**

**Project Manager (if any)**

**All others (by name)**

**All other fees or expenses**

Each proposal must contain the following statement:

**The Office of the People’s Counsel shall pay offeror as full compensation for all authorized work performed and accepted including all costs, fees and expenses, an amount not to exceed \$ \_\_\_\_\_.**

The Office reserves the right to disallow expenses charged for this engagement if OPC determines such expenses are unreasonable. The successful offeror must make every effort to minimize the cost of hotels, meals and transportation.

**B.6 Statement Regarding Potential Conflicts of Interest**

Each offeror must identify any relationships between itself or its employees and the companies under the jurisdiction of the Public Service Commission of the District of Columbia, or any parent, subsidiary, or affiliate of such companies. The extent, nature, and time aspects must be identified. If there are or have been no such relationships, a statement to that effect shall be included in the proposal. Failure to provide the statement on potential conflicts of interest will automatically disqualify the offeror.

**B.7 Employer Identification Information**

Each offeror must provide the Office with its 9-digit Federal Employer Identification Number (“EIN”) or Social Security Number (“SSN”) if offeror is an individual.

## **B.8 Debarment and Suspension**

By submitting a proposal to the Office, offerors understand, agree, and certify that:

- a. Submitting a proposal with a false statement is a material breach of contract and shall void the submitted proposal and any resulting contract, and the offeror shall be removed from all future contracting opportunities with OPC. The Office may debar and suspend the offeror for: (i) engaging in contract fraud or a criminal offense incident to obtaining, attempting to obtain, or performing a public contract or subcontract (Payments due under the contract will be applied towards any debt, including but not limited to, delinquent taxes owed to the District of Columbia); (ii) violating Federal or state antitrust statutes arising out of submission of bids and proposals; (iii) engaging in acts involving embezzlement, theft, forgery, bribery, falsification or destruction of records, receiving stolen property, false statements, tax evasion, or any other offense indicating a lack of business integrity or business honesty; and, (iv) being convicted of any other offense that indicates a lack of business integrity or present responsibility as a offeror.
- b. OPC, in its discretion, may debar or suspend any offeror as a result of: (i) willful failure to perform in accordance with the specifications within the time limit provided in a contract; (ii) a record of failure to perform or of unsatisfactory performance of the terms of one or more contracts; or (iii) false assertion of status giving rise to special benefits under the laws of the District of Columbia.

## **SECTION C: ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF AMENDMENTS AND ADDENDA**

### **C.1 Acknowledgment of Amendments and Addenda**

Offerors must acknowledge receipt of any amendment or addendum to this RFP by: (i) signing and returning the amendment or addendum or (ii) letter or telegram, including mailgrams or by facsimile. The Office must receive the acknowledgment by the date and time specified for receipt of the submissions. An offeror’s failure to acknowledge an amendment or addenda may result in rejection of the proposal.

## **SECTION D: GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **D.1 Contact Person**

For information regarding this RFP, please contact:

Naunihal Singh Gumer

Director, Regulatory Finance

Office of the People's Counsel for the District of Columbia

655 15<sup>th</sup> Street, N.W. Suite 200

Washington, D.C. 20005

ngumer@opc-dc.gov

## **D.2 Explanations to Prospective Offerors**

Offerors should carefully examine this RFP and all amendments, addenda, or other revisions, and be thoroughly familiar with all requirements prior to proffering a submission. Should an offeror find discrepancies or ambiguities in, or omissions from, the RFP and amendments, addenda or revisions, or otherwise desire an explanation or interpretation of the RFP, any amendments, addenda, or revisions, the offeror must submit a request for interpretation or correction in writing. Any information given to an offeror concerning the solicitation shall be furnished promptly to all other offerors as an amendment or addendum to this RFP, if in the sole discretion of the Office, that information is necessary in proffering submissions, or if the lack thereof would be prejudicial to any other prospective offerors. Oral explanations or instructions given before the award of the contract shall not be binding.

## **D.3 Written or Oral Discussions**

The Office is permitted to conduct oral discussions with offerors that tender submissions to expedite the proposal evaluation process.

## **D.4 Award Without Discussions**

In order to meet the award schedule, OPC will make every effort to award the prospective contract without either written or oral discussions. Therefore, each offeror is advised that it should submit a complete and thorough submission that is fully compliant with the instructions in this RFP.

## **D.5 Written or Oral Discussions**

If the Office elects to hold discussions with offerors, then a competitive range will be established based on the Evaluation Criteria set forth in Attachment B of this RFP. Upon completion of discussions, the Office will issue to all offerors in the competitive range a request for Best and Final Offers. After receipt of Best and Final Offers, OPC will not reopen discussions unless it is clearly in the best interest of the Office to do so.

#### **D.6 Retention of Submissions**

OPC will retain all submissions; therefore, no submission will be returned to offerors.

#### **D.7 Examination of Submissions**

Offerors are expected to examine the requirements of all instructions (including all amendments, addenda, attachments, and exhibits) in this RFP. Failure to do so shall be at the sole risk of the offeror and may result in disqualification.

#### **D.8 Late Submissions: Modifications**

Any submission or Best and Final Offer received at OPC after the exact time specified for receipt shall not be considered. Any modification of a submission, including a modification resulting from the Office's request for Best and Final Offers, is subject to the same conditions set forth in Section C. The only acceptable evidence to establish the time of receipt at OPC is the time-date stamp of the Office on the submission cover page, or other documentary evidence of receipt maintained by OPC. Notwithstanding any other provisions of this RFP to the contrary, a late modification of an otherwise successful submission that makes the terms more favorable to the Office may be considered at any time it is received and may be accepted. Submissions shall be irrevocable and remain in full force and effect for a period not less than 120 days after receipt of submissions.

#### **D.9 No Compensation for Preparation of Submissions**

The Office will not bear or assume any financial obligation or liability regarding the preparation of any submissions in response to this RFP, or prepared in connection therewith, including, but not limited to, any submissions, statements, reports, data, information, materials or other documents or items.

#### **D.10 Rejection of Submissions**

The Office reserves the right, in its sole discretion:

1. To cancel this solicitation or reject all submissions.

2. To reject submissions that contain conditions and/or contingencies that, in OPC's sole judgment, makes the submission indefinite, incomplete, otherwise non-responsive, or otherwise unacceptable for award.
3. To waive minor irregularities in any submission provided such waiver does not result in an unfair advantage to any offeror.
4. To take any other action within the applicable procurement law or regulations.
5. To reject the submission of any offeror that has submitted a false or misleading statement, affidavit, or certification in connection with such submission or this RFP.

### **ATTACHMENT B**

Please list the contractors that will perform the work described in this RFP. Please acknowledge that none have worked for DC Water, or its subsidiaries and affiliates in the past three (3) years.