

City of Houston, Department of Intergovernmental Relations (IGR)
Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for
Federal Lobbyist Representation for the City of Houston
Date: September 30, 2010

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I. **PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND BACKGROUND**

The City of Houston's Department of Intergovernmental Relations (IGR) coordinates and supervises the City's legislative program at the state and federal levels. It works closely with federal lobbyists to promote the City's interests before two of the three branches of the federal government. The City of Houston is seeking the services of a federal lobbyist to advise and advocate on legislative, regulatory and policy issues under consideration by the U.S. Congress and federal agencies. The lobbyist will assist the city in monitoring and advocating on legislative and regulatory measures that have potential impact on all city interests, which may include the three airports it owns and operates—George Bush Intercontinental Airport, William P. Hobby Airport, and Ellington Airport. The successful proposal will possess proven effectiveness in this regard and will further demonstrate particular expertise representing metropolitan government in the areas of, but not limited to, Congressional members, staff and committees, Federal agencies, including U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Homeland Security (Customs and Border Protection; Transportation Security Administration), Department of State, Department of Justice, Department of Energy, Commerce Department, Environmental Protection Agency, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, and other agencies as needed.

II. **PROJECT SCOPE OUTLINE**

The City of Houston (City) anticipates selecting one proposal to represent the City and provide related services in Washington, D.C.

The services the City expects the successful proposal to provide include, but are not limited to:

- Coordinate meetings and visits by city officials to the District of Columbia;
- Monitor and keep IGR and the Houston Airport System (HAS) informed of existing and proposed federal legislative and regulatory policy issues and actions that would positively or negatively impact the Houston airports or other City interests;

- Proactively identify opportunities to develop legislation and regulations that will benefit the City;
- Prepare comments or otherwise respond to proposed regulatory changes and other Executive Branch actions that may impact the City;
- Assist with the development of the City's annual federal agenda and develop strategies necessary for its implementation;
- Serve as a liaison with the Houston congressional delegation and staff, the U.S. Congress, congressional committees, the executive branch and other federal government officials;
- Proactively promote City positions on policy matters to elected officials, their staffs, and other decision makers through personal contact, written correspondence or testimony;
- Prepare letters in support of City positions to members of Congress, congressional committees, federal agencies and other key stakeholders for the Mayor's or Department Director's signature;
- Provide copies of bills, amendments, committee reports and analyses, regulations or other information reasonably available, which may be pertinent to City interests;
- Draft and manage passage of legislation;
- Prepare testimony to be presented by City officials before legislative or regulatory bodies;
- Arrange and attend meetings and help establish relationships between federal legislators or federal agency representatives and City staff;
- Proactively identify opportunities to obtain grants for capital projects, including airport related projects;

- Advise and assist in the preparation of federal appropriations requests and submit on behalf of the City in accordance with Congressional deadlines;
- Develop and participate in strategic coalitions with associations and governmental and business organizations to further the City's federal agenda and interests;
- Register, on behalf of the City of Houston and Houston Airport System, with the necessary federal officers and agencies, and comply with all reporting requirements mandated by the Lobbying Disclosure Act, and any other legal requirements;
- Provide frequent written updates to the City on activities related to all items listed above, and provide a written weekly report of recent and upcoming activities and actions in Congress and federal agencies;
- Other legal services as required by IGR, HAS and the City of Houston Legal Department;

The selected proposer may also be engaged to:

- Monitor and prepare filings for bilateral air route negotiations, DOT proceedings with select air carriers for international routes, and other federal policies and actions to promote international air service for the Houston Airport System and the City.

III. GENERAL PROVISIONS

A sample City of Houston Services Agreement ("the Contract") is posted on the City's Intergovernmental Relations website at:
<http://www.houstontx.gov/govtaffairs/index.html> (click on).

The proposal selected to provide federal representation services to the City will be required to execute the Contract and adhere to its terms, based on their submission(s).

IV. SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Any proposal awarded a contract with the City under this RFQ shall comply with the following policies and ordinances (as

identified in the Contract) **and posted on the Intergovernmental Relations Website at www.houstontx.gov/govtaffairs/index.html:**

- A. The City's Equal Employment Opportunity Ordinance
- B. The City's Fair Campaign Ordinance
- C. The City's Pay or Play Policy
- D. The Mayor's Contractors Drug Policy
- E. Affidavit of Ownership and Control (Debt Ordinance)

All proposals selected must commit to providing, at no cost to the City, 10 hours annually of pro bono legal services in representation before regulatory agencies, commentary on federal rules, and/or providing assistance on federal legal issues to the City's legal department.

In addition, a selected proposer will not represent third parties in meetings or through electronic or telephonic communications before the City and/or with City Officials during the period they are under contract and for 12 months thereafter.

V. **SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS**

Each submission should address the following items:

Item 1: Specific services and expertise that the proposer offers to the City. Please describe in sufficient detail so that the City may compare to other proposals.

Item 2: The benefit to the City of engaging the proposer.

Item 3: The name of all attorneys, paralegals (legal assistants) and other professionals who will be assigned **specifically to the City of Houston**, including the person who will be the point of contact with the City. Please identify the minimum number of hours that each member of the team will dedicate to the City on a monthly basis.

Item 4: A list, with complete contact information, of representative clients and the types of matters handled for such clients.

Item 5: The proposer's assent to the provisions in The Contract, including a commitment to provide pro bono services as stated in IV, above.

Item 6: A listing of all matters in which the proposer or any of its attorneys have represented a party adverse to the City (in litigation or otherwise), within the last five years.

VI. CONTACT WITH CITY OFFICIALS

Efforts to contact City officials regarding this solicitation are strictly prohibited and may disqualify the proposal from consideration.

VII. RFQ LIMITATIONS

Statements of Qualifications should be no longer than 25 pages. General promotional business development materials may be included as an appendix to the proposal.

This RFQ is not a contract or a commitment of any kind, nor does it commit the City to pay for any costs incurred in the submission of a response or for any costs incurred prior to the execution of a formal contract.

The City believes this RFQ contains all the information that is needed to prepare an adequate response. Any questions or requests for information, however, may be submitted, in writing by October 7, to Darrin Hall, Director of Intergovernmental Relations, 901 Bagby, 3rd Floor, Houston Texas, 77002, darrinm.hall@houston.tx.gov.

VIII. FEDERAL REPRESENTATION PROPOSAL SELECTION PROCESS

A selection committee will review responses (Statements of Qualifications) that conform to the requirements of this RFQ. The selection committee may recommend one or more proposals as finalists. The committee may request interviews with the finalists, at its discretion.

At the conclusion of the process the City expects to select one proposal to act as the City's federal lobbyist. However, the City reserves the right to select more than one proposal based on qualifications and specialized areas of expertise and experience that may be offered. Upon such selection, the proposer or proposers selected shall enter

into a contract on the terms set out in Sections III to V above.

Evaluation of proposals for legislative lobbying services for the City will be based on the following:

- 1. Demonstrates a specialty or expertise in certain areas that is best suited to represent the City's federal lobbying needs as detailed in this RFQ.*
- 2. Demonstrates successful experience as a lobbyist for urban municipalities or other governmental organizations of a similar size, or with similar needs as the City of Houston.*
- 3. Demonstrates proven legislative consulting experience with an established professional reputation as being a very effective advocate of successful legislation.*
- 4. Demonstrates existing working relationships with members and staff of the Houston Congressional delegation.*
- 5. Demonstrates existing working relationships with the Executive branch and federal agencies listed in Section I.*
- 6. Demonstrates that individuals named in Section V. Item 3 will be made available to the COH for lobbying under the contract.*
- 7. Demonstrates a commitment to diversity and, where appropriate, enhance opportunities for businesses certified by the City's Small/Minority/Women/Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Program (SMWDBE) to act as contractors or subcontractors.*

IX. SUBMISSION DEADLINE

All submittals (five copies each, plus one electronic version, on a disk or flash drive) in response to the RFQ must be received in the Office of the Director of Government Affairs on the third floor of the City Hall (901 Bagby) by **5:00 p.m. on Monday, November 1, 2010, clearly marked on the exterior of the envelope or package as "Response to Legal Services RFQ."** Late submissions shall be rejected.