



## **INTRODUCTION**

This Request for Proposal is for a qualified compliance and quality auditing specialist to present to the Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority (RDA) a proposal for technical assistance in the administration of the RDA's minority compliance, Buy-Indiana, Buy-Northwest Indiana, and Hire Indiana programs, and the ongoing monitoring function of its grantees. The enabling statute of the RDA stipulates that RDA-funded projects should achieve a utilization goal of 15% Minority Business Enterprises (MBE) and 5% Women Business Enterprises (WBE), increase participation of Indiana and northwest Indiana corporations, goods and services, and carry out the "northwest Indiana plan" for equal employment in the northwest Indiana region.

## **SCOPE OF THE REQUEST**

Under I.C. 36-7.5-2-1, the RDA has been formed by the State of Indiana to assist in the funding and development of the Gary/Chicago International Airport expansion; commuter transportation district and other rail projects and services; regional bus authority projects; regional transportation authority projects and services; Lake Michigan marina and shoreline development projects; and economic development projects in northwestern Indiana.

The RDA is seeking a firm to assist in the administration of the RDA's MBE/WBE/DBE compliance, Buy-Indiana, Buy-Northwest Indiana, and Hire Indiana programs, to guide grantees in the preparation of the minority compliance plan, and to conduct monthly monitoring and auditing of grantees' compliance to these respective program goals and priorities. The firm will be responsible for maintaining updated compliance records at the RDA Office for each RDA-funded project and managing RDA grantees toward program success by developing and utilizing a uniform minority compliance plan template. The firm shall use clearly-defined, standardized, and well-managed reporting and consultative process beginning with an applicant's initial engagement with the RDA through a grantee's project completion.

A qualified firm should gather reports from grantees and prepare its own monthly reports to the RDA Staff and Board. These reporting activities are expected to be conducted electronically, by paper, and through face-to-face work-site visits. Other requirements include limited travel and attendance at RDA board meetings.

Additional areas of responsibility may include the assistance and/or the coordination of other program-

related activities as instructed by the RDA Board, Interim/CEO or COO.

The RDA currently oversees two major rail projects with federal requirements for DBE participation. The RDA has been implementing, via a contracted firm, minority compliance with its contracts for more than ten years. As a result, the chosen firm will be stepping into a fully functioning minority compliance program.

Questions regarding Proposals must be submitted via email and directed to the attention of Sherri Ziller at [sziller@rda.in.gov](mailto:sziller@rda.in.gov). All questions **must** be submitted no later than **3:00 pm on April 9, 2021**. RDA will make every effort to respond to questions no later than Friday, April 16, 2021.

### **BACKGROUND and OVERVIEW**

The Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority (RDA) was created by the Indiana General Assembly in 2005. The Authority is a multi-purpose, area-wide planning and regional development organization responsible for major economic development project financing within Lake and Porter Counties in Indiana. It is governed, according to its statute, by a board of seven members appointed by the Mayors of Gary, Hammond, and East Chicago; the County governments of Lake and Porter Counties; and the Governor of Indiana.

The mission of the RDA is to be a catalyst for the transformational advances in Northwest Indiana. We are guided by a set of principles directing us to be bold in our thinking; collaborative as we work with many groups and organization without regard to political affiliation, race, or social status; transparent to instill public confidence as we do our work; non-partisan as we reach out to all constituents; efficient in our use of the public's resources; accountable for prudent actions, now and in the future; and socially equitable in the way we conduct our business internally and externally that respects the diversity of the region we serve. This vision and these principles are very important to the RDA and will be embodied into the decision-making framework during the awarding of this contract.

Under I.C. 36-7.5-2-8, the RDA shall

“(b) In addition to the provisions of subsection (a), with respect to projects undertaken by the authority, the authority shall set a goal for participation by minority business



enterprises of fifteen percent (15%) and women's business enterprises of five percent (5%), consistent with the goals of delivery the project on time and within the budgeted amount and, in so far as possible, using Indiana businesses for employees, goods and services. In fulfilling the goal, the authority shall take into account historical precedents in the same market. *As added by P.L. 215-2005, SEC. 73.*

To that end, the RDA board articulated the following position with respect to MBE/WBE utilization and,

The RDA strongly affirms its support as a matter of policy for the 15% MBE and 5% WBE spending goals contained in the enabling RDA legislation. Accordingly, moving forward, grantees approved for funding, or operational consultants utilized by the RDA, will achieve these spending goals in the completion of projects funded or services provided to the RDA. All recipients of funds from the RDA are required to meet the MBE and WBE goals established by the Enabling Statute and RDA Program Requirements, unless DBE reporting status has been approved by the Board of Directors. All efforts to comply must be documented and reported and are subject to a monthly and/or quarterly audit by the designated RDA compliance consultant. The MBE/WBE utilization plan will be monitored as a component of the RDA's minority compliance program.

Further, the RDA board established as policy the Buy-Indiana and Buy-Northwest Indiana provisions and,

The Grantee shall establish and maintain a Buy-Indiana Plan to demonstrate the Project's progress toward the utilization of Indiana businesses for employees, goods and services. Businesses located in Northwest Indiana (Lake and Porter Counties) receive the benefit from bidding, procurement and contracting opportunities afforded by RDA funded projects or initiatives. The outline for the Buy-Indiana Plan requirements, and maintenance of the Buy-Northwest Indiana policy is assembled by the RDA designated compliance consultant. The Buy-Indiana Plan and Buy-Northwest Indiana Plan will be monitored as a component of the RDA's minority compliance program.

As a final requisite, Section 13. IC 36-7.5-3-5.4 established the northwest Indiana Plan (or Hire Indiana) policy effective July 1, 2015 and, finally:

Refers to activities of the Indiana plan for equal employment in its northwest Indiana region. Subject to the RDA Hire Indiana policy, the goal must be to attain a workforce for each project that consists of at least twenty percent (20%) of employees who are individuals who reside in cities that: (1) are within the boundaries of the RDA; and (2) have an unemployment rate that exceeds the state unemployment rate by more than twenty percent (20%). On a monthly and/or quarterly basis, documentation of planned efforts to meet Hire Indiana by each grantee must be monitored through certified payroll collection and monitoring by the RDA's compliance consultant as a component of the RDA's minority compliance program.

#### **OVERVIEW OF THE REQUEST PROCESS**

The proposed timeline for this RFP process is as follows and may be subject to change.

March 29, 2021	RFP Released to Public and Posted to RDA Website
April 9, 2021	Proposers Submit Questions to RDA Chief Operating Officer/Interim CEO <a href="mailto:sziller@rda.in.gov">sziller@rda.in.gov</a>
April 26, 2021	Proposals Due to the RDA Office
May 10, 2021	RDA COO/Interim CEO Completes Initial Review of Proposals and the Qualified Firms are Scheduled for Interviews
May 31, 2021	RDA COO/Interim CEO makes recommendations to the Fiscal Task Force for the Consultant
June 10, 2021	RDA Board Votes on the Recommendation for Consultant
July 12, 2021	New Consultant begins its work on the RDA Minority Compliance, Buy-Indiana, Buy-Northwest Indiana, and Hire Indiana Monitoring



**All responses to or questions regarding this request should be submitted in writing to:**

Ms. Sherri Ziller, Interim CEO

[sziller@rda.in.gov](mailto:sziller@rda.in.gov)

Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority

9800 Connecticut Drive Crown Point, Indiana 46307

**and be clearly marked "RDA Minority Compliance Consultant"**

The RDA will accept proposals no later than **4:30 p.m. CST on Monday, April 26, 2021.**

### **FORMAT AND SUBMISSION OF QUALIFICATIONS**

The proposal should include the following information:

- 1) The name and address of the submitting organization and the state in which it is incorporated or chiefly located; a designated contact within the organization and a telephone number, fax number, and e-mail address; a list of any proposed sub-consultants that may be used on this project along with the state in which such sub-consultants are incorporated or chiefly located and their designated contacts and phone numbers. If sub-consultants are to be used, a primary contact/project manager must be specified.
- 2) Identification and resumes of the project manager and the key technical personnel who will be conducting the work on the project.
- 3) The designated roles and duties with projected time allotted per week on this project for each consultant and sub-consultant must also be specified. The estimated cost for the work proposed.
- 4) References for similar work done by your firm, including the name, address, and telephone number of the client/contact person and a description of the work.
- 5) A copy of the ethics code to which the submitting organization subscribes.

- 6) One hard copy and an electronic file on cd or thumb drive are needed. Packets received after the deadline will be rejected.

### **REVIEW AND EVALUATION**

The RDA Chief Operating Officer/Interim CEO will review and evaluate the proposals based on, but not necessarily limited to, the completeness and clarity of the packet submitted, past experience in similar projects by firms and their staff members assigned to this project, professional qualifications, and availability of key personnel to participate in the project, and the fees involved in this submittal. Members of the Fiscal Task Force will review those proposals forwarded by the Chief Operating Officer/Interim CEO and may participate in the interview process. The Fiscal Task Force will make a recommendation on the finalist which will be presented to the Board.

### **COST OF PREPARATION**

The RDA is not liable for any cost incurred prior to issuance of a contract.

### **GENERAL RFP DISCLOSURES**

- 1) Requirements and specifications of this proposal are considered to be the minimum needed.
- 2) If any modifications are made to the Regional Development Authority's request, anyone who has requested the original RFP will be sent copies of said modifications.
- 3) The responder must follow all RFP instructions to be considered responsive.
- 4) The RDA has the sole discretion to award this contract and reserves the right to modify or withdraw any and all offers.
- 5) The RDA reserves the right to reject all proposals.
- 6) The RDA reserves the right to interview, negotiate and deliberate with candidates before making a final decision.