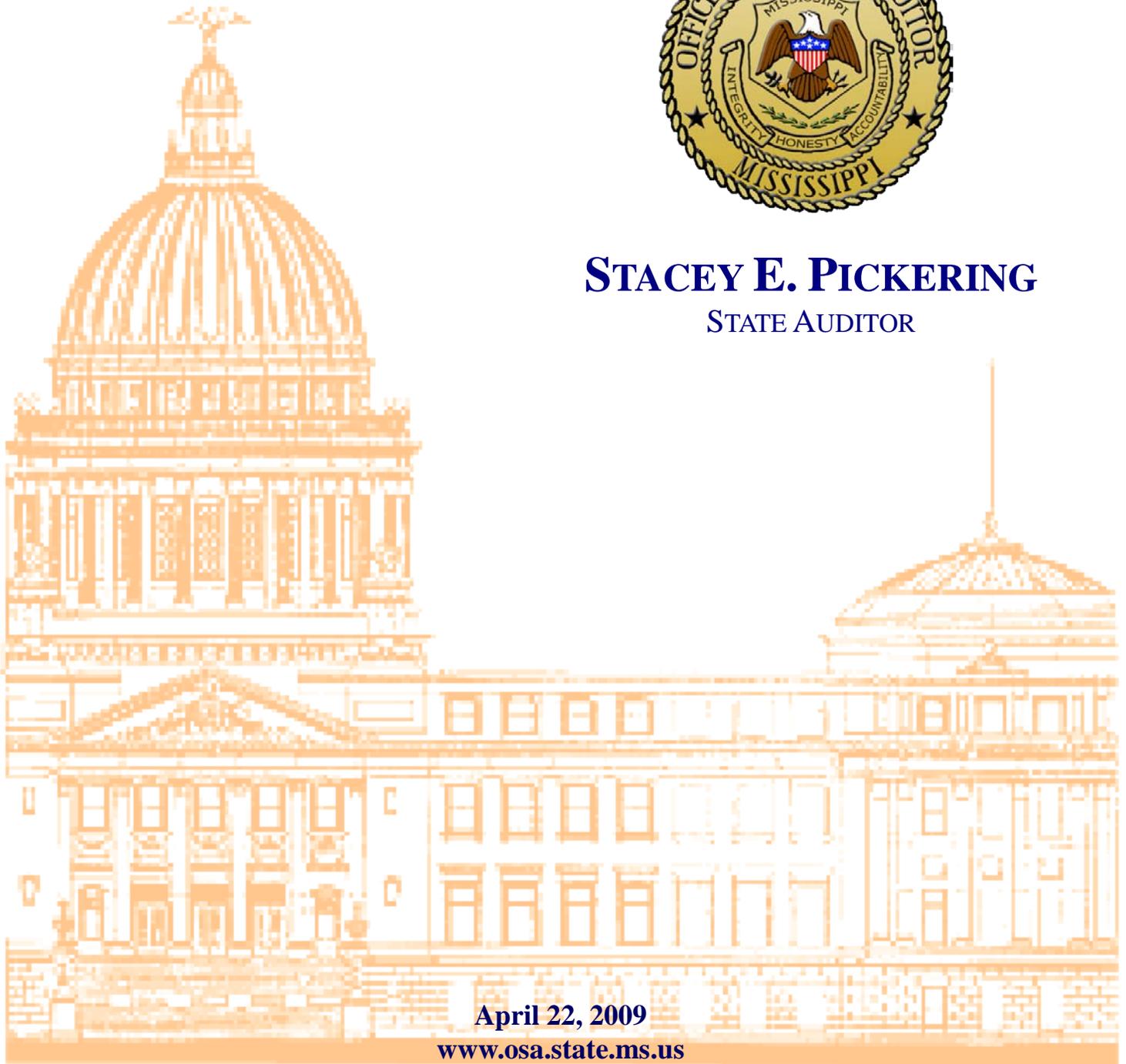


**OVERSIGHT, ASSISTANCE, AND MONITORING OF THE
AMERICAN RECOVERY AND REINVESTMENT ACT
IN MISSISSIPPI:
A REQUEST OF INTEREST/QUALIFICATIONS**



STACEY E. PICKERING
STATE AUDITOR



April 22, 2009

www.osa.state.ms.us



General Information

The Mississippi Office of the State Auditor is requesting Statements of Interest (SoI) from firms for a potential project to provide compliance oversight and technical assistance services related to American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds distributed to and used by State, local, and other government entities, as well as private and non-profit entities in Mississippi. This solicitation is not a request for proposals, but only a request for interested parties.

The State Auditor will accept such Statements of Interest until May 8, 2009 at 5:00 PM. No statements will be accepted after that time.

Any questions related to this Request for SoI should be addressed to:

Mr. Bill Pope, Chief of Staff
Mississippi Office of the State Auditor
501 N. West Street
Suite 801, Woolfolk Building
Jackson, MS 39201
Phone: (601) 576-2800
Fax: (601) 576-2687
Toll Free: (800) 321-1275
billpope@osa.state.ms.us

The deadline for questions (in order that they may be posted to our website) will be May 3, 2009 at Midnight.

The Mississippi Office of the State Auditor intends to contract for oversight, monitoring, and technical assistance services related to the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009 should sufficient funding be made available. The service contract contemplated will encompass activities of State government, municipal and county government, school districts, and other entities that receive and expend ARRA funds.

The following sections outline the specific areas for this request. These sections may result in multiple offers, based on prioritization and funding availability. Each response will be evaluated and ranked based on overall evidence of capability, staffing, and experience in the areas designated below.

The OSA reserves the right to reject any or all SoIs, to waive any informality or irregularity in any SoI received, and to be the sole judge of the merits of the respective SoIs received. In addition, OSA may choose not to pursue a contract or contracts for services, should funding not be available or should it be insufficient. This request does not obligate OSA to pay any costs incurred by respondents in the preparation and submission of their statement of interest. Furthermore, the request does not obligate OSA to accept or contract for any expressed or implied services. OSA may or may not negotiate the scope of services with one or more respondents. The Mississippi Office of the State Auditor does not discriminate based on race, religion, national origin, sex, age, or disability. The Mississippi Office of the State Auditor will adhere to any state and federal laws or regulations regarding minority business set asides.

Currently there is no pre-submittal conference scheduled. However, should one be scheduled, such information will be posted on the OSA website at www.osa.state.ms.us. Questions pertaining to the Request process or the contemplated contractual services should be directed in writing to Mr. Bill Pope, OSA Chief of Staff. Any changes to this notice will be posted on the OSA website as an addendum and provided to anyone who has already requested updates.

If sufficient funds are approved and made available to the Office of the State Auditor, then OSA will attempt to execute one or more contracts for this project based on services stated on a cost reimbursement basis (hourly rate and maximum hours fixed). Any contract(s) awarded by OSA will have a "not-to-exceed" clause which will limit the allowable fees charged in connection with this project through close out. The project and contract(s) will be developed in a manner that satisfies all applicable Federal, State, and Local laws and regulations.



Description of Potential Project

The Mississippi Office of the State Auditor, in an attempt to comply with and anticipate the federal government's oversight, transparency, and accountability requirements, is undertaking to compile a list of interested parties that are qualified (in whole, or in part) to assist with "front-end," "real-time," auditing services. These services may include (but are not limited to) accounting reviews, project and contract selection reviews, possible systems development, compliance reviews, deadline and reporting monitoring, performance evaluation and performance measures (which may include independent internal control testing). Should sufficient funding be made available, one or more contracts may be awarded for the services proposed in this Request of Interest (RoI). This project should result in the types of data collection and reporting that will ultimately provide post-audit entities, the federal government, the State, and the public with useful information about ARRA projects in Mississippi. Further, this project requires "real time" oversight and technical assistance to project managers throughout the State. ARRA projects may encompass services, construction, research, benefit provisions, and other delivery areas at all levels of government. Because transparency and accountability of ARRA dollars is expected, the responsibilities envisioned by this project may include reviews of private sector contract recipients of ARRA funds, as well. SB 3052, passed in the 2009 regular session provides the Office of the State Auditor the authority to gather information and have oversight of any ARRA funds in the State, regardless of whether those funds are provided to government or non-government entities.

Potential Request for Proposals

After receiving notice of sufficient funds availability, OSA will contact all qualified respondents to this RFI to have them submit an RFP/Q. OSA will begin the process of selecting a firm or firms to undertake to provide coordination, support, oversight, assistance, and monitoring services of all American Recovery and Reinvestment Act related projects (ARRA) conducted in Mississippi. The numbers of these projects will vary, therefore if contract(s) are awarded, OSA reserves the right to add to or subtract from the contract agreement.

Anticipated Scope of Work

Please note—Respondents to this Request of Interest should be aware that although OSA seeks to find one or more comprehensive firms that will provide their qualifications under this Request, expertise in all areas is not required. OSA seeks submissions from all firms, including small, local, regional, or large firms with expertise in limited areas that relate to oversight and accountability of ARRA funds and projects. Such submissions should heavily emphasize the strengths in limited areas, including experience with various government entities, software development, specialized work such as environmental, engineering, or construction management. The Mississippi Office of the State Auditor will adhere to any state and federal laws or regulations regarding minority business set-asides.

Qualified respondents to this RoI will be offered the opportunity to submit an RFP for work related to ARRA funds/project oversight, however any subsequent RFP will be conducted as an open request for submissions.. If one or more contracts are awarded that require some subcontracting, the primary pool for those subcontracts will be qualified firms that submitted under this RoI and/or the subsequent RFP. Ultimately funding and priorities will drive the final scope of services.

The scope of services may include the following:

1. Ensuring that agencies and other governing and private entities (subrecipients) receiving ARRA funds, and the projects they sponsor, comply with:
 - a. The terms of the ARRA, including Federal Acquisition Regulations
 - b. Legislation, if any, enacted by the Legislature pertaining to the ARRA program.
 - c. The State's policies and standards;
2. Providing an industry-standards based and scalable project methodology, including procedures, tools, and templates for ARRA oversight, so projects will be managed, planned, and executed consistently;



3. Establishing Program Governance Office with project control standards, milestone management, management reporting and key performance indicators
4. Maintaining a centralized office from which a pool of qualified, skilled and experienced project managers who will assist sponsoring agencies with many of the ARRA projects and related tasks;
5. Tracking and monitoring projects for timeliness and accuracy; help projects get back on track, and escalate critical issues and risks where necessary;
6. Ensuring that projects provide necessary financial, progress and status reporting, tracking, Federal reporting requirements and dashboards for State's senior management, as necessary;
7. Developing work plans and assisting with the coordination and integration of ARRA initiatives;
8. Providing project guidance, training, coaching, and mentoring to project managers throughout the State as necessary or required;
9. Maintaining precise and accurate records of all expenditures and all matters related to the contract (contemplated by this RoI and subsequent RFP); transfer all records of any kind whatsoever related to such a project to the Office of the State Auditor (OSA) at the end of the contract; and make such records available to the OSA for inspection without notice at any time during the term of the project;
10. Coordinating numerous internal and external stakeholders to streamline communication and maintain focus of ARRA expectations and requirements;
11. Compiling reports of "shovel-ready" projects and staffing needs for projects throughout the State and at all levels of government;
12. Creation and maintenance of a system to track expenditures, permitting, compliance, and reporting requirements;
13. Ensuring that developed systems are compliant with audit requirements of the Federal and State government.
14. Developing criteria to allow the State to prioritize projects as necessary;
15. Monitoring compliance with reporting, key metrics, milestones, and policies and procedures;

Company Information

Each prospective respondent shall provide a cover letter with their response that clearly identifies their area(s) of interest. The cover letter shall be no more than three (3) pages and shall include, at a minimum the company name, tax identification number, DUNS number, description of the firm/team, the legal company organization, primary contact name, phone number(s) address, fax number, and email address. Someone who can legally bind the company to a commitment in the future must sign the letter. As a clearly identified Appendix to this RoI, relevant organization chart(s) with names and titles need to be supplied. Finally, the certification found at the end of this Request must be a part of the cover letter.

Qualifications Criteria

In order to establish interest and be qualified as an "interested party," the successful respondent will provide sufficient information related to the following five areas. All qualified interested parties will be placed in a pool in the event that an RFP is issued, however, any subsequent related RFP will be an open process. Applicants are encouraged to organize their submissions in such a way as to follow the general evaluation criteria listed below. Information included may be used to evaluate your firm as part of any criteria regardless of where that information is found within these sections. Information obtained from the Statement of Qualifications (SOQ) and from any other relevant source may be used in the evaluation and selection process. The SOQs received by the deadline stated above will be ranked according the following criteria:

Relevant Firm Experience

- a. Applicant's overall reputation, service capabilities and quality as it relates to this project.
- b. A Statement detailing whether the applicant is Mississippi owned and based, and if so, for how long. Where applicable, provide previous addresses if the applicant business has moved.
- c. List and briefly describe 3-5 comparable projects completed by your firm or currently in progress; include your firm's role, and discuss contract amendment history, if applicable. For each project, include: contract



- value (original value plus all contract amendments, if applicable), project owner, project location, contact name and title, address, current/accurate telephone number, fax number, and email address (if available).
- d. A minimum of three referrals and references from other agencies and owners. If possible, references should be from the projects listed above.
 - e. List all projects in the last five (5) years that were with Mississippi State or local governments, or provide a statement that there were no projects in the last five (5) years with any Mississippi State or local government entity.
 - f. List and describe any litigation; arbitration; claims filed by your firm against any project owner as a result of a contract dispute; any claim filed against your firm; termination from a project.
 - g. Applicant's capacity and intent to proceed without delay if selected for this work.
 - h. Photocopies (attached as a clearly marked Appendix to this response) of all relevant licenses, certifications, professional memberships, etc.

Team Experience & Qualifications

- a. Describe each team member's position within the firm. Provide resumes of each proposed team member in Appendix A. List professional continuing education.
- b. Briefly describe each team member's role on this project. *Please note, once listed in an RFP submission, these members would not be able to be reassigned without the approval of OSA and/or the Prime Contractor and any reassignments would have to be equivalent qualifications.*
- c. Provide "team" experience working together on similar projects.
- d. Identify proposed subconsultants.
- e. Individually list any current employees who have previously been employed by Mississippi State government. Include the agency and dates of such employment.

Project Understanding and Approach

- a. Describe your understanding of the project.
- b. Identify and discuss any potential problems during design and implementation phase.
- c. Identify and discuss methods to mitigate those problems.
- d. Describe and discuss applicant areas of strength as they would apply to this project.
- e. Describe applicant limitations as they would apply to this project.

Approach to Project Management

- a. Describe your firm's project management approach and team organization during programming, design and implementation phases for similar projects and how that would apply to this project.
- b. Describe systems used for planning, scheduling, estimating and managing project oversight and accountability services.
- c. Describe the firm's experience on quality assurance and dispute resolution.
- d. Describe the Quality Assurance/Quality Control as it relates to data and other information gathering for this project. Include a statement about how that would be implemented in this project.

Other Factors

- a. Current workload and ability to proceed promptly.
- b. Willingness to abide by the State contract clauses as provided in the PSCRB regulations found at www.spb.state.ms.us (See the Appendix D) with few or no objections or changes.
- c. Provide statement regarding your assurance that this engagement will not result in a conflict of interest—including, but not limited to, audit engagements, oversight over existing contracts outside of State government, and any other official reasons that a conflict of interest might be determined under State and federal law.



- d. Relevant factors impacting the quality and value of work.

Please note: A qualified respondent to this RoI will be eligible to participate in the anticipated RFP process; however, the RFP process will not be exclusive to pre-qualified applicants. If not selected in the RFP process as a Prime Contractor(s), qualified respondents may become part of the pre-qualified subcontractor pool.

Submittal Requirements

The SOQ shall include a cover letter of no more than three (3) pages, plus a maximum of twenty (20) pages to address the SOQ criteria specified above (excluding resumes, which should be clearly designated in a separate Appendix). Any Table of Contents and section divider pages will not count towards the total page count. Resumes for each anticipated key team member shall be limited to no more than three pages and shall be attached to a clearly marked Appendix. Please use page numbers in the submission.

One original and four (4) copies of the SOQ and appendices must be submitted in sealed packaging by the deadline in order to be considered. Failure to comply with the following criteria may be grounds for disqualifications:

- Receipt of submittal by the specified cut-off date and time.
- The number of originals and/or copies of the submittal specified.
- Adherence to maximum page requirements.

Adherence to the maximum page criteria is critical; each page side (maximum 8 ½" X 11") with criteria information will be counted. Pages that have photos, charts and graphs will be counted towards the maximum number of pages.

Representation Regarding Contingent Fees

The respondent represents that it has not retained a person to solicit or secure a State contract upon an agreement or understanding for a commission, percentage, brokerage, or contingent fee, except as disclosed in the contractor's bid or proposal."

Representation Regarding Gratuities

The respondent, bidder, offeror, or contractor represents that it has not violated, is not violating, and promises that it will not violate the prohibition against gratuities set forth in Section 7-204 (Gratuities) of the Mississippi Personal Service Contract Procurement Regulations."

Acknowledgment of Amendments

Respondents shall acknowledge receipt of any amendment to the solicitation by signing and returning the amendment with the bid, by identifying the amendment number and date in the space provided for this purpose on the bid form, or by letter. The Office of the State Auditor must receive the acknowledgment by the time and at the place specified.

Certification of Independent Price Determination

The respondent certifies that the prices submitted in response to the solicitation have been arrived at independently and without - for the purpose of restricting competition - any consultation, communication, or agreement with any other bidder or competitor relating to those prices, the intention to submit a bid, or the methods or factors used to calculate the prices bid.

E-Verification



The respondent represents and warrants that it will ensure its compliance with the Mississippi Employment Protection Act (Senate Bill 2988 from the 2008 Regular Legislative Session) and will register and participate in the status verification system for all newly hired employees. The term "employee" as used herein means any person that is hired to perform work within the State of Mississippi. As used herein, "status verification system" means the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigration Responsibility Act of 1996 that is operated by the United States Department of Homeland Security, also known as the E-Verify Program, or any other successor electronic verification system replacing the E-Verify Program. Contractor agrees to maintain records of such compliance and, upon request of the State, to provide a copy of each such verification to the State. Contractor further represents and warrants that any person assigned to perform services hereunder meets the employment eligibility requirements of all immigration laws of the State of Mississippi. Contractor understands and agrees that any breach of these warranties may subject Contractor to the following: (a) termination of this Agreement and ineligibility for

any state or public contract in Mississippi for up to three (3) years with notice of such cancellation/termination being made public, or (b) the loss of any license, permit, certification or other document granted to Contractor by an agency, department or governmental entity for the right to do business in Mississippi for up to one (1) year, or (c) both. In the event of such termination/cancellation, Contractor would also be liable for any additional costs incurred by the State due to contract cancellation or loss of license or permit.

E-Payment to Vendors

Payments by state agencies using the Statewide Automated Accounting System (SAAS) shall be made and remittance information provided electronically as directed by the State. These payments shall be deposited into the bank account of the Contractor's choice. The State may, at its sole discretion, require the Contractor to submit invoices and supporting documentation electronically at any time during the term of this Agreement. Contractor understands and agrees that the State is exempt from the payment of taxes. All payments shall be made in United States currency.

PLEASE NOTE: Each submission shall contain the following certification as part of the Cover Letter:

Prospective Contractor's Representation Regarding Contingent Fees

The respondent (prospective contractor) represents as a part of this submission that such contractor
 has
 has not
retained any person or agency on a percentage, commission, or other contingent arrangement to secure this contract.

Signature

Date



For more information about this issue, contact

The Office of the State Auditor
Post Office Box 956
Jackson, MS 39205-0956
Phone: 601-576-2800 in the Jackson area or
1-800-321-1275 Statewide
Fax: 601-576-2687
Website: <http://www.osa.state.ms.us>

The Performance Audit Division of the Office of the State Auditor assesses the performance of organizations, programs, activities, and functions of government in order to provide information to improve accountability, effectiveness, and to facilitate decision-making. All reports, documents, and supporting materials obtained and utilized by the Performance Audit Division will be considered public information, unless otherwise prohibited by law.

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