

**Request for Proposals
for a
Loleta Safe Routes to School and Connectivity to Tribal Lands
Project**

**RFP released: 1/21/2026
Proposals due: 02/19/2026**

Invitation: The Humboldt County Association of Governments (HCAOG) is inviting interested parties to submit proposals for developing a series of technical deliverables for the Loleta Safe Routes to School and Tribal Connectivity Project. HCAOG would like to retain the professional services of a qualified professional and/or firm, or team of professionals and/or firms, to assist in this project. The consultant deliverables will include developing existing conditions mapping and analysis, as needed community outreach and meeting support, and developing a draft and final plan for the project, accompanied by 30% design drawings and cost estimates. HCAOG seeks a qualified consultant team to provide technical, analytical, facilitation, and outreach work to make this project a success.

This project will be led by a team of three local Humboldt County agencies. HCAOG will serve as the primary contracting agency and will be providing general administrative oversight for the duration of the contract. Redwood Community Action Agency (RCAA) will serve as the primary project coordinator and will lead community and tribal outreach and engagement on the project. The County of Humboldt, the agency with jurisdictional charge of the county-maintained roadway network, will provide project support and oversight primarily for the technical deliverables, including the existing conditions mapping and analysis, and the final project report and plans. The selected technical consultant will work closely with RCAA throughout all project deliverables, ensuring the public engagement results are reflected in the final technical deliverables.

Qualified candidates will demonstrate technical, analytical, and comprehensive knowledge in transportation planning with an emphasis on multi-modal network planning and completing projects in small, rural communities led by a diverse group of community stakeholders.

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Administrative questions:

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Loleta Safe Routes to School and Connectivity to Tribal Lands Project

I. BACKGROUND

Loleta is a rural, unincorporated town located between the Table Bluff Reservation, home of the Wiyot Tribe, and the lands of the Bear River Band of the Rohnerville Rancheria in Humboldt County. In 2024, the population was 532, a decline of 11% since the most recent census. Loleta Union Elementary School serves 103 students (42.7% Native American, 36.9% Hispanic, and 10.7% White) from all three communities; 93.2% qualify for free or reduced-priced meals.

While Loleta Elementary is ranked among the highest priorities for needed safety improvements in HCAOG's "Safe Routes to School Prioritization Tool," no supportive plans have yet been developed for Loleta. Loleta Elementary is located on Loleta Drive, the primary entrance into town from US Highway 101. Currently, many drivers on Loleta Drive are traveling at speeds unsafe for pedestrians trying to use the crosswalk directly in front of the school. Consequently, most parents choose to send their children to school by bus or drive them themselves. This adds congestion to a busy school zone intersection, which also connects directly to the highway. The existing street design is car-centric and deters students and residents from walking or biking to school, shops, and Main Street, and the town's sole transit stop, which is only 0.3 miles from the school.

Students coming from the Bear River Rancheria must use the US Highway 101 overpass, which lacks pedestrian and bicyclist access and has no shoulder. Because of this problematic access, some students climb over a fence from the Rancheria (Singley Hill Rd) and sprint across US Highway 101 to get to school. Students who reside at the Table Bluff Reservation are 4.5 miles from Loleta Elementary, and their only path to school is along narrow, 2-lane rural roads with no shoulders, with cars traveling up to 55 mph. Native American students make up 42% of Loleta Elementary's enrollment and would benefit from a tribally-informed needs assessment, as would Tribal citizens of all ages residing on Tribal lands who regularly travel to Loleta. From the Rancheria or the Reservation, Loleta is the closest town with schools, businesses, parks, trails, family resource centers, and public community events.

Over the last decade, the project area experienced 15 traffic crashes, with two reported as injuring pedestrians (TIMS data). A great deal of anecdotal evidence supports the need for traffic calming measures. The project's engagement will include training school employees and community members to use Street Story. Engaging the community in fact-finding creates authentic opportunities for community input.

Loleta community members, Humboldt County staff, and a team from the UC Berkeley Safe Transportation Research and Education Center (Safe TREC) conducted a street-safety field audit in April 2024. The main goal was to assess Loleta Drive to improve pedestrian access and identify safe routes to school from downtown Loleta to Loleta Elementary School. The Final Report of the "Humboldt County–Community of Loleta Complete Streets Safety Assessment" was completed in September 2024 (Attachment F). The safe route to school alignment shown in this report, connecting downtown Loleta and the Elementary School via Park Street and Scenic Drive, is anticipated to be the primary corridor of focus for the 30% design work under this RFP.

There is strong community momentum now because of engaged and energized local champions at Loleta School, Loleta Chamber, Wiyot Tribe, and Bear River Rancheria. With that momentum, HCAOG and RCAA, working collaboratively with the stakeholder group and the County of Humboldt, succeeded in obtaining a fiscal year 2025-26 Caltrans Sustainable Transportation

Planning Grant (STPG) to help move this important work forward. A copy of HCAOG's grant application is included for reference as Attachment E.

Humboldt County Association of Governments

HCAOG conducts work for the benefit of the entire Humboldt County region. The region now known as Humboldt County includes the unceded traditional territories and current homelands of several indigenous nations including the Karuk, Hupa, Wiyot, Yurok, Tsugwe, Chilula, Chimariko, Lassik, Mattole, Nongatl, Sinkyone, Wailaki, and Whilkut people.

HCAOG is the designated Regional Transportation Planning Agency (RTPA), which has transportation planning responsibilities under federal and state law. As the RTPA, HCAOG is responsible for developing regional transportation plans and programs in a cooperative, continuous, and comprehensive planning process. This process is carried out with federal, state, regional, local, and tribal agencies, and the public. The HCAOG Board of Directors is comprised of eight members: the Chairman of the Board of Supervisors, and the Mayors of Humboldt's seven cities (Arcata, Blue Lake, Eureka, Ferndale, Fortuna, Rio Dell, and Trinidad), or an alternate designate from that governing body. HCAOG has three standing advisory committees: the Policy Advisory Committee, Social Service Transportation Advisory Council, and Technical Advisory Committee.

II. PROJECT SUMMARY

To address the significant challenges to safe, sustainable, and active transportation in the greater community of Loleta, which includes two Native American Tribes and Loleta Elementary School, HCAOG is partnering with the nonprofit Redwood Community Action Agency (RCAA), the Wiyot Tribe, the Bear River Band of the Rohnerville Rancheria, Humboldt County Public Works, Caltrans, and the diverse community members of Loleta to develop 30% design plans that focus on multimodal transportation safety improvements from Loleta Elementary School to Loleta's Main Street, as well as produce two tribally-informed multimodal needs assessments and concept plans focused on enhancing transportation safety between tribal lands and Loleta Elementary/Main Street. This project will address pedestrian and roadway safety challenges created by the proximity of US Highway 101 to Loleta Elementary School. Enhancing safety, sustainability, and walkability can transform this community as it works on expanding school enrollment, developing a thriving business district, connecting the community with the Wiyot Tribe and the Bear River Rancheria in a safer, multi-modal network, and positioning Loleta to be a healthy and economically vibrant community along the future Great Redwood Trail.

OVERALL PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The project objectives include:

- Engaging the Wiyot Tribe and the Bear River Band of the Rohnerville Rancheria to inform multimodal needs assessments between Tribal lands and Loleta.
- Engaging the diverse community of Loleta and its stakeholders to inform plans for multimodal safety improvements within Loleta, including safe routes to Loleta Elementary School.
- Producing draft and final 30% design plans, ready for implementation, that focus on multimodal transportation safety improvements from Loleta Elementary School to Loleta's Main Street.
- Producing a tribally-informed multimodal needs assessment and concept plan focused on enhancing transportation safety between the Bear River Rancheria and Loleta Elementary/Main Street.

- Producing a tribally-informed multimodal needs assessment and concept plan focused on enhancing transportation safety between the Wiyot Tribe's Table Bluff Reservation and Loleta Elementary/Main Street.
- Positioning all multimodal safety improvements for implementation, in cooperation with the Loleta community, associated Tribes, and all stakeholders.

PROJECT STAKEHOLDERS

As noted above, there are three partnering agencies that will be leading the development and implementation of the grant, including HCAOG, the County of Humboldt Public Works Department, and RCAA. Additional key project stakeholders will also include the Wiyot Tribe and Bear River Band of the Rohnerville Rancheria, Caltrans, the Great Redwood Trail Agency, Loleta Elementary School and various other members of the Loleta community. Regular engagement from this stakeholder group will be key in developing a project that truly serves the greater Loleta community.

III. SCOPE OF WORK

HCAOG considers the activities listed in the Consultant Scope of Work (Attachment B) to be the minimum requirements expected for conducting subject consultant services for the Loleta Safe Routes to School and Tribal Connectivity Project. Proposals should describe tasks, time frames, staffing, and approaches to project management and communicating with project stakeholders.

A final scope of work and schedule will be developed by HCAOG and the Successful Proposer. All proposers will be held to the applicable requirements, standards and protocols set forth in this RFP, and the sample Consultant Services Agreement (Attachment A). If subconsultants are proposed, the Subconsultant List form (Attachment D) must be included with the proposal. Such requirements and standards will be incorporated into the final Consultant Services Agreement subject to negotiation between HCAOG and the Successful Proposer.

Regular progress reports will be required as deliverables for this project. Proposals should detail any assistance the respondent will require from HCAOG staff and/or committee members.

IV. PROJECT TIMETABLE

The following dates represent HCAOG's best estimate of the schedule that will be followed with regard to this RFP process. HCAOG hereby reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to modify this tentative schedule as it deems necessary, including, without limitation, extending the deadline for submission of Proposals.

January 21, 2026	Request for Proposals (RFP) released
February 4, 2026 at 5 p.m.	Deadline to submit questions regarding RFP
February 11, 2026	HCAOG posts answers to questions regarding RFP
February 19, 2026 (11:59 p.m.)	Closing date for receipt of proposals
February 23-26, 2026	HCAOG evaluation process
March 5, 2026	Recommendation by Technical Advisory Committee
March 19, 2026	Staff recommends award to HCAOG Board
March 23-27, 2026	Execute contract
Last week of March, 2026	Project commences

Closing Date

Complete proposals must be received via electronic delivery (email) no later than **Thursday, February 19, 2026 (by 11:59 p.m. Pacific Standard Time)**. By submitting a proposal, the Proposer certifies that his or her name or the consultant firm's name, as well as the name of Proposer's subcontractors, does not appear on the Comptroller General's list of ineligible contractors for federally assisted projects.

All proposals received *prior to* the closing date and time specified above may be withdrawn or modified by respondent's written request. Any modification, to be considered, must be received in writing (via email), prior to the closing date for receipt of proposals. Any modifications received late shall not be considered. Proposals will become HCAOG's property after the submission deadline has passed.

V. PROPOSAL CONTENT AND ORGANIZATION

Proposals should be limited to specifically discuss the elements outlined in this RFP and must be submitted in accordance with the standards and specifications set forth in this RFP and contain all required attachments. To be considered to perform the services requested by this RFP, a respondent must meet the following criteria and submit all the following information outlined below. Submittals failing to meet any of these criteria shall be considered to be non-responsive and will not be evaluated further.

Complete proposals submitted in response to this RFP shall be submitted to HCAOG via electronic mail submitted to: oona.smith@hcaog.net and cc info@hcaog.net, with subject line: "Loleta Safe Routes RFP submittal."

A) Cover Letter

The proposal shall be transmitted with a cover letter that describes the respondent's interest and commitment to the proposed project. The cover letter should include the name, title, address and telephone number of the individual to whom correspondence and other contacts should be directed during the consultant selection process and shall contain a statement to the effect that the proposal is a firm offer for at least a sixty (60) day period. The person authorized to negotiate a contract with HCAOG shall sign the cover letter. Only one cover letter needs to be prepared to accompany the technical proposal and cost proposal. Proposals that are unsigned or signed by an individual not authorized to bind the Proposer will be considered non-responsive and rejected.

B) Proposal Formatting (Sections 1 through 7)

Each responsive proposal shall have a technical proposal (sections 1-5), cost proposal (section 6), and required attachments (section 7). Failure to follow this format may result in the rejection of the proposal. Each Proposal shall consist of the following items:

1) Table of Contents

Proposals shall include a table of contents that identifies submitted material by sections 1 through 7 with sequential page numbers.

2) Understanding of Project

This section shall clearly convey how the respondent understands the nature of the work, and issues related to HCAOG's RFP project.

3) Consultant Qualifications and Experience

Discuss overall qualifications of the firm and/or project team (key staff and subconsultants, as applicable).

a) Firm

Briefly describe the respondent's firm (the lead firm if you are proposing a multi-firm project team), including the year the firm was established and type of organization (partnership, corporation, etc.).

Include a detailed description of any litigation regarding the provision of services equivalent to those set forth in this RFP that have been brought by or against the Proposer, including the nature and result of such litigation, if applicable.

Include a detailed description of any fraud convictions related to public contracts, if applicable.

Include a detailed description of any current or prior debarments, suspensions or other ineligibility to participate in public contracts, if applicable.

Include a detailed description of any violations of local, state and/or federal industry or regulatory requirements, if applicable.

Include a detailed description of any controlling or financial interest the Proposer has in any other firms or organizations, or whether the Proposer's firm is owned or controlled by any other firm or organization. If the Proposer does not hold a controlling or financial interest in any other firms or organizations, that must be stated.

State the firm's qualifications for performing the consulting services requested in this RFP. Briefly describe the firm's experience with similar organizations. Briefly describe the firm's recent experience in projects and/or programs related and relevant to the services and scope of work sought for this project.

If subconsultants are proposed as part of the project team, a Subconsultant List, provided as Attachment D of this RFP, must be submitted as an attachment with the proposal (section 7).

b) Key Personnel

Describe the qualifications and experience of each professional who will participate in the project. Include, as an attachment (section 7), a résumé for each key staff member of the project team. Include a detailed summary of how each team member's qualifications and experience will help meet the objectives of the project.

Include an organizational chart which identifies all team members, and subconsultants if proposed, that will be responsible for providing services set forth in this RFP.

Include a detailed description of the expected communication channels between the project team and HCAOG to ensure that the services set forth in this RFP will be performed to HCAOG's satisfaction, including, without limitation, how potential problems will be solved.

c) References

Provide a list of at least three references. Include references from clients of similar type agencies (governmental) and projects, as applicable. References must include client name, and current address, phone number, and e-mail address. For each reference, describe the nature of the work you performed, approximate dates your firm performed the work, and your firm's professional staff who performed the work. Provide qualifications and at least two references for each subconsultant, if proposed.

4) Approach

Describe your firm's or team's proposed approach and management plan for providing the scope of work. Respondents to this RFP should build on this general description by proposing a scope of work with specific subtasks as deemed appropriate. Some tasks may require additional information from respondents as called out under the description of each task. Additional tasks and work elements may be added or deleted during contract negotiations. Upon conclusion of the negotiation process, the selected consultant will be required to prepare a final work plan, schedule and budget for inclusion into a final contract.

Discuss your views on the challenges that may arise from developing or managing the Loleta Safe Routes to School and Tribal Connectivity project, and your intended approach and your capacity to solve such problems. Describe the practices you use to complete tasks and deliverables on time, and how you would assure that the quality of the contracted products will meet HCAOG's requirements.

5) Work Plan & Schedule

HCAOG's best estimate of the project timeframe, with regard to this RFP scope, is approximately 24 months. The project is expected to commence in the last week of March, 2026. The contract expenditure deadline will be no later than June 2028. The proposal shall discuss the respondent's view of the project schedule, and the team members' workload and availability.

Include a detailed schedule identifying the timeframe for each major task and milestone of the activity, or each activity, to be undertaken. Include all internal project-team meetings, public meetings, progress reports, and deliverables. Provide estimated staff and hours to accomplish each activity and deliverables.

6) Cost Proposal

Respondents shall include a fee schedule for cost of services not to exceed the total project budget of **\$230,000**.

The cost proposal for the proposed scope of work shall be detailed by cost per activity and shall describe:

- (a) both the hourly rate for all personnel, including subcontractors, to be assigned to this contract;
- (b) a summary of any related costs that are to be billed directly, including costs for attending additional meetings; and
- (c) work to be completed by subconsultants should be clearly identified in both the proposal and cost proposal. Cost plus a percentage of cost for subcontractors is not allowed.

Any consultant travel and per diem reimbursement costs must be consistent with the California Department of Transportation's Travel Guide policies for consultants, contractors, and subcontractors (non State employees). Policies can be found at <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/accounting/travel-guide>.

7) Required Attachments

Proposals that do not contain each of the following required attachments (if applicable), may be rejected by HCAOG.

- (a) If subconsultants are proposed, the Subconsultant List form, attached as Attachment

D, must be included as an attachment to the proposal.

(b) Staff résumés for key personnel.

8) Conflict of Interest

By submitting a Proposal in response to this RFP, Proposer warrants and covenants that no official or employee of HCAOG, nor any business entity in which an official of HCAOG has an interest, has been employed or retained to solicit or assist in procuring the final Consultant Services Agreement resulting from this RFP process, nor that any such person will be employed in the performance of such Consultant Services Agreement without immediate divulgence of such fact to HCAOG.

VI. OTHER REQUIREMENTS

A) Insurance

The selected firm(s) or project team must be prepared to comply with HCAOG's standard Consultant Services Agreement (Attachment A) terms and must submit evidence of eligibility for all insurance required. Prior to executing a final Consultant Services Agreement, the successful proposer shall produce certificates of the required insurance, including a certified endorsement naming HCAOG as an additional insured. Additional insurance should not be purchased until a final Consultant Services Agreement has been awarded by the HCAOG Board.

HCAOG's standard requirements for insurance coverage include:

- One million dollars (\$1,000,000) General Liability Insurance
- One million dollars (\$1,000,000) Automobile Insurance
- Twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000) for Document
- Five-hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000) for Errors and Omissions

Exceptions to the standard insurance amounts may be considered on a case-by-case basis. Any proposer seeking any exception must include that request as part of the proposal, listing a justification for the exception and proposed insurance coverage.

B) Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

The contractor agrees to comply with all the requirements imposed by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (49 USC 2000d) and the regulations of the U.S. Department of Transportation issued there under in 49 CFR Part 21.

C) Equal Employment Opportunity

In connection with the performance of the contract, the contractor shall not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, color, age, creed, sex or national origin. Such action shall include, but not be limited to, the following: employment, upgrading, demotion or transfer, recruitment or recruitment advertising, layoff or termination, rates of pay or other forms of compensation, and selection for training, including apprenticeship.

Each proposal, to be considered responsive, must include the following:

- (1) A copy of the consultant's affirmative action policy (applicable for firms with 50 or more employees); and
- (2) Discussion of the consultant's program for use of DBEs in the performance of this work, including the following:
 - The names and addresses of DBE firms that will participate
 - The description of the work each named firm will perform

- The dollar amount of participation by each DBE firm.

D) Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Provisions

To comply with the nondiscrimination requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), it is the policy of HCAOG to make every effort to ensure that its programs, activities and services are available to all persons, including persons with disabilities. For persons with a disability needing a reasonable modification to participate in the procurement process, or for persons having questions regarding reasonable modifications of the procurement process, you may contact the HCAOG representative listed in this RFP.

IMPORTANT: To ensure that we can meet your need for ADA accommodations, it is best that we receive your request for reasonable modification at least 10 working days before the scheduled event (e.g., meeting, conference, workshop, etc.) or deadlines due date for procurement documents. In order to ensure the proposal is in compliance with Federal ADA guidelines, Proposers should review the Federal ADA guidelines at <http://www.ada.gov/>.

E) Format and Copies of Proposal

Complete proposals submitted in response to this RFP will only be accepted in electronic form via email. Proposals must be ADA accessible for sight-impaired readers, i.e., documents must be readable by screen-reader software. Printed hard copies are not accepted.

F) Public Record

Proposals will not be treated as confidential documents unless they are marked as such by the bidder and the bidder is able to demonstrate that the documents contain the type of information protected by law as confidential or trade secret. Until award of the contract, the proposals shall be held in confidence and shall not be available for public review. Upon award of a contract to the Successful Proposer, all proposals shall be public records. No proposal shall be returned after the date and time set for opening thereof. All proposals, whether selected or rejected, shall become the property of the Humboldt County Association of Governments.

G) Exceptions, Objections and Requested Changes

Each proposer should carefully review the terms and conditions of this RFP and the sample Consultant Services Agreement. Any exceptions, objections or requested changes to this RFP or the sample Consultant Services Agreement shall be clearly identified and explained in the Proposal. Descriptions of any exceptions, objections or requested changes should include the page and paragraph number of the referenced portion of this RFP or the sample Consultant Services Agreement. Protests based on any exception, objection or requested change shall be considered waived and invalid by HCAOG, if the exception, objection or requested change is not clearly identified and explained in the proposal.

VII. EVALUATION CRITERIA AND REVIEW PROCESS

Each proposal will be reviewed to determine if it meets the minimum proposal requirements stipulated in this RFP. Failure to meet the requirements of the RFP may be cause for HCAOG to reject the proposal. HCAOG may reject any proposal if it is conditional, incomplete, or contains irregularities. HCAOG may waive an immaterial deviation in a proposal. Waiver of an immaterial deviation shall in no way modify the RFP documents or excuse the respondent from full compliance with the contract requirements if the respondent is awarded the contract. HCAOG reserves the right to award the contract to other than the low bidder.

Proposals will not be publicly opened. All Proposals will be evaluated by an RFP Evaluation Committee made up of HCAOG and other local-jurisdiction agency staff members that have

expertise or experience in the types of services set forth in this RFP. Their review and evaluation will consider the responsiveness to this RFP in order to determine whether the Proposer possesses the qualifications necessary for the satisfactory performance on the services set forth in this RFP. The top-ranked firms may be interviewed, if deemed necessary. HCAOG reserves the right to select a consultant based solely on written proposals and not convene oral interviews.

HCAOG will employ a one hundred (100) point competitive evaluation system with consideration given to the following criteria:

Criteria –	Weight
Respondent's Understanding of the Project Objectives and Requirements (35) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completeness and clarity of responses to the specific requirements of scope of work; demonstrated knowledge of the required work. 	35
Approach to Services and Deliverables Requested (35) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposed work plan and schedule by task. Practices to ensure clear communication and coordination between the consultant, HCAOG, HTA and other major partners (advisory or decision-making bodies). Cost effectiveness and adherence to available budget providing the best value of services offered. 	20 15
Respondent's Qualifications & Experience (30) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Firm's or project team's (including subconsultants) qualifications. Firm's (or team's) relevant current and overall experience with similar projects. 	15 15
Total	100

The Evaluation Committee will make a recommendation to HCAOG's Executive Director. The Executive Director will conditionally approve or reject the recommendation based on information provided by the Evaluation Committee and other factors as deemed appropriate, including, but not limited to, qualifications, ability to meet schedule, cost of work and meeting insurance requirements. The Executive Director also may interview one or more of the firms prior to making a selection. Once the Consultant has been selected, the recommendation will be brought to the HCAOG Board at which time the Executive Director will obtain authorization to execute a contract incorporating the negotiated terms and conditions.

VIII. GENERAL CONDITIONS

A) Limitations

This RFP does not commit HCAOG to award a contract, to pay any costs incurred in the preparation of the contract in response to this request, or to procure or contract for services or supplies. HCAOG expressly reserves the right to reject any and all proposals or to waive any irregularity or information in any proposal or in the RFP procedure and to be the sole judge of the responsibility of any respondent and of the suitability of the materials and/or services to be rendered. HCAOG reserves the right to withdraw this RFP at any time without prior notice. Further, HCAOG reserves the right to modify the RFP schedule.

B) Award

HCAOG may require RFP finalists to present oral presentations regarding their firms and any special expertise in the necessary areas. All finalists may be required to participate in negotiations and submit such price, technical, or other revisions of their proposals as may result from negotiations. HCAOG also reserves the right to award the contract without discussion, based upon the initial proposals. Accordingly, each initial proposal should be submitted on the most favorable terms from a cost and a technical viewpoint. The final award will be made by the HCAOG Board.

C) RFP Addenda

Any changes to the RFP requirements will be accomplished by issuance of an addendum at least 72 hours before proposals are due. Distribution of the addenda will be via HCAOG's website and sent to original RFP recipients. Before amending an RFP, the period of time remaining until the proposal deadline and the possible need to extend this period will be considered and, if necessary, confirmed in the addendum.

Addenda issued by HCAOG interpreting or modifying any portion of this RFP shall be incorporated in the Proposal. An Addenda Cover sheet shall be signed and dated by the Proposer and submitted to HCAOG with the Proposal. Any oral communication concerning this RFP by HCAOG personnel are not binding on HCAOG and shall in no way modify this RFP or the obligations of HCAOG or any Proposer.

D) Verbal Agreement or Conversation

No prior, current, or post award verbal conversations or agreement(s) with any officer, agent, or employee of HCAOG shall affect or modify any terms or obligations of the RFP, or any contract resulting from this RFP.

E) Pre-contractual Expense

Pre-contractual expenses are those expenses that respondents and selected consultant(s) incurred in relation to:

1. Preparing proposals in response to this RFP;
2. Submitting proposals to HCAOG;
3. Negotiating with HCAOG on any matter related to proposals; and
4. Other expenses incurred by a contractor or respondent prior to the date of award of any agreement.

HCAOG shall not be liable for any pre-contractual expenses incurred by any respondent or selected contractor. Respondents shall not include any such expenses as part of the price proposed in response to this RFP. HCAOG shall be held harmless and free from any and all liability, claims, or expenses whatsoever incurred by, or on behalf of, any person or organization responding to this RFP.

F) Signature

The proposal must include name, title, address and telephone number of the individual with authority to bind the company and also who may be contacted during the period of proposal evaluation. The proposal must be signed by an official authorized to bind the consultant and shall contain a statement to the effect that the proposal is a firm offer for at least a sixty (60)- day period. This signature should be included in the cover letter to the proposal.

G) Contract

The successful consultant will be required to enter into a standard contract with HCAOG that specifies the scope of service, completion schedule, and a mutually agreed upon schedule of payment. The consultant will be required to prepare a scope of work (See Section III) to be inserted into the contract as an Attachment A. A sample copy of the HCAOG's standard agreement is included as Attachment A. Consultants are responsible for reviewing the terms of the contract.

Upon notification of award the consultant will be sent an electronic copy of the contract for signature.

H) Contract Term

The period of the contract will be from March 2026 to no later than June 2028.

I) Conflict of Interest

By submitting a proposal in response to this RFP, the prospective contractor warrants: Consultants and consultant firms submitting proposals in response to this RFP must disclose to HCAOG any actual, apparent, or potential conflicts of interest that may exist relative to the services to be provided under Contract for consultant services to be awarded pursuant to this RFP. If the consultant or firm has no conflict of interest, a statement to that effect shall be included in the proposal.

The selected consultant shall refrain from and disclose subsequent potential conflicts during this contract. Consultant shall at all times avoid conflicts of interest, or the appearance of conflicts of interest, in the performance of this contract. Consultant shall file statements of financial interest on forms provided by HCAOG to the extent and at all times required by HCAOG's Conflict of Interest Code and applicable law.

In the event that the prospective contractor has no prior knowledge of a conflict of interest as set forth above and hereafter acquires information that indicates there may be an actual or apparent violation of any of the above, the prospective contractor shall promptly bring such information to the attention of the HCAOG Executive Director. The prospective contractor shall thereafter cooperate with HCAOG review and investigation of such information and comply with any instruction it receives from HCAOG in regard to remedying the situation.

J) Lobbying

With the exception of contacting HCAOG to ask questions regarding this RFP, any party submitting a proposal shall not contact or lobby any appointed or elected official, member, or other officer or employee of HCAOG. Any party attempting to influence any part of the proposal, submittal, or review process through ex parte contact of any HCAOG officials may have their proposal rejected.

K) Payment Schedule

The contracted consultant will be paid based on work actually performed during the preceding month. The consultant should forward a copy of all invoices for payment for work performed, and associated expenses, by the 10th day of the following month. Invoices shall be mailed or emailed to the attention of the Executive Director. Invoices shall include the following information.

1. Date work was performed.
2. Personnel performing the work (all staff billed for must be identified in proposal or must have been approved by HCAOG).

3. Number of hours worked.
4. Hourly rate (must correspond to cost proposal).
5. Brief description of work completed.
6. Related task/scope of work.

The contracted consultant may bill no more than once monthly after submittal of completed deliverable(s). Quarterly progress reports will be required as deliverables for this project.

L) Questions

Proposers shall be responsible for meeting all of the requirements and specifications set forth in this RFP and the sample Consultant Services Agreement attached hereto. If a Proposer discovers any ambiguity, conflict, discrepancy, omission or other error in this RFP, a written request for clarification or correction should be submitted to HCAOG via email at the following addresses:

info@hcaog.net and oona.smith@hcaog.net

Requests for clarification or correction and any other question pertaining to this RFP must be received by HCAOG before **5:00 p.m. PST on Wednesday, February 4, 2026**. All responses for clarification or correction and written questions will be posted to the HCAOG website on or before February 11, 2026.

IX. PROTEST PROCEDURES AND DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCESS

HCAOG's Protest and Procedures and Dispute Resolution Process (Attachment C) shall be utilized to resolve any protests or disputes to this procurement process.