



HUMBOLDT COUNTY ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS
Regional Transportation Planning Agency
Humboldt County Local Transportation Authority
Service Authority for Freeway Emergencies
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Request for Proposals for Siting Analysis for North State Hydrogen Fuel Station Network

RFP released: 02/21/2025
Proposals due: 5:00PM 03/28/2025

Invitation: The Humboldt County Association of Governments (HCAOG) is inviting interested parties to submit proposals to develop a **Siting Analysis for North State Hydrogen Fuel Station Network** referred to as “**Siting Analysis**” for the Humboldt County region. 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 Humboldt County Association of Governments (HCAOG) is seeking qualified consultants to develop a Site Analysis for the North State Hydrogen Fueling Station Network that will interconnect the rural North State region to the Sacramento and San Francisco Bay Area metropolitan regions to make it practical for transit and fleet operators to transition to hydrogen fuel cell electric vehicles. The project is funded by a Rural Planning Assistance (RPA) Discretionary Grant. The RPA program is a State funding program administered by Caltrans. This grant aims to support regional transportation planning efforts in rural areas, ensuring that rural regions can develop and implement effective transportation plans that align with state priorities. With this grant, Caltrans seeks to promote sustainable transportation solutions, improve air quality, and ensure that rural areas have the necessary resources to address their unique transportation challenges. The grant is part of a broader effort to support equitable and efficient transportation planning across California.

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SITING ANALYSIS FOR NORTH STATE HYDROGEN FUEL STATION NETWORK

I. BACKGROUND AND PROJECT SUMMARY

Zero emission vehicles that can travel longer distances over difficult terrain in, at times inclement weather, are needed if the rural North State region is to be equitably included in the transition to zero emission vehicles. Much of the region’s medium duty (MD) and heavy duty (HD) vehicle fleet need longer ranges and/or faster refueling times than can be achieved with battery electric vehicles (BEVs). In the North State region, hydrogen fuel cell electric vehicles (FCEVs) currently hold the best promise to allow for a successful transition to zero emissions. But there is no existing or planned fueling network that would make transitioning to hydrogen fuel cell electric vehicles feasible at a regional scale.

This project will develop a Site Analysis that will identify a potential hydrogen fueling station network for the North State region that interconnects the rural North State region to the Sacramento and San Francisco Bay Area metropolitan regions. The North State region consists of 16 rural counties in northernmost California and is defined as the portion of California north of Sacramento and San Francisco Bay area (see Figure 1). There are only two Metropolitan Planning Organizations within this region (Butte and Shasta). In the North State region, the median household incomes range from the lowest of \$47,317 in Trinity County, to the highest of \$79, 395 in Nevada County. The average annual household income across the region is \$61,743. Our region is chronically under-resourced and under invested in.



Figure 1: North State Region

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 (TAC).

II. PROJECT STAKEHOLDERS

Project stakeholders include Caltrans, regional transportation planning agencies (RTPAs), two Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), transit operators (including Tribal transit operators), the North Coast Tribal Transportation Commission, and freight companies operating in the North State region. The North State Super Region (NSSR) and their Zero Emission Vehicle Working Group will also be stakeholders. Other stakeholders include California GO-Biz and their Alliance for Renewable Clean Hydrogen Energy Systems, and the Schatz Energy Research Center at Cal Poly Humboldt.

Original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) that produce hydrogen fuel cell vehicles are to be consulted to gain a better understanding of vehicle capabilities and equipment limitations, although OEMs are not considered to be project stakeholders.

III. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This project will develop the Site Analysis for the North State Hydrogen Fueling Station Network that will interconnect the rural North State region to the Sacramento and San Francisco Bay Area metropolitan regions to support the transition to FCEVs in the region. A network of hydrogen fueling stations throughout the region is needed to make it practical for transit and fleet operators to transition to hydrogen fuel cell electric vehicles. The specific focus of the Site Analysis will be on creating a fueling network that can be used by transit and freight operators.

The Site Analysis will build on work already performed for the Humboldt Transit Authority's (HTA's) Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program (TIRCP) grant, and the Schatz Energy Research Center at Cal Poly Humboldt Medium Duty/Heavy Duty Hydrogen Blueprint. The Schatz Energy Research Center has a graduate student developing a methodology for hydrogen fuel siting within Humboldt County. This will benefit in attracting future public-private partnerships and grant funds to support the build out of the network.

The Site Analysis will be prepared in collaboration with project stakeholders to promote coordinated solutions in engineering, education, evaluation, equity, and enforcement. Additionally, the stakeholder engagement and information sharing will serve to strengthen regional conversations related to this network and build awareness of regional needs and possibilities related to a hydrogen fueling network and transitioning fleets.

1. Project Management and Reporting

Task 1.1: Project Kick-off Meeting

Consultant will take the lead to organize a project kick-off meeting (virtual or in-person) with HCAOG and consultant. The meeting will be used to verify project goals, review the scope, project approach, schedule, and deliverables.

Task 1.2: Project Coordination

Consultant shall meet with HCAOG staff throughout the project. Meetings may be virtual or in-person, as needed. Consultant shall propose frequency and schedule of project management meetings and shall be responsible for all aspects of meetings. Meetings are intended to keep HCAOG up to date on project progress, track milestones, and discuss key decision points to keep project moving forward on budget and on schedule.

Task	Deliverable
1.1	<i>Meeting notes with action items; detailed project timeline and budget</i>
1.2	<i>Meeting notices, agendas and meeting minutes for project management meetings</i>

2. Stakeholder Engagement and Regional Project Kick-off

Stakeholder engagement is critical to this project. Contacts with project stakeholders to request and receive information needed to complete the deliverables described in Task 3 will be completed under this task. Consultant will develop a way to efficiently document these efforts (such as a spreadsheet indicating when stakeholders were contacted and what the response was).

Task 2.1: Stakeholder Engagement Plan

Project stakeholders are listed in the Project Stakeholder section above. Initially the consultant, with input from HCAOG, will prepare a stakeholder engagement plan. The plan will list, in detail, contact information for the stakeholders (individuals and groups) that will be consulted, at what milestones of the project they will be consulted, method of outreach (i.e. presentation, meeting, email, etc.), the process for responding to feedback after it is received, and information needed from the various stakeholders. The Consultant may propose a mix of in-person and virtual activities that provide flexibility and allows for a diverse range of stakeholder engagement.

Task 2.2: Regional Project Kick-off

After the stakeholder plan has been created there will be a regional project kick off at a North State Super Region meeting to discuss the stakeholder engagement plan, explain what type of information will be needed from the RTPAs/MPOs, and the general schedule of the project. Stakeholders will be asked for feedback on the methodology for the project, and the stakeholder outreach approach. Similar information will be presented to the North Coast Tribal Transportation Commission. The Consultant will take the lead in planning, preparing, facilitating, and hosting the North State Super Region meeting and North Coast Tribal Transportation Commission meeting. HCAOG agency staff will assist with providing venues and arranging logistics for these meetings.

Task 2.3: Post-Regional Project Kick-off Revisions

As a result of stakeholder feedback appropriate revisions to approach or project methodology will be incorporated into the stakeholder engagement plan.

Task	Deliverable
2.1	<i>Draft stakeholder engagement plan.</i>
2.2	<i>Documentation of stakeholder outreach, slide decks for regional project kick off at North State Super Region and North Coast Tribal Transportation Commission, slide decks and/or meeting notes from updates provided to stakeholders at the project milestones identified in the Stakeholder Engagement Plan.</i>
2.3	<i>Final stakeholder engagement plan document.</i>

Task 3: Analysis

The analysis will be conducted in three major parts as described below. Consultant will lead all aspects for consulting with and information gathering from stakeholders that will occur throughout

Task 3. Additionally, the Consultant’s analysis is to draw on work already completed such as the Schatz Energy Research Center’s Medium Duty/Heavy Duty Hydrogen Blueprint, analysis completed as part of Humboldt Transit Authority’s TIRCP (Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program) grant, and Caltrans’ Freight Plan.

During the analysis the Consultant will provide monthly status updates on the analysis efforts and hold monthly meetings with HCAOG to evaluate progress, discuss information needs, and receive direction on decision points.

Part 1 – Determine the use case and the expected station size

The Consultant will work to gather information from the stakeholders to be able to answer the following questions: What sort of vehicles will be using these stations? How many of them will there be? How far will they be traveling? What level of fuel consumption will the stations need to support? What will be a typical station footprint? What size vehicles will access these stations and what will be required in the station footprint to ensure safe and practical vehicle access (ingress and egress)?

Part 2 – Determine the number of stations and where they will need to be placed

Based on the use case defined above, the Consultant will determine the number of stations needed and the general locations needed to provide adequate coverage and connectivity for the north state region.

Part 3 – Conduct a micrositeing exercise and identify possible specific locations

For the areas identified where stations are needed, the consultant will conduct a micrositeing exercise using Google Earth, Google Maps, and other mapping resources and GIS skills. The Consultant will examine the following criteria: adequate parcel size and footprint, flat topography, proper zoning, adequate clearances for safety, allowance of safe traffic flow, easy access to major highways, promising ownership status, lack of geologic hazards, within Federally defined “alternative fuels corridor,” within a disadvantaged community (for potential funding benefits), and other criteria as deemed important. The intent is to identify 2 to 3 favorable sites for hydrogen fueling stations in each general location.

Task	Deliverable
3	<i>Monthly status updates: brief monthly memo that succinctly indicates progress, questions and needs, notes from monthly check-in meetings.</i>

Task 4: Draft and Final Technical Memorandum

Task 4.1: Administrative Draft of the Technical Memorandum

To summarize efforts conducted under Tasks 2 and 3, Consultant will prepare a draft and final Technical Memorandum. HCAOG and Caltrans staff will complete the initial review of draft Technical Memorandum.

The Technical Memorandum prepared by Consultant will be in an ADA accessible format and shall include at minimum:

- Executive Summary
- Explanation of the methodology used to make use case assumptions and expected station size, including a spreadsheet with supporting calculations.

- A high-level map showing the regions where stations could optimally be located.
- Detailed maps for each high-level station location that identifies possible specific locations based on detailed criteria. Where possible, including information about land ownership, including contact information. The map will be accompanied by a narrative explaining the detailed criteria used to select the locations.
- Recommendations of next steps towards implementation of fueling network
- A high-level fact sheet that presents the overall concept for a hydrogen fueling network. This can be used to approach policy makers, potential funders, legislators, etc.
- Appendices documenting stakeholder outreach.

Task 4.2: Draft Technical Memorandum

The Consultant shall create a public Draft Technical Memorandum based on one round of consolidated comments from HCAOG and Caltrans staff on the Administrative Draft of the Technical Memorandum. The Consultant will then present the Draft Technical Memorandum to the North State Super Region so that comments can be included in the Final Technical Memorandum. The Consultant will also create a public-facing summary presentation to be delivered to the North State Super Region.

Task 4.3: Final Technical Memorandum

The Consultant shall create a Final Technical Memorandum, based on comments from the North State Super Region. The Final Technical Memorandum will have a highly visual and clean appearance that is concise and engaging. Upon final project completion, the Consultant will be responsible for providing a high-resolution document in PDF format and that is ADA accessible.

<u>Task</u>	<u>Deliverable</u>
4.1	<i>Administrative Draft Technical Memorandum</i>
4.2	<i>Draft Plan Technical Memorandum and Presentation to the North State Super Region</i>
4.3	<i>Final Plan Technical Memorandum</i>

Task 5: Regional Presentations

Upon completion of the Final Technical Memorandum under Task 4, the Consultant will conduct up to six (6) virtual presentations to present findings. A presentation will be provided to the North State Super Region, North Coast Tribal Transportation Commission, the HCAOG Board, and up to three other RTPA’s, MPOs, or transit agencies that request a separate presentation for their Board. If there is a high demand for individual presentations, we may consider a virtual meeting that is open to multiple Boards and the public.

An in-person presentation at the Far North Transit Symposium, will be included if timing is appropriate. These symposiums are conducted in either Eureka or Ukiah in June or July each year.

The Consultant will also recommend groups in the freight industry that may be interested in receiving a presentation and provide up to two virtual presentations to these groups.

<u>Task</u>	<u>Deliverable</u>
5	<i>Meeting agendas, presentation materials.</i>

IV. SCOPE OF WORK

This RFP contains five major tasks. HCAOG considers the activities listed in the Scope of Work, attached as Attachment B, to be the minimum requirements expected for conducting the Siting Analysis for North State Hydrogen Fueling Station Network. 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.

V. 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.

February 21, 2025 (Fri.)	Request for Proposals (RFP) released
March 7, 2025 (Fri.)	Deadline to submit questions regarding RFP
March 14, 2025 (Fri.)	HCAOG deadline for responding to questions regarding RFP
5:00 p.m. March 28, 2025 (Fri.)	Closing date for receipt of proposals
April 8, 2025 (Tues.)	HCAOG completes review and evaluation process
April 17, 2025 (Thur.)	Staff recommends award to HCAOG Board

Closing Date

Complete proposals must be received via electronic delivery (email) no later than 4:00 p.m. Pacific Standard Time (PST) on Friday, March 28, 2025. 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.

VI. 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: amy.eberwein@hcaog.net, with subject line: Siting Analysis for North State Hydrogen Fueling Station Network proposal 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 need be prepared to accompany the technical and cost. Proposals that are unsigned or signed by an individual not authorized to bind the Proposer, will be considered nonresponsive 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 (sections 7 & 8). 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 the Siting Analysis for North State Hydrogen Fueling Station Network 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 14 months. The project is expected to commence in the week of April 21, 2025. The proposal shall discuss the respondents' 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 \$222,000.

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.

VII. 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) Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) Policy and Obligation

It is the policy of the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) that minority-and women-owned business enterprises (hereby referred to as DBEs) as defined in 49 CFR Part 23 shall have the maximum opportunity to participate in the performance of contracts financed in whole or in part with Federal funds. The recipient or its subcontractor agrees to ensure that DBEs have the maximum opportunity to participate in the performance of contracts and subcontracts financed in whole or in part with Federal funds provided under this contract. In this regard, all recipients or subcontractors shall take all necessary and reasonable steps in accordance with 49 CFR Part 23 to ensure that DBEs have the maximum opportunity to compete for and perform contracts. Recipients and their subcontractors shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, or sex in the award and performance of USDOT assisted contracts.

C) 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.

D) 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.

E) 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/>.

F) Format and Copies of Proposal

Complete proposals submitted in response to this RFP will only be accepted in electronic form via email. Printed hard copies are not accepted.

G) 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.

H) 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.

VIII. 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 <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 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed work plan and schedule by task. Practices to ensure clear communication and coordination between the consultant and HCAOG. • Cost effectiveness and adherence to available budget providing the best value of services offered 	20
Respondent’s Qualifications & Experience <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 choose to 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.

IX. 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 April 2025 to no later than June 2026.

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 AMBAG to the extent and at all times required by AMBAG'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:

amy.eberwein@hcaog.net and debbie.egger@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 Friday, March 7, 2025**. All responses for clarification or correction and written questions will be posted to the HCAOG website on or before Friday, March 14, 2025.

X. 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.