

**DESCHUTES COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES**

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS  
FOR  
STATE LEGISLATIVE REPRESENTATION AND LOBBYING SERVICES**

**May 18, 2022**

The Deschutes County Department of Administrative Services is seeking proposals from qualified individuals or firms (hereinafter referred to solely as "firm") to provide state legislative representation and lobbying services as described herein.

Proposals can be submitted electronically to [whitney.hale@deschutes.org](mailto:whitney.hale@deschutes.org) or can be submitted in a sealed envelope that is clearly marked with the name and address of the responding firm, titled "State Legislative Representation and Lobbying Services," and addressed to:

Whitney Hale  
Department of Administrative Services  
Deschutes County  
PO Box 6005  
Bend, OR 97708-6005

Proposals may also be addressed as above and delivered in person to the following physical location:

1300 NW Wall Street, Suite 206  
Bend, OR 97703

Proposals must be received no later than 5:00 p.m. on Monday, June 13, to be eligible for consideration. Late proposals will not be considered. Members of the proposal review committee and Deschutes County Board of Commissioners may not be contacted or solicited by any firm intending to submit a proposal. All questions concerning this Request for Proposals (RFP) and the review process should be directed to Whitney Hale at [whitney.hale@deschutes.org](mailto:whitney.hale@deschutes.org).

All costs associated with preparing and submitting a proposal are solely the responsibility of the respondent. Deschutes County may reject any proposal not in compliance with prescribed procedures and requirements, may reject for good cause any and all proposals, and reserves the right to waive any informalities or irregularities in the proposals upon a finding of Deschutes County that it is in the public interest to do so. This solicitation does not obligate Deschutes County to select any single respondent and the County reserves the

right to cancel the procurement, to retain all proposal materials in accordance with ORS 279B.100, and to use any material included in the proposal regardless of whether it is selected.

## **Overview**

### **Deschutes County**

Deschutes County is a political subdivision of the State of Oregon, governed by a three-member Board of Commissioners, and managed by a County Administrator who is assisted by Department Directors, including an elected County Clerk, Assessor, Sheriff, Treasurer, and District Attorney. The County provides a wide range of services through the following departments and organizational units: Administrative Services, Assessor's Office, Clerk's Office, Community Development, Community Justice, District Attorney's Office, Fair & Expo Center, Finance, Health Services, Legal Counsel, Road, and Sheriff's Office.

Located in the center of the state, Deschutes County is currently home to an estimated 198,000 people who live on 3,055 square miles of land. The region is isolated, both by distance and geography, from the more urban counties located in western Oregon. The County is largely rural in nature, but it has the sixth highest number of residents in the state, significantly more than any other county east of the Cascades. A favorable climate and easy access to outdoor recreation such as skiing, snowshoeing, and snowmobiling during the winter months and bicycling, golf, hiking, and water sports in the summer bring an estimated 2 million tourists into the area each year as well.

As a result, Deschutes County faces unique challenges related to natural resources, health and safety, economic development, and infrastructure that are not experienced in other parts of Oregon. The County takes a proactive approach to addressing such issues and frequently leads the state in developing solutions, particularly in matters of land use and health care reform. A strong presence during each legislative session and healthy relationships with legislators, public officials, industry organizations, and other local government agencies are necessary both to maintain this position and to further the County's goals for safe communities, healthy people, a resilient economy and quality service delivery.

Deschutes County has engaged a contract lobbyist firm to represent its interests since 2003. Through this RFP, the County is seeking competitive proposals to continue and potentially expand that service as described in the Scope of Work section of this document.

### **Request for Proposals Process**

This RFP is intended to solicit proposals for the purpose of selecting a firm to provide state and legislative representation and lobbying services at the direction of the Deschutes County Board of County Commissioners and under the management of the Department of Administrative Services.

The Department of Administrative Services will designate a contract administrator for the portion of the contract involving services provided. Payment for all contract services will be administered by the Department of Administrative Services.

Deschutes County will review proposals in June and anticipates that it will announce the results of this RFP process in early July. The County and the selected firm will then negotiate the terms of a contract and sign a legally-binding agreement. A sample copy of Deschutes County's standard personal services contract is included in the appendix of this document for reference. The selected firm must be able to begin providing services pursuant to the contract by late summer / early fall.

### **Instructions and Conditions**

Respondents must follow the instructions and conditions detailed in this section. Proposals that do not conform may be excluded from further review.

#### **Minimum Qualifications**

Respondents must:

1. Be registered with the Oregon Government Ethics Commission to conduct lobbying with State legislators and public officials and be in good standing concerning standards of conduct and the filing of periodic expenditure and other required reports.
2. Be able to certify that, in performing the specified work, that they will not discriminate against any person on the basis of race, color, religion, political affiliation, gender, sexual orientation, age, marital status, physical or mental disability, national origin, or ancestry unless the reasonable demands of employment are such that they cannot be met by such a person.
3. Maintain an accounting and financial management system which complies with generally accepted accounting principles and which is adequate to meet federal and state government requirements. The system must provide adequate documentation, monitoring, access and reporting concerning the organization's financial position.

## **Acceptance or Rejection of Proposals**

In awarding a contract, the Board of County Commissioners will accept and consider the proposal or proposals which, in their estimation, will best serve the interests of Deschutes County, and reserves the right to award a contract to the respondent whose proposal is most advantageous to the County based upon the evaluation process and evaluation factors contained within this RFP. The Board of County Commissioners reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals. Any proposal which is judged to be incomplete or nonconforming may be rejected. Only one proposal will be accepted from any one agency. Any evidence of collusion between respondents may constitute a cause for rejection of proposals so affected. However, individual respondents may form alliances to submit a single proposal. For example, one firm may collaborate with another to provide services under the contract, but only one proposal clearly listing the firms forming the alliance may be submitted and all must demonstrate that they meet the minimum qualifications of this RFP.

## **Withdrawal of Proposals**

Proposals may be withdrawn via written request submitted by the respondent prior to the due date. Negligence on the part of the respondent in preparing the proposal confers no right for the withdrawal of the proposal after it has been opened. The proposal will be irrevocable until such time as the Deschutes County Board of Commissioners specifically cancels the procurement, rejects the proposal, or awards a contract.

## **Selection Process**

All proposals will initially be screened by Deschutes County staff. Those proposals determined to be late, incomplete, or noncompliant, and those respondents that do not meet the minimum qualifications listed above may be eliminated from further evaluation at that time.

A review committee established by the Deschutes County Board of Commissioners will assess the written proposals based on the evaluation criteria provided with this RFP. Following the initial evaluation, the highest ranking respondents may be invited to attend an interview with the review committee to answer additional questions.

Based on the proposal evaluation and interviews, if any, the review committee will evaluate and rank the proposals, then forward a recommendation to the Deschutes County Board of Commissioners. The Board of Commissioners will vote on the recommendation in a public meeting, officially rejecting all proposals or selecting a firm to provide state legislative and lobbying services. The successful firm will then enter into negotiations with the County to develop a mutually acceptable contract for services which will be based upon

the personal services contract attached to this RFP and the proposal submitted by the successful respondent.

### **Protest of Award**

After the Deschutes County Board of Commissioners selects the firm to provide state legislative and lobbying services, the County will provide notice of its intent to award a contract. If no written protest is filed by 5:00 p.m. on the seventh day following announcement of the decision, the award will be deemed final. The County will not entertain protests submitted after this time period. The written protest must specify the grounds upon which the protest is based. If a protest is filed, the decision of the County will be considered final only upon issuance of a written notice. The award and any written decision upholding or denying a protest will be sent to each respondent.

Written protests must be delivered to:

Whitney Hale  
Department of Administrative Services  
Deschutes County  
PO Box 6005  
Bend, OR 97708-6005

Protests may also be addressed as above and delivered in person to the following address:

1300 NW Wall Street, Suite 200  
Bend, OR 97701

### **Tentative Schedule of Events**

- |  |                         |
|--|-------------------------|
| 1. Request for Proposals is released.  | May 18, 2022            |
| 2. Proposals are due.  | June 13, 2022 by 5 p.m. |
| 3. Proposals are evaluated by selection committee.                               | June 2022               |
| 4. Interviews are conducted with top ranking agencies, if needed.                | June 2022               |
| 5. Recommendation of selected agency is forwarded to the Board of Commissioners. | July 2022               |
| 6. Board of County Commissioners considers selection and award.                  | July 2022               |
| 7. Protest period.   | July 2022               |
| 8. Contract for services is developed and signed.                                | July – August 2022      |
| 9. Contracted services commence.   |                         |

## Scope of Work

### **Services Requested**

The selected firm will be responsible for providing state legislative representation and lobbying services on behalf of the Deschutes County Board of Commissioners. Services to be provided may include, but are not limited to, the responsibilities, tasks, and activities listed below. Respondents may include additional services with the knowledge that Deschutes County may select all or a portion of those proposed and will negotiate a final contract price based on the range chosen.

1. Act as Deschutes County's representative to the Legislature and lobby on behalf of the County on topics including, but not limited to: Land use laws and regulations, health and behavioral health programs, natural resource management, community and economic development, roads and transportation, law enforcement, adult and juvenile justice, community corrections, and employee and workplace management.
2. Assist in preparing position papers, exhibits, testimony, correspondence, proposed bill text and amendments as necessary.
3. Advise and assist County officials with planning, preparing, and implementing legislative strategies to accomplish the County's goals and objectives and with preparing proposed legislation to be introduced during the session.
4. Building relationships with legislative champions for the County's proposed legislative.
5. Facilitate a process to identify and prioritize bills introduced during the annual legislative session which may be of interest to the County and which may require active lobbying on the County's behalf.
6. Monitor and track proposed legislation, programs, and proposals of interest to the County. Furnish written reports regarding the status of such on a regular basis.
7. Work directly with legislators and staff, the governor's office, public officials and state agencies, special interest and industry groups, local governments, the Association of Oregon Counties, and other professional organizations to develop support for or opposition to proposed legislation, funding, policy, and regulatory decisions that may affect the County.
8. Coordinate and facilitate weekly or bi-weekly meetings held remotely between the Board of Commissioners and the County's local legislative delegation throughout each legislative session.
9. Review periodic revenue forecasts and the proposed biennial state budget and alert the County to opportunities and obstacles. Identify funding opportunities and assess program requirements and guidelines.
10. Provide introductions to individual legislators, and arrange meetings, manage logistics, and prepare County officials for interaction with legislators, legislative staff, committees, interim work groups, and other public officials.
11. Support partnerships between Deschutes County and the Association of Oregon Counties, other Central Oregon agencies and groups, including the Central Oregon

Cities Organization, Cities of Bend, La Pine, Redmond, and Sisters, local Chambers of Commerce, special districts, and other entities actively pursuing a legislative agenda which may have elements in common with the County.

12. Prepare and submit quarterly lobbying expenditure reports on behalf of Deschutes County Commissioners, the County Administrator, and other staff as required.

These services will be performed under the authority of the Deschutes County Board of Commissioners and under the direction of the Department of Administrative Services.

### **Compensation**

Respondents must provide a detailed budget that corresponds with each of the responsibilities, tasks, and activities addressed in the scope of work. Based on the information provided, Deschutes County may select all or a portion of the services itemized and will negotiate a total contract price with the successful firm accordingly.

The services will be evaluated annually during the term of the contract to assess effectiveness. Continuation of the contract will be dependent on evaluation results.

### **Duration**

The contract term for legislative and lobbying services resulting from this RFP will extend through August of 2024. At the conclusion of this period, Deschutes County may opt to extend the contract under the same or new terms. The County may also decide to initiate a new RFP process at the close of any contract period or upon termination.

## **Proposal Format and Contents**

### **Format**

Written responses are limited to no more than 15 pages, exclusive of items included in the appendix.

Proposals can be submitted electronically to [whitney.hale@deschutes.org](mailto:whitney.hale@deschutes.org) or can be submitted in a sealed envelope that is clearly marked with the name and address of the proposing agency, titled "Legislative Representation and Lobbying Services", and addressed to:

Whitney Hale  
Department of Administrative Services  
Deschutes County  
PO Box 6005  
Bend, OR 97708-6005

Proposals may also be addressed as above and delivered in person to the following address:

1300 NW Wall Street, Suite 200  
Bend, OR 97703

All proposals submitted in response to this RFP shall become the property of the County and may be utilized in any manner and for any purpose by the County. Be advised that proposals and all documents submitted in response to this RFP are subject to public disclosure as required by applicable state and/or federal laws. If you intend to submit any information with your proposal which you believe is confidential, proprietary, or otherwise protected from public disclosure (trade secret, etc.), you must separately bind and clearly identify all such material. The cover page of the separate binding must be **red**, and the header or footer for each page must provide as follows: "Not Subject to Public Disclosure". Where authorized by law, and at its sole discretion, the County will endeavor to resist disclosure of properly identified portions of the proposals.

## **Contents**

Respondents must address each of the following questions in narrative form. Proposals may not exceed 20 pages of single-spaced text (excluding supporting documentation and attachments).

## **Qualifications and Experience**

1. Provide addresses for office facilities located in Salem, Deschutes County, and other locations within Oregon.
2. Describe the nature and scope of the firm's experience in providing state legislative and lobbying services for local government agencies.
3. Describe the firm's knowledge and experience in analyzing and reviewing proposed legislation; participating in administrative rule development and interim work groups; analyzing the proposed state budget; educating clients about the impact of legislation; advising clients on potential courses of action; and preparing legislative strategies and plans in advance of the legislative session.
4. Outline a process for establishing and maintaining strong working relationships with state legislators and staff representing all political affiliations, public officials and state agencies, special interest and industry groups, local governments, and other organizations involved in the legislative process.
5. Describe any legislative information and bill-tracking software used by the firm to identify and monitor introduced legislation of interest to the County and to generate weekly status reports.



## **Project Understanding and Approach**

1. Describe from a project management and logistical perspective how the firm would carry out the scope of work specified in this RFP.
2. Explain the firm's philosophy and strategy used to achieve the best possible outcomes for clients as a result of the legislative session.
3. Document examples of success in providing lobbying services to clients in the following areas: a) achieving passage of legislation; b) defeating legislation; c) amending legislation.
4. Provide assurance that the firm is capable of providing the described services to Deschutes County in addition to other responsibilities or commitments of the firm.
5. Describe the firm's overall knowledge and understanding of issues that are likely to be of specific concern to Deschutes County.
6. Describe the firm's process for identifying, avoiding, and resolving and/or managing conflicts or potential conflicts that may arise from representing various clients who hold opposing views on legislative issues.
7. Outline internal procedures and/or policies related to work quality and cost control.

## **Project Team**

1. Describe the firm's management and organizational structure.
2. Explain the extent of involvement with the contracted services by the firm's owner or chief executive officer.
3. Provide names and locations of key staff members and provide brief biographical data describing their background, qualifications, and experience. Identify those who would be assigned to work with Deschutes County.
4. Describe how the assigned staff members will interact with Deschutes County Commissioners and staff.
5. Estimate the number of hours key project staff members will dedicate to the contractual obligations.
6. Describe team experience with similar or related contractual services.

## **Budget**

1. Provide a detailed budget for the full contractual period itemized in accordance with each of the responsibilities, tasks, and activities outlined in the scope of work as well as any additional elements proposed. The budget should be organized in such a way that each item is priced individually, allowing Deschutes County to select all or a portion of the services and negotiate a total contract price accordingly.

## **Supporting Documentation**

1. Please attach the following supporting documents:
  - A signed proposal response form (attached).
  - Proof of registration with the Oregon Government Ethics Commission to conduct lobbying with state legislators and public officials.
  - A list of clients from the 2020, 2021, and 2022 legislative sessions.
  - Expenditure reports submitted to the Oregon Government Ethics Commission between July 1, 2020 and June 30, 2021.
  - An organization chart.
  - Resumes of key project staff.
  - A sample legislative tracking report.
  - Three references, including a contact name and phone number, of agencies for which similar services have been performed.

## **Selection Criteria**

Deschutes County will select the firm that is determined to be most qualified to fulfill the terms of the contract. The following criteria will be used to evaluate written proposals on a 100-point scale. If necessary to make a decision, those firms that submit the highest rated written proposals may be invited to participate in a personal interview in which additional points may be awarded.

<u>Evaluation Factor</u>	<u>Total Points Available</u>
Qualifications and Experience	25
Project Understanding and Approach	30
Project Team	25
Budget	20

## **Attachments**

1. Proposal Response Form.
2. Sample Deschutes County Personal Services Contract