



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR WORKFORCE MODEL ANALYSIS, DEVELOPMENT, AND IMPLEMENTATION

General Information

The purpose of this request is to obtain proposals from qualified organizations interested in working with the Greater New Orleans Foundation (The Foundation) and the Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans (SWBNO) to assist SWBNO in developing and implementing an optimal workforce model designed to support a high-performing utility workforce that is skilled, committed, inspired, rewarded, engaged, and accountable.

Background

The Sewerage and Water Board is a state-created utility whose 1,200-person workforce provides drinking water, wastewater, and drainage services to New Orleans' residents and visitors. Considered "essential employees," SWBNO's staff works 24 hours a day, 365 days a year to ensure that critical citywide services are uninterrupted – even in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic and extreme weather events, such as Hurricane Ida.

Despite its status as a state entity, the Sewerage and Water Board is, by law, a participant in the City of New Orleans' Civil Service system. The Civil Service system, originally designed to protect public servants from political influence, has developed over the years into an organization more akin to a human resources department for all City of New Orleans employees and SWBNO staff. Through a robust system of rules and regulations, the Civil Service Commission and staff govern employee salaries, job classifications, hiring qualifications, promotions, discipline, and termination. SWBNO operates within the structure of these rules and regulations, with little to no policy-making authority to develop or adjust policies related to these issues.

Additionally, workforce challenges are myriad, for SWBNO and the water utility industry generally. Nationwide, one-third of the water sector workforce is eligible to retire within the next ten years, and technologies are increasingly advanced, which means that the workforce of tomorrow will look very different from the workforce of today in terms of skills and competencies. Anecdotally, one well-regarded water utility reported this year that it experienced a 90% turnover rate in its engineering department. SWBNO is tracking these trends: more employees are retiring, and recruiting and retention efforts are less successful than they have been in the past across the utility based on inability to offer competitive salaries and promotions.

The SWBNO has found that working within the structure of the Civil Service System as it currently functions has challenged the utility's ability to be flexible and adapt to changing economic and industry conditions. Despite partnership and efforts to maximize autonomy under the existing rules and regulations, SWBNO believes that it needs a system that supports its ability to act as the unique utility that it is rather than a more typical City agency. For example, SWBNO believes that utility-specific job descriptions, market-based salaries, merit-based performance policies, and targeted job training in water industry topics would significantly help support its current workforce.



SWBNO's goal is to create a high-performing utility workforce that is skilled, committed, inspired, rewarded, engaged, and accountable. To do that, the utility must operate under an organizational structure that fosters successful employees and utilizes staff in the most effective manner possible. To get there, SWBNO requires support from an independent firm to evaluate differing workforce models, determine the most optimal structure for the utility, recommend a path forward, and develop implementation plans for the selected model.

Project Overview

The selected firm will work closely with the Foundation and SWBNO to identify, develop, and assist in the implementation of a workforce management model that fosters a high-performing workforce and utilizes staff in the most effective manner possible. To achieve that goal, the firm should:

- Become familiar with SWBNO's current workforce model under the Civil Service system and identify challenges and opportunities to supporting optimal utility workforce management under the current model;
- Identify and research additional workforce model options, including but not limited to state and local civil service systems, or other models utilized by high-performing utilities;
- Consult with SWBNO to identify the models most likely to benefit SWBNO;
- Analyze and compare the structures, features, feasibility, legal/legislative requirements, and potential costs of such workforce models;
- Provide the Foundation and the SWBNO with a final report based on the research, analysis, evaluation, and comparison of the identified workforce models, and recommend the model, or combination of models, that would be most likely to support and promote a utility-wide workforce that is skilled, committed, inspired, rewarded, engaged, and accountable;
- Develop an SWBNO-specific workforce structure based on the recommended model [and acceptance by SWBNO] that is tailored to the needs of the utility;
- Based on SWBNO's feedback, develop an implementation plan and work with the utility to successfully transition into the recommended structure; and
- Engage SWBNO employees throughout the project to elicit feedback on recommendations, consider support [or lack thereof] for proposed models, and incorporate input into final recommended model and implementation plan.



RFP Process and Response Format

Submitting firms are required to email completed proposals by 5:00pm CST on February 28, 2023.

Proposals must be submitted electronically. Please email the file to Roy Williams [RFP@gnof.org]. Your submission must include a cost proposal, submitted in a separate electronic file. All costs associated with delivery of the project should be presented in a flat rate, fee for service format.

The Greater New Orleans Foundation reserves the right to select more than one, or none, of the organizations or firms submitting proposals and to select proposals in whole or in part.

The Greater New Orleans Foundation anticipates selecting a partner firm by March 31, 2023.

Timeline

- This RFP is dated January 31, 2023. Firms may download a copy of this RFP from www.gnof.org.
- Questions are due by February 7, 2023 [please see Questions section on subsequent page for more details].
- A mandatory pre-bid meeting will be held virtually on February 10, 2023.
- Proposals are due no later than 5:00pm CST, February 28, 2023.
- Potential Agency Interviews/Presentations could be requested to take place the week of March 13, 2023.
- Proposals will be evaluated immediately thereafter. The selection committee will be comprised of members appointed by SWBNO and Greater New Orleans Foundation.
- Candidate firms will be notified by March 31, 2023, if they have been selected.
- Work on the project should begin immediately after contract signing and all costs must be invoiced.

Questions

Questions regarding this request must be submitted via email to RFP@gnof.org by 5:00pm CST, March 7, 2023. Questions received after that time will not be considered. Please include "Greater New Orleans Foundation Workforce Model Proposal Question" in the subject line of the email. All questions and answers will be placed on the www.gnof.org under RFP section of the site – www.gnof.org/rfp.

Contract Terms

The Greater New Orleans Foundation will negotiate contract terms upon selection. All contracts are subject to review by Greater New Orleans Foundation's legal counsel, and the project will be awarded upon signing of the contract which outlines terms, scope, budget, timelines, and other necessary items. The Greater New Orleans Foundation may cancel or modify this solicitation at any time at will, with or without notice. This request for proposals and any relevant discussions or evaluations by anyone creates no rights or obligations whatsoever.



Disadvantaged Business Enterprises ["DBE"]

A successful proposal will incorporate local and/or DBE firms to perform meaningful aspects of the project where practical and appropriate. DBE participation is strongly encouraged to produce a recommendation that is tailored to SWBNO and the unique needs and desires of its workforce within the New Orleans community. For more information regarding qualified DBE firms, please contact:

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Performance

The individual or firm contracted will be subject to monitoring, by the contract monitor, if it is determined that the individual or firm has misrepresented themselves and is not competent to perform the task this will result in a termination of the contract.

Termination may also be for serious misconduct, habitual neglect of duty or incompetence, conduct incompatible with the technician's duties or prejudicial to the region's business, or willful disobedience of the Greater New Orleans Foundation or SWBNO directives.

Timing and Budget

The budget for this scope is up to \$240,000. Only private funds from the Greater New Orleans Foundation will be used in support of this contract. The expected time period of the contract is from April 3, 2023 to December 31, 2024, with potential for extension or scope expansion based on need, performance, and availability of funds.

Proposal Content and Scoring Criteria

If you are interested in this project, please respond via e-mail to RFP@gnof.org by February 28, 2023, 5pm CST with a brief that includes:

1. A descriptive outline of your approach to meeting the aforementioned project objectives. Please make sure to include:
 - o A brief discussion of how your proposed approach will achieve the project objectives.
 - o The timeline for the implementation of your approach. All proposed deliverables must be provided by December 31, 2024.
1. Scoring criteria: up to 40 points



2. An overview of your firm's capabilities and experience, particularly those that demonstrate your abilities to execute on your proposed approach. This overview must also include:
 - Any relevant experience the firm has performing similar projects for public and private sector clients. Please provide links or attachments of similar work.
 1. Scoring criteria: up to 20 points
 - Resumes of your team members who will be involved in this project which includes their relevant experience, proposed role, and anticipated hours of work.
 1. Scoring criteria: up to 20 points
 - Any external partners who you plan to involve in this project and their capabilities and relevant experience.
 1. Scoring criteria: up to 10 points
3. Three references and their contact information [firms/organizations that your firm has previously worked with].
4. A cost proposal and proposed budget outline, indicating anticipated hours and scope for each participating team member. Cost will be scored separately, after the selection criteria reviews all substantive submissions.
 1. Scoring criteria: up to 10 points

Briefs may not exceed twenty [20] pages, excluding work examples, and must use a font size of at least 11.

Contact: For any questions, please feel free to email Roy Williams (RFP@gnof.org).