

## REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

### State Legislative and Executive Advocacy and Consulting Services for the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District

August 4, 2022

This Request for Proposal ("RFP") invites you to submit a proposal to provide State of Ohio Legislative and Executive advocacy and consulting services for the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District ("NEORS") for a four (4) year period beginning January 1, 2023, with one (1) additional two-year period at NEORS's option.

The RFP is organized as follows:

SECTION 1 – SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

SECTION 2 - INTRODUCTION

SECTION 3 - SCOPE OF SERVICES

SECTION 4 - PROPOSAL & EVALUATION

SECTION 5 – FEE PROPOSAL

SECTION 6 – PROPOSAL SCORING

### SECTION 1 – SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

To be considered, your proposal must be received by the District no later than the close of business (5:00 pm) on **September 9, 2022**.

Proposals are to be emailed or delivered to:

**Danielle Giannantonio**  
**Legislative Affairs Manager**  
**Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District**  
**3900 Euclid Avenue**  
**Cleveland, Ohio 44115-2506**

Proposals and questions regarding this RFP may be directed to Danielle Giannantonio (216) 881-6600 ext. 6407, [giannantoniod@neorsd.org](mailto:giannantoniod@neorsd.org). Late submittals will not be considered. Proposals not meeting the requirements of this RFP may be deemed non-responsive at the sole discretion of NEORS.

## **SECTION 2 - INTRODUCTION**

The Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District protects public health and the environment by leading effective wastewater and stormwater management. As the largest wastewater treatment provider in the State of Ohio, the Sewer District spans 360 square miles, serves 62 communities and one million residents, treats 90 billion gallons of wastewater a year, and manages more than 400 miles of streams.

In addition to its award-winning treatment plant and laboratory performance, the Sewer District's Project Clean Lake construction program will reduce annual Lake Erie pollution by 4 billion gallons by 2035, while its Regional Stormwater Management Program addresses widespread inter-community problems like flooding, pollution, and erosion.

## **SECTION 3 - SCOPE OF SERVICES**

### **Task 1: General Advocacy**

This task shall consist of identifying and pursuing legislative and executive/regulatory initiatives that could impact NEORSD and funding opportunities for NEORSD. As directed by NEORSD staff, the state advocacy consultant(s) will serve as a consistent and effective primary point of contact between NEORSD and State officials and legislators.

Services required under this task include:

- Participating in regular meetings and other communications with NEORSD staff, as needed and requested by NEORSD.
- Contacting and communicating with legislators, agencies, and state government officials as directed by NEORSD staff.
- Establishing and maintaining effective working relationships with state agencies, officials, as well as legislators and their staff.
- Proactively obtaining and providing timely, accurate and relevant information concerning matters and issues of interest to NEORSD, including changes in state laws and regulations.

- Assisting NEORSD staff in identifying and applying for all relevant state funding opportunities.
- Proactively identifying, monitoring, and providing regular written updates regarding state legislation, state agency decisions and state rulemaking processes that impact NEORSD.
- Acting as an official representative of NEORSD with members of the state legislature, state governmental agencies, and other persons involved in legislative and executive/regulatory affairs affecting NEORSD, as designated and authorized by NEORSD staff.
- Arranging meetings with state legislators and state agency officials for NEORSD staff, when necessary, and participating as required.
- Advocating on behalf of legislation and issues of benefit to NEORSD, as directed.
- Submitting timely and informative reports to NEORSD staff as needed, depending on the nature of the issue(s) and NEORSD's needs, describing in detail activities and services performed on behalf of NEORSD and reflecting progress toward achieving the NEORSD's legislative and executive/regulatory initiatives and funding opportunities. Reports can include phone calls, emails, and other forms of communication. Reports may be required at designated dates and times and can also be requested as needed.
- Working with other trade or utility organizations to strengthen NEORSD's relationships and involvement with such organizations and when appropriate, coordinating efforts to advance NEORSD legislative and executive/regulatory initiatives and funding opportunities.
- Assisting NEORSD in reviewing, drafting, and submitting appropriate written communications such as legislative and regulatory testimony, letters, requests etc.
- Submitting executive and legislative quarterly activity reports related to their advocacy of NEORSD to the Joint Legislative Ethics Commission (JLEC) as well as responsible for submitting the NEORSD's legislative and executive activity to JLEC in coordination with NEORSD staff.
- Preparing and submitting to NEORSD annual progress and activity on key performance indicators (KPIs) of the consultant's work.

- Assisting with the establishment and continuing representation of the District as an expert in wastewater management.

## **Task 2: Legislation and Executive Agency Rules**

This task will focus on the identification and analysis of legislation introduced or under consideration for introduction before the Ohio General Assembly and its committees, and for proposed regulatory changes to the Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) as they relate to NEORSR's operations and purposes. Issues that should be considered include, but are not limited to, anything affecting Ohio Revised Code Chapter 6119, regional sewer districts; eminent domain; water affordability, infrastructure; water quality; public records laws; sovereign immunity laws; public improvement, competitive bidding and prevailing wage requirements; laws governing professional design services under Ohio Revised Code Chapter 153; OEPA regulations related to pollutant discharge, wastewater permitting, general environmental issues; funding and other matters relevant to publicly owned sewage treatment works; legislation and rules relating to emerging contaminants and nutrients; Lake Erie and tributary rivers; water quality; employment, collective bargaining, labor and workers compensation; PERRP health and safety regulations; ODNR regulations related to dams; other laws and regulations related to stormwater management and streams, rivers and lakes; the regulation of firearms and weapons as relates to government entities; diversity, equity and inclusion limitations or requirements; public depositories, and other general or specific statutes or rules that may affect NEORSR operations as a governmental body. Services under this task shall include:

- Working with NEORSR staff to identify issues related to NEORSR mission and operations where revisions to the ORC and OAC would be feasible and appropriate, help develop and implement strategy for same.
- Identifying, reviewing, and analyzing proposed or pending revisions to ORC, with emphasis on ORC Chapter 6119, and to the OAC or other state policies.
- Work with NEORSR staff to develop strategy and language and implement a plan of action regarding pending and proposed legislation and OAC changes of import to NEORSR.
- Identifying pending legislation and proposed regulatory rules that would impact NEORSR, both positively and negatively, and assistance in opposing or

supporting legislation or OAC rules or other State of Ohio policies or procedures, as directed by NEORSD.

### **Task 3: Other Critical Issues**

This task will include any other issues that are or become a priority for NEORSD and providing feedback on rules and regulations that could impact the NEORSD's mission. Services under this task could include:

- Developing strategy to positively impact pending legislation or regulations.
- Assisting with garnering support for strategic initiatives that impact NEORSD's current and/or future obligations.
- Liaising with elected officials or other pertinent individuals or groups related to such issues of priority.

## **SECTION 4 - PROPOSAL & EVALUATION**

Proposals should demonstrate how the proposing entity will accomplish the above Tasks and should identify any additional work that the proposing entity deems necessary to meet NEORSD's objectives. The proposing entity shall discuss the appropriate steps to take to carry out the work.

## **SECTION 5 - QUALIFICATIONS**

The proposing entity shall assemble, organize, and direct a team of advocacy consultant(s) and advocates with significant experience to effectively interact with the Ohio Assembly and other individuals as necessary to facilitate NEORSD's objectives.

### **Qualification 1: Background and Experience**

- Identify prior experience in performing services like the services required under this RFP.
- Identify three (3) client-references for whom such services were performed, including name of the client, address, telephone number, e-mail address, and contact for the client. NEORSD, in the exercise of its discretion, may or may not contact one or more of these clients.
- Identify any additional references for which other types of consulting services

have been recently performed, including name, address, telephone number, e-mail address, and contact person. NEORSD, in the exercise of its discretion, may or may not contact one or more of these references.

- Describe any experience in advocacy and lobbying of a similar nature as that which NEORSD seeks.
- Furnish any other information that supports and documents the proposing entity's experience and qualifications to perform this work.
- Describe prior experience and familiarity with NEORSD, similar entities, and issues affecting them, generally, and as more specifically described in Task 2.

### **Qualification 2: Personnel**

- Include individual resumes for personnel who are to be assigned to the work, including the proposed role and assignment of each person.
- Identify one member of the firm that is designated as the point person responsible for performing all work assignments.

### **Qualification 3: Management Summary**

- Provide a synopsis of how the proposal meets the needs of NEORSD, including whether the proposing entity can perform each service identified in the RFP and how the services will be provided to satisfy the stated requirements.
  - If company literature or other publications are included and intended to respond to an RFP requirement, the response to this section should include reference to the document name and page to be considered complete.

### **Qualification 4: Conflicts of Interest**

- Identify any known possible conflicts of interest the proposing entity may have with NEORSD, including individual Board of Trustees members, executive personnel, and individual staff members.
- If no conflicts of interest are identified, please include the following statement in your firm's proposal:

“By submitting this proposal response, I acknowledge, on behalf of the entity submitting this proposal, that I have familiarized myself with the NEORSD Code of Ethics which is located on the NEORSD web page and

certify that, to the best of my knowledge, there is no conflict of interest involving my entity and that I have authority to make such certification. I understand that any conflict or potential conflict of interest, must be reported to the NEORSRSD contact person for this request for proposal in writing prior to the submission of the proposal response. I further understand that conflict of interest or potential conflict of interest information may be considered by NEORSRSD in evaluating a proposal response.”

## **SECTION 5 - FEE PROPOSAL**

Please include a Fee Proposal inclusive of a budget for a four-year engagement beginning January 1, 2023, with one (1) additional two-year period at NEORSRSD’s option, for the performance of the services contained in this RFP, including as appropriate:

- An all-inclusive monthly retainer and/or fixed hourly rate for general and/or specific advocacy/lobbying services;
- Indirect costs, including general and administrative expenses;
- Other direct costs, including travel, equipment, materials and supplies;
- Any additional fees; and
- Any prompt payment, government or other discount opportunities.

## **SECTION 6 - PROPOSAL SCORING**

The scoring committee will score the consultants that have submitted timely proposals. Such consultants will be scored based on their written proposals using the following five scoring criteria:

1. Understanding of NEORSRSD and our work **(25% of total score)**
2. Advocacy and Consulting Qualifications **(25% of total score)**
3. Advocacy Experience/Past Performance for similar entities **(25% of total score)**
4. Quality of Written Proposal: substance and presentation **(10% of total score)**
5. Value **(5% of total score)**

Scoring based on the written proposal will determine which consultant(s) is/are selected for an oral presentation to the committee. The oral presentation will also be scored by the committee and will consist of **10% of the total score**. Scoring for the oral presentation will be based on a combination of: approach to advocacy, communication skills, likelihood of success, value, and confirmation of qualifications, experience and knowledge/understanding of the District and the issues affecting it. Oral presentation scores will be added to the five written proposal criteria above.