

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

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PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

21 S. Fruit St., Suite 10
Concord, N.H. 03301-2429

April 17, 2018

**RFP #2018-004
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

**Survey of Residential and Commercial Customers Regarding Interactions with
the Consumer Services Division of the Public Utilities Commission**

To Prospective Consultants:

The New Hampshire Public Utilities Commission (NHPUC or Commission) is seeking proposals from qualified firms to gather information from residential and commercial New Hampshire consumers who have contacted the Commission with questions regarding or for assistance with their utility service during the fiscal year which began July 1, 2017, and ends June 30, 2018.

Pertinent dates and information are as follows:

1. Electronic proposals must be received by the Commission no later than 4:30 p.m. on May 3, 2018. The electronic proposal must be in PDF format.
2. In addition to the electronic submissions, prospective bidders must submit four (4) additional paper copies, which must be postmarked no later than May 3, 2018.
3. Proposals should be submitted to:

Eunice Landry
Business Administrator
New Hampshire Public Utilities Commission
21 S. Fruit Street, Suite 10
Concord, NH 03301-2429
RFP@puc.nh.gov

4. Prospective consultants may submit written inquiries about the RFP by email to RFP@puc.nh.gov no later than 4:30 p.m. EDT on April 25, 2018. Inquiries and responses will be posted on the Commission's website at www.puc.nh.gov/home/requestforproposal.htm. The subject line of the email must state the following: RFP #2018-004 Survey.
5. Follow-up interviews will be scheduled as needed. If such interviews are necessary, they would be conducted during the week of May 14, 2018.
6. An evaluation team consisting of Commission Staff and/or other qualified personnel will be established to evaluate prospective consultants' responses to this RFP.

I. BACKGROUND

The Commission is an administrative agency with executive, legislative and quasi-judicial powers. The Commission's prime responsibility is as an arbiter between the public utilities and their ratepayers. Proceedings in this regard address such areas as public utility rates, financing, terms and conditions of utility service, quality of service, safety and reliability, eminent domain matters, public utility exemptions from local zoning ordinances, public utility franchises, utility crossings of public lands and waters, wholesale relationships between utilities, rulemakings and consumer complaints.

The Commission's Consumer Services Division provides assistance to prospective and current utility customers. Customers contact the Division via telephone, email, an online inquiry portal, U.S. Mail, and in-person visits. The Division provides customers with up-to-date information about utility services and changes in the utility industry, assists in the resolution of disputes between customers and utility service providers, including electric, natural gas, telephone, water, and sewer providers, as well as non-utility service providers such as competitive energy suppliers and aggregators. The Consumer Services Division:

- acts as a mediator to help resolve disputes between customers and regulated utility companies or non-utility service providers;
- acts as a mediator between competitive energy suppliers and electric utility companies;
- assists in setting up payment plans for utility bills;
- provides information on rules and regulations governing utility companies and non-utility service providers;
- provides information regarding the competitive electric energy supply market and competitive energy suppliers and aggregators; and
- provides information about Commission proceedings and how consumers can participate.

During the period July 1, 2012 to June 30, 2017, the Commission received 45,765 inquiries from consumers, an average of 9,153 inquiries annually.

II. SCOPE OF SERVICES AND DELIVERABLES

The Commission would like to establish a benchmark for measuring the responsiveness of its

Consumer Services Division to consumer inquiries. Specifically, the Commission would like to know how customers view their interactions with the Consumer Services Division as they relate to the following:

- The timeliness of the response;
- The professionalism of the response and the interaction;
- The adequacy and clarity of the response; and
- Any correlation between customer satisfaction and the reason for the inquiry.

The general scope and purpose of services to be provided by the consultant(s) are as follows:

1. The consultant will work closely with the Consumer Services Division Director to construct a survey of residential and commercial customers in New Hampshire that have interacted with the Consumer Services Division to collect data regarding the items listed above;
2. Develop a statistically valid sample size to provide a 95% confidence level and a confidence interval of +/- 2.5%;
3. Conduct survey and compile survey data and provide a report which would include, at a minimum, an executive summary that highlights findings and conclusions, the mean response by question, cross tabs by utility, reason for contact, gender, income, age, and housing status, and detailed findings in tabular, graphic and narrative format;
4. Submit a draft report for review no later than October 31, 2018. The final report shall be received by the Commission no later than November 15, 2018.

III. CONFIDENTIALITY

Each prospective consultant agrees to maintain as confidential all information to which it has access until such time as it is instructed otherwise by the Commission. A proposal must remain confidential until the effective date of any contract resulting from this RFP. A prospective consultant's disclosure or distribution of a proposal other than as permitted by the Commission will be grounds for disqualification.

IV. COMPONENTS OF THE PROPOSAL

The following is a list of the information to be provided in the proposal. Prospective consultants should respond to all areas listed below, in the order listed, and conclude with a separate section on cost.

1. Letter of Transmittal: Include name of prospective consultant, contact information for, and signature of, prospective consultant.
2. Corporate/Company Information: Information concerning its corporate/company history;

i.e., how many years in business, corporate officers or company principals, location of branch offices, professional and business association memberships, current or prior engagements involving substantive areas similar to those described in this RFP, the parties it represented in such engagements, the scope of work it performed in such engagements, and the conclusion and recommendations it made publicly in connection with such engagements.

3. Technical Plan, Approach and Schedule: A proposal describing the recommended approach to the project including a timetable for implementation. Samples of the types of questions to be used in the survey should be included. Any additional proposals for unique services which the prospective consultant offers should include a recommended timetable and budget.
4. Relevant Qualifications and Experience of Personnel Assigned: Detailed description of the prospective consultant's relevant experience with respect to the proposed scope of services, including a list of all personnel who will be assigned to this engagement, including the project manager (if applicable), and detailed resumes (in an appendix) and summaries of each individual reflecting their relevant experience and the nature of their specific responsibilities. During the course of the work, the Commission must approve in writing any substitutions or changes in personnel assigned to perform the work.
5. References: A list of up to three references for work performed which is similar in scope or content to that proposed, preferably within the past 3 years.
6. Statement of Disclosure: Identification and description of any existing or potential conflicts of interest, including those that arise as a result of relationships or affiliations with utility companies under the jurisdiction of the Commission, other industry participants, trade associations, or advocacy organizations or groups that participate in or represent active stakeholders in matters before the Commission.
7. Detailed Program Budget: A detailed cost proposal that identifies the hourly rate for personnel and any associated expenses, with specific reference to the defined scope of services and the responsibility of individual personnel for particular areas of inquiry and evaluation. Any component of the proposal which the bidder expects to subcontract out to another party should be clearly delineated along with the associated costs.

V. SELECTION CRITERIA

Cost is a consideration but may not be the determining factor in the Commission's decision. In addition to cost, the Commission will consider the following criteria and assign a corresponding point score, where a maximum score for all criteria would be 100 points and any proposal with a total aggregate point score of less than 65 points will not be considered for selection:

1. Qualifications, technical expertise, knowledge and practical experience that the organization possesses, including that of the staff and any subcontractors assigned to the project, in providing services directly relevant to the specified scope of services.

Maximum Point Score: 35

2. Quality and extent of the bidder's experience and expertise in the area of communication and research as well as that of any subcontractor along with general experience and qualifications in providing similar services in New Hampshire as well as other states and to other utility commissions or regulatory agencies.

Maximum Point Score: 25

3. Cost of consulting services and expenses, including the competitive of the proposed hourly rates and any proposed discounts of other cost effective benefits. (The Commission reserves the right to negotiate lower fees or a different fee structure than proposed with any selected consultant.) **Maximum Point Score: 20**
4. Availability and accessibility of staff assigned to project, including physical proximity to New Hampshire. **Maximum Point Score: 10**
5. Overall responsiveness to the requirements of the RFP, including completeness, clarity and quality of the proposal. **Maximum Point Score: 10**

VI. GENERAL PROPOSAL CONDITIONS

1. Proposals must be typed and double-sided. Proposals that are incomplete or unsigned will not be considered. Electronic proposals must be received by the Commission prior to 4:30 pm EDT on May 3, 2018. The electronic proposal must be in PDF format. In addition to the electronic submissions, prospective bidders must submit four (4) additional paper copies, which must be postmarked no later than May 3, 2018. Proposals must be addressed to Eunice Landry, Business Administrator, New Hampshire Public Utilities Commission, 21 S. Fruit Street, Suite 10, Concord, NH 03301-2429 and via email at RFP@puc.nh.gov .
2. Prospective consultants may submit written inquiries about the RFP by email to RFP@puc.nh.gov no later than 4:30 p.m. EDT on April 25, 2018. Inquiries and responses will be posted on the Commission's website
3. The Commission reserves the right to cancel or withdraw this RFP, to reject or accept any or all proposals, to reject or accept all or any part of any proposal, to determine what constitutes a conforming proposal, to waive irregularities that it considers non material to the proposal, to award the proposal solely as it deems to be in the best interest of the State, to contract for any portion of the proposals submitted and to contract with more than one prospective consultant if necessary. Notwithstanding any other provision of the RFP, this RFP does not commit the Commission to the award of a contract.
4. This RPF and all information relating to this RFP, including but not limited to fees, contracts, agreements and prices, are subject to the laws of the State of New Hampshire regarding public information and state procurement of goods.

5. The Commission reserves the right to amend or modify this RFP at its discretion, prior to the proposal submission deadline. In the event of an amendment or modification of this RFP, the State, at its sole discretion, may extend the proposal submission deadline as it deems appropriate.
6. Proposals must be valid for sixty (60) days following the deadline for submission of proposals.
7. By submitting a proposal, a prospective consultant agrees that in no event shall the Commission be either responsible for or held liable for any costs incurred by the prospective consultant in the preparation of or in connection with the proposal, or for work performed prior to the effective date of any resulting contract.

VII. CERTIFICATES

Prospective consultants will be required to provide the following certificates prior to entering into a contract:

Secretary of State's Office Certificate of Good Standing ("CGS")	Individuals contracting in their own name do not need a CGS. Business organizations and trade names need a CGS, except for nonresident nonprofit corporations.
Certificate of Vote /Authority ("CVA")	Individuals contracting in their own name do not need a CVA. Business entities and trade names need a CVA.
Certificate of Insurance	Certificate of Insurance form attached with insurance coverage required under the contract. Modifications of insurance coverage required will be specified in the contract.
Workers' Compensation	Contractor must demonstrate compliance with or exception from RSA 281-A (and if applicable, RSA 228:4-b and RSA 21-I:80, and any other applicable laws or rules).

VIII. FORM OF CONTRACT

1. The terms and conditions set forth in Form P-37 (v. 5/8/15) General Provisions Agreement (available at: <http://www.puc.nh.gov/Home/requestforproposal.htm>) are part of the proposal and will apply to any contract awarded to the prospective consultant.
2. Any contract resulting from this RFP shall not be deemed effective until the initial term and the ability to renew are approved by Governor and Council, and subsequent options to renew are exercised in writing by the Commission.
3. Any contract awarded through this RFP or renewal period will expire on February 28, 2019. .

4. When responding to this RFP, please include your ability to comply with Paragraph 14 of the Form P-37 General Provisions Agreement, “Insurance”, referenced in subparagraph X.1 above. Please note that the Commission will allow substitution of professional liability insurance for part or all of the per occurrence comprehensive general liability insurance coverage. In addition, excess liability insurance in an equal amount may be substituted for up to \$1,000,000 of the per-occurrence comprehensive general liability or professional liability insurance coverage. The State reserves the right to further waive or modify the insurance requirement in Paragraph 14 based on proposals submitted.

IX. FINANCIAL INFORMATION AND PUBLIC POSTING REGARDING RFPS

1. Pursuant to the relevant statutes and regulations, all responses to this RFP shall be considered confidential until the award of a contract. At the time of receipt of proposals, the State will post the number of responses received with no further information. No later than five (5) business days prior to the final approval of the proposed contract, the Commission will post the name and the rank or score of each prospective consultant on the Commission website (<http://www.puc.nh.gov/Home/requestforproposal.htm>).
2. The content of each proposal will become public information upon the effective date of any resulting contract. Any information submitted as part of a response to this RFP may be subject to public disclosure under RSA 91-A. In addition, in accordance with RSA 9-F:1, any contract entered into as a result of this RFP will be made accessible to the public online via the website Transparent NH (<http://www.nh.gov/transparentnh/>). Accordingly, business financial information and proprietary information such as trade secrets, business and financial models and forecasts, and proprietary formulas, may be exempt from public disclosure under RSA 91-A:5, IV. If you believe any information being submitted in response to a request for proposal, bid, or information should be kept confidential as financial or proprietary information, you must specifically identify that information in a letter to the Commission, and should mark/stamp the materials as such. Marking of the entire proposal or entire sections of the proposal (e.g., pricing) as confidential will neither be accepted nor honored.
3. Notwithstanding any provision of this RFP to the contrary, contractor pricing will be subject to disclosure upon approval of the contract by the Commission. The State will endeavor to maintain the confidentiality of portions of the proposal that are clearly and properly marked confidential. If a request is made to the State to view portions of a proposal that the contractor has properly and clearly marked as confidential, the State will notify the contractor of the request and of the date upon which the State plans to release the records. A designation by the contractor of information it believes exempt from disclosure does not have the effect of making such information exempt. The State will determine the information it believes is properly exempted from disclosure. By submitting a proposal, contractors agree that, unless the contractor obtains a court order, at its sole expense, enjoining the release of the requested information, the State may release the requested information on the date specified in the State’s notice without any liability to the contractor.