



# SANTA ROSA PLAIN GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY AGENCY

## REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR

### SANTA ROSA PLAIN GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY AGENCY

#### ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

##### I. INTRODUCTION

The Santa Rosa Plain Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) is seeking proposals from consultants or firms with experience managing and administering public agencies to provide administrative services for the GSA.

The GSA is interested in a consultant's or firm's experience in relation to day-to-day management of public entities that involve multiple partners and that focus on water issues, specifically related to the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act. The administrative services provided include:

Management of the GSA Board and Advisory Committee -- including scheduling, development of and posting agendas for a total of between 12-14 meetings annually; coordination with Board Chair, Vice-Chair, Board members and staff of Board members; presentations at the Board meetings; coordination with the facilitator (for the Advisory Committee); creation of meeting minutes; compliance with the Brown Act; maintaining all official records of the GSA and responding to Public Records Act requests as needed;

Management of GSA contracts -- including monitoring contracts; contract negotiations and extensions; coordinating with general counsel; and tracking and paying contract invoices;

Fiscal management -- including serving as the fiscal agent for the GSA; generating and paying invoices; developing, maintaining and tracking the budget; complying with County of Sonoma's accounting requirements; managing and assisting with the annual audit;

Inter-and Intra-basin Coordination -- including scheduling of, developing agendas for and following up on up to six interbasin staff meetings; participating in up to 12 meetings (in person or by conference call) with administrators and plan managers from Sonoma County's other GSAs; and, as needed, participating in calls or meetings to address issues that are common to all basins; and

Other -- Including arranging and participating in Public Workshops as needed (approximately two annually); assisting with grant applications as needed; assisting with outreach and website content, as needed; coordination of records retention and public records archives; coordinating legislative advocacy activities as needed; and participating in industry training and workshops, as needed.

Since formation of the GSA administration has been provided on an interim basis by GSA-member agency staff, to provide stability to the GSA, preference is that the consultant be able to make a multi-year commitment. A consultant or firm selected as Administrator will serve at the pleasure of the Governing Board. If the GSA determines to award a contract for administrative services as a result of this

RFP, it will enter into a contract establishing the terms and compensation for the subject services.

## **II. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

On September 14, 2014, Governor Brown signed into law three bills collectively referred to as the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA). SGMA requires the formation of groundwater sustainability agencies (GSAs) in state-designated medium and high priority basins. Sonoma County has three medium priority basins: Santa Rosa Plain, Sonoma Valley, and Petaluma Valley. As authorized by SGMA, the GSA-eligible entities formed a Joint Powers Authority for each basin with the intent to work together to implement the requirements of SGMA.

The Santa Rosa Plain GSA was formed through a JPA between the cities of Cotati, Rohnert Park, and Santa Rosa, Town of Windsor, County of Sonoma, Sonoma County Water Agency, Gold Ridge Resource Conservation District, and Sonoma Resource Conservation District. This agency entered into a participation agreement with mutual water companies and CPUC (California Public Utility Commission) regulated water corporations to allow them to participate in the GSA.

The GSA was formed for the purpose of developing, adopting, and implementing a Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) in each basin in order to implement SGMA's requirements and achieve the sustainability goals outlined in SGMA. The Santa Rosa Plain GSA coordinates activities with the Sonoma Valley and Petaluma Valley GSAs where appropriate and involves the public and local stakeholder through outreach and engagement in developing and implementing the GSP.

## **III. SCHEDULE**

To the extent achievable, the following schedule shall govern the RFP. The GSA reserves the right to modify the dates below.

Availability of the Request for Proposals: *July 19, 2018*

Deadline for Submission of Interpretation and/or Questions: *August 2, 2018*

Closing Date for the Request for Qualifications: *August 13, 2018*

Contract Awarded: *October 11, 2018*

Start services: *November 1, 2018*

## **IV. QUALIFICATIONS**

1. Consultant must have management experience with public agencies, special GSAs, municipal governments, or joint powers authorities in California, with a preference given to consultants with experience working with agencies that deal with water issues.
2. Consultant must have experience working with boards, councils or other governing bodies that are subject to California's Ralph M. Brown Act or other open-meeting laws.
3. Consultant must have strong leadership and communication skills.
4. Consultant must have experience in managing public agency budgets.

5. Consultant must have experience in developing and maintaining public agency files and records, and have a working understanding of the California Public Records Act.
6. Experience with groundwater and water resource management desirable.
7. Consultant shall staff all Board and Advisory Committee meetings and meetings of committees of the board, and must be accessible to provide assistance to the GSA on a daily basis.
8. Consultant must have experience managing projects and contracts in a timely and fiscally responsible manner.

**V. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS**

1. Cover letter (no longer than 1 page)

The cover letter should convey a clear understanding of the requirements and objectives, and why the Respondent is uniquely qualified to be awarded a contract.

2. Respondent's Qualifications

Summary of overall qualifications and experience of the Respondent.

3. Proposed Respondent Team

The Proposal shall identify the lead consultant who will be primarily responsible for providing administrative services to the GSA, and other staff to be assigned to the GSA administrative matters including any subconsultants, to be assigned to the GSA administrative matters. Identify roles and responsibilities for each team member and identify who will provide services in the absence of the team lead. Please include the qualifications, training, and certifications of lead consultant, and all other staff who will perform the services outlined herein.

4. Proposed Scope of Work and Schedule

Submit a proposed scope of work and schedule that demonstrates how the consultant would proceed with the work, and the proposed project elements. .

5. Fee Schedule

This section should identify the billing rates for listed personnel, as well as other costs or expenses that would be charged in conjunction with the work.

Conflicts Firms submitting proposals must disclose any actual, apparent, direct or indirect, or potential conflicts of interest that may exist with respect to the firm, management, or employees for the firm or other persons relative to the services to be provided. Respondent should identify how they would address any potential conflicts with respect to any member agencies and/or between GSAs.

6. References

The names, addresses, and telephone numbers of three (3) public agency clients who have contracted with the Respondent for services similar to those described in this RFP within the last five years.

## **VI. EVALUATION CRITERIA**

The following criteria will be used by the GSA in evaluating submissions:

1. Experience and demonstrated competence of the identified key areas of service outlined in the Qualifications section of this RFP.
2. To the extent two or more applicants are deemed equal in their qualifications, preference shall be given to those applicants with an office located within the jurisdiction of the GSA.
3. References and recommendations.
4. Comprehensive consultant fee schedule.
5. Thoroughness of submission.

The GSA reserves the right to award a contract based on written responses only, however oral presentations and written questions for further clarifications may be required of some or all of the respondents.

## **VII. MISCELLANEOUS**

1. Proposal Preparation, Interview and Negotiation Costs

The GSA shall not be responsible for and/or shall not pay any costs associated with the preparation, proposal, or presentation of any proposal, or costs incurred by the responding firms during the interview and negotiations phase of the solicitation process.

2. Proposal Withdrawal

To withdraw a proposal, the responding firm must submit a written request, signed by an authorized representative, to the GSA. After withdrawing a previously submitted proposal, the responding firm may submit another proposal at any time up to the deadline for submitting proposals.

3. Proposal Amendment

The GSA shall not accept any amendments, revisions, or alterations to the proposal after the deadline for the proposal.

4. Proposal Errors

Responding firms are liable for all errors or omissions contained in their proposal. Responding firms shall not be allowed to alter proposal documents after the deadline for submitting a proposal.

5. Incorrect Proposal Information

If the GSA determines that a responding firm has provided, for consideration in the evaluation process or contract negotiations, incorrect information which the responding firm knew or should have known was materially incorrect, the proposal may be rejected in the GSA's sole discretion.

## 6. Prohibition of Respondent Terms and Conditions

A responding firm may not submit the firm's own contract terms and conditions in a response to this RFP. If a proposal contains such terms and conditions, the GSA, at its sole discretion, may reject the proposal.

## 7. Insurance

The apparent successful responding firm will be required to provide proof of insurance as set forth in the attached GSA's model contract prior to commencing work.

## 8. RFP Amendment and Cancellation

The GSA reserves the unilateral right to amend this RFP in writing at any time. The GSA also reserves the right to cancel or reissue the RFP at its sole discretion. The GSA shall post copies of the RFP and amendments on the webpage under <http://santarosaplaingroundwater.org> and it shall be the responsibility of the responding firm to monitor the posting of written responses. Responding firms shall respond to the final written RFP and any exhibits, attachments, and amendments.

## 9. Right of Rejection

(a) The GSA reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to reject any and all proposals or to cancel this RFP in its entirety.

(b) Any proposal received which does not meet the requirements of this RFP may be considered to be non-responsive, and the proposal may be rejected. Responding firms must comply with all of the terms of this RFP and all applicable state and local laws and regulations. The GSA may reject any proposal that does not comply with all of the terms, conditions, and performance requirements of this RFP.

(c) Responding firms may not restrict the rights of the GSA or otherwise qualify their proposals. If a responding firm does so, the GSA may determine the proposal to be a non-responsive counteroffer, and the proposal may be rejected.

(d) The GSA reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to waive variances in proposals provided such action is in the best interest of the GSA. Where the GSA waives variances in proposals, such waiver does not modify the RFP requirements or excuse the responding firm from full compliance with the RFP. Notwithstanding any variance, the GSA may hold any responding firm to strict compliance with the RFP.

## 10. Disclosure of Proposal Contents

All proposals and other materials submitted in response to this RFP procurement process become the property of the GSA. Selection or rejection of a proposal does not affect this right. All proposal information, including detailed price and cost information, shall be held in confidence during the evaluation and selection process. Upon the completion of the evaluation and selection process, indicated by approval of a contract for services emanating from this RFP by the GSA Board or by rejection of all proposals, the proposals and associated materials shall be open for review by the public

to the extent required by the California Public Records Act. By submitting a proposal, the responding firm acknowledges and accepts that the contents of the proposal and associated documents shall become open to public inspection.

11. Proprietary Information

The master copy of each proposal shall be retained for official files and will become public record after the award of a contract unless the proposal or specific parts of the proposal can be shown to be exempt by law. Each responding firm may clearly label part of a proposal as "CONFIDENTIAL." The failure to so label any information that is released by the GSA shall constitute a complete waiver of all claims for damages caused by or related to any release of the information. If a public records request for labeled information is received by the GSA, the GSA will endeavor to notify the responding firm of the request. The responding firm shall have seven (7) working days after the GSA's receipt of the public records request to seek a protective order. Failure to so act shall constitute a complete waiver, and the GSA may release the documents marked "CONFIDENTIAL."