

Louisiana Public Service Commission



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Executive Counsel

November 4, 2021

JOHNNY E. SNELLGROVE, JR.
Deputy Undersecretary

VIA EMAIL

RFP 21-31 Docket No. X-36093, Louisiana Public Service Commission, ex parte. In re: Proceeding to Review the Current Status and Future Plans for Traditional Telephone Services.

To all LPSC qualified consultants:

Enclosed please find a Request for Proposals (“RFP”) for **outside consultants** issued by the Louisiana Public Service Commission for the above referenced docket. If your firm is interested in submitting a proposal, please review the RFP carefully to determine whether your firm meets the specific requirements to qualify for this representation. All Proposals must include a showing that your firm possesses the requisite qualifications and experience to represent the Commission in this matter. Also, please note that all Proposals, including the original, plus (2) two copies and an electronic copy must be received on or before Tuesday, November 30, 2021 at 4:30p.m. Selection of consultants is anticipated to take place at the Commission’s December 2021 Business and Executive Session.

If you have any questions regarding this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Kathryn H. Bowman
Executive Counsel

Encl.

cc.: Brandon M. Frey, Executive Secretary
H. Barlow Holley, Staff Attorney

RFP 21-31
LOUISIANA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (“RFP”)
November 4, 2021

DOCKET NO. X-36093, Louisiana Public Service Commission, ex parte. In re: Proceeding to Review the Current Status and Future Plans for Traditional Telephone Services.

The Louisiana Public Service Commission (“Commission” or “LPSC”), in accordance with the requirements of the LPSC General Order dated November 10, 2014 regarding the selection of contract employees (the “Contract Order”), issues this Request for Proposals (“RFP”) to **outside consultants** who will assist Commission Staff in a review of traditional telephone service plans, and an investigation into outage reporting, complaints, bill credits, reports of restoration activities, and needed improvements for reliability of telecommunication carriers.

Deviations from the requirements contained herein, or conditional bid amounts may result in rejection of the bid as non-conforming. Consideration of qualifying bids received in response to RFP 21-31 are anticipated to be on the Commission’s December 2021 Business and Executive Session.

I. Overview

At the June 16, 2021 Business and Executive Session, the Commission directed Staff to open a docket to determine the current status of all traditional telephone services within the state and determine future plans the carriers have in terms of continued availability, customer service, pricing, and transition to newer technology over time. As a result of this directive, Staff initiated Docket No. X-36093 on July 2, 2021.

Following Hurricane Ida, the Commission noticed an uptick in complaints regarding the telecommunication carriers, and as a result, at the October 20, 2021 Business and Executive Session, Vice Chairman Skrmetta directed Staff to:

... expand the scope of Docket No. X-36093 to include an investigation and review of outage reporting, customer complaint handling, repair appointments, bill credits, network status reports provided to the LPSC, reporting of restoration activities and improvements needed to ensure network reliability.

There was no opposition to this directive.

Therefore, Applicants will be assisting Commission in-house Staff (Legal, Utilities, and Auditing Divisions) in reviewing traditional telephone services’ plans on availability, customer service, pricing and transitioning to newer technology, as well as looking into each carrier’s process regarding the above areas.

II. Scope of Representation

In assisting Staff, Applicants will assist with drafting requests for information to the traditional telephone carriers regarding, but not necessarily limited to, the above categories, as well as conducting independent research on the same; provide analysis of each carriers' plans and procedures regarding the above categories, as well as the independent research conducted; assist in drafting a report to the Commission, which may include recommendations; participating in conferences and/or meetings with telecommunication carriers, Staff, or Commissioners; and participating at Business and Executive Sessions where this docket may be discussed and considered. The scope of work provided herein shall continue through the conclusion of the docket.

All proposals shall include an outline of a plan of action for conducting the review of the application, including the activities described above. The Commission and its Staff shall have the right to determine how the tasks will be carried out. In addition, all proposals shall be accompanied by a professional firm resume indicating the qualifications and experience necessary to meet the requirement of this RFP, including experience with securitization of costs and prior Commission storm recovery processes.

III. Period of Representation

The time period estimated to complete the Scope of Representation is approximately 10-12 months. This is merely an estimate and the Commission makes no representations as to the accuracy of the Period of Representation.

IV. Minimum Requirements

To qualify, all Applicants must have requisite knowledge of the topics listed below, in addition to those provided in Commission General Order dated November 10, 2014. Consideration will be given to factors which indicate degrees of competence such as the amount of practical experience in the field of public utility practice, similar practice before this or other regulatory agencies, and knowledge of state and federal regulatory law.

Applicants shall at a minimum be experienced in participating in dockets involving public utility regulation, or other regulatory issues on administrative and judicial levels, including presentation of reports and recommendations; assistance in research and the development of Commission rules and policy. Applicants should demonstrate familiarity with the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure and process, and be qualified and prepared to assist with respect to all issues addressed in this RFP, which are likely to arise in this proceeding, and be prepared to render a report and/or recommendation at a B&E regarding the same and have knowledge of:

- (1) Commission orders regarding traditional telecommunication carriers, including, but not necessarily limited to the Commission's General Orders dated August 31, 1998, November 16, 2000, July 31, 2001, May 20, 2004, July 26, 2013, and March 11, 2014; and
- (2) Any applicable FCC regulations.

V. Estimate of Costs

All proposals shall include fees and direct costs associated with Applicant's services described above. Applicants responding to this RFP shall quote their rates on an hourly basis, and shall submit a total budget, separating professional fees from direct costs. Along with providing the above, Applicants should provide an overview of the estimated costs in the summary of the bid proposal.

Applicants shall only be allowed to charge for actual hours of work performed and costs incurred. Once selected, an Applicant's hourly rates and budget shall not be altered except by formal approval of the Commission.

VI. Conflict of Interest

Applicants shall prominently and separately disclose current, as well as past employment, which could possibly result in a conflict of interest. In addition, Applicants shall disclose matters in which they currently represent clients before the Commission.

VII. Billing Guidelines

As required by the November 10, 2014 General Order, all bills will be rendered monthly and shall specifically identify and describe all work performed, the person performing such work, the time and charge for such work, and shall additionally show the total amount billed to date and the authorized original estimate. Bills will be rendered in strict accordance with the Commission's guidelines. Expenses shall also be separately disclosed with proof of such expenses attached.

Expenses, where applicable, shall be reimbursed at state authorized rates as specified in the Travel Policies and Procedures Memorandum issued by the State of Louisiana, Division of Administration in effect at the time such expenses are incurred ("Allowable Expenses"). Any expenses that exceed the Allowable Expenses shall be borne by the contract employee and shall not be reimbursed by either the Commission, or the correspondent utility, unless otherwise specified by the Commission.

VIII. Reservation of Rights

The LPSC reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, to amend and/or supplement this RFP at any time, and to consider proposals or modifications thereof received at any time prior to LPSC vote at Open Session, if such action is found by the LPSC to be in the public interest. Pursuant to the General Order regarding the selection of contract employees, the LPSC has the right to accept any offer and does not have to accept the lowest bid amount. In addition, there is also no assurance, express or implied, that an award will necessarily be made pursuant to this RFP.

IX. Submission of Proposals

Interested parties should submit the **original (hard copy), 2 copies, and e-mail an electronic copy** of the proposal to:

Kimberly N. O'Brian
Louisiana Public Service Commission
Assistant to Legal
602 North Fifth Street (Galvez Building) (70802)
P.O. Box 91154
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70821-9154
Phone: (225) 342-9888
Fax: (225) 342-5610
Email: kim.obrian@la.gov
Kathryn.bowman@la.gov

To be considered, an original, two copies, and the electronic copy of the proposal must be received on or before **Tuesday, November 30, 2021 at 4:30 p.m.** **Selection of consultants is anticipated to take place at the Commission's December 2021 Business and Executive Session, which is currently scheduled for December 14, 2021.** Information concerning billing procedures and the Commission's RFP policy may be obtained from the address listed above, or by calling (225) 342-9888.