

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

FOR

Financial Audit Services

ISSUED BY:



Humboldt Waste Management Authority

**1059 West Hawthorne Street
Eureka, CA 95501**

November 15, 2024

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1.0 GENERAL INFORMATION

The Humboldt Waste Management Authority (“HWMA or Authority”) issues this Request for Proposals (RFP) to solicit from qualified Proposers proposals for the “Financial Audit Services” with demonstrated experience and qualifications in providing Financial Audit Services as set forth in this RFP.

Proposals are due and must be delivered in a sealed envelope to Eric Keller-Heckman, HWMA Executive Director, no later than 3pm Friday, January 3, 2025. The RFP can be viewed online at <https://www.hwma.net/proposals-and-bids>

Proposals are being solicited from qualified Proposers, or a group of qualified Proposers that form a team arrangement, for purposes of this 45-day solicitation. In the event a teaming arrangement is proposed, the Proposers are expected to establish a team that is represented by a single prime Proposer responsible for negotiating and entering into an agreement and who will serve as the primary contact and responsible party.

1.1 Humboldt Waste Management Authority

Established in 1999, the Humboldt Waste Management Authority is a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) comprised of six member agencies (the cities of Arcata, Blue Lake, Eureka, Ferndale, Rio Dell, and County of Humboldt) responsible for receipt, management, and disposal of Member’s solid wastes, and to act as a regional focal point for waste diversion programs and services. One of the primary goals of the Authority is to provide cost-effective waste reduction, recycling, and solid waste disposal services and programs to Members.

The HWMA consists of 37 full time equivalent positions with fiscal year 2024-25 annual budget projected at \$ 15,767,528.

1.2 Pension Plans

The HWMA participates in the California Public Employees Retirement System (“PERS”), and currently employs both Classic and Pepra members with actuarial services for the plan provided by PERS.

1.3 Availability of Prior Audit Reports and Working Papers

Interested proposers who wish to review prior years’ audit reports and management letters should contact Hilary Schwartz Director of Finance, at either hschwartz@hwma.net or 707-268-8680. The HWMA will use its best efforts to make prior audit reports and supporting working papers available to proposers to aid their response to this request for proposals.

1.4 Organization of the RFP

General information regarding the RFP purpose, process, and schedule are provided in the following sections.

- **Section 1** contains General Information to assist Proposers in understanding the current and proposed services required, including general information about HWMA and its Members.
- **Section 2** contains Proposal Considerations such as the rights of the Authority, consequence of Contractor's submission of their proposal, costs to prepare a proposal, and the proposal schedule.
- **Section 3** Scope of Services describes the work and services covered by this RFP.
- **Section 4** discusses Agreement Arrangements.
- **Section 5** overview of general submittal requirements.
- **Section 6** describes the Proposal Evaluation and Proposer selection process to be followed by the Authority.
- **Section 7** presents the Proposal Submittal Instructions to be followed by Proposers for submittal of their RFP.

2.0 PROPOSAL CONSIDERATIONS

2.1 HWMA Rights

In issuing this RFP HWMA retains, but is not limited to, the following rights.

- To issue addenda to the RFP, including extending or otherwise revising the timeline for submittals.
- To withdraw, reissue or modify the RFP.
- Withdrawing the RFP at any time during the procurement process
- Issuing addenda to the RFP, including extending or revising the timeline for submittals.
- Requesting clarification or additional information from the Proposers at any time during the procurement process.
- Execution of an Agreement with the successful Proposer on the basis of the original proposals and/or any other information submitted by the Proposers during the procurement process.
- Rejection of any or all proposals, waiving irregularities in any proposals, accepting, or rejecting all or part of any proposals, and waiving any requirements of the RFP, as may be deemed in the best interest of the Authority.
- Negotiate with more than one Proposer.

Accepting a proposal that does not offer the lowest cost but offers the best overall proposal, which the Authority determined is in the best interest of the Authority and its Member Agencies based on the Proposer's qualifications, operations proposal, financial strength, and willingness to accept the Agreement terms, as well as its cost proposal.

Discontinuing negotiations after commencing negotiations with a selected Contactor if progress is unsatisfactory in the sole judgment of the Authority and commencing negotiations with another qualified Proposer.

2.2 Obligations of Submission of Proposal

Proposers submitting a Proposal understand that:

- Proposal submission constitutes an incontrovertible representation and warranty by Proposer that the Proposer has investigated all aspects of the RFP.
- Proposer is aware of the applicable facts pertaining to the RFP process, its procedures, and requirements.
- Proposer has read and understands the RFP and complied with every requirement.
- Without exception, the proposal is premised upon performing and furnishing the services and equipment required by this RFP and Agreement and as such means, methods, techniques as may be indicated or required by this RFP and Agreement.
- Proposer submittal of an RFP, and/or any addendums, are sufficient in scope and detail to indicate and convey understanding of all the terms and conditions for performance and furnishing services of the project.

Submission of a Proposal shall not be deemed an agreement between the Proposer and the Authority, and the following provisions apply:

- Authority shall not be obligated to respond to any proposal submitted, nor is bound in any manner by the submission of a proposal by a Proposer.
- Acceptance of a proposal by the Authority obligates the Proposer to enter into good faith Agreement negotiations on the proposal submitted.
- The Agreement shall not be binding or valid against the Authority unless and until it is executed by the Authority Board and the selected Proposer, and the Proposer's performance bond or other surety has been accepted.

2.3 Proposal Costs

Costs of investigating, preparing, and submitting a proposal is the sole responsibility of the Proposer and shall not be chargeable in any manner to the HWMA. HWMA will not reimburse any Proposer for any costs associated with the preparation and submission of proposals or expenses incurred in making an oral presentation, participating in an interview, or negotiating an Agreement with the HWMA.

2.4 Proposal Schedule

The HWMA intends to adhere to the schedule provided in Table 1 during the selection process. This schedule may change at the HWMA's sole discretion.

TABLE 1: PROCUREMENT SCHEDULE

<i>Task</i>	<i>Date</i>
RFP Released for 45-day Solicitation Period.	November 15, 2024
Deadline to submit written questions and clarifications by Proposers.	December 13, 2024
HWMA will issue to Proposers: response to written questions and RFP addendum if necessary.	December 20, 2024
PROPOSAL DUE	January 3, 2025
HWMA Evaluation Committee may request clarification of proposals.	
HWMA Evaluation Committee may interview shortlisted Proposer(s).	
HWMA Evaluation Committee Recommends Preferred Contractor(s) to Board of Directors.	February 13, 2025
HWMA and Contractor(s) complete negotiations with Contractor.	April 1, 2025
HWMA Board of Directors to Approval Final Agreement	April 10, 2025
PROPOSER TO COMMENCE SERVICES.	Second Half 2025 (TBD)

**The Authority retains the rights to modify and/or amend dates as necessary.*

2.5 Anti-Collusion Statement

A sworn anti-collusion statement is included as *Attachment 3* as part of the proposal package. The Authority requires that a non-collusion statement be made as a sworn affidavit executed and sworn before a person who is authorized to administer oaths by laws of the State. This certification is required as important evidence in the event that collusion or bid rigging is discovered at a later date. If any Proposer submits a false statement, sanctions may then be taken against the Proposer.

2.6 Conflict of Interest

The Proposer must disclose any contractual relationship that exists, or has existed, between the Proposer and a predecessor organization of the Proposer, or a sub-contractor included in the Proposer's response to this RFP, and the HWMA or its Member Agencies. Proposers must also disclose any existing business or personal relationship between the Proposer, its

principals, or any affiliate or subcontractor, and the HWMA, its Member Agencies, or any other entity or person involved in the project that is the subject of this RFP.

Failure to disclose any such prior or existing contractual or personal relationship as described in this section may result in disqualification of the proposal. The Authority will make the final determination regarding the existence of a conflict of interest.

2.7 Proposals and Public Records

Until selection by HWMA of a Proposer, proposals shall be held in confidence and not subject to public review. After selection of a Proposer, all proposals will become public records and subject to disclosure as required under the California Public Records Act (Government Code §7920.000 et seq). Notwithstanding the foregoing, certain portions of short-listed proposals may be tabulated and presented to the HWMA Board together with proposal rankings and recommendations to inform the HWMA Board's decision-making in selecting a single proposal.

Proposers who believe portions of their proposals are subject to an exemption from disclosure shall clearly mark or label such content as "Confidential" in order to assist HWMA in the event of a Public Records Act request. However, HWMA will make its own evaluation under the Public Records Act of what content in the proposal, if any, is exempt from disclosure. By submitting a proposal, the Proposer hereby holds harmless and agrees to indemnify HWMA, its officials, officers, employees, and agents from and against any losses of any type arising out of actions taken by HWMA in response to any request to review the proposals.

2.8 Proposer Code of Conduct

Proposers are required to follow the "Proposer Code of Conduct" as a result of submitting an RFP. The Code of Conduct for Proposers includes the following:

- Prohibits ex-parte communications with HWMA Board members, elected officials of Member Agencies, or Member Agency staff members; and
- Prohibits giving any gift or monetary compensation to an HWMA Board member, HWMA staff member, Member Agency staff members or its agents; and
- Prohibits collaboration or discussion with other Proposers of the content of the proposal or rates proposed.

Failure to abide by the above will result in Proposals being disqualified.

3.0 Scope of Work

3.1 Services to be performed by Auditors

- The auditors will perform a financial and compliance audit to determine (a) whether the combined financial statements of the Authority fairly present the financial position and the results of financial operations in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles, and (b) whether the Authority has complied with laws and regulations that may have a material effect upon the financial statements.
- The auditors will examine the Authority's internal accounting controls and accounting procedures and render written reports of their findings and recommendations to the Director of Finance and Executive Director. The examination shall be made and reports rendered in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards.
- In the required reports on internal controls, the auditor shall communicate any reportable conditions found during the audit.
- Reportable conditions that are also material weaknesses shall be identified as such in the report. Non-reportable conditions discovered by auditors shall be reported in a separate letter to management, which shall be referred to in the reports on internal controls.
- Prior to issuing their final reports, the auditors will meet with the Director of Finance and their designees, and conduct an exit interview. All audit reports will be addressed to the HWMA Board of Directors.
- Irregularities and illegal acts: Auditors shall be required to make an immediate, written report of all irregularities and illegal acts or indications of illegal acts of which they become aware to by any staff or representative the HWMA.
- Field Work: The HWMA anticipates and expects the major fieldwork for to begin on or near the first week of October of each year. This does not include preliminary field work which may occur earlier than that.
- Attendance at Meetings and Hearings: As part of the work scope, and included in the contract price, is attendance by the Contractor at a minimum of one (1) public meeting to present and discuss its findings and recommendations.
- The contractor shall attend as many "working" meetings with staff as necessary in performing

4.0 AGREEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

It is the intent of the HWMA to contract for the services for a term of three (3) years, with the right to extend the term of this contract for one additional 3 year extension subject to the satisfactory negotiation of terms, including a price acceptable to both the HWMA and the selected firm.

The HWMA is interested in selecting a Proposer that is willing to negotiate and execute an Agreement in a timely manner.

5.0 SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS

Proposers are required to provide all information requested in this section, requested attachments and addendum items, if any, as part of their proposals. Failure to provide all required information as listed below may be grounds for rejection of a proposal as nonresponsive.

5.1 General Requirements

The purpose of the proposal is to demonstrate the qualifications, competence and capacity of the firms seeking to undertake an independent audit of the HWMA in conformity with the requirements of this request for proposals. The technical proposal should demonstrate the qualifications of the firm and of the staff to be assigned to this engagement. It should also specify an audit approach that will meet the request for proposal requirements.

5.2 Independence

The firm should provide an affirmative statement that it is independent of the HWMA as defined by generally accepted auditing standards/the U.S. General

5.3 License to Practice in the State of California.

An affirmative statement to be included that the firm and all assigned key professional staff are properly licensed to practice in the State of California.

5.4 Firm Qualifications and Experience

The proposal should state the size of the firm, the size of the firm's governmental audit staff, the location of the office from which the work on this engagement is to be performed and the number and nature of the professional staff to be employed in this engagement. If the proposer is a joint venture or consortium, the qualifications of each firm comprising the joint venture or consortium should be separately identified and the firm that is to serve as the principal auditor should be noted, if applicable. The firm is required to include a summarization of the results of its most recent external quality control review, with a statement whether that quality control review included a review of specific government engagements. The firm shall provide information on the

results of any Federal or State desk reviews or field reviews of its audits during the past three (3) years. In addition, the firm shall provide information on the circumstances and status of any disciplinary action taken or pending against the firm during the past three (3) years with State regulatory bodies or professional organizations.

5.5 Partner, Supervisory and Staff Qualifications and Experience

The firm should identify the principal supervisory and management staff, including engagement partner, manager, other supervisors and specialists, who would be assigned to the engagement and indicate whether each such person is registered or licensed to practice as a certified public accountant in the State of California. The firm should provide information on the government auditing experience of each person, including information on relevant continuing professional education for the past three (3) years and membership in professional organizations relevant to the performance of this audit.

The firm should provide as much information as possible regarding the number, qualifications, experience and training, including relevant continuing professional education, of the specific staff to be assigned to this engagement. The firm should indicate how the quality of staff over the term of the agreement will be assured. Engagement partners, managers, other supervisory staff and specialists may be changed if those personnel leave the firm, are promoted or are assigned to another office. These personnel may also be changed for other reasons with the express prior written permission of the City. However, in either case, the City retains the right to approve or reject replacements. Consultants and firm specialists mentioned in response to this request for proposal can only be changed with the express prior written permission of the City, which retains the right to approve or reject replacements. Other audit personnel may be changed at the discretion of the proposer provided that replacements have substantially the same or better qualifications or experience.

5.6 Similar Engagements with Other Government Entities

For the firm's office that will be assigned responsibility for the audit, list the most significant engagements (maximum of 5) performed in the last five years that are similar to the engagement described in this request for proposal.

These engagements should be ranked on the basis of total staff hours. Indicate the scope of work, date, engagement partners, total hours, and the name and telephone number of the principal client contact.

5.7 Specific Audit Approach

The proposal should set forth a summarized work plan, including an explanation of the audit methodology to be followed, to perform the services required in Section 3 of this request for proposal. The work plan should reference such sources of information as the HWMA budget and related materials, organizational charts, manuals and programs, and financial and other management information systems. Proposers will be required to provide the following information on their audit approach:

- a. Level of staff and number of hours to be assigned to each proposed segment of the engagement
- b. Sample size and the extent to which statistical sampling is to be used in the engagement
- c. Approach to be taken to gain and document an understanding of the Authority's internal control structure
- d. Approach to be taken in determining laws and regulations that will be subject to audit test work
- e. Approach to be taken in drawing audit sample for purposes of tests of compliance.

5.8 Cost Proposal

This section should be last and separately identified with a total page. All dollar units and/or total costs should be shown in this section, not in the technical proposal.

6.0 PROPOSAL EVALUATION AND PROPOSER SELECTION

6.1 Proposal Evaluation Procedures

Proposals will be evaluated based on their responsiveness, content, completeness, and clarity. Specific evaluation criteria have been developed that will focus on evaluating the information requested in the RFP. Proposals will be evaluated based on the extent to which they meet evaluation criteria.

Proposals will be evaluated by an RFP Evaluation Committee (RFP Committee) with The Authority's Executive Director facilitating the evaluation process and provide support to the RFP Evaluation Committee. The Executive Director will be available to answer questions by the RFP Evaluation Committee as needed but will not have any proposal scoring and ranking voting authority. Each evaluator will review all proposals received using a set of established evaluation criteria that will be applied to identify the relative strengths and weaknesses of individual proposals.

The ratings from the RFP Committee evaluators will be compiled to determine a preliminary ranking of the proposals based solely on the evaluation criteria. After initial evaluation of proposals and preliminary ranking, the RFP Evaluation Committee may prepare a list of the top-ranking Proposers to be interviewed.

Invitations may be issued to Proposers to make oral presentations to and/or interviews with the Evaluation Committee. Site visits to Proposer's representative facilities by RFP Committee members may also be conducted as part of the selection process.

Based on the contents of submitted proposals, the results of interviews and oral presentations and site visits, if conducted, along with any other information requested by the HWMA, the Evaluation Committee will prepare a final ranking of the Proposers and present

their rankings and recommendations to the HWMA Board of Directors. After the HWMA Board reviews and approves their selected Proposer, HWMA staff will enter negotiations with the selected Proposer to develop an agreement that provides the services outlined in this RFP. The final agreement will be presented to the Board for approval.

In the event the negotiations with the selected Proposer are unsuccessful, HWMA may designate another Proposer from the list of shortlisted Proposers and enter negotiations with that Proposer(s).

6.2 Proposal Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be numerically scored and ranked using the criteria and weighting described in this section. The scores assigned will reflect the extent to which criteria is satisfied relative to other proposals. The evaluation criteria and maximum score that can be achieved for each criterion are presented in Table 2.

- a. Mandatory Elements
 - i. The audit firm is independent and licensed to practice in the State of California.
 - ii. The firm has no conflict of interest regarding any other work performed either by the firm or the HWMA.

Table 2: Proposal Evaluation Criteria and Maximum Evaluation Score

Proposal Evaluation Criteria	Maximum Evaluation Score
Cost proposal	30
Audit approach	30
Qualifications and experience	40
Interview (If requested)	10
Total Maximum Score Up To	100

The potential factors that may be considered by the proposal Evaluation Committee when developing the score for each criterion are presented below. Proposer must be fully compliant with the RFP and procurement procedures as demonstrated by submittal of all elements required including completion of the proposal cost form and compliance with proposal submission process.

- b. Cost Proposal (Maximum 20 points)
 - i. Reasonableness of Cost Proposal: Logical relationship between proposed costs and operational assumptions for the cost proposal.

- c. Audit Approach (Maximum 30 points)
 - i. Reasonableness and reliability of the proposed services (e.g., technology, equipment, and staffing levels,); reasonableness of productivity and operating assumptions.
 - ii. Adequacy of Staffing to be provided for various section of the engagement work.
 - iii. Adequacy of Sampling and Analytical techniques
 - iv. Timeline commitments to conduct Audit.

- d. Qualifications and Experience (Maximum 40 points)
 - i. Past experience and performance on like or comparable government engagements.
 - ii. Quality of firms proposed personnel to be assigned and quality of management support personal to be available to assist audit.

- e. Interviews if requested (Maximum 10 points)
 - i. Short Listed Proposers may be invited to meet with the Evaluation Committee. Proposers will be expected to provide a presentation outlining their proposal and responses to committee member questions.

7 PROPOSAL SUBMITTAL INSTRUCTIONS

Proposals shall be submitted in accordance with the requirements presented in Section 3 – Scope of Services and Section 6. All data and information furnished by HWMA or referred to in this RFP are provided for the Proposer’s convenience. The HWMA does not guarantee that such information or data is accurate and assumes no responsibility as to the accuracy of the information. Proposers are encouraged to independently verify the accuracy and interpretation of all such information or data.

7.1 Authority Contact and Address

Proposers shall submit all correspondences, questions, and the proposal submittal to the following contact individual:

Executive Director
Humboldt Waste Management Authority
1059 West Hawthorne Street
Eureka, CA 95501
Telephone number: 707.268.8680
Email: ekeller@hwma.net

7.2 Submittal of Written Questions

HWMA requires Proposer to submit all questions and requests for information in writing (email is acceptable) directly to HWMA at the address listed in Section 7.1. The deadline for submitting written questions and requests for information will be **December 13, 2024**.

7.3 Proposal Submittal Format

The Proposer shall submit (2) double-sided hard copies of the complete proposal, no later than **3:00 p.m. Friday January 3, 2025** in a sealed package. In addition, a thumb drive storage device containing an electronic copy of the proposal in Adobe PDF shall be submitted in the sealed package. This will be used to distribute to Evaluation Committee members.

Proposals must be printed on 8½” x 11” paper with 30% or greater post-consumer recycled content paper. All pages shall be consecutively numbered.

**PROPOSAL TO HWMA FOR
“Financial Auditing Services”**
Submitted By: *(Name of Proposer)*

Proposals must be mailed, or hand delivered to HWMA’s Business Office address as cited in Section 7.1. Proposals received after the deadline will not be considered and will be returned unopened to the Proposer. Postmarks will not be accepted as proof of receipt.

7.4 Clarification of Proposal Information

Proposer may be asked to clarify information through written communications and interviews or during site visits of the Proposer’s processing facility. The clarification process may be performed by HWMA staff or Evaluation Committee representatives.

7.5 Presentation to Evaluation Committee and HWMA Board of Directors

One or more Proposers may be invited to present their proposals to the Evaluation Committee and/or the HWMA Board of Directors. Invitations to present will be based on evaluation of the proposals at a time to be determined.

7.6 Selection of Recommended Proposers

After the HWMA Board of Directors selects and approves a Proposer, Agreement negotiations will commence.

7.7 Schedule

The Procurement Process schedule is presented in Section 2.4, Table 1.

7.8 Proposal Content

Proposals must be submitted according to the following format and include the following information:

1. Cover letter containing:
 - Name, address, and telephone and fax number of Proposer and key contact person.
 - Description of type of organization (e.g., corporation, partnership) submitting proposal.
 - If teaming arrangement with is proposed, describe past working relationships on similar projects.
 - Name of entity that would sign the Agreement.
 - A statement that you have reviewed the requirements of the project as described in this RFP, its enclosures, and all addenda, by listing all addenda and dates received.
 - The cover letter and Forms must be signed by an officer or agent of the Proposer authorized to bind the Proposer. In signing proposal, the Proposer agrees that the terms of proposal and the cost as submitted by Proposer are firm for a period of one year from proposal due date and assures that a performance bond or other instrument as specified in the Agreement will be issued by the Proposer.
2. Executive summary that highlights the major topics of your qualifications and proposal and clearly states the services the proposal addresses.
3. Responses to all information requested in Section 6. Organize your responses into topics, and address each element following the format outlined below so that all requested information can be readily found.
4. Proposal Outline

Each proposal must address the topics and Scope of Services as stated in Section 3 of the RFP in the following format:

- I. Title Page, Cover Letter, Table of Contents, Executive Summary
- II. Company Description, Experience and Qualifications Element

Attachment 3: Anti-Collusion Statement Form

The undersigned Proposer has not divulged to, discussed, or compared his/her proposal with other Proposers and has not colluded with any other Proposer or parties to the proposal whatsoever. Proposer acknowledges that all information contained herein is part of the public domain as defined in the guidelines in Section 2.7 Limits on Disclosure of Proposals as stated in the RFP and as governed by the State of California.

I certify that this proposal is made without prior understanding, agreement or connection with any corporation, firm or person submitting a proposal for the same service, and is in all respects fair and without collusion. I agree to abide by all conditions of these proposal specifications and I certify that I am authorized to sign this proposal.

(Please type or print below)

Executed under penalty of perjury on this _____ day of _____, 2023 at _____.

SIGNED BY: _____
TITLE: _____
ORGANIZATION: _____

Subscribed and sworn to before me this _____ day of _____, 2023 at _____.

Notary Public
My Commission expires: