



**BATON ROUGE NORTH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT (BRNEDD)
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP) TO PROVIDE LEGAL SERVICES**

ISSUE DATE: Thursday, March 6, 2025
PROPOSAL DUE DATE: Thursday, April 17, 2024
(Late proposals will not be accepted)

Point of Contact:
April Hawthorne, Executive Director
All inquiries and contact shall be made in writing by email to:
april@brnedd.com

This RFP is posted on the following website: www.brnedd.com

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Baton Rouge North Economic Development District (BRNEDD) was established in 2015 by the Louisiana State Legislature to stimulate economic growth and development in North Baton Rouge. BRNEDD's mission is to drive investments, foster job creation, support local businesses, and improve the quality of life through targeted economic development initiatives. BRNEDD works through partnerships with local, state, and federal agencies, private businesses, and community organizations to achieve these goals.

2. OBJECTIVE

The objective of this RFP is to select a qualified attorney or law firm to serve as legal counsel to the BRNEDD Board of Commissioners and the Executive Director. The chosen legal advisor will provide comprehensive legal services, ensuring that BRNEDD's operations align with applicable laws and regulations, support BRNEDD's mission to promote economic development, facilitate investment, and guide growth in North Baton Rouge.

3. CORE SCOPE OF SERVICES

This Request for Proposal ("RFP") seeks a law firm ("Firm") to assist BRNEDD in actively accomplishing the BRNEDD Mission, including but not limited to, representation in various aspects of law, such as advising, counseling, and rendering legal opinions to the Board and staff concerning laws related to organization generally and the BRNEDD Mission.

Core Scope of Services. The firm should have significant experience and expertise in providing the following scope of services ("Core Scope of Service") to the BRNED, its Board, Executive Director and Staff:

3.1 Organization Matters Specifically Related to a Governmental Entity;

a. The selected firm will provide guidance on governance and operational matters relevant to BRNEDD as a political subdivision.

3.2 Expertise in Robert's Rules of Order and Parliamentary Procedures

a. The selected firm must be an expert in Robert's Rules of Order and parliamentary procedures to provide legal guidance and ensure that all BRNEDD Board of Commissioners' meetings are conducted in compliance with proper governance protocols.

b. The firm must provide legal counsel during board meetings to ensure motions, resolutions, and decision-making processes adhere to parliamentary standards and Louisiana public meeting laws.

c. The firm must be prepared to offer training and legal interpretation to the Board of Commissioners and the Executive Director on parliamentary procedures, governance compliance, and best practices for board decision-making.

d. The firm must also advise on any disputes or procedural issues that arise during meetings and provide guidance on maintaining order and compliance with BRNEDD's bylaws and state regulations.

3.3 Public Law Issues

a. The firm will ensure compliance with BRNEDD's enabling legislation.

b. The firm will advise on the Louisiana Code of Ethics, Open Meetings Law, and Public Records Act to support BRNEDD's transparency and accountability.

3.4 General Advice on Day-to-Day Activities

a. The firm will offer counsel regarding contracts, agreements, by-laws, and risk management for BRNEDD's daily operations as needed.

3.5 Maintaining General Knowledge of BRNEDD's Operations and Legal Transactions

a. The firm is expected to stay informed on BRNEDD's legal matters, advising proactively on transactions and potential issues.

3.6 Review and Provide Opinions on Contracts, Legal Instruments, and Other Public Law Matters

a. The firm will draft, and review agreements, contracts, and memoranda of understanding (MOUs) as requested by the Board of Commissioners and/or the Executive Director.

3.7 Advice Regarding New and Existing Laws Related to BRNEDD

a. The firm will update BRNEDD on legislative changes, new policies, or existing laws that impact BRNEDD's mission and operations.

3.8 Liaison with Outside Legal Counsel

a. The firm will manage BRNEDD's legal representation in special projects by acting as a liaison with other legal counsel when required.

3.9 Other General Legal Representation

a. The firm will provide additional legal services as required, including representation in unique cases or specific initiatives.

3.10 Conflict of Interest Disclosure

a. The firm must disclose any current or past representation that could create a conflict of interest with BRNEDD or its affiliates.

b. The firm must commit to avoiding engagements that could impair its ability to provide unbiased legal counsel to BRNEDD.

c. If a potential conflict arises during the contract period, the firm must immediately notify BRNEDD and propose a resolution for review by the Board of Commissioners.

3.11 Compliance with Public Records Law

- a. The firm must be knowledgeable about the Louisiana Public Records Act and ensure that BRNEDD complies with legal obligations regarding public records requests.
- b. The firm must provide legal guidance on responding to public information requests in a timely and legally compliant manner.

3.12 Representation Before Government Entities

- a. The firm must have experience representing public agencies before local, state, and federal governmental bodies.
- b. The firm must be capable of preparing legal documents, testimonies, and advisory opinions on legislative and regulatory matters affecting BRNEDD.

3.13 Attendance at Board Meetings

- a. The firm must attend all BRNEDD Board of Commissioners meetings unless an exception is granted by the Executive Director.
- b. The firm must provide real-time legal counsel on governance, parliamentary procedure, and any legal matters that arise during meetings.
- c. The firm must be available to draft or review resolutions, ordinances, and other legal documents discussed in meetings.

4. GROWTH-ORIENTED LEGAL SERVICES

To support BRNEDD's future expansion, the Firm should be prepared to offer the following specialized services:

4.1 Risk Management and Compliance

- a. The firm will provide legal guidance on risk management strategies, particularly for environmental law, zoning, and regulatory compliance in redevelopment projects.

4.2 Economic Development and Public Finance

- a. The firm will assist with complex financial structures, including public financing, bonds, tax credits, and public-private partnerships to support large-scale development projects.

4.3 Contracts, Procurement, and Bidding Processes

- a. The firm will advise on public bidding processes, procurement, and contract negotiations to ensure BRNEDD complies with state and federal regulations.

4.4 Community Engagement and Dispute Resolution

- a. The firm will represent BRNEDD in community dispute resolution processes and provide legal advice on public consultations, community impact assessments, and mediation.

4.5 Government Relations and Intergovernmental Affairs

- a. The firm will assist with intergovernmental relationships, lobbying, and securing government support, including navigation of legislative matters affecting BRNEDD.

4.6 Human Resources and Employment Law

a. The firm will provide guidance on employment policies, labor law compliance, and related matters as BRNEDD grows its workforce.

4.7 Future Intellectual Property Needs

a. The firm will offer legal advice on intellectual property matters, including branding, trademarks, and copyrights, to protect BRNEDD's identity and work.

5. SPECIAL PROJECT SCOPE OF SERVICES

For specific projects, BRNEDD may request additional legal services in the following areas:

5.1 Real Estate-Based Transactions

a. The firm will draft, review, and negotiate real estate acquisitions, leases, and land use agreements.

5.2 Real Estate Title Matters

a. The firm will address title clearance, quiet title actions, and related real estate issues.

5.3 Governmental Grants and Loan Programs

a. The firm will advise on compliance with federal and state grant and revolving loan programs.

5.4 Cooperative Endeavor Agreements (CEAs) and Public Benefit Transaction Documents

a. The firm will draft, review, and advise on CEAs and other legal instruments aimed at public-private partnerships and economic development.

5.5 Litigation and Dispute Resolution

a. The firm will represent BRNEDD in litigation, mediation, and other dispute resolution processes.

5.6 Employment and Labor Law Issues

a. The firm will counsel BRNEDD on employment agreements, labor relations, and compliance with employment regulations.

5.7 Tax Credit Transactions

a. The firm will provide expertise in tax credit programs, including historic rehabilitation, new market, and low-income housing credits.

5.8 Formation and Administration of Special Taxing Districts

a. The firm will guide BRNEDD in establishing and managing special taxing districts to support economic development initiatives.

6. REQUIRED INFORMATION

Instructions: If you are interested in participating in this RFP process, prepare a response to this request by the date and time listed above. The response should provide separate information on the proposed team and the Firm's experience in supporting each individual Scope Components.

In your discretion, you are welcome to refrain from responding on one or more Scope Components where your firm lacks material experience or does not wish to submit a response. The BRNEDD may award this bid by acceptance of any proposal received without further negotiations or discussions or award a contract after further interviews with the finalist Firms. Initial proposals in response to this RFP, therefore, should set forth the most favorable terms and conditions that you are prepared to offer. As a governmental entity, it is not likely that an applicant Firm will be successful in submitting a proposal with its "standard" rates. The BRNEDD will consider alternative fee arrangements for the Firm, including a retainer, deeper discount rates for some Scope Components and lesser for others.

A proposal may be rejected if it does not include the following required information and documents:

A. Basic Information

- 1) Background information, such as number of attorneys in the Firm, location of all offices, telephone number and e-mail address of the primary staff personnel who are anticipated to provide services to the RDA, firm descriptions/brochures, resumes and organizational charts should be included.
- 2) Provide a specific description of the Firm's relevant experience and expertise for each Scope Component, including, without limitation:
 - a. The specific attorney or attorneys who will serve as lead for each Scope Component with a bio of each and their relevant experience and expertise;
 - b. Specific project and/or client experience and expertise for each Scope Component;
- 2) Indicate whether legal services have been provided previously to any other state, local or federal entities, with an emphasis on governmental entities similar to the BRNEDD ("Other Governmental Entities"). If so, list and describe any and all work performed including (a) the date(s) such work was performed and (b) the entity for which such work was performed.
- 3) Identify and provide contact information for the person(s) in the firm who will be BRNEDD's primary point(s) of contact and provide resumes for such person(s). After a selection is made, the primary point(s) of contact may not be changed without BRNEDD's approval.

- 4) Provide the firm's standard hourly billing rate structure and proposed discounted rate for each named attorney that may provide legal services for each Scope Component.
- 5) If the Firm is a State-certified Minority and Women-owned Business Enterprise (MWBE) or Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) firm, provide documentation evidencing certification. Law firms that are not certified, but have applied for certification, should provide evidence of filing, including the filing date.
- 6) Provide a brief general description of what distinguishes the Firm in connection with this proposed representation.

Provide the information in the same order in which it is requested. The proposal must be limited to 25 pages, in at least 12-point font, with standard margins printed on one-sided 8 ½ X 11-inch pages.

7. SCHEDULE OF DATES

- 7.1 Release of RFP: March 6, 2025
- 7.2 Deadline to Submit Questions: March 20, 2025 - 5:00 PM CST
- 7.3 Posting of Answers to Questions: March 25, 2025
- 7.4 Intent to Submit Proposal (Optional): March 31, 2025 - 5:00 PM CST
- 7.5 Submission of Proposals: April 17, 2025 - 5:00 PM CST (*Late proposals will not be accepted*)
- 7.6 Evaluation of Proposals: April 18–21, 2025
- 7.7 Notification of Shortlisted Firms: April 22, 2025
- 7.8 Interviews/Presentations by Shortlisted Firms (if applicable): April 24–25, 2025
- 7.9 Final Selection and Notification of Successful Respondent: April 28, 2025
- 7.10 Anticipated Contract Start Date: May 5, 2025 *BRNEDD reserves the right to modify this schedule at its discretion. Notification of changes will be made available via the website.*

8. SELECTION CRITERIA

Proposals will be evaluated based on relevant experience and qualifications, experience with the Special Project Scope of Services, experience representing governmental entities, fee proposal and scale of discount, proposal organization, completeness and quality, and diversity and inclusion commitment.

9. SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

Proposal submissions must be received by BRNEDD on or before 5:00 PM CST on Thursday, April 17, 2024. The submission should be labeled proposals as “BRNEDD Counsel RFP Response” and mailed to the following address:

Baton Rouge North Economic Development District (BRNEDD)
Re: Counsel RFP Response
Attn: Ms. April Hawthorne, Executive Director
Post Office Box 53187
Baton Rouge, LA 70892

The submission should include three (3) hard copies of the information and other items required by this RFP, AND one digital copy on flash drive or sent via email to april@brnedd.com (PDF format required).

Submit a digital copy in PDF format to april@brnedd.com

10. QUESTIONS

Submit questions to april@brnedd.com by March 20, 2025, 5:00 PM CST. Answers will be posted on or by March 25, 2025, on www.brnedd.com.

11. GENERAL PROVISIONS

BRNEDD reserves the right to amend, modify, or withdraw this RFP. All responses are subject to the Louisiana Public Records Law and may be discussed at public meetings.