



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Accounting Services

The Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission (CVRPC) is requesting proposals from qualified individuals or firms for accounting services. Services provided through this contract will assist CVRPC to perform full charge bookkeeping including preparing for and participating in an annual audit from April 15, 2020 – October 31, 2023. If requested, services may also include training financial management staff, adapting and strengthening internal controls, and updates to the existing financial system. The estimated total value of this 3-year contract is ~\$262,000.

I. SCHEDULE

March 10, 2020	Request for Proposals issued
<i>March 20, 2020</i>	<i>Deadline for submission of questions in writing</i>
March 23, 2020	Response to questions posted to www.centralvtplanning.org
<i>March 27, 2020</i>	<i>Proposals Due</i>
<i>April 6, 2020</i>	Anticipated Contractor Notification
<i>April 15, 2020</i>	<i>System training begins</i>
<i>May 15, 2020</i>	<i>Contractor begins fully operating system</i>
<i>July 31, 2021</i>	<i>Contract Completion</i>
OPTIONAL CONTRACT EXTENSIONS (if in the best interests of CVRPC)	
October 31, 2021	FY21 audit preparation and participation
<i>June 30, 2023</i>	<i>Training of CVRPC finance staff should they be hired</i>

Questions in writing may be sent via email to chartrand@cvregion.com. Contractors may request a “tour” of CVRPC’s existing financial system by appointment.

Proposals must be clearly marked “Accounting Services Proposal” and delivered via email to Nancy Chartrand, Office Manager - chartrand@cvregion.com.

Proposals received after the submittal deadline will not be considered.

Qualified disadvantaged (DBE) and women-owned (WBE) businesses are encouraged to submit proposals. Proposers are required to document whether the individual is a DBE or WBE. CVRPC, in accordance with the provisions of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (78 Stat. 252, 42 U.S.C §§ 2000b to 2000b-4) and the Regulations, hereby notifies all bidders that it will affirmatively ensure that any contract entered into pursuant to this advertisement, will afford disadvantaged business enterprises full and fair opportunity to submit bids in response to this invitation and will not be discriminated against on the grounds of race, color, or national origin in consideration for an award.

II. BACKGROUND

The Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission (CVRPC) works to assist its 23 member municipalities in providing effective local government and to work cooperatively with them to address regional issues. As one of eleven regional planning commissions enabled through 24 V.S.A. §4341, CVRPC is a political subdivision of the State. As such, it is a tax exempt organization.

CVRPC's budget was \$1.2 million for FY19; it is projected to be \$1.4 million for FY20. CVRPC's total budget flexes annually based on the number and amount of contracts. CVRPC budget ranges from \$800,000 to \$1.7 million annually. Larger budgets are reflective of contractor projects (pass through monies). CVRPC's fiscal year is July 1 through June 30.

CVRPC operates through annual appropriations from its 23 member municipalities, an annual legislative grant through the Agency of Commerce and Community Development, and 20-30 municipal, state, federal, and private agreements for planning and project development and implementation services. CVRPC's financial system was substantially revised in FY17-18. The primarily manual system was modified into a primarily automated system using QuickBooks Pro 2017. An upgrade to QuickBooks Pro 2020 is anticipated in spring 2020. Excel spreadsheets are used for wage/benefit job allocations, Paid Time Off tracking, etc.

CVRPC's financial system uses job codes to track revenues and expense for each agreement. Agreements may interrelate and multiple agreements may fund a single product. Some agreements require cash, cash-in-kind, or in-kind match. CVRPC's financial system tracks cash and cash-in-kind match. In-kind match is tracked using excel spreadsheets.

CVRPC also provides specific accounting services to two other organizations: the Wrightsville Beach Recreation District (full accounting services) and the Cross Vermont Trail Association (payroll, benefits, payroll taxes, associated reporting). Services provided through this contract will include services for those organizations. CVRPC maintains separate QuickBooks files for both organizations. In summary:

- The Recreation District completes 100-200 transactions per year. Reconciling credit account receipts and payroll requires more substantial effort. This District has one full time employee and approximately seven seasonal employees.

- Cross Vermont Trail Association has one employee and may have seasonal interns. Payroll is completed monthly. Wages are hourly; hours vary from 0-40 hours per week.

The cost of services provided to these organizations must be tracked separately on the contractor's invoices to CVRPC.

CVRPC acts as fiscal agent for Local Emergency Management Committee 5 (LEPC). Based on discussions with Vermont Emergency Management, which provides operational grants to the LEPC, CVRPC tracks the LEPC's funds as a job within CVRPC's financial system. The LEPC does not have any employees. Rather, CVRPC provides staff services through an administrative agreement with the LEPC.

CVRPC contracts for annual audit services. CVRPC's current auditor is Batchelder Associates. This contract ends with preparation of the FY21 audit. Audits meet 2 CFR Part 200 and other applicable rules and laws. Contractors providing accounting services through this contract will not be eligible to provide audit services to CVRPC for at least three years after close of this contract to avoid conflict of interest or the appearance thereof.

Audited financials are used to produce an indirect cost proposal in accordance with 2 CFR Part 200 and a Memorandum of Understanding between the Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) and Vermont's 11 Regional Planning Commissions. The resulting indirect rate allows for recapture of administrative expenses in subsequent years. Services under this contract include development of the indirect cost proposal and negotiation of the final rate with VTrans.

CVRPC is seeking a new accounting firm because its current contractor is ending service early due to a change in its office capacity.

III. SCOPE OF WORK

CVRPC is requesting multiple required services as well as optional services that may be requested by CVRPC. The service period begins April 1, 2020 and is expected to extend through October 31, 2021. Two (2) additional one-year service extensions may be approved based on performance. Services during April 2020 primarily will be cross training on CVRPC's system with its current accounting services provider, Nicole Sancibrian, CPA, PLLC. The period of performance may be extended through October 31, 2023 for audit preparation and participation. CVRPC estimates contractors will work on average 24 hours per week to complete required services.

REQUIRED SERVICES

- 1) Perform Accounting Services. Typical services include, but are not limited to:
 - Payroll including tax and benefit payments and reporting. CVRPC issues payroll bi-weekly and uses direct deposit. CVRPC currently has 7 employees and 1 summer intern.

- Invoicing and record deposits (~10 monthly, 20 quarterly, and 10 product based periodically)
- Payables (~20-30 per month; CVRPC will code for appropriate jobs and items)
- Reconciling cash accounts (CVRPC does not have securities)
- Provide monthly financial statements and a monthly financial report for the Executive Director and Executive Committee
- Participate in monthly Executive Committee meetings as requested to report on finances; meetings are at 4pm on the Monday one week prior to the Board of Commissioners' meeting. The Board of Commissioners meets on the second Tuesday of each month.
- Update the financial system as needed to improve performance and to accommodate changing requirements
- Complete accounting and fiscal agent services for the outside organizations served by CVRPC
- Preparation and negotiation of the indirect cost proposal
- Work with CVRPC's Office Manager to:
 - identify where internal controls should be strengthened,
 - document modifications to internal controls and administrative procedures affected by accounting services, and
 - identify policies and procedures that CVRPC should develop or update
- Other duties as necessary

2) Prepare for and Participate in CVRPC's Annual Audit. Typical services include, but are not limited to:

- Assemble and prepare documents required by the auditor
- Verify and, if necessary, reconcile revenues and expenses
- Prepare schedule of federal expenditures
- Reconcile year end expenses and bank statements
- Reconcile payroll taxes with reporting
- Update equipment inventory
- Update depreciation schedule
- Prepare list of year-end accounts payable and accrued expenses
- Reconcile deferred grant revenue and refundable advances from funders
- Reconcile of net assets classifications
- Participate in audit field work and response to questions and requests from the auditor
- Complete other duties as necessary

3) Other Services (as requested by CVRPC)

- Advise CVRPC on adapting and strengthening internal controls.
- Provide input into documentation of administrative procedures as they relate to financial system management.
- Assist CVRPC in hiring financial staff if CVRPC elects to do so at the conclusion of this contract. This would include advising CVRPC on skills and knowledge required, reviewing

resumes, participating in interviews, and other tasks requested by CVRPC. The decision on which candidate to hire will be made by CVRPC.

- As appropriate, train CVRPC financial staff to operate the financial system successfully.
- Insure the updated financial system is operating as intended if run by CVRPC staff for an additional one-year period beyond the advertised 3-year term of this contract.

The successful contractor will work with CVRPC's Office Manager. The Office Manager will complete financial filing, track Paid Time Office from information in QuickBooks, enter payables, enter credit card transactions, mail payments, and complete other clerical work associated with finance. The full scope of the Office Manager's assistance will be negotiated between CVRPC and the successful contractor.

PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENTS

Milestones

Working with CVRPC's Executive Director and Secretary/Treasurer,

- prepare invoices for grants and agreements monthly or as otherwise required by specific grants, agreements, and contracts.
- pay bills on time and no less than bi-weekly.
- prepare monthly financial statements with an accompanying written report for the Executive Committee at least one week prior to the Committee's monthly meeting.
- complete training with CVRPC's current service provider beginning April 15, 2020.
- perform all accounting services beginning May 15, 2020.
- prepare for the audit by September 15th of each year. Participate in the audit, which is generally scheduled for mid-September through early October each year. CVRPC's audit must be completed and submitted to agencies by November 30th annually.
- develop CVRPC's indirect cost proposal for review and signature by the Executive Director and submittal to the Vermont Agency of Transportation by December 31st annually.

Requirements

The majority of work must be performed at the CVRPC office to facilitate interaction with staff. Some remote work may be permitted. CVRPC anticipates this work will require a minimum average of 24 hours of services weekly with the majority of work occurring in the second and third weeks of the month.

CVRPC's financial information system must meet requirements in 2 CFR Part 200, requirements for State of Vermont grantees and contractors, other applicable laws and requirements, and best management practices.

IV. PROPOSALS

CONTENTS & SUBMISSION

Scope of Services

Proposals should describe how the contractor intends to carry out the services described, including transitioning services from the current provider and the firm's expectations of and process for communicating with CVRPC. It should also highlight any changes to the scope of work described in Section III of this RFP recommended by the contractor.

Proposals must provide details on anticipated work at the CVRPC office versus remote work hours, describe the type of work to be performed remotely, describe anticipated work times (days of the week and hours work will be performed), and other information that may affect CVRPC's interaction with the contractor.

Technical Qualifications

- 1) A description of the firm, including addresses of all offices proposed for involvement in this project, structure of the firm, size of the firm, number of years the firm has been in business, and the firm's experience with state and federal grants.
- 2) A statement of the firm's financial stability and ability to complete all services.
- 3) A list of people who will work on the contract, including names, education, professional licenses, registrations or certifications, relevant experience (resumes are acceptable), and role in the contract. CVRPC must affirm use of any staff not identified in the proposal to insure staff qualifications are similar to staff proposed through the contractor's proposal.
- 4) Examples of relevant past experience. Contractors demonstrating relevant experience with job cost accounting, payroll services, state and federal grant requirements especially 2 CFR Part 200, and indirect cost proposal preparation will be highly competitive.
- 5) A minimum of three references. The references should include service description, contact person, phone number, and address of reference at minimum. References should demonstrate the experience of the staff proposed to work under the CVRPC contract. CVRPC reserves the right to check references beyond those provided by the contractor. The quality and relevance of references as it relates to services required under this RFP will be considered more competitive than an excess of references.
- 6) Proof of insurance. The selected contractor will be required to add CVRPC and its officers and employees as an additional insured for services performed.

Cost Proposal

Proposals must provide hourly rates with estimated hours by staff and projected expenses. This is a one-year contract with the potential for two (2) one-year extensions (total of 3 years). It is expected that if the selected firm performs satisfactorily, it will be engaged to continue the scope of work for each of the succeeding two (2) years. Therefore, rates in the proposal should reflect a 3-year contract period.

Submission Requirements

Proposals must be submitted electronically. Materials should be addressed to:

Bonnie Waninger, Executive Director
Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission
29 Main Street, Suite 4
Montpelier, VT 05602

The CVRPC assumes no responsibility and no liability for costs incurred relevant to the preparation and submission of the proposal or any other costs prior to issuance of a contract.

Proposals received after due date and time will not be considered.

Upon submission, all proposals become the property of the CVRPC. The expense of preparing, submitting, and presenting a proposal is the sole responsibility of the contractor. The CVRPC retains the right to reject any and all proposals received, to interview or not interview any or all firms responding to this RFP prior to selection, to negotiate with any qualified source, or to cancel in part or in its entirety this RFP if it determines such action to be in the best interest of the CVRPC or that of eligible parties. Reasons for cancellation or rejection will be provided to all registered vendors in writing. This solicitation in no way obligates the CVRPC to award a contract.

EVALUATION

Proposals will be evaluated on the following criteria:

1. Completeness and responsiveness of submission.
2. Scope of Work Format and Contents (10%):
 - a. Is the proposal written in concise language understandable to a non-technical audience?
 - b. Is the proposal well organized and easily navigable?
3. Qualifications (60%): To what degree:
 - a. do the personnel to be assigned to this project have the necessary qualifications to conduct this work?
 - b. do the personnel to be assigned to this project have experience with state and federal grants, job cost accounting, indirect rate cost proposal development, and financial management?
 - c. does the contractor have a proven record of successful completion of similar work within time and budget constraints?
 - d. are communication skills responsive to the audience that will be served?
 - e. do the assigned staff demonstrate success working together with each other as a team unit if multiple staff will be used to serve this contract?
4. Cost Proposal (10%):
 - a. Is the cost proposal thorough and clearly linked to the proposed scope of services?
 - b. Are rates and costs reflective of an efficient level of effort necessary to complete the task, compensation reflective of level of expertise, materials appropriate to the task and expectations of quality, and overall reasonable costs as accepted in the industry?

5. References (20%):

- a. Which types of services has the contractor provided to the reference?
- b. How satisfied was the reference with the contractor's interactions with it?
- c. How satisfied was the reference with the contractor's technical expertise, ability to meet deadlines and budgets, reporting, communication, and overall value and quality of work?
- d. How did the contractor demonstrate value-added expertise?
- e. Was the reference satisfied with how the contractor dealt with problems that arose? Give an example.
- f. What, if any, challenges did the reference experience with the contractor?
- g. How does this contractor compare with others the reference has worked with?
- h. Would the reference recommend the contractor for providing the described Scope of Services and desired qualifications?

Proposals will be evaluated by a selection committee consisting of the CVRPC Executive Director, CVRPC Office Manager, and CVRPC Chair and/or Secretary/Treasurer.

If any changes are made to this RFP, an addendum will be issued to contractors expressing interest and providing CVRPC with contact information. Alternative delivery methods may be arranged by request. A contractor may correct, modify, or withdraw a response to this RFP via written notice received by CVRPC prior to the submission deadline. Modifications must be submitted electronically and clearly labeled "Modification No. ___". Each modification must be numbered in sequence, and must reference the original RFP.

After the opening of responses to this RFP, a contractor may not change any provision of the response in a manner prejudicial to the interests of CVRPC or fair competition. If a mistake and the intended correct wording are clearly evident on the face of the response document, the mistake will be corrected to reflect the intended correct meaning and the contractor will be notified in writing. Contractors may not withdraw responses to this RFP so corrected. A contractor may withdraw an opened response to this RFP if a mistake is clearly evident on the face of the response document, but the intended correct wording is not similarly evident.

CVRPC reserves the right to seek clarification of any statement submitted, conduct interviews with contractors, and to select a contractor that is best able to address the services requested and promote the public interest.

CVRPC reserves the right to examine all aspects of responses submitted, tangible and intangible. CVRPC reserves the right to withdraw this Request for Proposals, and/or to advertise for new submissions at any time if it is in the best interest of the CVRPC to do so. A contract will be awarded as deemed to be in the best interest of the CVRPC.

Pursuant to State of Vermont Laws, anyone in any matter relative to the procurement of services who intentionally makes a material statement that is false, omits or conceals a material fact in a written statement, submits or invites reliance on a material writing that is false, submits or invites reliance on a sample or other object that is misleading, or uses any trick, scheme or device that is misleading in a material respect will be subject to sanction pursuant to the laws of the State of Vermont.

IV. STANDARDS AND DELIVERABLES

1. Except for appendices, all reports are to:
 - a. be presented for ease of readability by the average citizen;
 - b. include charts, graphs and other graphics as appropriate;
 - c. include executive summaries or abstracts suitable for broad distribution;
 - d. include a glossary of technical terms, and a list of references or citations for all sources of data and information.
3. All documents must be provided in digital form (Microsoft Office format for report text and PDF format for full report). Images (photos, maps, drawings, graphics, etc.) shall be provided as separate files for use by CVRPC.
4. All written reports must be provided double-sided. The use of recycled paper is strongly encouraged.
5. Copies of all reports and documents, including drafts, should be provided to CVRPC *no less than one week prior* to any scheduled review or discussion.
6. All data, databases, reports, programs and materials, in digital and hard copy formats, created under this project shall become the property of the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission.

V. CONTRACTING PROVISIONS

Contract Completion

Performance under the scope of work must be completed by the dates indicated in Section I.

Payment

The amount and timing of payments will be determined during contract negotiations. Requests for payments shall be made directly to the CVRPC, and payments made shall be 100 percent of the amount requested and approved. CVRPC anticipates making payments within 30 days of invoicing.

Ownership of Material

All rights, titles to and ownership of the data, material, and documentation resulting from this contract project and/or prepared for the CVRPC pursuant to a contract between CVRPC and the selected contractor shall remain with the CVRPC.

Compliance with State and Federal Laws

All contractors must comply with any and all applicable laws, statutes, ordinances, rules, regulations, and/or requirements of federal, state, and local governments and agencies thereof, which relate to or in any manner affect the performance of this agreement. CVRPC receives funding from numerous state and federal agencies. Those requirements imposed upon the CVRPC as a recipient or subrecipient of federal funds are thereby passed along to the contractor and any subcontractors, and those rights reserved by the state or federal government are likewise reserved by the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission.

All contractors and any subcontractors must carry adequate insurance coverage and must affirm being an equal opportunity employer. Contractor shall comply with the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (See Primer for Small Business at <https://www.ada.gov/ta-pubs-pg2.htm>).

It is the policy of the CVRPC that Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE) have the opportunity to participate to the maximum extent feasible in procurement and contracting.

If the contractor is a natural person, not a corporation or partnership, the contractor states that, as of the date the contract is signed, he/she:

- a. is not under any obligation to pay child support; or
- b. is under such an obligation and is in good standing with respect to that obligation; or
- c. has agreed to a payment plan with the Vermont Office of Child Support Services and is in full compliance with that plan.

The contractor makes this statement with regard to support owed to any and all children residing in Vermont. If the contractor is a resident of Vermont, contractor makes this statement with regard to support owed to any and all children residing in any other state or territory of the United States.

**The Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission
is an Equal Opportunity Employer.**