

SE-210

# INVITATION FOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

**AGENCY/OWNER:** SC Rural Infrastructure Authority

**PROJECT NAME:** RIA Water and Sewer Sustainability Study

**PROJECT NUMBER:** P45-N001-MJ

**PROJECT LOCATION:** Statewide

**DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT / PROFESSIONAL SERVICES:** A study of water and sewer system sustainability statewide, to include (1) an assessment of issues and conditions, (2) development of a statewide sustainability strategy, and (3) a summit/workshop. Pre-Submittal Conference will be held via video conference on Wednesday, October 28, 2020 at 10:00 AM. For more information, please go to: <https://ria.sc.gov/news/ria-seeks-proposals-for-a-sustainability-study/>

**RESUME DEADLINE DATE:** 11/12/2020 **TIME:** 3:00 PM **NUMBER OF COPIES:** 10 hard copies + 1 electronic (flash drive)

**ANTICIPATED PROJECT DELIVERY METHOD:** Design-Bid-Build  CM-R  N/A

**AGENCY PROJECT COORDINATOR:** Clarissa Belton, CPPB, CPM

**EMAIL:** [cbelton@sccommerce.com](mailto:cbelton@sccommerce.com)

**TELEPHONE:** 803-737-0416

The Agency/Owner requests qualifications from firms interested in providing professional services for the project listed above. Any questions concerning this solicitation must be addressed to the Agency Project Coordinator listed above.

**RESUME DELIVERY ADDRESSES:**

**HAND-DELIVERY:**

**Attn:** Clarissa Belton, SC Department of Commerce  
1201 Main Street, Suite 1600  
Columbia, SC 29201

**MAIL SERVICE:**

**Attn:** Clarissa Belton, SC Department of Commerce  
1201 Main Street, Suite 1600  
Columbia, SC 29201

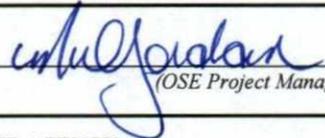
**DESCRIPTION OF PROFESSIONAL SERVICES ANTICIPATED FOR PROJECT:** Firm and any required subcontractors to perform study of water and sewer system sustainability.

**OTHER SPECIAL QUALIFICATIONS REQUIRED:** \_\_\_\_\_ N/A

**ANTICIPATED CONSTRUCTION COST RANGE:** \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to \$ \_\_\_\_\_ N/A

**• INTERESTED FIRMS SHOULD SUBMIT THE FOLLOWING:**

1. A Current STANDARD FEDERAL FORM 330;
  2. The Name and Contact Information, including Email, of a Primary Contact;
  3. A Certification stating whether the Firm is a Resident of South Carolina (See SC Code §11-35-3215); and
  4. Response to Selection Criteria set forth in SC Code §11-35-3220.
- **PUBLIC NOTICES:** All notices (Notice of Meetings; Notification of Selection for Interviews; and Notification of Selection for Contract Negotiation) shall be posted at the following location: 1201 Main Street, Suite 1600, Columbia, SC 29201
  - **LICENSURE:** To be considered for selection, persons or firms must be properly licensed in accordance with the requirements of Title 40 of the SC Code of Laws, as amended, at the time of resume submission.
  - To submit confidential information, see <https://procurement.sc.gov/construction/ose-confidential>.
  - In accordance with the South Carolina Green Purchasing Initiative, submittals cannot exceed 20 pages, front and back, including covers, which must be soft – no hard notebooks. The Standard Federal Form 330 is not included in this page count.
  - All written communications with parties submitting information will be via email.
  - Agency will accept submittals via email above: YES  NO
  - Any actual bidder, offeror, contractor or subcontractor who is aggrieved in connection with this solicitation or the intended award or award of a contract under this solicitation may protest to the State Engineer in accordance with § 11-35-4210 at: CPO, Office of State Engineer, 1201 Main Street, Suite 600, Columbia, SC 29201. EMAIL: [protest-ose@mmo.sc.gov](mailto:protest-ose@mmo.sc.gov)

**APPROVED BY:**  (OSE Project Manager)

**DATE:** 10/9/2020

**INSTRUCTIONS TO THE AGENCY:**

1. Submit the completed SE-210 to the OSE Project Manager in MS Word format.
2. OSE Project Manager will review and send approved copy to SCBO and the Agency.

# **RFQ for RIA Water and Sewer Sustainability Study**

## **SECTION 1: GENERAL SCOPE**

### **Overview:**

The SC Rural Infrastructure Authority (RIA) is seeking proposals for a firm to conduct a multidisciplinary study of water and sewer system sustainability issues statewide. The project is being funded, in part, by a grant from the Economic Development Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce (Federal Award ID Number 04-69-07461) and any applicable federal requirements apply.

The study will inventory the state's water and sewer systems, identify the range of needs and challenges faced by large and small systems, and explore alternative solutions for addressing long-term sustainability. To be sustainable, water and sewer systems must operate as an enterprise where revenues are sufficient to cover operating and maintenance costs as well as make necessary capital improvements and maintain a reserve for emergencies. When this is not feasible, alternatives should be explored.

The project will produce a statewide infrastructure assessment to include several components: technical, managerial, operational and financial needs of public water and sewer systems in South Carolina. The study will identify the common elements needed for sustainability (asset inventory, mapping and life cycle analysis; operational and management plans; regulatory compliance; fiscal plans and rate setting; capital improvement plans; etc.) and identify existing or new tools for systems to address areas of concern as well as alternative solutions, including regional and cooperative approaches, where appropriate. The study will also provide a statewide strategy for funding partners and policymakers to identify systems with viability concerns and assist them. The last statewide infrastructure plan was developed in 2001. The new study will utilize and build upon this historical data and other information to determine trends and needs for the future.

As part of this planning effort, a statewide summit will be held to gather input from stakeholders, explore case studies and alternative approaches and present preliminary findings of the assessment. Following the input gathered at the summit, a final report will be developed.

RIA has created a Sustainability Advisory Committee to provide guidance to the agency during this project. RIA will administer this advisory committee and communicate useful information to the successful Firm. RIA may require the successful Firm to give occasional progress reports directly to the advisory committee.

The ultimate goal is to build partnerships to increase water and sewer system capacity and sustainability statewide and put communities in a position to compete for economic development opportunities and to succeed.

### **Background:**

RIA provides financing for infrastructure projects statewide. The agency has made over 364 grants worth more than \$148 million since 2013. RIA co-administers the State Revolving Fund Program with DHEC to provide low-cost loans for infrastructure improvements. DHEC handles the federal program requirements and technical aspects of SRF projects while RIA manages the financial requirements including credit analyses, loan agreements and repayments. Annually the agency is responsible for over \$100 million in infrastructure financing – including grants and loans. RIA programs are designed to address one or more of the following objectives:

- Increase community sustainability by helping to maintain reliable and affordable infrastructure;
- Improve the quality of life by addressing public health, environmental and regulatory concerns; and
- Create opportunities for economic impact by building the infrastructure capacity to support economic development.

In addition to offering financial assistance, RIA works with other public infrastructure funders in the state to:

- Market available resources;
- Meet with prospective applicants on potential projects;
- Address funding gaps;
- Coordinate jointly funded projects;
- Identify solutions to infrastructure challenges; and
- Promote sustainability.

Many communities and public systems cannot properly operate and maintain the water and sewer facilities that serve residents and businesses because they lack sufficient resources. Budgets are stretched thin to cover necessary repairs and capital improvements. Some communities have limited revenues to address problems beyond a “band-aid” approach. A delay in making the required investments can result in higher costs, business and service disruptions as well as increased health and environmental risks.

SC has also been affected by multiple natural disasters from 2015-2019. These disasters have had a significant impact on water and sewer systems. Addressing issues created by the disasters has required resources beyond what local budgets can provide and caused delays in making other needed capital investments.

Thus, access to reliable and affordable infrastructure serves as an important quality of life concern for protecting public health, improving environmental quality and encouraging economic opportunities. Given the extensive problem of aging infrastructure in our state, significant investments will be needed to ensure that there is adequate capacity for future economic growth.

## **SECTION 2: SPECIFICATIONS**

### **Scope of Work and Deliverables:**

The scope of work includes: a statewide assessment of water and sewer system sustainability issues and identification of tools to address areas of concern; a statewide sustainability strategy for assistance to systems with sustainability concerns; and a summit/workshop to seek feedback from stakeholders. Upon preliminary completion of the assessment and strategy, a summit will be held to solicit input that will be used to finalize the sustainability strategy. The assessment, strategy, and a summary of the results of the summit will be contained in a report to be published by RIA upon completion of the contract. RIA will provide a staff contact who will monitor progress and facilitate coordination with stakeholders and other partners.

RIA anticipates a project budget of \$250,000-\$300,000. Upon award of the contract, RIA will schedule a meeting with firm management and project staff to discuss the project. Upon completion of that meeting, the firm can submit an invoice for the first 10% of the overall contract.

Specific deliverables are as follows:

#### **1. Statewide Assessment**

A statewide water and sewer system assessment will include the following tasks/topics:

- Using currently available data, inventory SC water and sewer systems by size, type, location and other relevant factors, making note of any unusual characteristics or regional differences within the state;
- Assess the socio-economic conditions and regulatory environment in which such systems operate as well as relevant trends that could impact water and sewer needs;
- Provide a broad overview of the magnitude of current and future water and sewer needs in the state using existing data and estimates;
- Identify the key components and conditions required for systems to be sustainable including technical, financial, operational and management factors;
- Identify the most common factors that cause viability concerns and indicators that might predict future sustainability problems. Factors to consider include age and remaining useful life of infrastructure, compliance issues, expertise/training of staff, revenues and expenditures, debt, user rates and fees and financial transfers between the utility and other funds;
- Develop guidance on assessing if rates are sufficient and implementing rate adjustments;
- Identify how systems can address affordability issues;
- Summarize tools and resources currently available to assist systems with viability concerns and assess the usefulness of such resources; and
- Identify a range of alternative solutions to be considered to address sustainability issues and a general assessment of the effectiveness and barriers to implementation of such alternatives. These alternatives must include consideration of system consolidation or regional and cooperative partnerships and technological advances as well as a discussion of relevant legal, financial, and logistical issues including state law as it relates to the types of partnerships.

To prepare the assessment, the firm shall use any existing or historical infrastructure plans, data from sources including the US Environmental Protection Agency, the SC Department of Health and Environmental Control, surveys or information provided by individual systems, and any other sources deemed relevant. At least 90 days prior to the summit (see Item 3), the selected firm will provide RIA with an electronic draft assessment that addresses the issues outlined above. The firm will also provide RIA and the Sustainability Advisory Committee with an oral summary, in-person or by video conference, of the findings. Only after this action can the firm submit an invoice for an additional 25% of the overall contract for a running total of 35%. RIA will provide feedback that the firm will incorporate into the final assessment, which will be delivered as part of the final report (see Items 5-6).

#### **2. State Strategy for Sustainability**

Using the information gathered during the statewide assessment, develop a strategy encompassing the items outlined below.

- Identify specific metrics, both quantitative and qualitative, that are associated with potential sustainability problems within an individual system. Develop a set of indicators and benchmarks that can be used to differentiate between multiple levels of concern (e.g., systems in crisis needing immediate assistance vs. those that might face serious issues within a number of years).
- Outline a protocol for state infrastructure partners and funders to collaborate to assist such systems in moving toward sustainability for the long-term, with differentiated strategies for different types of situations. Outline strategies for overcoming implementation challenges that may exist (e.g., lack of awareness about resources that exist, resistance to relinquishing local control, etc.)
- Identify types of resources required to provide such assistance and compare with the resources that currently exist.
- Develop tools, as appropriate, to provide assistance to systems in need.
- Identify changes to current funding structures, laws and policies that could lead to greater sustainability.

At least 30 days prior to the summit (see Item 3), the selected firm will provide RIA with an electronic draft strategy that addresses the issues outlined above. The firm will also provide RIA and the Sustainability Advisory Committee with an oral summary, in-person or by video conference, of the strategy. Only after this action can the firm submit an invoice an additional 25% of the overall contract for a running total of 60%. RIA will provide feedback that the firm will incorporate into the final strategy, which will be delivered as part of the final report (see Items 5-6).

### **3. Sustainability Summit/Workshop**

Hold a full-day summit in September or October 2021 to involve stakeholders, partners and leadership, with up to 300 participants.

The selected firm will work with RIA to develop the summit content, structure, and presenters. RIA must approve the date, time and place of the summit. RIA will be responsible for marketing the summit and inviting participants and RIA staff will assist with facilitation of sessions during the summit. The selected firm will be responsible for all other aspects of the workshop including summit logistics and all costs to include venue, food, online access, speakers' travel reimbursement, etc. The event must be free to participants.

If possible, the summit will be held in person in/near Columbia, SC and include lunch. The in-person summit must include an option to view or participate in some or all sessions virtually for those who are unable to attend. If COVID-19 precautions make an in-person event impossible or imprudent, the summit will be fully virtual. Proposals must address both options, and RIA will approve the final decision on whether the workshop will be in person or fully virtual.

The summit must accomplish the following:

- Present case studies of systems that have faced and overcome challenges to sustainability with a variety of solutions.
- Present the findings of the statewide assessment (see Item 1).
- Seek input from participants on the long-term needs of water and sewer systems.
- Seek input on the challenges faced by systems that contribute to long-term sustainability.
- Seek input on alternative solutions and assistance needs.
- Provide opportunities for stakeholders and other interested parties to build long-term partnerships.

Only after this action is accepted can the firm submit an invoice for an additional 25% of the overall contract for a running total of 85%.

### **4. Progress Updates**

Provide a monthly progress update via email, phone, video conference, or in person to RIA for the duration of the contract. At RIA's request, monthly progress updates will be provided directly to RIA's Sustainability Advisory Committee at scheduled meetings.

### **5. Draft Final Report**

No later than November 15, 2021, provide RIA with a draft report containing the assessment (see Item 1), the sustainability strategy (see Item 2), and a summary of the results of the summit (see Item 3). The report must include an executive summary or other such brief document/section that can be easily and widely distributed. It must also contain the following disclaimer:

*This report was prepared by the SC Rural Infrastructure Authority using Federal funds under award 04-69-07461 from the Economic Development Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce. The statements, findings, conclusions, and recommendations are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Economic Development Administration or the U.S. Department of Commerce.*

The draft must be delivered electronically to RIA for review. Only after this action is accepted can the firm submit an invoice for an additional 10% of the overall contract for a running total of 95%. RIA will review and provide comments that the firm will use to finalize the report (see Item 6).

**6. Final Report**

By December 15, 2021, provide the final report to RIA as an InDesign file ready for professional printing. RIA plans to print and distribute hard copies of the report and publish it electronically on the agency's website. Only after this action is accepted can the firm submit an invoice for the remaining 5% of the overall contract.

**SECTION 3: SUBMITTAL INFORMATION**

Submittal shall include, at a minimum, information required in the solicitation, responses to all selection criteria required by the SC Consolidated Procurement Code (found in Chapter 4 of the OSE Manual) and the following:

1. Firm's staffing proposal for this project, including a list of all subcontractors to be used at any stage of the project with a description of their responsibilities.
2. Documentation of technical and engineering qualifications related to water and sewer utilities within the firm or planned subcontractor(s);
3. Documentation of financial qualifications including knowledge of sound business and management practices for water and sewer systems within the firm or planned subcontractor(s).
4. Firm's plan to address each component of the scope of work and proposed timeline.
5. List of similar infrastructure studies completed by the firm in the past five (5) years including any with a statewide or regional focus. Include the Executive Summary of each study and staff involved in each.
6. List of references for any similar projects completed by the firm in the past five (5) years.

**SECTION 4: PRE-SUBMITTAL CONFERENCE**

The State will conduct a Non-Mandatory Pre-Submittal conference as part of this process to provide additional project information and expound upon potential questions. This conference will be held on Wednesday, October 28, 2020 at 10:00 AM via video conference. Although attendance is not mandatory, all interested firms are strongly encouraged to attend. Firms interested must contact Clarissa Belton at [cbelton@sccommerce.com](mailto:cbelton@sccommerce.com) to receive an invitation to the meeting.

Any questions regarding this project must be submitted in writing (email) no later than 4:00 PM on Wednesday, October 21<sup>st</sup>. Questions should be emailed to the Agency Coordinator, Clarissa Belton. All submitted questions will be addressed at the Pre-Submittal conference.