

**KENT COUNTY WATER AUTHORITY
REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
DESIGN, PRINTING AND MAILING SERVICES FOR WATER BILLS AND NOTICES**

ARTICLE 1. GENERAL:

1.1 PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The Kent County Water Authority is requesting proposals from qualified design and printing vendors to convert raw data from Conduent Government Systems, our financial and billing system necessary for the design, printing and mailing services for Kent County Water Authority monthly bills, delinquent and shut off notices. The vendor will be required to print, insert, meter and mail via first class postage completed statements, notices and return envelopes. The standard mailing will consist of One #10 Outbound Envelope, One Courtesy Reply Envelope, (1) one 8.5” x 11” invoice with a perforation at bottom for tear off remittance. Monthly mailings include approximately 9,000 water bills, 2,200 delinquent notices, 1,400 shut off notices, in addition quarterly mailings include 120 fire line bills, 200 hydrant bills. Also, to design and provide a shut off pdf file for Kent County Water Authority to use in-house for termination of services. This represents approximately 13,000 notices per month comprised of 26,000 two sided printed images. In addition, Kent County Water Authority may at times include informational inserts, such as a water quality report, flyers or other communications with customers. The selected provider shall provide insert services as a separate payment item. A complete detailed description can be found in the Requests for Proposal documents.

1.2 The Scope of Service is intended to last for a one-year duration. The Kent County Water Authority will have the option of extending this agreement to include up to two additional years of printing and mailing services.

ARTICLE 2. QUALIFICATIONS OF PROPOSER:

2.1 To be considered, firms must be able to demonstrate recent experience in Design, Printing and Mailing Services for Bills and Notices for government agencies, a utility, business or municipality comparable in size to the Kent County Water Authority.

2.2 Proposers shall provide written information and references to assist the Kent County Water Authority in determining if they are qualified to perform the work. All proposers shall submit to Kent County Water Authority written evidence of Design, Printing and Mailing Services for Bills and Notices. The investigation of a proposer will seek to determine whether the organization is adequate in size, financially sound and has sufficient personnel in the disciplines required to assure Kent County Water Authority that they can complete the assignment ordered by the Kent County Water Authority.

2.3 Proposers shall provide a brief financial and corporate resource statement to assist in determining whether the organization is adequate in size, has sufficient personnel and adequate financial resources to assure Kent County Water Authority that they can complete

all assignments ordered by the Kent County Water Authority.

- 2.4 In evaluating proposals, Kent County Water Authority will consider the qualifications of only those proposer proposals that are in compliance with the prescribed requirements of the Request for Proposal documents and invitation.
- 2.5 Kent County Water Authority reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, or parts thereof, if the evidence submitted by, or the investigation of, such proposer fails to satisfy Kent County Water Authority that such proposer is properly qualified to carry out the obligations of the Request for Proposal and any and all assignments from the Kent County Water Authority.
- 2.6 No proposer may be considered if they are indebted to the Kent County Water Authority for any unresolved issues regarding unpaid invoices issued by the Kent County Water Authority, or services and materials owed to the Kent County Water Authority.
- 2.7 Each and every proposer shall provide written evidence, at the time of the proposal submission and attached thereto, that they have or will acquire, prior to execution of the work or letter of engagement to the Kent County Water Authority, malpractice, errors and omissions insurance for protection of any and all claims arising out of service to Kent County Water Authority in an amount not less than \$1,000,000 per claim or occurrence with an aggregate amount not less than \$2,000,000.
 - 2.7.1 Cost of insurance shall not be billable or included in rates proposed to the Kent County Water Authority. Failure to provide written evidence will be grounds for rejection of proposal.
- 2.8 Each proposer shall have a minimum of five years of experience in Design, Printing and Mailing Services for Bills and Notices.

ARTICLE 3. COPIES REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL DOCUMENTS:

- 3.1 Complete sets of Request for Proposal Documents shall be used in preparing the proposals. Kent County Water Authority assumes no responsibility for errors or misinterpretations resulting from the use of incomplete sets of Request for Proposal Documents.
- 3.2 Kent County Water Authority, in making copies of Request for Proposal Documents available, do so only for the purpose of obtaining proposals for printing and mailing systems, and do not confer a license or grant for any other use.

ARTICLE 4. EXAMINATION OF REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL DOCUMENTS:

- 4.1 Before submitting a proposal, each proposer must examine the Request for Proposal Documents thoroughly, and familiarize themselves with federal, state and local laws as well as the Kent County Water Authority Procurement procedures that govern this solicitation.

- 4.2 The submission of a proposal will constitute incontrovertible representation by the proposer that they have complied with every requirement of this Request for Proposal and all documents contained herein.

ARTICLE 5. INTERPRETATIONS:

- 5.1 All questions about the meaning or intent of the Request for Proposal Documents shall be received in writing by Kent County Water Authority at the pre-proposal conference.
- 5.2 Written clarifications or interpretations will be issued, if requested by Addenda, not later than four (4) calendar days before the proposal opening date. Only questions answered by formal written Addenda will be binding. Oral and other clarifications or interpretations will be without legal effect. Addenda will be mailed via certified mail, with return receipt requested, to all parties recorded as having received the Request for Proposal Documents.
- 5.3 Each proposer shall be responsible for determining that they have received all Addenda issued and so note in the proposal cover letter.

ARTICLE 6. PRE-PROPOSAL CONFERENCE:

- 6.1 A pre-proposal conference will be held as described in the advertisement for Request for Proposals to discuss project related concerns.
- 6.2 The pre-proposal conference is not mandatory for all proposers. Failure to attend will not negate the proposers' ability to submit a proposal for consideration.

ARTICLE 7. RECEIPT OF PROPOSALS:

- 7.1 Sealed proposals for services related to Design, Printing and Mailing of Bills and Notices will be received at the time and place indicated in the Request for Proposal Invitation.
- 7.2 Kent County Water Authority may consider informal any proposal not prepared and submitted in accordance with the provisions hereof.
- 7.3 Proposer are cautioned that it is the responsibility of each individual proposer to assure that their proposal is in the possession of the responsible official of the Kent County Water Authority or their designated alternate prior to the stated time and at the place of the proposal opening. Kent County Water Authority is not responsible for proposals delayed by mail and/or delivery services, of any nature.
- 7.4 All proposals shall be submitted in a sealed opaque envelope. Clearly indicate on the envelope jacket that it is a Proposal for Design, Printing and Mailing of Bills and Notices Services. Kent County Water Authority will not be responsible for any envelopes opened

that are not clearly marked. (If forwarded by mail, proposal shall be in a sealed outer envelope marked as described above and shall be enclosed in another "inner" envelope with the notation "PROPOSAL ENCLOSED" on the face.)

ARTICLE 8. MODIFICATION OF REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS:

- 8.1 Proposals may not be modified once they are accepted by the Kent County Water Authority office staff or designated alternate prior to opening. After opening of proposals, modifications will not be allowed.

ARTICLE 9. KENT COUNTY WATER AUTHORITY INVOLVEMENT DURING THE PROJECT:

- 9.1 It is clearly understood that the office staff personnel of the Kent County Water Authority will have limited involvement in the project. With the exception of providing content regarding company information and outlining the strategic goals of the Authority, the proposer is required to provide all field services, information gathering and all other appurtenant services to complete the requirements of the project.
- 9.2 Kent County Water Authority shall provide all existing information to the selected vendor for review from all available company sources and coordinated project meetings.
- 9.3 Kent County Water Authority will not provide any services for the project. The staff of the Kent County Water Authority will participate in project progress and informational meeting and provide informational content and related documents to facilitate the final product. The Executive Director/Chief Engineer will be available to review, in detail, all aspects of the project and the like and assist where necessary but, will provide no office work or design related services. Direction will be provided as needed. It is clearly understood that the vendor is responsible for the entire project.

ARTICLE 10. SCOPE OF WORK:

- 10.0 Vendor must provide programming and bill design services as required. The design should be able to accommodate the use of graphics, scannable bar codes of account and bill information and color where feasible.
- 10.1 Vendor must be able to assist the Kent County Water Authority in form design and development and make recommendations on cost savings.
- 10.2 Vendor must provide professional 8 ½"x11" laser quality monthly billing statements, notices which include a full horizontal perforation on bottom, and additional informational inserts as necessary, #10 envelope and return envelope, insert statements, return envelopes, and additional flyers where necessary into #10 envelope, meter mail, statements and notices via first class mail.

- 10.3 Vendor will be required to print, insert, meter postage, and mail via first class mail completed bills and notices within three days of receiving the data transmission. The vendor must guarantee this schedule.
- 10.4 Vendor must provide a means for secure data transmission from Muni-Link utility billing system and confirm receipt of the data.
- 10.5 Vendor must provide for Kent County Water Authority the ability to view and approve sample bills online before they're printed and mailed at no additional charge. Vendor must provide the Kent County Water Authority the ability to electronically approve sample billings and notices prior to commencement of printing. The vendor will provide electronic notification that samples and totals are ready for approval.
- 10.6 Vendor must provide a postage breakdown prior to mailing the bills.
- 10.7 Kent County Water Authority must have ability to modify personalized message on statements without assistance of vendor using highlighted or bold text when requested.
- 10.8 Bills, delinquent notices, shut off notices and in-house shut off pdf file must include a full horizontal perforation on the bottom for payment remittance. Payment remittance will include an optical character recognition (OCR) scan line to facilitate payment scanning at Kent County Water Authority.
- 10.9 Vendor must have the capability to include a bar chart displaying the customers' usage history.
- 10.10 Vendor must support bill inserts provided by Kent County Water Authority and provide insert printing services as well.
- 10.11 Vendor must provide electronic presorting services to maximize postal discounts and mail statements at lowest first-class rates.
- 10.12 Vendor must provide description of quality control and information assurance procedures to ensure integrity of customer data, security and accuracy.
- 10.13 Vendor must provide detailed training activities to the Authority staff regarding how to transmit data and retrieve copies of bills.
- 10.14 Vendor must be willing to provide at no cost parallel data processing for a month to Kent County Water Authority's satisfaction before official start of service.
- 10.15 Vendor must provide access to ten years historical statement data along with the ability of the Kent County Water Authority staff to immediately reprint statements.
- 10.16 Vendor must have a disaster recovery facility to process bills and statements if the suppliers'

main facility becomes inoperable. List locations and security and safety information on all facilities.

- 10.17 Vendor must be a full-service provider who is capable of all services requested with no subcontracting.
- 10.18 Vendor must provide a corrective action plan should an error occur.
- 10.19 Each respondent must develop and present in their proposal a detailed plan of operations in layman terms as necessary for the design and implementation for the Kent County Water Authority. The respondent's proposal must be detailed and clearly demonstrate a complete understanding of the project and deliverables. Clarity and ease of understanding of the content of the proposal is essential. A simple restatement of the Request for Proposal information will not be interpreted as a demonstration of such understanding. The vendor is solely responsible to ensure all requested information is addressed in the proposal submission.
- 10.20 Progress meeting schedule with timelines for each phase of the project.
- 10.21 Vendor must provide a copy of most recent statement on auditing standards (SAS) No. 70 signifying an in-depth audit of controls over information technology.

10.22 **DELIVERABLE**

10.22.1 Provide the Kent County Water Authority all design work and establish bill processing by January 1, 2021.

10.23 **MEETINGS**

10.23.1 Vendor shall attend all meetings necessary to complete the work.

ARTICLE 11. REQUIRED SUBMITTALS:

- 11.1 All items request in this article must be submitted bound in one volume, eight (8) copies of each. A maximum of 30 pages total.
 - 11.1.1 Each proposal shall adhere to the following format:
 1. Introductions and Executive Summary
 2. Company Profile
 3. Organizational Structure and Key Staff Résumés
 4. Experience and Reference Summary: emphasis on utility or municipal entity.
 5. Detail Presentation of technical approach, plan of operations and services to be provided.
 6. Detailed Project Schedule
 7. Fee Proposal as outlined below

- 11.2 A resume of the project manager to be designated as contact and project director for Kent County Water Authority with special emphasis on experience that might be considered germane to this Request for Proposal, in particular utility or municipal industry. Resumes of the staff who will perform the actual work as described in this Request For Proposal.
- 11.3 Disclosure statement detailing any potential conflicts of interest relating to the Kent County Water Authority and any and all previous or proposed clients.
- 11.4 Brief (5 pages or less) description of the firm and the divisions responsible for this type of work as requested by the Kent County Water Authority.
- 11.5 Description of current workload of the firm and/or the personnel to be assigned to this project and a description of the workload of the departments of the firm. Description shall include current, proposed, projected and ability to service Kent County Water Authority.
- 11.6 A complete listing of clients and assignments over the past 5 years for whom Design, Printing and Mailing Services for Bills and Notices have been performed. Please provide contact name, address, telephone number and web address link.
- 11.7 Any and all other specifically related qualifications as deemed essential and necessary for a comprehensive submission and review.
- 11.8 A schedule of the anticipated tasks and scope of service.
- 11.9 Registration to do business in Rhode Island in accordance with R. I. General Laws (as amended) Sections 7-1.1-99, 7-1.1 105, 7-1.1-106 (Applies to out of State corporations.)
- 11.10 All proposers shall provide a fee proposal broken down into tasks for the work required. A list of products to be delivered with an assigned cost shall also be included in the breakdown. A listing of anticipated reimbursable items and basis of payment, if any and all other items to be charged and the basis of those charges.
 - 11.10.1 Proposer must also provide a separate sheet indicating one-time upfront implementation, licensing fees and maintenance fees effective for one year from the date of engagement. Ongoing monthly production: receive files, audit totals, create print output, print insert and apply automated mail posting sorting for discount #10 envelope, customer reply envelope plain white 8 ½” x 11” invoice with micro-perforation, additional fees anticipated, qualified postal rate, any minimum billable amount for any cycle.
 - 11.10.2 Hourly rates for additional services such as: additional pages static and custom content management with administrative update, graphic work, custom programming and other services provided by the proposer. Fees shall include all incidentals.

- 11.11 Detailed explanation of no cost phone support and technical/programming services to repair defects found in the operation during the first year following implementation including minimum response time to commence investigation of the problem.

ARTICLE 12. SELECTION CRITERIA FOR INTERVIEW:

- 12.1 The Kent County Water Authority shall review proposals based on the following criteria: a minimum of three proposals (if sufficient #'s submitted) may be selected from the criteria below for interviews. Only those selected for interview, if the Authority so chooses, shall be eligible for selection to perform the services requested.
- 12.2 Competence and demonstrated knowledge experience, and professional qualifications necessary to perform the services as reflected by experience of the firm and individual consultant to perform the service. Demonstrated success working with comparable utilities that provide the greatest value for non-profit organizations, utilities or municipal entities is desirable but not a limiting requirement.
- 12.3 Ability to perform the services as reflected by the workload, experience and availability of adequate personnel; and quality of work as evidenced by successfully completed projects relevant to the project contemplated in this RFP.
- 12.4 Organization content of proposal, clear and concise nature of presentation, ability and demonstrated understanding and approach to performing the required work. Procedures proposed for use in evaluation of needs and completeness of technical plan of operations. Coherent application of techniques to capture the full intent of the contemplated project. Creativity in approach to completion of tasks will be desired.
- 12.5 Schedule with tasks, time of completion is critical and will be considered carefully for selection.
- 12.6 Fee proposal. Competitive pricing appropriate for the project that includes itemized costs.

ARTICLE 13. INTERVIEW AND FINAL SELECTION:

- 13.1 Upon completion of Article 12, those firms selected will be notified of the date and time for interviews, interview will be optional and determined by Kent County Water Authority. Interviews, if required, will be held directly with the Kent County Water Authority and each interviewed proposer will be given an opportunity for a 10-minute presentation and 20 minutes of response questions from the board.

- 13.2 The Kent County Water Authority reserves the right to award this proposal in whole or in part and reject any and all proposals. The Kent County Water Authority reserves the right to award this proposal without interviews and basing these decisions on Article 12 above or competitive negotiations. Under competitive negotiation the terms of service contract, the price of service, the method of delivery, and conditions of performance are negotiable. A negotiated contract may be awarded to the agency or firm that best meets the needs of the Authority at a reasonable price, not necessarily at the lowest price.

ARTICLE 14. ENGAGEMENT OF SERVICES:

- 14.1 Upon successful selection in Article 12 and/or 13, the Kent County Water Authority reserves the right to negotiate any and all parts to this proposal with the selected proposer prior to formalization of a letter of engagement for services.
- 14.2 In the event the successful proposer cannot fully and timely perform his contractual obligation and/or successfully negotiate the proposal with the Kent County Water Authority, the Kent County Water Authority reserves the right to award the proposal to any of the other qualified proposer.
- 14.3 Kent County Water Authority reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, or parts thereof, to waive any and all informalities if it is in Kent County Water Authority's best interest to do so, and the right to disregard all nonconforming, non-responsive, or conditional proposals or portions thereof.
- 14.4 It is fully intended to engage the services of the successful proposer as stated above upon successful negotiations and preparation of a purchase order by the Kent County Water Authority. The Kent County Water Authority Procurement procedures shall be the governing document for the contract.
- 14.4.1 Price alone will not be the sole determining factor. No work shall proceed without the issuance of a purchase order or prior written authorization.
- 14.4.2 Kent County Water Authority reserves the right to make periodic evaluations of the selected consultant's performance and make a determination on whether to continue or discontinue the engagement of services based upon that evaluation or at the completion point of each phase.
- 14.5 The successful proposer shall be responsible for all work and every part thereof, and for all tools, materials, appliances, software and property of every technical description used in connection therewith. The successful proposer agrees to indemnify and hold harmless the Kent County Water Authority, its employees, and agents against loss or expense by reason of liability imposed by law against the proposer, subcontractors, or the Kent County Water Authority for damages of any nature arising out of or inconsequence of the performance of this work.

- 14.6 All information developed under this project become the sole property of the Kent County Water Authority and must be delivered to the Kent County Water Authority upon completion of the project or discontinuation of services. Prior approval by the General Manager/Chief Engineer is required before the release of any element of the data or information developed for this project for any reason other than for use by Kent County Water Authority.
- 14.7 All services to be performed under this contract shall be completed within 90 calendar days from the date of purchase order issuance unless an extension of time is granted by the Kent County Water Authority.

Kent County Water Authority