

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL FOR LEGAL SERVICES  
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS – HAMILTON COUNTY**

**INQUIRIES AND PROPOSALS SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO:**

Hamilton County Clerk of Courts  
207 N.E. First Street, Room 106  
Jasper, FL 32052  
Phone (386) 792-1288  
Email: [godwing@hamiltoncountyfl.com](mailto:godwing@hamiltoncountyfl.com) or [morgank@hamiltoncountyfl.com](mailto:morgank@hamiltoncountyfl.com)

**I. GENERAL INFORMATION**

**A. Purpose.** This request for qualifications (RFQ) is to contract for legal services to be provided to Hamilton County Board of County Commissioners.

**B. Who May Respond.** Only attorneys who are currently a member of the Florida Bar and are recognized by the Middle District Federal Court.

**C. Instructions on Qualifications Submission.**

1. **Closing Submission Date.** Open until filled.

2. **Inquires.** Inquiries concerning this RFQ should be emailed to:

[godwing@hamiltoncountyfl.com](mailto:godwing@hamiltoncountyfl.com) or [morgank@hamiltoncountyfl.com](mailto:morgank@hamiltoncountyfl.com)

or mailed to:

Hamilton County Clerk of Courts  
207 N.E. First Street, Room 106  
Jasper, FL 32052

3. **Conditions of Qualifications.** All costs incurred in responding to this RFQ will be the responsibility of the offeror and will not be reimbursed by Hamilton County.

4. **Instructions to prospective proposers.** Your qualifications should be addressed as follows:

Hamilton County Clerk of Court  
207 1<sup>st</sup> St NE, Room 106  
Jasper, FL 32052

It is important that the offeror's qualifications be submitted in a sealed envelope clearly marked in the lower left corner with the following information:

**RFP Legal Services  
SEALED QUALIFICATIONS FOR LEGAL SERVICES**

It is the responsibility of the offeror to ensure that the qualifications are received by Hamilton County by the date and time specified above. Late qualifications will not be considered in order to ensure a fair review and selection process.

5. **Right to Reject.** Hamilton County reserves the right to reject any and all qualifications received in response to this RFQ. A contract for the accepted qualifications will be drafted based upon the factors described in the RFQ.
6. **Minority-Owned Businesses.** Efforts will be made by Hamilton County to utilize woman, minority and/or service-disabled veteran owned businesses.
7. **Notification of Award.** It is expected that a decision selecting the successful firm or attorney will be made within thirty (30) days of the closing date for the receipt of qualifications upon conclusion of final negotiations with the successful firm or attorney, all offerors submitting qualifications to the Request for Qualifications will be informed, in writing, of the name of the successful firm or attorney.

## II. SCOPE OF SERVICES

Under the proposed agreement, Counsel will provide the following:

1. Provides legal advice, counsel, services and consultation to the County Administrator, County Commissioners, and senior County management staff on a wide variety of civil assignments, including but not limited to: general civil law, labor law, general state and federal laws relating to grant and contract issues, public disclosure issues, laws against discrimination, property/real estate law, contract law, purchasing and procurement, criminal law, statutory law related to Service Delivery and Intergovernmental Agreements, and law that may affect County governance. Counsel's advice includes methods to avoid civil litigation.
2. Answers requests for legal opinions, in writing and verbally. Prepares written legal opinions at the request of the County Administrator, County Commissioners, senior County management staff, and Constitutional Officers. Availability to answer staff questions by telephone or email.
3. Appears before courts and administrative agencies to represent Hamilton County's interests.
4. Works cooperatively with any special legal counsel retained by Hamilton County for special projects. Coordinates with other special counsel, as needed, to ensure proper management of legal issues, and proper coordination and transition of legal information among special counsel.
5. Provides guidance and legal advice on the Sunshine Law, the Freedom of Information Act, and county rules, policies, and procedures.
6. Assists staff to understand the legal roles and duties of their respective offices and interrelationships with others.

7. Assists the County Administrator, County Commissioners, and senior County management staff, to maintain ethical standards and appearance of fairness standard, and to avoid potential conflicts of interest, prohibited transactions and the appearance of prohibited transactions.
8. Prepares and reviews contracts, leases, Intergovernmental Agreements, resolutions, ordinances, proclamations and other legal documents for correctness and acceptability. Negotiates said contracts, leases, Intergovernmental Agreements, resolutions, ordinances, proclamations and other documents upon request.
9. Review and redrafts various policies for legal correctness and acceptability. This would include by way of example but not limited to, Personnel Policies, Family Medical Leave, etc.
10. Attendance during the year of County Commissioner meetings and/or Work Sessions. Attend other meetings as requested, by way of example but not limited to, Special Called Meetings of Hamilton County Commissioners, Tourist Development Council, Nutrien Technical Working Group, Code Enforcement proceedings, etc.
11. Performs other legal services and tasks, as requested.

### **III. GENERAL SPECIFICATIONS**

The following provisions shall also apply:

1. Timeliness of response and accessibility to Counsel is an important aspect of this service. Accessibility includes the ability to be generally available to attend meetings in person on short notice and the ability to be reached promptly by telephone, cell phone or e-mail. Regular scheduled office hours should be staffed and maintained for public availability.
2. Counsel must be available by phone, fax, cell phone and e-mail. Regular scheduled office hours should be staffed and maintained for public availability.
3. Service response is also of high importance. When the County Administrator/County Commissioners request legal services, Counsel should provide some estimated time of completion and keep the requesting party apprised of any delays or special considerations.
4. Describe malpractice insurance coverage: carrier, limits and exemptions.
5. The service provider shall disclose possible conflicts of interests.
6. The service provider shall provide statements on a monthly flat fee basis for services rendered.

#### IV. CONTRACT ETHICS

1. No County Commissioners or employee of Hamilton County who exercises any responsibilities in the review, approval or implementation of the qualifications or contract shall participate in any decisions, which affect his or her direct personal or financial interest.
2. It is a breach of ethical standards for any person to offer, give or agree to give any County employee, County Commissioners, or for any County employee to solicit, demand, accept or agree to accept from another person or firm, a gratuity or an offer of employment whenever a reasonably prudent person would conclude that such consideration was motivated by an individual, group or corporate desire to obtain special, preferential, or more favorable treatment than is normally accorded to the general public.
3. The attorney or firm shall not assign any interest in this contract and shall not transfer any interest in the same without the prior written consent of Hamilton County.
4. The attorney or firm shall not accept any client or project that places it in a conflict of interest with its representation of Hamilton County. If such a conflict of interest is subsequently discovered, Hamilton County shall be promptly notified.

#### V. QUALIFICATIONS SUBMISSION

1. Qualifications received after the deadline will not be accepted. It is neither Hamilton County's responsibility nor practice to acknowledge receipt of any qualifications. It is the responder's responsibility to assure that qualifications are received in a timely manner.
2. Interested attorneys or firms shall submit a monthly flat rate for legal services. The price shall include all labor, material, and equipment necessary for the performance of this contract. The County has resources to provide office and utilities if negotiated.
3. Hamilton County expects all submitting attorneys and firms to consent to the Scope of Work and General Specifications. Exceptions desired must be clearly noted in the qualification's submittal.
4. Hamilton County reserves the right to reject any and all qualifications, to waive irregularities and informalities, to request additional information from all respondents, and further reserves the right to select the qualifications with furthers the best interests of Hamilton County.
5. All interested attorneys or firms should provide One printed (1) original and three (3) digital USB flash drive copies of qualifications, responding to each inquiry in the order below. Please attach one set of business cards from your team with the original qualifications.

#### VI. PROPOSAL CONTENTS

The Offeror, in its qualifications, shall at a minimum include the following:

1. **Legal Experience.** The Offeror should describe its legal experience, including the names, addresses and telephone numbers of at least three (3) clients, preferably including clients similar to Hamilton County. Experience should include the following categories:

- A. Experience advising local and county governments
  - B. Experience advising clients providing similar services through local taxation, fees, local, state and federal funds
2. **Organization, Size, Structure, and Areas of Practice.** If the Offeror is a firm, it should describe its organization, size, structure, areas of practice and office locations. Indicate, if appropriate, if the firm is a small or minority owned business.
3. **Attorney Qualifications.** The ideal candidate should have a preferred minimum of 5 years of experience in the following areas: local and county government, government grants/contracts, labor/employment and general business operations with overall preferred experience of at least 10 years. The offeror should describe the qualifications of attorneys to be assigned to the representations.

Descriptions should include:

- A. Professional and educational background of each attorney.
  - B. Overall supervision to be exercised.
  - C. Prior experience of the individual attorneys with respect to the required experience listed above. Only include resumes of attorneys likely to be assigned to the representation. Education, position in firm, years and types of experience and continuing professional education will be considered.
4. **Price.** The offeror's proposed price will be based on a monthly flat rate fee.
5. **Evaluation Procedure and Criteria.** The Hamilton Board of County Commissioners will review qualifications by interview in a public meeting and award based on findings and negotiation of contract for final approval.