

Whiteside School District #115
Request for Proposals for Legal Services

I. OBJECTIVE

The Whiteside School District #115 (District) utilizes the services of a legal firm qualified to provide such services in the areas of: General Legal Counsel, Human Resources, Employee Relations/Negotiations, Facilities, and Special Education. Firms that demonstrate expertise, and are subsequently designated, will be utilized. One or more firms may be engaged.

The overall objective of this Request For Proposal is to permit firms the opportunity to submit their relevant school district legal experience, client references and proposed schedule of charges for consideration.

Background

Whiteside School District is a Pre K – 8th grade elementary school located in Belleville/Shiloh, IL. The District enrollment is approximately 1200 students who come from varying social and economic backgrounds, and with a wide variety of abilities and needs. The District population is approximately 60% low income and about 22% of our students utilize special education services. The District employs approximately 105 certified staff members and 70 non-certified or classified employees, with teachers operating under a collective bargaining agreement.

II. INSTRUCTIONS

Interested firms are invited to submit one original signed proposal and seven additional (7) hard copies. The proposal shall be made in the format provided and the complete proposal, together with any and all additional materials, shall be enclosed in a sealed envelope addressed and delivered no later than 2:00 p.m. on Wednesday, September 27, 2023 to the following address:

Mr. Mark Heuring
Superintendent
Whiteside School District 115
111 Warrior Way
Belleville, IL 62221

The sealed envelope shall be marked with the words “Legal Services RFP”. It is the Proposer’s sole responsibility to ensure that their proposal is received prior to the scheduled closing time for receipt of proposals. No corrected or resubmitted proposals will be accepted after the deadline.

This Request for Proposals does not commit the Whiteside School District 115 to award a contract or pay any costs incurred in the preparation of a proposal responsive to this request. The District reserves the right to accept all or part of any proposal or to cancel in part or in its entirety this Request for Proposals. The District further reserves the right to accept the proposal that it considers to be in the best interest of the District.

All requirements must be addressed in your proposal. Non-responsive proposals will not be considered. All proposals, whether selected or rejected, shall become the property of the District. Firms are responsible for checking the website periodically for any updates or revisions to the RFP.

Requests for Information

Questions related to this RFP should be submitted to Mr. Mark Heuring, Superintendent, at mark.heuring@wssd115.org. Specify "RFP for Legal Services" in the subject line.

III. SCOPE OF SERVICES

The District is seeking proposals for legal services in the following area:

A. GENERAL COUNSEL

- Provide advice and consultation with the Board of Education, the Superintendent and Key Personnel in connection with their general and specific powers and duties.
As requested:
- Be physically present on days of Board meetings and as needed.
- Provide advice with respect to all Constitutional questions.
- Assist in the development of employment contracts upon request.
- Provide advice, consultation and representation on student matters, including hearings and related proceedings.
- Provide advice and consultation with respect to school board elections and ballot measures.
- Provide such other services as are inherent in matters relating to the operation of a school district.
- Provide information on new federal and state laws that may impact the District operation and advise appropriate action.
- Assist the District in developing contract templates for outside services as needed.
- Review contractual agreements as requested.
- Provide advice, consultation and representation of the District with respect to the employment, discipline and dismissal of certificated and classified employees.
- Provide advice, consultation and representation on issues involving District employees relative to: legal qualifications; teaching credentials and certificates, and other required licenses; proposed reductions in force and related seniority and tenure questions; various forms of leaves of absence; substitute and part-time employees; and matters related to compensation.
- Provide advice, consultation and representation on all matters related to certificated and classified collective bargaining and related negotiated agreement development.
- Provide advice, consultation and representation on grievances and actions taken to hearings, etc. Provide such other services as are inherent in matters related to employee relations and negotiations.

- Provide advice, consultation and representation related to real estate property matters, including acquisition, disposition, environmental impact reports, leasing and construction of facilities, as well as contract and bidding requirements.
- Provide such other services that are inherent in matters related to school facilities.
- Provide advice, consultation and representation in connection with the placement of special needs students, including participation in hearings and representation in related administrative and judicial proceedings.
- Provide such other services as are inherent in matters related to the provision of services to special needs students.
- Provide such other services as are inherent in matters related to the provision of services for all district students.

IV. CONTENTS FOR PROPOSALS

In order for proposals to be considered, said proposal must be clear, concise, complete, well organized and demonstrate both respondents' qualifications, and its ability to follow instructions. The quality of answers, not length of responses or visual exhibits is important in the proposal.

The proposal shall be organized in the format listed below. Respondents shall read each item carefully and answer each of the following items accurately to ensure compliance with District requirements.

A. Submittal Letter

Include the RFP's title and submittal due date, the name, address, fax number and telephone number of the responding firm. Include a contact person and corresponding email address.

B. Description of Firm

This section should provide an overview and history of your firm, and its practice in Illinois, and the approach that will be used in meeting the needs of the District. Please also include what areas of law are firm specialties.

C. Description of Experience

Use this section to indicate the areas of expertise of your firm and how the firm's expertise will enable the District to benefit from that expertise. Include at least three (3) school districts with similar demographics, along with the name(s) of individuals familiar with your work at school districts and submitted as references, which can be contacted by District staff.

D. Team

Please provide the names and resumés of staff who would be working with the District. Specifically discuss the individual(s)' experience in providing legal and advisory services to an organization and program similar in size and scope as specified in this RFP. Please indicate who the primary contact will be and who will be responsible for the day to day work with the District.

E. Fee Schedule

Describe in detail all fees to be charged, including hourly rates for each level of service. Describe how you might adjust your fees for subsequent years of the contract. Describe in detail, charges for travel, telephone calls, and any other expenses to be separately billed. Indicate how billings are specific for each area/case. Also, identify billing increments (i.e. 1/10 hour, ¼ hour etc.)

F. Miscellaneous

Please provide the following additional information:

- List any additional services that your Firm provides, but which were not listed in the Request for Proposals.
- Copy of Firm's Professional Liability Certificate of Insurance.

V. SELECTION CRITERIA

District Administration and the Board of Education will evaluate and select those firms deemed to be the most highly qualified to perform the required services. The evaluation of proposals and the basis of award will be based on the review and analysis of numerous factors, which will include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Background and experience in providing work as identified in the Scope of Services section of this RFP.
- Qualifications of personnel.
- References of work done of similar nature.
- Costs, including hourly rates for all levels of service and personnel, travel time costs, and costs for support services of word processing, copying etc.

Upon evaluation of all submitted proposals, a limited number of Firms deemed most qualified to provide the requested legal services may be invited to present their qualifications and respond to questions from panel members. The panel may include, but will not be limited to, Board of Education members, Superintendent, Administration, and others qualified to rate providers.