

Request for Qualifications (RFQ)

For the development of municipal ADA Transition Plans.

Announcement

The Western Connecticut Council of Governments (“WestCOG”) has initiated a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) process to identify and procure a qualified vendor to develop municipal ADA Transition Plans.

About WestCOG

Founded in 2014, the Western Connecticut Council of Governments is one of nine regional Councils of Governments established pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes §4-124i et seq. WestCOG serves the Western Connecticut Planning Region, the second most populous and fastest growing region in Connecticut, with an estimated population of 620,000. WestCOG is governed the Chief Elected Officials (Mayors and First Selectmen) of its members, comprising three principal cities (Stamford, Norwalk, and Danbury) and fifteen surrounding towns (Bridgewater, Brookfield, Danbury, Darien, Greenwich, New Canaan, New Fairfield, New Milford, Newtown, Redding, Ridgefield, Sherman, Weston, Westport, and Wilton).

More information on WestCOG is available at <http://westcog.org>.

Project background

The Americans with Disabilities Act (42 U.S.C. § 1210 et seq.) requires public entities, regardless of size, to evaluate their services, policies, and practices and to modify those that do not meet ADA requirements. In addition, public entities with fifty or more employees are required to develop a Transition Plan detailing any structural changes that will be undertaken to achieve program access and specifying a time frame for their completion.

This project seeks to develop municipal ADA Transition Plans through a regional approach, leveraging economies of scale and providing municipalities with expertise to satisfy the requirements of Title II of the ADA. The Transition Plans shall identify a list of covered barriers, methods to remove these barriers, cost estimates, and a schedule for the completion of work.

Scope of work

ADA Transition Plans are to be prepared for 17 participating municipalities in the WestCOG region – Bethel, Bridgewater, Brookfield, Danbury, Darien, Greenwich, New Canaan, New Fairfield, New Milford, Newtown, Norwalk, Redding, Sherman, Stamford, Weston, Westport, and Wilton. (The Town of Ridgefield is excluded because it already has a completed Transition Plan.) Work shall proceed approximately simultaneously in all municipalities within the study period; plans should be in a consistent, easily comprehensible, usable, and implementable format. Municipal facilities to be evaluated include but are not limited to city/town halls, municipal centers, libraries, parks,

police departments, fire departments, senior centers, public works buildings, community centers, sidewalks, and other municipal buildings as needed.

Certain facility types are specifically excluded from the scope of work for this project. These are:

- Any facilities, programs, or services operated by the State of Connecticut.
- Facilities (including K-12 schools), programs and services operated by local and regional Boards of Education, as they are operated and managed differently.
- Public rights-of-way (roads and streets). Preparation of ADA Transition Plans for these facilities work is being conducted under a separate project led by the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT). Furthermore, some WestCOG municipalities (Greenwich and Norwalk) have already completed partial ADA Transition Plans that exclusively address changes (streets, sidewalks, curbs, ramps) in the public right-of-way.

The following is a general scope of services for this project which must be completed by **June 30, 2025**:

Task 1 – Project Management

The study shall be managed by WestCOG and the consultant in close coordination with the participating municipalities.

To facilitate the development of the plans, working groups shall be established and meet through the course of the study period at key milestones. These groups will be composed of WestCOG staff and municipal representatives. Additional persons may be invited to the working group meetings, depending on the subject and stage of study. These working groups will be organized into two areas:

- Municipal Facilities
- Municipal Services and Programs

Additional one-on-one meetings with individual municipalities or stakeholders may be coordinated as needed. Additional stakeholders may include, but are not necessarily limited to municipal officials, both elected and staff, CTDOT, Senior Citizen Groups and advocates, individuals with disabilities, advocates for persons with disabilities, and the general public.

Task 2 – Facility and Program Inventory

Municipal facilities, services, and programs to be evaluated for ADA compliance shall be identified. In some cases, municipalities may have already prepared a list of such facilities; in other cases, the list will need to be compiled. These include buildings, building access, and associated parking lots. Policies, practices, and procedures will also be identified.

Task 3 – Investigation and Inspection

Existing conditions shall be documented, and compliance with ADA standards shall be evaluated. Barriers that limit accessibility in violation of the ADA and improvements needed to eliminate these barriers shall be identified. A detailed sheet/file will be provided for each facility, service, or program, including (as applicable) name, description, photograph, drawing, code section,

conceptual design, and cost estimates. Provision of separate sheets for each facility is preferred to facilitate updates. Analyses shall take place in a consistent format across all municipalities. Evaluation shall take place in two streams:

- Physical environment (including buildings, structures, and surface facilities).
- Programs, policies, and procedures for each community. The evaluation shall indicate changes that need to be made, with citation of relevant code, and responsibility for implementation.

The current status of ADA compliance shall be documented in one or several reports. This will be a base against which future improvements will be noted.

Task 4 – Public Engagement

Public involvement will be provided as required by Title II. This will include public notices in municipal buildings, notices on municipal and WestCOG websites indicating how to get involved, and public information meetings. All meetings shall be conducted in an accessible manner.

Task 5 – Capital Program

Estimated costs for required improvements shall be summarized and categorized. Expected funding sources shall be identified (municipal operations, capital budget, grant(s), etc.). Authority and responsibility for implementation of improvements shall be identified. A general schedule for implementation shall be developed through consultation with the working groups.

Task 6 – Final Report

The inventory, analysis, recommendations, and schedules shall be included in an approved ADA Transition Plan for each community. These shall be in a format that facilitates updates as improvements are accomplished. The report shall include an Executive Summary that gives an overall description of the process, facility and program inventory, summary of recommended policy and program changes, and a process for updating transition plans in the future. A schedule for completion of recommended improvements shall be developed. A regionwide summary report shall also be prepared.

Expertise sought

The following knowledge, skills, and experience will be needed to complete the project:

- Track record of comparable projects that are completed and meet expected outcomes, including timetable and budget adherence, customer satisfaction, and compliance with the ADA
- Expertise in
 - Title II of the Americans with Disability Act (ADA)
 - Municipal ADA Transition Plans
 - ADA Standards for accessible design
 - Cost estimation for facility upgrades
- Experience working with regional and local officials, including
 - Chief Elected Officials

- Municipal Departments (including Planning, Public Works, Social Services)
- Stakeholders and members of the public
- Ability to deliver on time and within budget
- Ability to research, analyze, and provide solutions to complex questions
- Ability to communicate specialized technical, financial, and legal matters to and make them understandable by elected officials, civil servants, and to the public
- Ability to facilitate groups and lead them to actionable consensus
- Understanding of local government with experience in New England states preferable
- Expertise in communication during all project development phases
- Project management experience

Application process

Format

Each application should include the following components:

1. Cover page with project title; proposing firm; and name, telephone number, and e-mail address for the project manager.
2. Stage-based project approach. Each stage in the project should be briefly described, including timing/duration, output, and associated fee.
3. Work history. Similar or relevant work conducted by proposer in the past, with project outcomes and client references. Name, title, employer, relationship to the project, telephone number, and e-mail address should be given for each reference.
4. Qualifications. Task assignments and resumes for key staff on project. The total hours each staff person is expected to spend on each task should be documented.
5. Corporate background. Include the history, location(s), length of time in existence, and structure of the firm; and demonstration of the capacity of the firm to carry out the project.
6. If a joint venture is proposed, provide the number of projects that have been conducted under previous joint ventures with the designated firm and the success of those joint ventures as measured by on time, and under budget performance and customer satisfaction with the performance of the work.
7. Signature of a representative of the firm having legal authority to contract for the firm.
8. A completed Organizational Conflict of Interest Statement that either warrants that there are no relevant facts or circumstances that could give rise to organizational conflicts of interest or, as applicable, gives a full, written disclosure of all such conflicts of interests. Political activity on housing, land use, or related policy in Connecticut; legal action against local governments in Connecticut; and efforts to influence local regulatory processes in Western Connecticut will be considered a conflict of interest.

Material submitted in response to this RFQ and received by WestCOG may be subject to the provisions of the Connecticut Freedom of Information law (CGS §1-200 et seq.).

How to apply

Proposals are due by the end of the application period, Monday, April 29 at 5:00 PM ET. Submissions should be directed to Mr. Francis R. Pickering, Executive Director at ccarpenter@westcog.org, include the RFQ title in the subject line.

Submissions should be provided in PDF format, as a single file. The file may be attached to the e-mail, or, in case of a large submission (larger than 10 megabytes), linked in the e-mail. Recipients should enable delivery and read receipts in their e-mail client. No other confirmation will be given.

Review and contracting

WestCOG will evaluate proposals received after close of the application period. At this point, WestCOG may invite additional information from selected proposers, including but not necessarily limited to, samples of other work or an in-person interview.

Should WestCOG determine to proceed with a proposal, WestCOG will begin contract negotiations, including on scope and fee, with the respective proposer. WestCOG encourages interested proposers to review WestCOG's standard contract terms and conditions sample (which may be found at <https://westcog.org/about/RFQs-grant-opportunities/>). Should WestCOG and the selected proposer be unable to come to an agreement, WestCOG may terminate negotiations with that firm and revisit other proposals submitted.

It is expected that proposers will be notified of decisions on their submission by May 31, 2024. WestCOG may award the project in part or in full to one or more proposers or cancel or reissue this RFQ. Any award will not be final until a contract has been negotiated and executed.

Communications

Location of posting

This RFQ may be found online at <https://westcog.org/about/RFQs-grant-opportunities/> until May 31, 2024. It is the responsibility of interested parties to retrieve and store a copy of the RFQ beyond this date.

Pre-proposal meeting

A pre-proposal meeting will be held Wednesday, April 17, 2024 at 12:30 PM ET. The meeting will be held by videoconference. Parties interested in attending should e-mail ccarpenter@westcog.org for an invitation link. Attendance, by phone or in person, is optional and is not required in order to respond to this RFQ.

Inquiries

Proposers may submit questions on this RFQ by Wednesday, April 17, 2024 at 5:00 PM ET. Questions should be directed to Mr. Francis R. Pickering, Executive Director at ccarpenter@westcog.org. Answers will be posted online where WestCOG posted this RFQ on a rolling basis until the close of business on Monday, April 22, 2024.

No questions will be accepted by other forms of communication.

Information about WestCOG can be found at <http://westcog.org>.

Addenda and supplements

Should WestCOG amend or adjust this RFQ, such changes will be posted online where WestCOG posted this RFQ. It is the responsibility of proposers to check for changes to the RFQ.

Conditions

Legal requirements

Contracts awarded as a result of this RFQ are subject to all applicable federal and state laws, including those concerning civil rights, nondiscrimination, and equal opportunity. Any responses to this RFQ, as well as any work resulting from it, are subject to freedom of information.

Insurance requirements

Proposers must maintain insurance coverage as required by federal and state law.

Consortia, joint ventures, and teams

Proposals from consortia, joint ventures, and teams (“groups”) will be accepted. In such cases, a lead firm must be identified for contracting purposes. A work history and statement of qualifications (as described under *Expertise sought*, #4 and #5) must be provided for each member of the group.

In designating a lead firm, groups should consider the following:

1. The lead firm should have sufficient experience and expertise to perform or supervise all facets of the project and must have sufficient resources to carry out the contractual responsibilities of the group.
2. The lead firm will be legally responsible to WestCOG for the performance of, and must perform at least 51% of, the total work awarded under any contract issued as a result of this RFQ.
3. Firms that are subsidiaries may not rely on the experience, expertise, or resources of its parent firm to meet these requirements.

Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE)

DBE firms are encouraged to respond to this RFQ.

If a DBE firm is proposed, the proposal must clearly identify the DBE firm, the role the DBE will play in the project, and the tasks assigned to the DBE. Proof of Connecticut DBE certification must be submitted with the proposal. Responses that fail to give proof of DBE certification and description of project involvement will not be identified as including DBE participation.

Nonreimbursement of proposal costs

Costs associated with responses to this RFQ, including proposal development and participation in a selection process, are the sole responsibility of the respondent firms. WestCOG will not reimburse firms for such costs, nor will any selected firms be permitted to negotiate such costs as part of a contract with WestCOG.

Conflicts of interest

All relationships that may pose a conflict of interest shall be disclosed as part of the response to this RFQ.