



ERIE COUNTY

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

RFP# 2021-045VF

TO PROVIDE IN REM FORECLOSURE

LEGAL SERVICES

November 8, 2021

MICHAEL A. SIRAGUSA
ERIE COUNTY ATTORNEY
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BUFFALO, NEW YORK 14202

COUNTY OF ERIE, NEW YORK

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS RFP 2021-045VF TO PROVIDE IN REM FORECLOSURE LEGAL SERVICES

I. INTRODUCTION

The County of Erie, New York (the “County”) is currently seeking Proposal Statements from qualified entities interested in providing legal services in connection with In Rem Foreclosures of Erie County Tax Liens pursuant to the Erie County Tax Act. Proposers with foreclosure experience and an understanding of the Erie County Tax Act interested in providing these services are invited to respond to this request. The County Attorney will determine no less than annually, which tax liens will be foreclosed and assigned to the successful proposer(s).

The County reserves the right to amend this RFP. The County reserves the right to reject any or all of the proposals, or any part thereof, submitted in response to this RFP, and reserves the right to waive formalities, if such action is deemed to be in the best interest of the County. The County reserves the right to request additional information from any proposer. The County reserves the right to award negotiated contracts to one or more proposers, although the County strongly desires to award a contract to a single entity for all of the requested services.

This RFP is not intended and shall not be construed to commit the County to pay any costs incurred in connection with any proposal or to procure or contract with any firm.

The County will only contract with firms that do not discriminate against employees or applicants for employment because of race, creed, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, citizenship status or any other status protected by New York State and Federal laws.

II. PROPOSAL PROCEDURES

A. ANTICIPATED SCHEDULE OF PROPOSAL

The following schedule is for informational purpose only. The County reserves the right to amend this schedule at any time.

| | |
|------------------|--|
| Issue RFP: | November 8, 2021 |
| Proposals Due: | November 26, 2021 |
| Selection Made: | Approximately December 10, 2021 |
| Contract Signed: | Following all necessary County approvals |

B. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

1. Each proposal shall be prepared simply and economically avoiding the use of elaborate promotional materials beyond what is sufficient to provide a complete, accurate and reliable presentation.
2. One (1) original and three (3) copies shall be submitted. Proposals **MUST** be signed. Unsigned proposals will be rejected.
3. Submission of the proposals shall be directed to:

Michael A Siragusa, Esq.
Erie County Attorney
95 Franklin Street, Room 1634
Buffalo, New York 14202

All proposals must be delivered to the above office on or before November 26, 2021 at 4:00 P.M. Proposals received after the above date and time will not be considered. The County is under no obligation to return proposals.

Requests for clarification of this RFP must be written and submitted to Assistant County Attorney, Gregory P. Kammer at 95 Franklin Street, Room 1634, Buffalo, New York 14202, no later than 12:00 noon on November 16, 2021. Formal written responses will be distributed by the County on or before November 22, 2021. **NO COMMUNICATIONS OF ANY KIND WILL BE BINDING AGAINST THE COUNTY, EXCEPT FOR THE FORMAL WRITTEN RESPONSES TO ANY REQUEST FOR CLARIFICATION.**

5. Proposal finalists may be required to give an oral presentation to the County to clarify or elaborate on the written proposal. Those proposers will be notified to arrange specific times.
6. No proposal will be accepted from nor any agreement awarded to any proposer that is in arrears upon any debt or in default of any obligation owed to the County. Additionally, no agreement will be awarded to any proposer that has failed to satisfactorily perform pursuant to any prior agreement with the County.

All proposers submitting proposals must include a fee proposal clearly labeled with the proposer name, due date of proposal, proposal name (“Erie County In Rem Foreclosure Legal Services”).

III. SCOPE OF PROFESSIONAL SERVICES REQUIRED

1. **Qualifications:**

Responses to this RFP should describe the In Rem Foreclosure legal services that the individual/law firm seeks to provide to the County of Erie and their/its experience in such matters and the Erie County Tax Act. Additionally, the respondent should include the following:

a) Whether any legal work has been performed by the individual/firm on behalf of the County of Erie, including when such work was performed, and a general explanation of the type of legal issue involved and outcome, if applicable. Additionally, whether the individual/firm represents or has represented any other municipality in relation to tax foreclosures, identify the municipality(ies) and the applicable time period representing each. If the respondent believes a conflict may exist from time to time in the representation of the County of Erie, please set forth generally the perceived/anticipated conflict and how it may be resolved.

b) An explanation of the type of legal work performed by the individual/firm generally and how such work can assist the County of Erie in matters of legal significance both from an experience and cost standpoint keeping in mind that maximizing the benefit to Erie County taxpayers relative to all legal issues is of paramount importance to the office of the County Attorney.

2. Compensation:

Please set forth a flat fee which will be charged to the County for each foreclosure file inclusive of all legal services and ancillary expenses including but not limited to filing fees, publication costs, title searches, surveying and other necessary services.

3. Expenses and Costs:

Your proposal should include any additional costs or fees your firm charges for postage and mailing, or any other costs and fees which are not part of the above compensation, if applicable. The County does not reimburse electronic research charges. In addition, firms hired by the County of Erie, on occasion, are required to submit responses to the County's outside auditors regarding the scope of the work performed by the firm for the County. If your firm charges for such a response, the amount of such charge should be reflected in your proposal.

4. Additional Information:

Required information shall include the name, title and department of any employee, attorney or individual of your firm who was a County employee or officer in the one-year period preceding the date of your response to this RFP. State the proportion of your firm's partners and associates who are minorities and a description of the firm's affirmative action program. State the proportion of your firm's partners and associates who are women.

5. Marketing Materials/Brochures/Website:

While not required as part of the submission, a copy of any marketing materials, brochures, and/or inclusion of web link information which further expands upon the qualifications and experience of the respondent is appreciated.

IV. STATEMENT OF RIGHTS

UNDERSTANDINGS

Please take notice, by submission of a proposal in response to this request for proposals, the proposer agrees to and understands:

- that any proposal, attachments, additional information, etc. submitted pursuant to this Request for Proposals constitute merely a suggestion to negotiate with the County of Erie and is not a bid under Section 103 of the New York State General Municipal Law;
- submission of a proposal, attachments, and additional information shall not entitle the proposer to enter into an agreement with the County of Erie for the required services;
- by submitting a proposal, the proposer agrees and understands that the County of Erie is not obligated to respond to the proposal, nor is it legally bound in any manner whatsoever by submission of same;
- that any and all counter-proposals, negotiations or any communications received by a proposing entity, its officers, employees or agents from the County, its elected officials, officers, employees or agents, shall not be binding against the County of Erie, its elected officials, officers, employees or agents unless and until a formal written agreement for the services sought by this RFP is duly executed by both parties and approved by the Erie County Legislature, the Erie County Fiscal Stability Authority, and the Office of the Erie County Attorney.

In addition to the foregoing, by submitting a proposal, the proposer also understands and agrees that the County of Erie reserves the right, and may at its sole discretion exercise, the following rights and options with respect to this Request for Proposals:

- To reject any or all proposals;
- To issue amendments to this RFP;
- To issue additional solicitations for proposals;
- To waive any irregularities in proposals received after notification to proposers affected;
- To select any proposal as the basis for negotiations of a contract, and to negotiate with one or more of the proposers for amendments or other modifications to their proposals;
- To conduct investigations with respect to the qualifications of each proposer;
- To exercise its discretion and apply its judgment with respect to any aspect of this RFP, the evaluation of proposals, and the negotiations and award of any contract;
- To enter into an agreement for only portions (or not to enter into an agreement for any) of the services contemplated by the proposals with one or more of the proposers;
- To select the proposal that best satisfies the interests of the County and not necessarily on the basis of price or any other single factor;
- To interview the proposer(s);
- To request or obtain additional information the County deems necessary to determine the ability of the proposer;

- To modify dates;
- All proposals prepared in response to this RFP are at the sole expense of the proposer, and with the express understanding that there will be no claim, whatsoever, for reimbursement from the County for the expenses of preparation. The County assumes no responsibility or liability of any kind for costs incurred in the preparation or submission of any proposal;
- While this is an RFP and not a bid, the County reserves the right to apply the case law under General Municipal Law § 103 regarding bidder responsibility in determining whether a proposer is a responsible vendor for the purpose of this RFP process; and
- The County is not responsible for any internal or external delivery delays which may cause any proposal to arrive beyond the stated deadline. To be considered, proposals MUST arrive at the place specified herein and be time stamped prior to the deadline.

EVALUATION

Evaluation criteria are not necessarily listed in order of importance. The County reserves the right to weigh its evaluation criteria in any manner it deems appropriate. The following criteria will be used to review the proposals.

- Proposer's demonstrated capability to provide the services;
- Evaluation of the professional qualifications, personal background and resume(s) of individuals involved in providing services;
- Proposer's experience to perform the proposed services;
- Proposer's financial ability to provide the services;
- Evaluation of the proposer's fee submission. It should be noted that while price is not the only consideration, it is an important one;
- A determination that the proposer has submitted a complete and responsive proposal as required by this RFP;
- An evaluation of the proposer's projected approach and plans to meet the requirements of this RFP;
- The proposer's presentation at and the overall results of any interview conducted with the proposer;
- Proposers MUST sign the Proposal Certification attached hereto. Unsigned proposals will be rejected;
- Proposers may be required to give an oral presentation to the County to clarify or elaborate on the written proposal; and

- No proposal will be accepted from nor any agreement awarded to any proposer that is in arrears upon any debt or in default of any obligation owed to the County. Additionally, no agreement will be awarded to any proposer that has failed to satisfactorily perform pursuant to any prior agreement with the County.

CONTRACT

After selection of the successful proposer, a formal written contract will be negotiated by the County of Erie and the successful Contractor(s) and will not be binding until signed by both parties and approved by the Office of the County Attorney. **NO RIGHTS SHALL ACCRUE TO ANY PROPOSER BY THE FACT THAT A PROPOSAL HAS BEEN SELECTED BY THE COUNTY FOR SUBMISSION TO THE ERIE COUNTY LEGISLATURE AND/OR THE ERIE COUNTY FISCAL STABILITY AUTHORITY FOR APPROVAL. THE APPROVAL OF SAID LEGISLATURE AND/OR AUTHORITY MAY BE NECESSARY BEFORE A VALID AND BINDING CONTRACT MAY BE EXECUTED BY THE COUNTY.**

The term of the contract shall be for a period commencing January 1, 2022 and terminating December 31, 2023. The County, in its sole discretion, may extend the agreement beyond its initial term for up to three (3) additional one-year periods at the same prices and conditions.

INDEMNIFICATION AND INSURANCE

The proposer accepts and agrees that language in substantially the following form will be included in the contract between the proposer and the County:

“In addition to, and not in limitation of the insurance requirements contained herein the Contractor agrees:

(a) that except for the amount, if any, of damage contributed to, caused by or resulting from the negligence of the County, the Contractor shall indemnify and hold harmless the County, its officers, employees and agents from and against any and all liability, damage, claims, demands, costs, judgments, fees, attorneys' fees or loss arising directly or indirectly out of the acts or omissions hereunder by the Contractor or third parties under the direction or control of the Contractor; and

(b) to provide defense for and defend, at its sole expense, any and all claims, demands or causes of action directly or indirectly arising out of this Agreement and to bear all other costs and expenses related thereto.

Upon execution of any contract between the proposer and the County, the proposer will be required to provide proof that it has applicable insurance coverages in the types and amounts as described in Schedule “B”, with the exception of professional liability insurance coverage in which the successful proposer will be required to provide proof of coverage in an amount no less than three million (\$3,000,000) dollars per occurrence and aggregate.

Insurance coverage in amount and form shall not be deemed acceptable until approved by the County Attorney.

RECORDS

All records compiled by the Contractor in completing the work described in this Agreement including, but not limited to, written reports, source codes, studies, drawings, blueprints, negatives of photographs, computer printouts, graphs, charts, plans, specifications and all other similar recorded data, if any, shall become and remain the property of the County. The Contractor may retain copies of such records for its own use.

NON-COLLUSION

The proposer, by signing the proposal, does hereby warrant and represent that any ensuing agreement has not been solicited, secured or prepared directly or indirectly, in a manner contrary to the laws of the State of New York and the County of Erie, and that said laws have not been violated and shall not be violated as they relate to the procurement or the performance of the agreement by any conduct, including the paying or the giving of any fee, commission, compensation, gift, gratuity or consideration of any kind, directly or indirectly, to any County employee, officer or official.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

All proposers must disclose with their proposals the name of any officer, director or agent who is also an employee of the County of Erie. Further, all proposers must disclose the name of any County employee who owns, directly or indirectly, an interest of ten percent or more in the firm or any of its subsidiaries or affiliates.

There shall be no conflicts in existence during the term of any contract with the County. The existence of a conflict shall be grounds for termination of a contract.

COMPLIANCE WITH LAWS

By submitting a proposal, the proposer represents and warrants that it is familiar with all federal, state and local laws and regulations and will conform to said laws and regulations. The preparation of proposals, selection of proposers and the award of contracts are subject to provisions of all Federal, State and County laws, rules and regulations.

CONTENTS OF PROPOSAL

The New York State Freedom of Information Law as set forth in Public Officers Law, Article 6, Sections 84 et seq., mandates public access to government records. However, proposals submitted in response to this RFP may contain technical, financial background or other data, public

disclosure of which could cause substantial injury to the proposer's competitive position or constitute a trade secret. Proposers who have a good faith belief that information submitted in their proposals is protected from disclosure under the New York Freedom of Information Law shall:

a) insert the following notice in the front of its proposal:

“NOTICE

The data on pages ___ of this proposal identified by an asterisk (*) contains technical or financial information constituting trade secrets or information the disclosure of which would result in substantial injury to the proposer’s competitive position.

The proposer requests that such information be used only for the evaluation of the proposal, but understands that any disclosure will be limited to the extent that the County considers proper under the law. If the County enters into an agreement with this proposer, the County shall have the right to use or disclose such information as provided in the agreement, unless otherwise obligated by law.”

and

b) clearly identify the pages of the proposals containing such information by typing in bold face on the top of each page " *** THE PROPOSER BELIEVES THAT THIS INFORMATION IS PROTECTED FROM DISCLOSURE UNDER THE STATE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION LAW.**"

The County assumes no liability for disclosure of information so identified, provided that the County has made a good faith legal determination that the information is not protected from disclosure under applicable law or where disclosure is required to comply with an order or judgment of a court of competent jurisdiction.

The contents of the proposal which is accepted by the County, except portions "Protected from Disclosure", may become part of any agreement resulting from this RFP.

EFFECTIVE PERIOD OF PROPOSALS

All proposals must state the period for which the proposal shall remain in effect (i.e. how much time does the County have to accept or reject the proposal under the terms proposed). Such period shall not be less than 180 days from the proposal date.

PROPOSER CERTIFICATION

The undersigned agrees and understands that this proposal and all attachments, additional information, etc. submitted herewith constitute merely an offer to negotiate with the County of Erie and is NOT A BID. Submission of this proposal, attachments, and additional information shall not obligate or entitle the proposing entity to enter into a service agreement with the County of Erie for the required services. The undersigned agrees and understands that the County of Erie is not obligated to respond to this proposal nor is it legally bound in any manner whatsoever by the submission of same. Further, the undersigned agrees and understands that any and all proposals and negotiations shall not be binding or valid against the County of Erie, its directors, officers, employees or agents unless an agreement is signed by a duly authorized officer of the County of Erie and approved by the Office of the County Attorney.

It is understood and agreed that the County of Erie reserves the right to reject consideration of any and all proposals including, but not limited to, proposals which are conditional or incomplete. It is further understood and agreed that the County of Erie reserves all rights specified in the Request for Proposals.

It is represented and warranted by those submitting this proposal that except as disclosed in the proposal, no officer or employee of the County of Erie is directly or indirectly a party to or in any other manner interested in this proposal or any subsequent service agreement that may be entered into.

Proposer Name

By: _____
Name and Title

SCHEDULE "B"

STANDARD INSURANCE PROVISIONS

http://www2.erie.gov/law/sites/www2.erie.gov.law/files/uploads/pdfs/EC%20Final%20Cert_revised.pdf