



ERIE COUNTY

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

To Provide Housing Counseling and Referral Services -
Erie County Community Development Block
Grant Consortium

RFP# 2023-012VF

January 27, 2023

**Paul D'Orlando, Principal Contract Monitor
Department of Environment and Planning
Edward A. Rath County Office Building
95 Franklin Street, 10th Floor
Buffalo, NY 14202**

**COUNTY OF ERIE, NEW YORK
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS ("RFP")
RFP# 2023-012VF**

**To Provide Housing Counseling and Referral Services –
Erie County Community Development Block Grant Consortium**

I. INTRODUCTION

The County of Erie, New York (the "County") is currently seeking proposals from qualified organizations/firms interested in providing housing counseling and referral services to residents in the Erie County Community Development Block Grant Consortium. Proposers interested in providing said services are invited to respond to this request.

It is the County's intent to select the Proposer that provides the best solution for the County's needs.

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.

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:	January 27, 2023
Optional Pre-Proposal Meeting:	February 9, 2023
Proposals Due:	February 23, 2023
Selection Made:	Thirty (30) days following due date
Contract Signed:	Following all necessary County approval

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:
Paul D'Orlando, Principal Contract Monitor
Department of Environment and Planning, Edward A. Rath County Office Building
95 Franklin Street, 10th Floor
Buffalo, New York 14202

All proposals must be delivered to the above office on or before February 23 at 4:00 pm. Proposals received after the above date and time will not be considered. The County is under no obligation to return proposals.

4. Requests for clarification of this RFP must be written and submitted to Paul D'Orlando, Edward A. Rath County Office Building, 95 Franklin Street, Buffalo, NY 14202; Paul.D'Orlando@erie.gov; (716) 858-6927 no later than 4:00 pm on February 10, 2023. Formal written responses will be distributed by the County on or before February 17, 2023. NO COMMUNICATIONS OF ANY KIND WILL BE BINDING AGAINST THE COUNTY, EXCEPT FOR THE FORMAL WRITTEN RESPONSES TO ANY REQUEST FOR CLARIFICATION.
5. Proposers 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.
7. Certified Minority Business Enterprise/Women's Business Enterprise (MBE/WBE) proposers should include the Erie County certification letter with the proposal.
8. If proposer is a Veteran Owned Business, proposer should include letter indicating company is 51% or more Veteran-owned.
9. Proposers are encouraged to attend the optional pre-proposal Webex meeting which will be held at 2:00 pm on February 9, 2023. Please email Jean.Bennett@erie.gov to register.
10. Fee: Each response shall include a lump sum fee for services.

III. SCOPE OF PROFESSIONAL SERVICES REQUIRED

Reference should be made to Schedule A of this RFP for the required Scope of Services.

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 a 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;

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

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

- Evaluation of the professional qualifications, personal background and resume(s) of individuals involved in providing 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. This will include the agency plan for publicity and outreach to minimize public awareness of the availability of services.
- The proposer's presentation at and the overall results of any interview conducted with the proposer.
- MBE/WBE Participation
- Past performance when undertaking work for the Erie County Department of Environment and Planning.
- Miscellaneous
- Proposers MUST sign the Proposal Certification attached hereto as Schedule "B". 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.
- 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 prepared by the County of Erie and will not be binding until signed by both parties and, if necessary, approved by the Erie County Legislature, the Erie County Fiscal Stability Authority and 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 FISCALSTABILITY 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 one (1) year period commencing April 1, 2023 and terminating March 31, 2024. The County, in its sole discretion may extend the agreement beyond the initial term for up to two (2) 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 Agency agrees:

- a) that except for the amount, if any, of damage contributed to, caused by or resulting from the negligence of the County, the Agency 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 Agency or third parties under the direction or control of the Agency; 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 of the insurance coverage described in Schedule "C".

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

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 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.

SCHEDULE "A"

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

2019

ERIE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING

95 FRANKLIN STREET BUFFALO, NY 14202

Contact Person: Paul D'Orlando

(716) 858-2194

I. STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Erie County's Community Development Program administers housing rehabilitation programs and home purchase programs funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME Investment Partnership Programs for thirty-four communities in Erie County (Erie County Consortium). See attached service area map. Homeownership and renters in these consortium communities periodically require financial counseling and referral services.

II. PROPOSAL OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this request is to select a qualified agency to provide housing counseling for homeowner and renter households, homebuyer workshops, and referral services under a twelve month contract and two years extension option with Erie County to serve low income residents of consortium communities.

III. SCOPE OF SERVICES

A. Basic Services to be offered:

- Mortgage default counseling
- Pre- and Post- home buying counseling
- Credit risk counseling
- Renter assistance to include landlord-tenant information and help with apartment search
- Loan application counseling
- Referrals and follow-up
- Publicizing counseling services
- Pre-purchase home buying workshops
- Financial counseling
- On-going evaluation and modification of services subject to approval by the Senior Housing Specialist
- Landlord home buying class "becoming a landlord"

B. Reporting System:

Quarterly Statistical Report, including the following on a quarterly basis:

- a. Number of persons assisted
- b. % of persons assisted who are:
 - 1. Moderate income
 - 2. Low income
 - 3. Very low income
 - 4. White not Hispanic
 - 5. Black not Hispanic
 - 6. American Indian
 - 7. White Hispanic
 - 8. Black Hispanic
 - 9. Asian
- c. Number of female headed households
- d. Type of Assistance
- e. Annual evaluation of program due at end of each CDBG Program Year

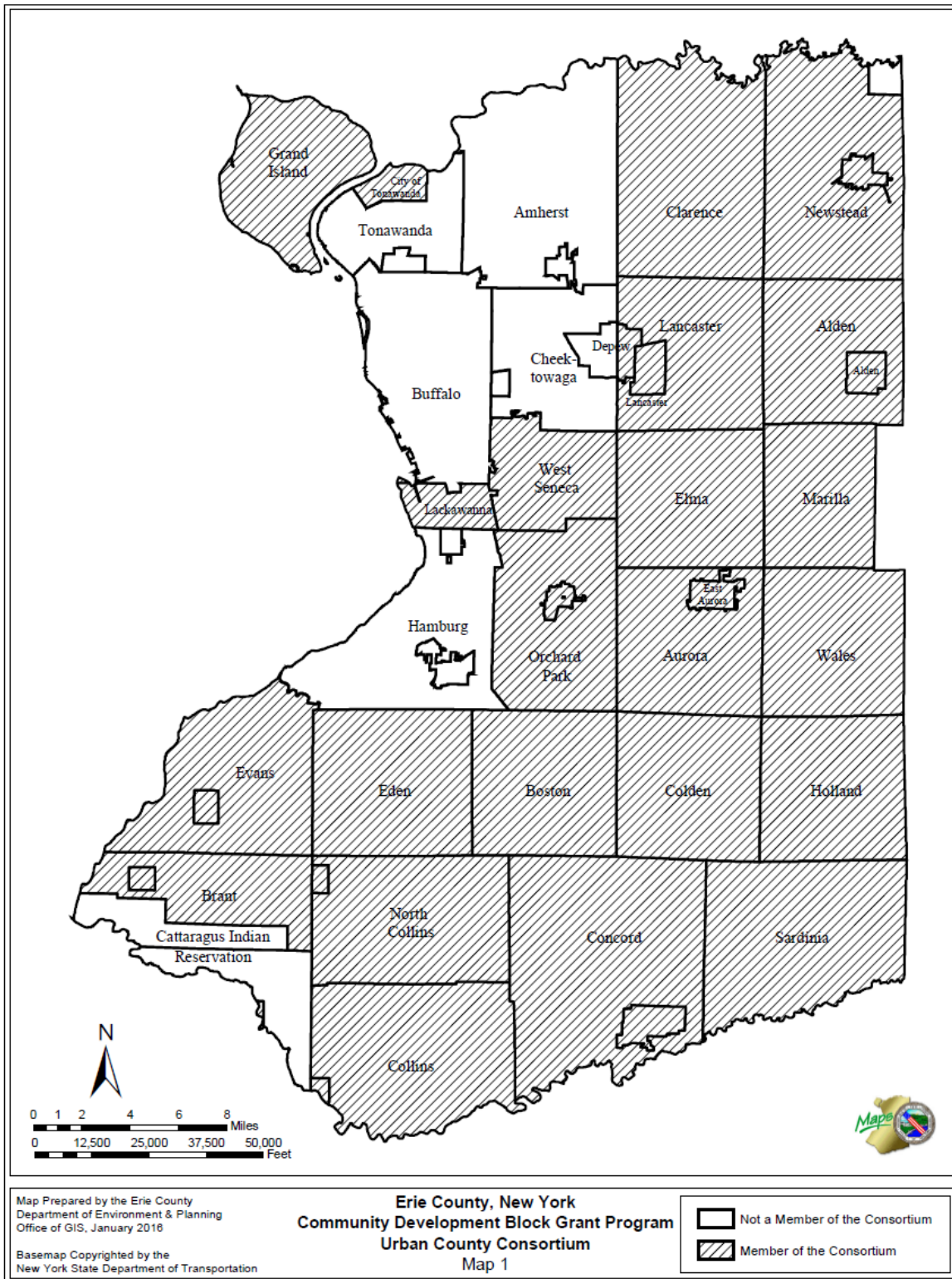
IV. COMPENSATION FOR SERVICES

The amount budgeted for housing counseling and referral services for the County's 2023-2024 year is \$26,716. Proposals must list staffing fees for services to be provided.

V. PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

- A. Description of the agency's qualifications and experience.
- B. Proposed fee per case and/or total annual fee for services for 4/1/23-3/31/24 and for the option period 4/1/24-3/31/25 and 4/1/25-3/31/26. It should be noted that, based on federal funding levels, Erie County has the right to readjust funding levels as well as the scope services.
- C. Statement indicating that the insurance requirements noted on Schedule C can be satisfied.

Erie County Community Development Block Grant Consortium Service Area Map



SCHEDULE "B"
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, if necessary, approved by the Erie County Legislature and Erie County Fiscal Stability Authority and 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 "C"

STANDARD INSURANCE PROVISIONS

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COUNTY OF ERIE STANDARD INSURANCE CERTIFICATE

- I. Insurance shall be procured and certificates delivered before commencement of work or delivery of merchandise or equipment.
- II. CERTIFICATES OF INSURANCE
 - A. Shall be made to the "County of Erie, 95 Franklin St, Buffalo NY, 14202"
 - B. Coverage must comply with all specifications of the contract.
 - C. Must be executed by an insurance company, agency or broker, which is licensed by the Insurance Department of the State of New York. If executed by a broker, notarized copy of authorization to bind or certify coverage must be attached.
- III. Forward the completed certificate to: County of Erie, (Department or Division) responsible for entering into the agreement for construction, purchase, lease or service.
- IV. Minimum coverage with limits are as follows:

Vendor Classification	A Construction and Maintenance	B Purchase or Lease of Merchandise or Equipment	C Professional Services	D Property Leased To Others Or Use Of Facilities Or Grounds	E Concessionaires Services	F Livery Services	G All Purposes Public Entity Contracts
Commercial Gen. Liab.	\$1,000,000 per occ.	\$1,000,000 CSL	\$1,000,000 CSL	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000 CSL	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000 CSL
General Aggregate	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000
Products Completed Operations Liability	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000
Blanket Broad Form Contractual Liability	INCLUDE						
Contractual Liability		INCLUDE	INCLUDE	INCLUDE	INCLUDE	INCLUDE	INCLUDE
Broad Form P.D.	INCLUDE						
X.C.U. (explosion, collapse, Underground)	INCLUDE						
Liquor Law				INCLUDE	INCLUDE		
Auto Liab.	\$1,000,000 CSL		\$1,000,000 CSL	\$1,000,000 CSL	\$1,000,000 CSL	\$1,000,000 CSL	\$1,000,000 CSL
Owned	INCLUDE		INCLUDE	INCLUDE	INCLUDE	INCLUDE	INCLUDE
Hired	INCLUDE		INCLUDE	INCLUDE	INCLUDE	INCLUDE	INCLUDE
Non-Owned	INCLUDE		INCLUDE	INCLUDE	INCLUDE	INCLUDE	INCLUDE

Excess/Umbrella Liab.	\$5,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$5,000,000	\$1,000,000
Worker's Compensation & Employer's Liability	STATUTORY	STATUTORY	STATUTORY	STATUTORY	STATUTORY	STATUTORY	STATUTORY
Disability Benefits	STATUTORY	STATUTORY	STATUTORY	STATUTORY	STATUTORY	STATUTORY	STATUTORY
Professional Liability			\$5,000,000				
Erie County, To Be Named Additional Insured	Gen. Liab., Auto Liab., & Excess	Broad Form Vendors May Be Required	Gen. Liab., Auto Liab., & Excess	Gen. Liab., Auto Liab., & Excess	Gen. Liab., Auto Liab., & Excess	Gen. Liab., Auto Liab., & Excess	Gen. Liab., Auto Liab., & Excess

- V. Construction contracts require excess Umbrella Liability limits of \$5,000,000.
- VI Coverage must be provided on a primary-noncontributory bases.
- VII. Designated Construction Project General Aggregate Limit Per Project Endorsement CG 25 03 is required.
- VIII. In the event the concessionaire is required to have a N.Y.S. license to dispense alcoholic beverages an endorsement for liquor liability is required.
- IX. Waiver of Subrogation: Required on all lines unless noted
- X. Transportation of people in buses, vans or station wagons requires \$5,000,000 excess liability.
- XI. Workers Compensation: State Workers' Compensation/Disability Benefits Law.

Use Applicable Certificates Below:

DBL (Disability Benefits Law) Forms

Workers Compensation Forms

CE-200	Exemption
C105.2	Commercial Insurer
SI-12	Self Insurer
GSI-105.2	Group Self Insured
U-26.3	New York State Insurance Fund

CE-200	Exemption
DB-120.1	Insurers
DB-155	Self Insured

- XII. The "ACORD" form certificate may be used in place of the County of Erie Standard Insurance Certificate, provided that all of the above referenced requirements are incorporated into the "ACORD" form certificate.