



**COMMUNITY
ACTION CORPORATION
OF SOUTH TEXAS**

COMMUNITY ACTION CORPORATION OF SOUTH TEXAS
IT Consulting Services
Request for Proposal (RFP)

PROPOSALS DUE:
July 29, 2021

Attn: Ann Awalt, MPA
Executive Director
ann.awalt@cacost.org

Community Action Corporation of South Texas
204 E. First St.
Alice, TX 78332

COMMUNITY ACTION CORPORATION OF SOUTH TEXAS

204 E. First St. • Alice, TX 78332 • Ph. 361.664.0145

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)
IT Consulting Services**

INTRODUCTION

The Community Action Corporation of South Texas (CACOST) is a private non-profit organization established in 1971 and funded through state and federal grants and fees for service. CACOST has a workforce of approximately 690 employees and a service area consisting of seventeen (17) south Texas counties. The mission of CACOST is to continuously improve the lives of south Texans by providing high quality healthcare, education, housing, and economic opportunities to reduce poverty through services and partnerships. More information on CACOST can be obtained by visiting the CACOST web site at www.cacost.org.

PROPOSAL SUMMARY

CACOST is seeking proposals from qualified IT Consultants to provide consulting services to assist in providing IT strategies and solutions to attain a greater agency-IT alignment and get the most from its current systems. Areas of experience should include but are not limited to security planning, cloud migration, systems analysis, staff development and infrastructure design. Other services, on a as needed basis, will include consultation on IT issues and training for staff and board members.

CLOSING DATE

Proposals must be submitted no later than 5:00 pm, July 29, 2021.

INQUIRIES & CONTACT INFORMATION

All questions concerning this RFP should be directed to Ann Awalt, MPA; Executive Director, at ann.awalt@cacost.org. Communication with other individuals will not be allowed. CACOST reserves the right to disqualify any Proposer who is found in violation of this provision. No questions other than written via email will be accepted, and no response other than written will be binding upon CACOST. Submittals will remain on file in accordance with the Texas Open Records Act.

EXPECTED TIMELINE

The following timeline of events is expected to be followed but shall not be considered binding:

RVP EVENT	DATE
RFP Publication	July 16, 2021
Proposal Submission Date	July 29, 2021
Announcement of Intent to Award	August 16, 2021
Contract Start Date	September 1, 2021

GENERAL TERMS & CONDITIONS

SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

To be considered responsive and receive an evaluation, proposals must fully address all sections of the RFP. Your proposal should be addressed as follows:

Community Action Corporation of South Texas
RFP for IT Consultant Services
ATTN: Ann Awalt, Executive Director
204 E. First St.
Alice, Texas 78332
OR via email to ann.awalt@cacost.org

It is the sole responsibility of the Proposer to ensure that the proposal is received by the date and time specified above. **LATE PROPOSALS WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED.** Confirmation of receipt is the sole responsibility of the Proposer. Proposal submissions may include value-added alternatives and any relevant information in addition to the information requested in the RFP. Proposals may be withdrawn in writing prior to the deadline. Unless otherwise stated, all materials submitted by the Proposer in response to this RFP shall become the property of CACOST.

NOTIFICATION OF AWARD

CACOST anticipates, but does not guarantee, a contract or multiple contracts will be awarded on or around the week of July 29, 2021. Award will be made to the Proposer(s) based on the listed evaluation criteria and the responses that are most compatible with CACOST's needs. CACOST will be the sole judge in making this determination. CACOST is not bound to accept the lowest bid or any proposal submitted. A contract for the approved proposal will be executed based upon the factors described in this RFP.

The term of this Agreement is for a one-year period, beginning September 1, 2021, with mutually agreeable extensions, subject to evaluation for continuance or modifications, for up to a four (4) year term.

CACOST may investigate the qualifications of any individual or firm under consideration, require confirmation of information furnished and require additional evidence of qualifications to perform the services described in this RFP. The Agency also reserves certain rights, including, but not limited to, the following:

- a. Reject any or all proposals
- b. Issue subsequent Requests for Proposals
- c. Cancel the entire Request for Proposal
- d. Remedy technical errors in the Request for Proposal process
- e. Appoint evaluation committees to review qualifications and proposals
- f. Seek the assistance of outside technical experts in evaluation
- g. Approve or disapprove the use of particular subcontractors
- h. Establish a short list of proposers eligible for discussions after review of RFP
- i. Solicit best and final offers from all, some, or one of the proposers
- j. Waive informalities and irregularities in RFP
- k. Award without discussion
- l. Cancel an awarded contract if performance is unsatisfactory, with the provision of a written notice; no penalty and/or fee may be imposed

- m. Conduct pre-contract negotiations with any and/or all potential qualified contractors

This RFP shall not, in any manner, be construed to be an obligation on CACOST to enter into a contract or result in any claim for reimbursement of cost for any efforts expended in responding to the RFP or in anticipation of any contract.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The Proposer agrees to keep the information related to all contracts in strict confidence. Other than the reports submitted to CACOST, the Proposer agrees not to publish, reproduce or otherwise divulge such information, in whole or in part, in any manner or form, or authorize or permit others to do so taking such reasonable measures as are necessary to restrict access to the information while in the Proposer's possession to these employees on the Proposer's staff who must have the information on a "need-to-know" basis. The Proposer agrees to notify immediately, in writing, CACOST's authorized representative in the event the Proposer determines or has reason to suspect a breach of this requirement.

LIMITATIONS & RESERVATIONS

CACOST reserves the right to negotiate the terms and conditions of the contract with any of the evaluated Proposers. Should the successful Proposer and CACOST fail to come to an agreement, CACOST may at its sole discretion award work to any of the remaining Proposers. The Proposer to whom the contract is awarded shall be required to enter into a written contract with CACOST. This RFP and the proposal, or any part thereof, shall be incorporated into and made a part of the final contract. CACOST specifically reserves the right to vary the provisions set forth herein any time before the execution of a contract where such variance is deemed to be in the best interest of the needs of CACOST.

If selected for negotiations, Proposer may be required to prepare and submit additional information before final Proposer(s) selection, to reach terms for the provision of services, which are agreeable to both parties.

FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

CACOST assumes no financial responsibility for any costs in developing and submitting a proposal or any amendments or addenda, participating in bid conferences, participating in any negotiation sessions or discussions, or any other costs incurred by Proposers prior to award of a contract or agreement pursuant to this RFP. All costs incurred in the preparation of any response to this RFP and/or associated costs will be the sole responsibility of the Proposer and will not be reimbursed by CACOST.

STEVENS AMENDMENT

This project will be supported by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of an annual award totaling \$38,851,223.74 with 72% funded by HHS and 28% funded by non-government source(s). The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by HRSA, Administration for Children and Families, ACYF-FYSB, HHS or the U.S. Government.

SMALL, WOMEN, AND/OR MINORITY-OWNED BUSINESSES

Efforts will be made by CACOST to utilize small businesses and women and minority-owned businesses with the consideration that the primary responsibility is the most favorable return to CACOST. A Proposer qualifies as a small business firm if it meets the definition of "small business" as established by the Small Business Administration (13 CFR 121.201).

HISTORICALLY UNDERUTILIZED BUSINESSES

It is CACOST policy to encourage participation of small and historically underutilized businesses (HUBs), as defined in Government Code, Chapter 2161. "Historically underutilized business (HUB): means an entity with its principal place of Business in this state that is:

1. a corporation formed for the purpose of making a profit in which 51 percent or more of all classes of the shares of stock or other equitable securities are owned by one or more economically disadvantaged persons who have a proportionate interest and actively participate in the corporation's control, operation, and management;
2. a sole proprietorship created for the purpose of making a profit that is completely owned, operated, and controlled by an economically disadvantaged person;
3. a partnership formed for the purpose of making a profit in which 51 percent or more of the assets and interest in the partnership are owned by one or more economically disadvantaged persons who have a proportionate interest and actively participate in the partnership's control, operation, and management;
4. a joint venture in which each entity in the venture is a historically underutilized business, as determined under Government Code Chapter 2161; or
5. a supplier contract between a historically underutilized business as determined under Government Code Chapter 2161 and a prime contractor under which the historically underutilized business is directly involved in the manufacture or distribution of the goods or otherwise warehouses and ships the goods.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

It is the policy of CACOST not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, gender, religion, marital status, age, national origin or ancestry, physical or mental disability, medical condition, sexual orientation, political affiliation or belief or any other consideration made unlawful by applicable federal, state, or local laws. Contractor agrees not to discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment to be employed in the performance of this Agreement, with respect to hiring, tenure, terms, conditions, and privileges of employment, or a matter directly or indirectly related to employment, because of age or race, color, creed, gender, religion, marital status, age, national origin, or ancestry, physical or mental disability, medical condition, sexual orientation, political affiliation, or belief. Contractor further agrees that every subcontractor entered into for the performance of the Agreement shall contain a provision requiring non-discrimination in employment herein specified, binding upon each subcontractor. Breach of the covenant may be regarded as a material breach of the Agreement.

CERTIFICATION WITH REGARDS TO LOBBYING

No federal appropriated funds will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of Congress or an employee of a member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any federal contract, the making of any federal grant or loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement or the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment or modification of any federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.

PROHIBITED SUBSTANCES IN THE WORKPLACE

The contractor is considered a representative of CACOST while carrying out the duties of the contract. CACOST has a policy that prohibits the possession and/or use of alcohol or illegal drugs when conducting CACOST business. If the contractor is observed engaging in this type of behavior while performing any aspect of the contract, termination of the contract will occur.

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

The Equal Employment Opportunity Clause required under Executive Order 11246, the affirmative action commitment for disabled veterans, recently separated veterans, other protected veterans, and Armed Forces Service Medal Veterans, the affirmative action clause for handicapped workers and the related regulations of the Secretary of Labor, 41 CFR Chapter 60, are incorporated by reference in the contract. By accepting the contract, the vendor certifies that it complies with the authorities cited above, and that it does not maintain segregated facilities or permit its employees to perform services at locations where segregated facilities are maintained, as required by 41 CFR 60.

DEBARMENT AND SUSPENSION

The contractor certifies, by submission of this proposal, that neither it nor its principals are presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in this transaction by any federal department or agency.

SCOPE OF SERVICES

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

CACOST is a private non-profit organization funded by federal, state and local grants. The IT Department consists of six (6) individuals: A Director of Information Technology, a Help Desk Manager, three IT Technicians, and an IT Assistant. The IT Department is currently responsible for managing servers, computer maintenance and troubleshooting, data integrity, equipment installation, and data archiving.

PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

General Requirements

The Proposer shall be capable of providing the following services at a minimum under this contract:

1. Evaluate existing information processing systems to determine their effectiveness and develop systems to improve production or workflows as needed.
2. Recommend organizational strategies to ensure that the IT Department supports the Agency's mission.
3. Analyze the existing infrastructure and systems to make recommendations for cloud and on-premises design.
4. Evaluate the existing cyber and information security program, analyze security risks and make recommendations for improvement.
5. Assess IT control elements to mitigate IT risks regarding the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of business information.
6. Review the IT Department's organizational structure and employee competencies and make recommendations on areas of restructuring and improvement.
7. Review workstation/server data integrity and recommend software and hardware solutions and a schedule of backups for data archiving.
8. Evaluate business and IT operations to recommend an appropriate framework that supports secure and resilient information systems.
9. Recommend strategies for disaster and incident response planning.
10. Recommend action on testing and certification of system software and hardware upgrades.
11. Structure an IT operating model that contains predictable costs.

Services and tasks to be performed will vary. The items identified in this RFP are intended to provide information to the Proposer and for evaluation purposes. Tasks should not be construed to represent any amount which CACOST shall be obligated to receive under the contract.

Proposer shall be prepared to submit detailed billing statements for all services billed at an hourly rate, if any, broken down into time increments of no less than a quarter hour. Proposer shall also include summaries of work performed and time spent on services performed under the flat monthly fee, as discussed below.

Proposal Requirements and Scoring

1. **Qualifications & Experience (45 points)**- The Proposer should describe their professional and educational background. The Proposer should have at least 10 years' experience and knowledge in the following areas:

- a. Security Planning
 - b. Cloud Migration
 - c. Disaster and Response Planning
 - d. Infrastructure Design and Management
 - e. IT Staff Development/ Organizational Structures
 - f. IT Modernization
 - g. Training
2. **Understanding of work to be Performed (30 points)** – the Proposer should describe its understanding of work to be performed (as described in *General Requirements*), including deliverables and estimated hours (when possible).
 3. **Price (15 points)**- The Proposer's proposed price should include information on the hourly billing rates and charges for expenses, if any, such as research and copies. Also include a monthly flat fee that would be charged to advise on routine matters that could be handled over the telephone or otherwise without extensive work. CACOST reserves the right to negotiate with the Proposer on the structure of the billing and/or retainer fee.
 4. **References (10 points)**- The Proposer should include, at a minimum, the names, addresses, contact persons, and telephone numbers of at least three professional references. References for whom similar or related services have been provided within the last three (3) years is preferred.

Proposal Review & Evaluation

A committee selected by CACOST will review and evaluate all proposals based on the criteria listed in 1-4 above. The Proposers may be asked to interview with CACOST representatives, make an oral presentation and/or respond to questions regarding the submittal response. CACOST may elect to negotiate pricing with one or more of the most qualified Proposers. Once all proposals are reviewed and evaluated, the submitted proposal that will provide the most value to CACOST will be selected and will be submitted as a recommendation to the CACOST Executive Director. CACOST is not bound to accept the lowest priced proposal if it is not in the best interest of CACOST as determined by the review committee.

In accordance with applicable laws, rules and regulations for public purchasing, an award will be made to the responsible Proposer whose proposal is determined to provide the best value to CACOST. The proposal must be submitted on time and must materially satisfy all mandatory requirements identified above to qualify for evaluation. A written acceptance mailed or otherwise furnished to the qualified proposer and a fully executed contract is required prior to commencement of any work under this RFP. Protest procedures are available upon request and must be submitted within ten (10) days of award determination for consideration.