

November 16, 2016

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

PREPARING A PLAN TO COORDINATE AND IMPLEMENT COMPUTER ASSISTED
MASS APPRAISAL SERVICES IN 18 CT MUNICIPALITIES

1. Introduction

The Western Connecticut Council of Governments (WestCOG) is a voluntary association of eighteen cities and towns. The eighteen municipalities which in combination constitute the study area (henceforth “Western Connecticut”) are Bethel, Bridgewater, Brookfield, Danbury, Darien, Greenwich, New Canaan, New Fairfield, New Milford, Newtown, Norwalk, Redding, Ridgefield, Sherman, Stamford, Weston, Westport and Wilton. These municipalities vary in character from small and rural with a few thousand people, such as Bridgewater and Sherman, to larger, more urban communities such as Danbury, Norwalk, and Stamford (Figure 1). Due to these differences the degree of CAMA related technical skill and training also varies significantly by municipality.

WestCOG is seeking qualified consultant(s) to evaluate the potential for a Computer Assisted Mass Appraisal (CAMA) system to serve the entire region and, if such a system is determined to be feasible and cost-effective, to develop a structure and plan for municipalities to migrate to it on a voluntary basis.

WestCOG will accept written proposals by e-mail, mail, or in person, **until 11:59 pm ET on Sunday, December 4th, 2016**. Respondents are strongly encouraged to submit two paper copies (one bound and one unbound) as well as a digital copy in PDF format, which can e-mailed or put on a thumb drive or CD/DVD as part of the submittal. Email submission must be smaller than **10 MB** and the proposal narrative can be no more than 12 pages. Technical, administrative, and other reference materials may be placed in appendices (unlimited). It is the responsibility of the respondent to ensure all required items are included in their proposal. RFP questions will only be accepted by email. Responses will be posted at www.westcog.org website by Nov. 30th.

Contact

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Schedule of Tasks

RFP Questions by E-mail (Responses posted on WestCOG website www.westcog.org)	Due: 11:59 pm ET on November 27th, 2016
Proposals Due	Due 11:59 pm ET on Dec. 4th, 2016
Consultant Interviews (Interviews located at 1 Riverside Road, Sandy Hook, CT)	December 15th, 2016 Alt date: Dec. 16th, 2016
Final Selection	December 21 st , 2016 (expected)

2. Scope of Work

Within each municipal government, property tax assessment and revenue collection are core functions. This is due to the role of property taxes in funding local government. Property tax assessment is typically supported by a Computer Assisted Mass Appraisal (CAMA) system with an attached web platform, mapping or tabular, that provides citizens access to information related to local parcels. According to the Massachusetts Department of Revenue's Division of Local Services, the four primary components of the CAMA system are data management (often including GIS and parcel management) with audit trail, then valuation, performance analysis and administration.¹ As the Connecticut governance system has a traditional 'home rule' basis, many government functions are carried out by local governments. Thus the tax assessment systems are highly individualized unique to each municipality, with numerous vendors involved (at least thirty across the 18 municipalities in Western Connecticut.) A regional approach to CAMA may eliminate some of this complexity and produce efficiencies.

The goal of this Request for Proposals is to obtain the services necessary to prepare a "Plan to Coordinate Computer Assisted Mass Appraisal Services in Western Connecticut" and help members understand steps, limitations, and possibilities going forward with a potential regional CAMA system.

WestCOG is a joint creation of the municipalities to provide services to them. Therefore, participation by each municipality in the resulting plan is entirely optional.

Suggested Study Structure

Overview: WestCOG seeks qualified consultant(s) with expertise in tax assessment management, software, and related technologies. They are to lay the foundation for a future migration of the fragmented tax assessment system in the WestCOG region to a shared regional CAMA system.

The consultant will assess the current municipal systems and recommend coordination strategies with various combinations of software, hardware, workflow and governance models. The goal is to create a single, scalable system that would allow the WestCOG municipalities to join in as they move through their appraisal cycle.

The consultant will evaluate the municipal systems; analyze the advantages/disadvantages of consolidation including the expected benefits, costs, and cost savings/expenses, if any; describe the available range of solutions; discuss issues with combining formats, processes, and systems; document relevant best management practices; and provide recommendations for the most

¹ Massachusetts Department of Revenue Division of Local Services

suitable approaches. An implementation plan which identifies barriers and opportunities for both the region as a whole and the individual towns will facilitate future integration.

To the greatest extent possible, the proposed system should be simple and secure, with low costs for migration, maintenance, and across the entire life cycle. Possible approaches may include but not be limited to the following three areas as recommended by the New York State Department of Taxation:

- A consortium with one contract and one price;
- A consortium with one contract and one price with optional services for each municipality;
- A single system with multiple contracts and pricing (allowing for migration).

Task 1: Baseline Evaluation

Create a baseline evaluation and assessment of the CAMA systems for the 18 municipalities in Western Connecticut. The goal of this task is to understand the current software, hardware, consultant structure, parcel data, data schema, and governance complexities of the CAMA systems across Western Connecticut. Results should be placed in an easy to understand overview with an accompanying explanatory text.

Task 2: CAMA Schema

Create a universal schema data format for the municipal CAMA data that facilitates migration of the data to a new regional system by incorporating a full range of assessment attributes.

Include a list of all relevant attributes that should be included in the system. Determine and describe what are major constraints and opportunities with regards to successful migration of the data.

Task 3: Digital Parcel Data

Determine the state of assessment and parcel data across Western Connecticut. Propose a single, unifying format and system for the region that would allow the communities to migrate to a single, shared platform. The new platform should include editing capabilities, multi-user access, a tracking system and audit trail, and other suggested attributes.

As part of this task, include the structure of a management plan for maintaining and updating the data sets.

In addition, suggest the most cost effective technology solutions including software, platform (e.g. cloud-based), and universal schema.

Task 4: Valuation Analysis

Describe current best management practices for mass appraisal and assessment analytics including standard valuation procedures. Determine the challenges, advantages, and disadvantages of a single-system approach and the migration to that system.

As part of this assessment include the structure of a management plan for maintaining and updating valuation methods.

Task 5: Performance Analysis

Describe current best management practices for mass appraisal and assessment analytics including standard valuation procedures. Determine the challenges, advantages, and disadvantages of a single-system approach and the migration to that system.

As part of this assessment include the structure of a management plan for maintaining and updating performance analysis methods.

Task 6: Implementation, Migration and Maintenance

Using proposed solutions recommend a cost-effective model for migration of municipalities to a regional CAMA system. Consider the possibility of extending the system in the future to include additional outside of Western Connecticut. One important consideration is system maintenance, so in addition provide a long-term maintenance plan. Also, the consultant will be required to provide implementation plan(s) for the **entire region and individually for its 18 municipalities** that accounts for barriers to success, easy “wins”, and potential management issues for the characteristics mentioned in this RFP and items considered critical by the consultant.

Task 7: Economic Analysis

Provide a cost assessment of the proposed solution including software, assessment records, parcels, and migration costs. Compare the total cost of ownership between eighteen local systems and the proposed regional system(s). Include at the minimum the following:

1. Migration costs, including (but not limited to) data conversion, deployment, retraining, and potential disruption
2. Capital costs, including (but not limited to) hardware, software, and IT support
3. Operational costs, including (but not limited to) maintenance, licensing, and IT support
4. Benefits, including (but not limited to) savings in all of the above areas as well as improvements in service, productivity, contracting

Indicate to whom each benefit or costs is expected to redound.

Task 8: Case Studies

Provide case studies or examples of similar coordinated regional CAMA systems that are potential models for this effort.

3. General Instructions and Inquiries

Questions regarding this Request for Proposal (RFP) should be directed to Carl Zimmerman via e-mail to czimmerman@westcog.org. **No phone calls please.** Inquiries and responses will be posted on WestCOG's procurement webpage. Please note that it is WestCOG policy to respond only to technical questions. Under no circumstances will WestCOG provide interpretive guidance.

New Releases

Written approval of WestCOG is required prior to any public disclosure of the cost proposal submitted in response to this RFP or any other subsequent awards.

Signature Requirements

Proposals must be signed by a representative of the firm having legal authority to contract on behalf of the firm. Proposals will be treated as bona fide offers and must remain open for a period of ninety (90) days from the closing date for submissions.

Proposals from Consortia, Joint Ventures and Teams

Qualifications statements from consortia, joint ventures or teams will be accepted. In such cases, a lead firm must be identified for contracting purposes. A qualifications statement must be prepared for each member of the consortia, joint venture or team, and each qualifications statement should clearly identify the lead firm.

In selecting a lead firm, consortia, joint ventures and teams should consider the following: (1) the lead firm should have sufficient experience and expertise to conduct or supervise all facets of the proposed project; (2) the lead firm will be legally responsible to WestCOG for performance of the total contract; (3) the lead firm must have sufficient resources to carry out the contractual responsibilities of the consortium, joint venture or team; and the lead firm must conduct fifty one percent (51%) of the total work awarded under any contract issued as a result of this RFP. Please note that firms that are subsidiaries or affiliates of another may not rely on the experience, expertise or resources of its parent firm to meet these requirements.

Submission of Qualifications Statements

WestCOG will accept completed proposals by mail or in person, until **11:59 pm ET on Sunday, Dec. 4th, 2016**. Proposals submitted via mail or facsimile will not be accepted. Please see the section entitled "Required Format" for additional guidance.

Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) Requirement

DBE firms are strongly encouraged to respond. Every effort will be made to consider awarding the contract to a qualified DBE, even though this project does not stipulate required compliance.

Proposals 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 provide proof of DBE certification and description of project involvement will be deemed incomplete.

Equal Employment and Nondiscrimination

All contracts awarded as a result of this RFP are subject to Section 4a-60 of the Connecticut General Statutes, "Nondiscrimination and affirmative action provisions in contracts of the state and political sub-divisions other than municipalities." Contracts also are subject to all other applicable state and federal laws concerning civil rights, nondiscrimination and equal opportunities for employment.

Insurance Requirements

Successful firms are required to maintain insurance coverage as required by state and federal law.

Addenda and Supplements

In the event that revisions or additions to this RFP are necessary, a copy of such revisions or additions will be posted to WestCOG website, found at: <https://westcog.org/business-grant-opportunities/>.

Rejection Rights

WestCOG reserves the right to reject any and all proposals received in response to this RFP. WestCOG also reserves the right to cancel this RFP at any time and to reissue this or a substitute RFP at a later date.

Multiple Awards

WestCOG reserves the right to issue multiple awards. WestCOG also reserves the right to retain portions of the work described in the attached scope of work for performance by its own staff, or to exclude portions of the work described in the attached scope of work from negotiated consultant agreement.

Cost of Preparing Proposal

All costs associated with any response to this RFP, including the development of costs and participation in the selection process, are the sole responsibility of the respondent firms. WestCOG will not reimburse any firms for such costs nor will any successful firms be permitted to negotiate such costs as part of any contract or agreement with WestCOG.

Interest of Members or Delegates to Congress

No member of or delegate to the Congress of the United States shall be permitted to share or have interest in or benefit from, directly or indirectly, any contract or agreement resulting from this RFP.

Prohibited Interest

No member, officer or employee of WestCOG, or member of a local public body having jurisdiction within WestCOG service area, during his or her tenure or one year thereafter, shall be permitted to share in, have interest in or benefit from, directly or indirectly, any contract or agreement resulting from this RFP.

Other

Any firm selected to perform any or all work associated with this RFP will be required to execute an agreement with WestCOG and meet any conditions on use of funds imposed by the Connecticut Office of Policy and Management. All fees will be negotiated and stated in the agreement.

Required format

Respondents must submit one digital copy (pdf format) to WestCOG. The proposal must contain the following information:

- Letter of interest
- Statement summarizing the experience of the firm and any proposed sub-consultants;
- Summaries of, and references for, comparable projects (three preferred), including description of services that are similar to this project, the role of any subcontractors, fees, and project status;

- Indication whether staff persons proposed for this project worked on comparable projects as well as their role in those projects;
- A project sample;
- Statement describing the organizational framework for the project, including clear identification of the lead firm, project manager, and sub-consultants, the roles and responsibilities of each sub-consultant, identification of DBE participation (if any), disclosure of any shared interests among the firm and proposed sub-consultants, e.g. parent-subsidiary, joint ventures, formal affiliations, etc., and location (city, state) of production facility where the work will occur;
- Resumes of key personnel to be assigned to the project and the amount of time they will devote to the project;
- Narrative that describes the suggested project approach and methodologies; addresses the goals and objectives stated in the scope of work; and indicates proposed staff assignments;
- A description of the firm's expectation of the involvement and contribution of WestCOG and its members to the project (other than the fee);
- A proposed work schedule;
- **A cost breakdown by task in the project scope of work, including any direct costs, as well as the total cost for all tasks in the project;** and
- Proof of Connecticut DBE certification, if applicable.
- If an alternative project approaches are proposed, please indicate why. Use of alternative approaches is encouraged if it can provide the same or better results without negatively impacting costs. Alternate project approaches are subject to WestCOG approval;

Selection Procedures

Responses to this RFP will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

1. Qualifications of the lead consultant or firm;
2. Qualifications of subcontractors, if any;
3. Qualifications of key personnel assigned to this project;
4. Understanding of project objectives and the thoroughness, creativity, and clarity of suggested approach;
5. Experience and proven record of success with comparable projects;
6. Technical capabilities;
7. Total cost including cost per section.

A Selection Team will be convened to evaluate proposals received by the close stated in this RFP. WestCOG will notify firms, consortia, joint ventures and teams selected for interview by the Consultant Selection Team **within an estimated 1 week of the closing date** via phone call or email. The Selection Team will rank the firms, consortia, joint ventures and teams it interviews according to the criteria identified in this RFP and submit its recommendations to WestCOG. Multiple firms may be selected. WestCOG reserves the right to make multiple awards.

WestCOG will negotiate with the selected firm, consortium, joint venture or team to develop a detailed scope of services and reach agreement on terms and fees for professional services. In the

event that an agreement cannot be reached, WestCOG reserves the right to terminate negotiations with that firm, consortium, joint venture or team and commence negotiations with the next most qualified firm, consortium, joint venture or team. All contracts will be negotiated on a lump sum basis.

Selection of any firm, consortium, joint venture or team may be subject to the approval of WestCOG Board and the Connecticut Office of Policy and Management.

Firms seeking to learn more about WestCOG and its projects and programs are encouraged to visit WestCOG website at <http://WestCOG.org>.

4. References

CT Tax Collectors Association. Found at: <http://www.ct-tax.org/pages/collecting.html>

Massachusetts Department of Revenue Division of Local Services, Bureau of Local Assessment. Guidelines on CAMA System Acquisition. Found at: <http://www.mass.gov/dor/docs/dls/it/pdfs/cama1.pdf>.

New York State Department of Taxation and Finance. Assessors Template. Found at: https://www.tax.ny.gov/research/property/assess/rfp_template_15-06.doc

Figure 1: Western Connecticut

