COLUMBUS CITY ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
OUTSIDE LEGAL COUNSEL
REQUEST FOR STATEMENT OF QUALIFICATIONS

1. Project Information

1.1 Project Name **OUTSIDE LEGAL COUNSEL SERVICES**

1.2 Project Overview

The Columbus City Attorney's Office is seeking Statements of Qualifications, through this Request for Statements of Qualifications (RFSQ), from qualified legal professionals to create a Qualified Suppliers List and contract(s) to serve as Outside Legal Counsel and to provide related legal services to the City of Columbus, Ohio ("City"). For more information, and to submit your proposal, please visit: https://columbus.bonfirehub.com/opportunities/256651

1.3 Project Background

The Columbus City Attorney ("City Attorney") is an elected public official who performs the duties provided in the Columbus City Charter, sections 66 through 78, and Chapter 125 of the Columbus City Codes as well as the duties of a city director of law as provided in Ohio Revised Code Chapter 733. The City Attorney serves as "attorney and counsel for the city, and for all officers and departments thereof in matters relating to their official duties. The city attorney shall prosecute or defend all suits for and in behalf of the city, and shall prepare all contracts, bonds and other instruments in writing in which the city is concerned and shall certify in writing approval of the form and correctness thereof." (Columbus City Charter, Section 67). The City Attorney's office is divided into nine legal divisions or departments based upon legal subject matter: Claims, General Counsel, Labor & Employment, Litigation, Police Legal, Property Action Team (formerly Zone Initiative), Prosecution, Real Estate, and Solicitor General. The City Attorney's office employs seventy-one full-time attorneys and 181 employees overall, including full and part-time administrative and support staff.

The City Attorney is seeking a pool of attorneys and law firms to be available to serve as Outside Legal Counsel on an as-needed basis for matters requiring specialized legal expertise, complex legal or litigation matters, and when separate representation is required due to a potential or actual conflict of interest under the Ohio Rules of Professional Conduct. If the matter involves litigation, most cases will be in Ohio federal and state courts. Please note that inclusion in the pool does not guarantee or provide any assurances that an attorney or law firm will be selected to serve as Outside Legal Counsel on any City transaction or matter. Also, the creation of the pool of attorneys and law firms does not limit the ability of the City Attorney to engage other attorneys or law firms with specialized legal expertise for any specific transaction or matter.

2. Scope of Services

The City Attorney is seeking Statements of Qualifications from qualified attorneys and law firms to provide legal services to the City on an as-needed basis. The City will accomplish this through signing

contracts with various respondents, creating a Qualified Suppliers List. It is required that all attorneys be licensed to practice law before the federal and state courts of Ohio and be in good standing with the Supreme Court of Ohio. If the legal services involve a matter pending in a jurisdiction outside of Ohio, then it is required that all attorneys assigned to the matter be licensed to practice law in the courts of that jurisdiction and be in good standing with the attorney licensing body of that jurisdiction. All attorneys must possess the experience and qualifications needed to provide effective legal services in the areas of law for which they are submitting a Statement of Qualifications. All attorneys assigned to the matter must be free of any conflict of interest under the applicable professional conduct rules.

2.1 Legal Subject Matters and Rates

The selected attorneys and/or law firms will assist the City Attorney with the following legal matters. Attorneys and law firms submitting a Statement of Qualifications may indicate their interest in providing legal services for some or all of the following legal matters:

A. Representation at a **$275.00 blended rate per hour**:
    1. 42 USC §1983 actions in federal court defending City employees including police officers
    2. Representation of the City and its employees on state law tort claims
    3. Representation of the City in labor matters including arbitrations
    4. Representation of the City in employment law matters and litigation
    5. Ohio municipal law
    6. Bankruptcy counsel
    7. Construction law matters and litigation

B. Representation at a **$350.00 blended rate per hour**:
    1. Tax law compliance matters
    2. Real estate and eminent domain matters
    3. Economic development
    4. Copyright and intellectual property matters
    5. Environmental compliance
    6. Energy purchase agreements
    7. Complex federal regulatory compliance matters

Other legal services beyond those listed above, but within the selected attorney or law firm's expertise, may also be directed through these contracts, with the approval of the attorney or law firm. The City Attorney reserves the right, in his sole discretion, to change the Scope of Services at any time during the term of the agreements.

2.2 Outside Legal Counsel will work closely with the City Attorney's staff and other City staff, as appropriate. Retention for a particular matter may include significant evaluative and investigative preparatory work.

2.3 Legal work may include drafting complex contracts and rendering legal opinions to the City interpreting the Columbus City Charter, Columbus City Codes, and/or other state and federal statutory and regulatory requirements.

2.4 Litigation may include drafting pleadings, motions, briefs, and all other papers to be filed in court; conducting and responding to discovery; attending all pre-trial, trial, and post-trial court appearances; conducting settlement negotiations, and handling appeals.

2.5 Outside Legal Counsel must have resources sufficient to advance all costs, including the costs of any experts needed to assess damage and the costs of the preparatory work.

2.6 Outside Legal Counsel will be required to submit quarterly reports to the City Attorney's designee summarizing the status of all assigned matters in process.

2.7 Outside Legal Counsel will also be required to submit a list of all open matters, with the relevant billing/file number and title designation of the matter on a monthly basis, along with its monthly billing including detailed invoices. The list shall include ALL open matters at the time regardless of whether any billing was performed in the billing/invoice cycle.

2.8 The foregoing outline of services is not exclusive. The City Attorney and the successful offeror(s) may agree in writing to amend or augment the services set forth above.

2.9 Outside Legal Counsel may decline to represent the City in any legal matter assigned by the City Attorney due to a conflict of interest or lack of capacity to handle the matter with reasonable notice of one week.

2.10 Outside Legal Counsel has a continuing obligation to disclose to the City Attorney any actual or potential conflicts of interest. Additionally, Outside Legal Counsel assigned to a matter must agree not to undertake any future representation that might result in the disclosure of the City's work product to potential or actual adversaries of the City.

3.0 RFSQ Overview

The offeror's response to this RFSQ should be a clear and concise description of the offeror's capabilities and proposed service offering. Statements of Qualifications will be evaluated using the criteria outlined below and the responses to questions posed in Section 4. They will be evaluated using: (1) the competence of the offeror to perform the required services as indicated by the technical training, education, and experience of the offeror's personnel who would be assigned to perform the work; (2) the ability of the offeror to perform the required services competently and expeditiously as indicated by the offeror's workload and the location and availability of necessary personnel; and (3) past performance of the offeror as reflected by evaluations of other clients of the offeror with respect to such factors as quality of work, success in controlling costs, success based upon results of legal matters, and success in meeting deadlines. Offerors must respond to each of these factors in the manner described herein.

3.1 **Process Summary** The City Attorney will appoint an evaluation committee to evaluate Statements of Qualifications received. The committee will evaluate all offerors and Statements of Qualifications received based upon the evaluation criteria specified in the RFSQ. The committee then may select two or more of the highest qualified offerors for each legal subject matter in Sections 2.1(A)(1) – (7) and 2.1(B)(1) – (7) with whom to hold additional discussions. The discussions may include, but are not limited to presentations by the offerors to the committee to elaborate upon their qualifications, Statements of Qualifications, and/or other pertinent information requested. Based upon the content of the Statements of Qualifications received, including any revisions thereto, and upon any additional discussions with the offerors, the committee will create a list of qualified suppliers for each legal subject matter listed in Sections 2.1(A)(1) – (7) and 2.1(B)(1) – (7) based upon the evaluation criteria specified in the RFSQ. The committee will submit its listing of qualified offerors to the City Attorney. The City Attorney will select the offeror(s) with whom to enter into contract for any specific legal matter that arises during the term of the contract.

After an offeror is chosen for a specific legal matter, the City Attorney will submit legislation to City Council requesting approval of the contract, if approval of Council is required by the Columbus City Codes. In the request for approval, the City Attorney will explain the basis for the selection of the chosen offeror. No contract awarded under this section or modification of any contract awarded will be effective until approved by Ordinance of City Council, if Council approval is required by the Columbus City Codes.

3.2. Evaluation Committee

Evaluators will be selected by the City Attorney based on their expertise in the area of municipal governmental legal services. Offerors may not contact members of the evaluation committee (hereinafter "committee") during the RFSQ period except at the City Attorney's request.

3.3 RFSQ Sequence of Events

The following RFSQ sequence of events represents the City Attorney's best estimate of the schedule that will be followed. Exact times for questions/answers and due dates are noted in this document and will be published on in the City Bulletin:

- RFSQ Issued: Monday, October 5, 2026
- Deadline for written questions: Friday, October 23, 2026
- City Attorney’s response to questions: Friday, October 30, 2026
- Statements of Qualifications Due: Friday, November 20, 2026
- Presentations to Committee: Presentations may be requested from Monday, January 11, 2027 through Friday, January 22, 2027

3.4 **Specification Questions** Questions regarding this solicitation must be submitted to the Bonfire portal no later than 12:00 pm (EST) on Friday, October 23, 2026. Responses will be posted on the Bonfire portal no later than 12:00 pm (EST) on Friday, October 30, 2026.

3.5 **Communications** During the bidding and evaluation process, offerors are strictly prohibited from communicating with any City Attorney employees regarding this solicitation except through the method stated immediately above during the Question-and-Answer period. Any communication from the offeror to City Attorney employees after the Question-and-Answer period should be limited only to what is necessary. Necessary communication required by the City Attorney will be communicated clearly to the offerors. If any offeror has a need to communicate with the City Attorney or his employees, the communication should come only to the Chair of the Committee. If a City Attorney employee attempts to communicate with an offeror contrary to this provision, the offeror shall report said incident to the Chair of the Committee. The Chair is Brian E. Shinn, Deputy Chief of Staff, City Attorney's Office. He may be reached at beshinn@columbus.gov or 614-645-5525.

3.6 Evaluation Criteria

Statements of Qualifications will be evaluated based on the answers to the questions in Section 4 based on the following factors:

3.6.1 **Competence (35 points):** The competence of the offeror to perform the required services as indicated by the education and experience of the offeror's personnel who would be assigned to perform the work. Offerors should have at least one attorney with five years or more of experience in any legal matter listed in Sections 2.1(A) and (B) for which the lawyer or law firm is submitting a Statement of Qualifications.

3.6.2 **Ability (15 points):** The ability of the offeror to perform the assigned legal services competently and expeditiously as indicated by the offeror's current workload and proximity of personnel to the state and federal courts of Columbus, Ohio.

3.6.3 **Past Performance (35 points):** Past performance of the offeror as reflected by evaluations of other previous similar clients of the offeror with respect to such factors as quality of work, success in controlling costs, and success in meeting deadlines. Government experience, including City, Township, or State experience will be weighted heavily.

Total : 85 points

3.7 Multiple Awards

It is the intention that the City Attorney will award multiple contracts for each legal subject matter in Sections 2.1(A) and (B). A sample contract is included as Attachment A. The City Attorney reserves the right to assign legal matters to its offerors as its needs require.

3.8 The City Attorney reserves the right, before awarding a contract, to require offerors to submit any evidence of their qualifications and ability to perform assigned matters as the City Attorney may deem necessary and to consider any evidence available of financial, technical, and other qualifications and capabilities, including performance experience with past and present clients.

3.9 The City Attorney reserves the right to award contracts to offerors who will best serve the interests of the City, and, based on its deliberations and in its opinion, to accept or reject any or all offers. The City Attorney also reserves the right to waive minor irregularities or variations to the specifications and in the bidding process.

3.10 The City Attorney intends to award the award the contracts within 180 days of the issuance of the RFSQ.

4.0 REQUIRED COMPONENTS OF THE RFSQ RESPONSE

Statements of Qualifications must respond to each of the following requests in the order indicated. Please provide the information requested below for all counsel who may perform any of the requested services.

4.1 Firm Profile and Experience [BACKGROUND]

A. Letter of Transmittal

1. Law firm information:	Provide the attorney or law firm's website address, phone number, e-mail address, and mailing address for the firm's principal place of business.
2. Contact information	Provide the names, titles, e-mail address, mailing addresses, and telephone numbers of the individuals to whom inquiries about the offeror's RFSQ should be directed.
3. Signature	The transmittal letter shall be affixed with the signature of a person legally authorized to bind the offeror to a potential contract agreement with the City.

B. Indicate the date your law firm was established. [PAST PERFORMANCE]

C. Describe the types of legal services provided by your law firm. [COMPETENCE]

D. Describe your law firm's specialty and/or area(s) of expertise. [COMPETENCE]

E. Identify the number of employees in your law firm (licensed attorneys, legal support staff, and other support staff). [ABILITY]

F. Describe any special training or experience members of your law firm possess that may assist in providing the requested legal services. [COMPETENCE]

G. Provide a description of your law firm's presence in Ohio. Note the location of each office, the number of attorneys resident in each office, whether they are partners or associates, and whether attorneys not licensed in the State of Ohio will be assigned to provide any of the requested legal services if your law firm is selected pursuant to this RFSQ. [ABILITY]

H. Identify any Ohio municipalities; Ohio counties; Ohio state agencies, departments or authorities; or other Ohio political subdivisions represented by the firm during the last five (5) years. For each matter, provide the name of the municipality, county, state agency, department or authority, or other Ohio political subdivision; a description of the matter; the dates of the engagement; and the name and contact information of the government employee responsible for overseeing the work of the law firm on that matter. [PAST PERFORMANCE]

I. Identify any Ohio municipal; Ohio county; Ohio state agencies, departments or authorities; or other Ohio political subdivisions before or against which the law firm has regularly appeared on behalf of other clients. [PAST PERFORMANCE]

J. Identify any other governmental entities, agencies, or political subdivisions (other than those listed in response to Question 4.1(I) above) that the law firm represents or has represented in the last five (5) years. Include the time period during which the firm represented each such agency and the nature of the work performed. [PAST PERFORMANCE]

K. Describe the law firm's approach to maintaining responsive communication with the City Attorney and/or his designee assigned to oversee a matter and keeping the City Attorney or designee informed of problems and progress. [COMPETENCE]

L. Provide a representative listing of the law firm's major private and public sector clients. [PAST PERFORMANCE]

M. Provide the name, address, telephone number, e-mail address, and facsimile number for the contact person in your law firm who will oversee the firm's work for the City Attorney. [BACKGROUND]

4.2 Qualifications and Experience (In addition to providing the information requested in 4.1 in your response, please include a <u>separate</u> Section 4.2 in your response for <u>each separate legal subject matter</u> identified in Sections 2.1(A) and (B) of this RFSQ for which you are interested in providing legal services).

A. Identify and give the office location of each attorney who practices in that practice area. Please indicate what percentage of your law firm's practice is in the practice area. [ABILITY]

B. List all attorneys in your law firm who have at least five years' experience pertaining to the practice area. [COMPETENCE]

C. State the qualifications and experience of the particular attorneys proposed to staff the work. For each member of the law firm who would be involved in handling the practice area as Outside Counsel on behalf of the City Attorney, provide a detailed resume including information as to:

1. Education, including advanced degrees;
2. Years and jurisdictions of admission to practice;
3. Number of years engaged in the designated practice area;
4. General work experience;
5. Any professional distinctions (e.g., trial certification, teaching experience);
6. Area(s) of specialization; and
7. Office location of the attorney. [COMPETENCE]

D. Describe your law firm's experience in the practice area. For litigation experience, list cases litigated since 2016 (identifying by case name, court, and case number), including the result of such litigation. [PAST PERFORMANCE]

E. As to the attorneys who would be involved in handling litigation as Outside Legal Counsel, describe the role each would play in litigation matters and the approximate percentage of the work that each would perform. Percentages for junior lawyers may be listed separately or in the aggregate. [ABILITY]

4.3 Other Qualification Information

A. Identify all adverse determinations against your law firm or any of its partners, associates, or employees or persons acting on its behalf, with respect to actions, proceedings, claims or complaints of any kind under any local, state, or federal laws, regulations, court rules, or Rules of Professional Conduct. [COMPETENCE]

B. Identify and describe in detail any indictments, convictions, or civil offenses arising directly or indirectly from the conduct of business by your law firm or any of its partners, associates, employees, or agents. [COMPETENCE]

C. Identify any material arrangements, relationships, associations, employment, or other contacts that may cause a conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest if your law firm acts as Outside Legal Counsel for the City. [COMPETENCE]

D. Identify your law firm's malpractice insurer and describe the insurance limits. [ABILITY]

E. Identify initiatives that the law firm has available or is willing to undertake that would streamline its management of the legal matters of, and interface with, the City Attorney's office, for example, electronic billing or internet-based client interface tools. [COMPETENCE]

4.4 References

The City Attorney is interested in evaluations by other government entities of their experience with your law firm. Provide **three** completed Performance Questionnaires (Attachment B). [PAST PERFORMANCE]

4.5 Trust Account

Provide information for your law firm's trust account used to keep client funds separate from other funds. [COMPETENCE]