

RFP NO. 2021-1

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS:
FEASIBILITY STUDY FOR A NEW
FIRE DISTRICT IN EASTERN PLUMAS COUNTY**

RFP ISSUE: _____, 2021

RFP DUE: _____, 2021 Time: 12:00 PM

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Contracting Agency City of Portola
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Gold Mountain[®] Community Services District
Water - Sewer - Fire Protection



TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION 1 – BACKGROUND INFORMATION	3
SECTION 2 - STATEMENT OF PURPOSE	4
SECTION 3 - SCOPE OF WORK/PROJECT TASKS.....	4
SCOPE OF WORK DESCRIPTION	5
SECTION 4 - MINIMUM CONSULTING FIRM QUALIFICATIONS	7
SECTION 5 - PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS	8
SECTION 6 - TERMS AND CONDITIONS	9
SECTION 7 - REQUEST FOR CLARIFICATION	10
SECTION 8 - SUBMITTING PROPOSAL.....	10
SECTION 9 - SCHEDULE.....	11
SECTION 10 - SELECTION PROCESS AND EVALUATION CRITERIA.....	12
WEIGHTED EVALUATION CRITERIA.....	12
SECTION 11 - CONFIDENTIALITY	13
SECTION 12 - PROPOSAL ACCURACY	13
SECTION 13 - DISCLAIMER.....	13
SECTION 14 - CONFLICT OF INTEREST	14
EXHIBIT "A" ACKNOWLEDGMENT FORM.....	15
EXHIBIT "B" CONFLICT OF INTEREST FORM	16

SECTION 1 – BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The City of Portola is the publishing and contracting agency for this RFP on behalf of a Study Group formed by six adjacent agencies that provide fire and emergency services to the Eastern Plumas County region. Agreement among the participating agencies determines the selection of a winning proposal. The resulting contractual relationship will be between the selected bidder and the City of Portola.

The disastrous fires across California have heightened the awareness by governmental agencies and residents in the eastern region of Plumas County of the critical importance of providing adequate and economical fire and emergency services. Concerns include: recruiting and retaining qualified volunteer firefighters; uniformity in training and operation; effective command structure for allocation of personnel and equipment during significant incidents; conformance to current reporting, testing, implementation of best practices, and adherence to regulatory directives. Additional concerns are the availability and cost of homeowners' insurance, ISO fire score, attracting and training agency board members, agencies' administrative operation, outdated district boundaries, out-of-district islands within districts; long-term affordable services; long-range planning.

CAL FIRE includes Plumas County in its Lassen-Modoc Unit (LMU), headquartered in Susanville. However, CAL FIRE has no presence in Plumas County. The USDA Plumas National Forest Fire Unit provides Plumas County wildfire protection. Structure fire protection and emergency services are provided County-wide by about 20 all-volunteer or hybrid-volunteer agencies.

In December of 2017, the City of Portola was alerted to significant deficiencies in its Volunteer Fire Department's operation. Recognizing it could not quickly remedy the shortcomings, the City decided to stand down its Volunteer Fire Department and entered into a contract with Eastern Plumas Rural Fire Protection District (EPRFPD) to provide Fire and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) to the City. Previous to its fire department's stand-down, Portola was the long-term contract provider of fire and EMS to the Gold Mountain Community Services District (GMCSO). Subsequently, GMCSO also entered into a contract with EPRFPD for services.

City officials planned to evaluate the feasibility of re-establishing a stand-alone volunteer department in the future. Still, they felt due to the difficulty in recruiting volunteers and the high financial costs of supporting a fire department that it was not the best choice.

This stand-down action prompted the Plumas County Civil Grand Jury to investigate Portola's fire and EMS coverage status. The Grand Jury also wanted to know if the City of Portola intended to re-establish its Volunteer Fire Department or pursue other long-term means of offering fire and EMS coverage to the residents of Portola.

In its Report released in March 2019, the Grand Jury discussed and reviewed alternatives to re-establishing the Portola Fire Department, including the potential formation of a Joint Powers Authority (JPA). The formation of a JPA could also include GMCSO as it is within the Eastern Plumas Fire response area. During this same period (2019), Plumas County District 1 Supervisor Michael Sanchez initiated a series of public meetings to address the issues that all of the volunteer fire departments in Eastern Plumas County are experiencing.

There are six fire agencies (Beckwourth FD, C-Road CSD, City of Portola, Eastern Plumas RFPD, Gold Mountain CSD, and Sierra Valley FPD) facing similar issues in recruiting volunteers, financing, training, and administrative compliance. These concerns led to the execution of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) regarding the reorganization of fire and emergency services among the six agencies. The parties executed the Agreement in January 2020. It created the Local Emergency Services Study Group (LESSG), a framework for cooperative and collaborative action to explore ways to strengthen and improve the provision of fire and emergency services throughout the six agencies' service areas.

In October of 2020, following ten (10) months of meetings with LAFCo, CAL FIRE, Plumas National Forest Service, Plumas County Officials, Legal Counsels, and the surrounding area Fire Departments, the LESSG committee along with the new Plumas County District 1 Supervisor Dwight Ceresola arrived at a consensus. The decision was unanimous. Creating a new single Fire District (thus dissolving the existing Districts or relinquishing their fire and EMS authority) is the most effective, efficient, and economical choice available.

SECTION 2 - STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The LESSG is seeking proposals from qualified Professional Consulting firms. The purpose of this Request for Proposals (RFP) is to demonstrate the background, qualification, competence, and capability of the firm seeking to undertake these services for the LESSG.

The LESSG is seeking a consultant in Fire and Emergency Services to perform a Feasibility Study to produce a report that determines if the six agencies' consolidation will improve services and related costs to the community. The study must meet all necessary elements required by LAFCo's application and approval process to create the new District. The report should include potential funding mechanisms to support a new Fire District. The study must also include a public relations plan designed to educate the community to gain support for creating the new District.

SECTION 3 - SCOPE OF WORK/PROJECT TASKS

A qualified firm must perform and complete the work and provide the services outlined in the scope of work.

SCOPE OF WORK DESCRIPTION

Statement of desired services:

The LESSG's goal is to provide Fire and Emergency Medical Services to the community and institute a tiered dispatch system for medical response with the local ambulance provider and the Plumas County Sheriff's dispatch center.

The selected Consultant will be responsible for providing a feasibility study to the LESSG that includes and meets all requirements LAFCo requires in the application to create a new Fire and EMS Service District.

The selected consultant will review and research the following elements of a feasibility study and provide suggestions and analysis of each.

- Fire and EMS operations
- Administration
- Finance and Budget
- Training
- Business and transition plan

Project Tasks:

1. Conduct a kickoff meeting (virtual is acceptable) with the LESSG committee and Plumas County LAFCo executive officer to confirm the process and build a consensus on any elements or recommendations for a change in scope if necessary.
2. Complete a feasibility study that either confirms, modifies, or rejects LESSG's decision to pursue a reorganization course that creates a new fire services district. The research must be suitable for inclusion in an application to LAFCo to create a new fire services district. LESSG will provide the latest internally-updated Municipal Service Reviews (MSRs), including the last two financial audits and current year budget information from the six individual agencies.
 - a. Evaluate the needs of the new District with consideration of the status of the existing six districts. Recommendations must include costs for new facilities, staffing requirements, paid and volunteer positions, and fleet and equipment needs.
 - b. Recommend training requirements and required certifications for firefighters, command staff, administrative staff, and elected Board members.
 - c. Provide recommendations for relocation or closure of existing facilities and determine the current market value of those assets.

- d. Estimate the new District's operations and administrative budget requirements.
- e. Evaluate the District's financial needs, including a capital improvement program, repair and replacement costs, Operations and Maintenance (O&M) emergency reserve fund, and a disaster emergency restricted reserve. Provide further recommendations as appropriate.
- f. Evaluate the three participating Fire Districts to determine any legal issues that may prevent them from legally dissolving to form a new district.
- g. Investigate the availability of grant funding to defray expenses incurred in fire and EMS provider reorganization.

The Consultant will provide the services following acceptance of the feasibility study by LESSG and its constituent agencies.

1. Provide mapping and corresponding metes and bounds legal description of the proposed district boundary.
2. Provide a completed LAFCo application for the creation of a new District.
3. Determine final election requirements for the new District and governing board in conjunction with LAFCo and recommend and/or provide necessary election support and materials.
4. Prepare the dissolution of three agencies.
5. Prepare the relinquishment of fire and EMS services for three agencies.
6. Prepare a resolution for the creation of the new District by the City in coordination with LAFCo.
7. Create a plan for providing services in conjunction with the above-noted resolution to LAFCo, including:
 - a. The statutory section under which the formation would occur.
 - b. An enumeration of the services provided, along with a description and justification for each of the services.
 - c. The level and range of those services
 - d. An indication of when those services would be provided
 - e. A discussion of any improvements or upgrades to fire facility structures, water or sewer facilities, or other conditions the new District would impose or require within its boundaries upon formation.
 - f. Recommend the Options for the financing of the improvements to fire facilities recommended in "e."
 - g. An operating budget for the District
 - h. A discussion of alternate boundaries for a new fire services district and rationale for the boundaries proposed

- i. Fees and costs to form a new District; provide estimated project costs including LAFCo and Plumas County fees, charge for mapping, feasibility studies, elections, California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) documents, and District transition costs. (The LESSG has researched most of these and can provide some documentation for this section).
 - j. Coordinate with LAFCo as the lead agency and provide the necessary documentation for the application to meet CEQA requirements.
 - k. Provide a business plan with milestones for a smooth transition process transitioning from six districts to one district.
 - l. Provide a recommendation of funding mechanisms for the new District based on current California law. This analysis should include:
 - i. Current funding for the six agencies to include tax sharing, assessments, parcel taxes, contracts, direct pay, etc
 - ii. A recommendation of funding requirements for the new District based on your analysis
 - iii. Provide a conclusion of a fair and equitable standardized Parcel Tax for all the necessary types of parcels, i.e., agriculture land, ranch land, residential, commercial, industrial, multi-residential apartments, condos, and any other categories your analysis recommends.
 - iv. Recommend additional funding options that would keep parcel taxes as low as possible—for example, a potential County-wide special sales tax dedicated to fire protection services. Include a recommendation of an appropriate “cost of services fees” list to be adopted by the new District.
8. The final element is a two-part scope of work:
- a. Provide recommendations on best practices for conducting a successful outreach and education program regarding the benefits of creating a new District. Include sections on the process's timing and content, from early outreach to final public approval through the election process. Identify key areas and timing that are critical for success.
 - b. Provide a separate bid for the LESSG Committee to evaluate how your Firm will assist with the public outreach and education steps, including a detailed scope of work for this effort.

SECTION 4 - MINIMUM CONSULTING FIRM QUALIFICATIONS

1. The consulting firm must have been in business for a minimum of three (3) years.
2. The preferred consulting firm preferably maintains an office in Northern California that is open during regular business hours.

3. The consulting firm has experience advising local governments on the formation of new and combined fire services districts.
4. The consulting firm has experience and a good track record working with LAFCo.
5. The consulting firm has members on their staff working on the project with experience in the Fire Service industry. *

*Highly desirable but not required

SECTION 5 - PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

All Proposals must include and will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

1. A detailed scope of services that reflects the Firm's understanding of the LESSG's requirements
2. **Consulting Firm Qualifications:** The Proposal shall address all Section 4 "Minimum Consulting Firm Qualifications."
3. **Personnel Qualifications:** The Proposal shall identify the assigned Project Manager and staff and their qualifications, training, and certifications to perform the services outlined in the scope of work.
4. **List of Clients:** A list of significant clients served during the last three (3) years with contact information (i.e., name of the clients, addresses, phone numbers, and contact person), especially clients that are/were volunteer fire departments or hybrid departments with volunteer and paid staff. The LESSG reserves the right to contact any of the clients for reference purposes.
5. **Additional Consulting Firm Qualifications:** The Proposal shall include an overview of the firm as to the number of current clients, the size of the firm's existing staff, the location of the administrative office, and the number and position of staff who will regularly work with the LESSG.
6. **Capability to Meet LESSG's Requirements:** Consulting Firm's past performance includes completed projects' experience and history.
 - a. Discuss the firm's capability to manage and schedule projects, the standard turnaround time, current relative workload, and staff availability.
 - b. Demonstrate the firm's expertise and experience in the projects identified in the scope of work.
 - c. Demonstrate any experience the firm has working with clients similar in size or industry as the combined six participating agencies.
7. **Fee Schedule:** If applicable, include a schedule of rates per hour for partners, principals, directors, specialists, project managers, and staff. The rates should contain all direct and

overhead expenses and premiums (if necessary, attach a Rate Schedule in your Proposal) for any rush work. Indicate if the firm follows the complied prevailing wage law.

8. **Business License:** The Proposal shall include a copy of the consulting firm's business license.

SECTION 6 - TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Acknowledgment of City Contract Provisions:

Interested consulting firms should include a sample contract for consulting work. The City requires the following insurance provisions. The consulting firm shall procure and maintain the insurance required for the duration of the Agreement, including coverage against claims for injuries to persons or damages to property arising from or in connection with the performance of the work performed.

1. **Insurance Requirements:** The following are the City standard insurance requirements.
 - a. **Commercial General Liability:** Coverage should include \$1,000,000 per occurrence, \$ 2,000,000 aggregate, as applicable. Before the start of work, the selected company shall provide the City evidence of insurance from an insurer(s) certifying the coverage. Add the City and its Board Members, officers, employees, agents, and volunteers as insured.
 - b. **Business Automobile Liability:** Business Automobile Liability insurance insuring all owned, non-owned, and hired automobiles - coverage code 1 "any auto" (Insurance Service Office policy for CA 0001 or insurer's equivalent) in the amount of \$1,000,000 combined single limit per accident for bodily injury and property damage.
 - c. **Workers' Compensation and Employer's Liability Insurance:** Shall be furnished in accordance with statutory requirements of the State of California and shall include Employer's Liability coverage of \$1,000,000 per accident for bodily injury or disease.
 - d. **Professional Liability Insurance:** For the entire term of the Agreement, the Firm shall procure and maintain Errors and Omissions Liability Insurance appropriate to CONSULTANT's profession. Such coverage shall have minimum limits of no less than One Million Dollars (\$1,000,000) per claim.
 - e. **Commercial General Liability & Workers' Compensation Liability Insurance:** Policies shall contain a waiver of transfer rights of recovery ("waiver of subrogation") against the City, its Board Members, officers, employees, agents, and volunteers for any claims arising out of the work of the Company.

- f. **Additional Insured Requirements:** The CGL Coverage and the Automobile Liability Insurance shall contain an endorsement naming the City, City's governing board of directors, and City's elected and appointed officials, officers, employees, agents, and volunteers as additional insured.
2. **Indemnification:** Consulting firm shall, before completion and upon completion of the work, deliver possession thereof to the City ready for use and free and discharged from all claims for labor and material from subcontractors, suppliers, or others. The consulting firm shall defend, indemnify, and hold harmless the City to the fullest extent permitted by law, as set forth in Exhibit "C," Section 5 of the attached sample contract.
3. **Term:** The contract term is from May 1, 2021 - to December 31, 2021.

Submit a sample contract as part of the RFP packet for review. The contract must be representative of the one presented for execution upon award to the successful consulting firm. If the consulting firm does not agree with these insurance provisions, the company should include all comments and proposed contract language in the Proposal. Submission of Proposal in response to this RFP constitutes acceptance of all terms and conditions set forth above unless otherwise stated.

SECTION 7 - REQUEST FOR CLARIFICATION

Consulting firms requesting clarification pertaining to this RFP shall submit all requests through written correspondence by email only on or before 3:00 P.M. on Thursday, _____, 2021, to:

Daniel Smith
RFP Manager
Grizzlyrider0@gmail.com

The RFP Manager will not accept Requests for Clarification (RFC) over the phone, fax, or regular mail.

If deemed necessary by the RFP Manager, responses will be in writing for the benefit of all prospective companies and will be posted on the City's website at cityofportola.com. The consulting firm's responsibility is to visit our website to check and view any response to RFCs or view changes/addenda made to this RFP by the City.

SECTION 8 - SUBMITTING PROPOSAL

To be considered:

1. Five (5) printed copies of the Proposal must be received on or before 12:00 P.M. on Monday, _____, 2021.

2. Also, the RFP Manager must receive one (1) electronic copy of the Proposal on a CD or USB flash drive before noon on Monday, _____, 2021.

To qualify for consideration, respondents must provide the following information by the deadline:

1. Title Page and Table of Contents.
2. Letter of Introduction signed by an officer of the company and a summary highlighting the Proposal's key points.
3. Detailed Proposal (addressing the scope of work)
4. Sealed RFP Bid in a separate envelope.
5. Signed Acknowledgement Form - refer to Exhibit "A" attached hereto.
6. Signed Conflict of Interest Form - refer to Exhibit "B" attached hereto.
7. Sample contract for our review.
8. Additional documentation, if applicable.

Submit your Proposal to:

Daniel Smith
RFP Manager
Beckwourth Fire District
180 Main St
Beckwourth, CA 96129

SECTION 9 - SCHEDULE

The following dates reflect the anticipated schedule for the Proposal and selection of the consulting firm:

Procurement Process Schedule	Anticipated Date
RFP post and distribute on website and social media	
Questions from consulting firms about scope or approach due by 3:00 P.M.	
Responses to consulting firms about scope or approach due by 3:00 P.M.	
Proposal due date	
Target date to begin review of Proposals	
Consulting firm interviews, if required by LESSG -- the week of	
Final consulting firm selection discussion(s) -- the week of	
Anticipated decision and selection of consulting firm(s)	
Anticipated commencement date of work	

SECTION 10 - SELECTION PROCESS AND EVALUATION CRITERIA

The RFP Manager will examine all Proposals to ensure completeness. The LESSG, at its discretion, may waive any omission which it deems to be non-essential or inconsequential.

The LESSG, at its discretion, will evaluate each submission for the following criteria:

1. They have demonstrated an understanding of the project requirements, including identifying critical elements and key issues.
2. Project approach that includes a comprehensive scope of work, as applicable.
3. A project work plan that clearly defines project deliverables, as applicable.
4. A project work plan that provides quantitative and/or qualitative measurement criteria for results as applicable.
5. A project work plan that offers estimated timelines for milestone completion to create systematic progress reporting on vendor performance, as applicable.

Proposing consulting firms should note that the **pricing**, while important, **will not be the only deciding factor** in the final selection but rather the ability of the company to provide and perform the required duties as outlined in the scope of work.

WEIGHTED EVALUATION CRITERIA

Completeness of the Proposal	15%
Company qualifications	20%
Evaluation of experience & Interview	30%
Strategic technical approach	15%
Capability to meet LESSG requirements	20%
TOTAL	100%

The evaluators may require an Interview, oral presentation, or written questions to clarify some or all submissions. The final scoring basis is a predefined method considering the Proposal and interview, should an interview occur.

The sealed Bid for services shall be as detailed as possible, identifying the cost for each section of the RFP requirements, including optional services such as outreach and education support.

A selection committee will present its awarding recommendation of the subject contract to the LESSG for a final decision based on the Committee's recommendations. The LESSG will make the final decision and at that time shall open the sealed Bid. The LESSG will negotiate the contract

amount, and if an agreement is reached, direct the City to award a Contract. If an agreement cannot be reached, the LESSG will move to the next highest-rated consulting firm and repeat the negotiation process until a firm is selected.

No Proposal will be considered that does not include written/documented responses to all "Proposal Requirements" items. Postmarks, facsimiles, and emails will not be accepted.

LESSG anticipates that a qualified company will be selected by _____, 2021.

SECTION 11 - CONFIDENTIALITY

The City is subject to Public Records Act under the California Government Code Section 6250 et. seq. As such, all required submitted information is subject to disclosure to the general public.

Proposals submitted and terms and conditions specified in each company's bid response will remain the City's property.

SECTION 12 - PROPOSAL ACCURACY

A proposal that is in any way incomplete, irregular, or conditional will not be accepted. By submitting a bid, companies agree that any significant inaccuracy in the company's information to the LESSG will constitute a good and sufficient cause for the Proposal's rejection.

SECTION 13 - DISCLAIMER

The Local Emergency Services Study Group (LESSG), consisting of the six participating agencies, reserve the right to:

1. Reject any or all Proposals.
2. Instruct the City to withdraw this solicitation at any time without prior notice and make no representations that any contract will be awarded to any respondent to this RFP.
3. Instruct the City to award its total requirements to one respondent or apportion those requirements among two or more respondents as LESSG may deem to be in its best interests.
4. Negotiate a final contract with any respondent(s) as necessary to serve the best interest of LESSG.
5. Select the Proposal most advantageous to the LESSG.
6. Verify all information submitted in Proposal.
7. Reject bids by companies found to have made misleading statements or material misrepresentations.
8. Direct the City to amend the RFP.

SECTION 14 - CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The Agencies participating in this RFP are subject to the Political Reform Act, under California Government Code section 1090, et. seq. To protect those Agencies, their Board Members, Council Members, and staff, all bidders are required to complete a Conflict-of-Interest Questionnaire before the award. Refer to Exhibit "B" attached hereto.

DRAFT

EXHIBIT "A" ACKNOWLEDGMENT FORM

RFP No. 2021-1 is for Professional Consulting Services to complete a feasibility study to create a new Fire and Emergency Medical Services District in Eastern Plumas County. The final document must include all the required elements and application materials to submit to LAFCo for approval.

Part A

Proposing company warrants the following:

1. That it will not delegate or subcontract its responsibilities under contract without the expressed prior written permission from LESSG.
2. That all information provided in connection with this Proposal is true and correct.
3. That it will acknowledge and agree with all terms and conditions stated in this request for Proposal.

_____ Company Name (RFP Respondent)	_____ Contact Name
_____ Authorized Signature	_____ Date
_____ Title	_____ Phone
_____ Address	_____ Fax
_____ City	_____ Email
_____ State	_____ Zip

Part B

The above-listed company responds to a Request for Proposals for a qualified and experienced company to provide Professional Consulting Services for conducting a feasibility study and preparing an application to LAFCo on behalf of the City of Portola.

THIS COMPLETED FORM MUST BE RETURNED TO THE RFP MANAGER BY THE RESPONDENT WITH THEIR PROPOSAL. RETURN ON OR BEFORE 12:00 P.M. ON _____, 2021

EXHIBIT “B” CONFLICT OF INTEREST FORM

LESSG's Code of Conduct prohibits its Directors and staff from making decisions in which he/she has certain financial or personal relationships with a contracting party. The responses to questions that follow alert LESSG to potential code of conduct conflicts. Suppose conflicts of only a remote interest exist. In that case, a contract may still be awarded as disclosure allows the LESSG to choose the processes for negotiation, awarding, and administration of contracts to avoid such conflicts. However, LESSG reserves the right to review and make a final determination regarding whether any actual or potential conflicts would violate LESSG policies or California law and thus preclude a contracting party's participation in this award. All contracting parties and proposed sub-consultants must respond to each of the following questions. For responses answered "Yes," LESSG may require additional information to evaluate potential conflicts before award. Failure to fully disclose conflicts will result in rejection of the Proposal or immediate termination of any contract awarded therefrom.

- Reference to “City” means – City of Portola, CA
- Reference to District(s’) means – The fire services districts as listed in the Request for Proposal as Beckwourth Volunteer Fire District, C-Road Community Services District, Eastern Plumas Rural Fire Protection District, Gold Mountain Community Services District, Sierra Valley Volunteer Fire District
- Reference to “employees” means – employees of the City and District

Yes	No	Indicate “Yes” or “No” on each row
		To the best of your knowledge, do any current City or District members or employees have any of the following financial relationships with your company or with any proposed sub-consultants?
		Owner
		Member
		Partner
		Officer
		Employee
		Contractor, Consultant
		Broker
		Major Stockholder (ownership of 3% or more of company stock)
		If "Yes" to any of the above, did this Board member or employee participate in formulating your submittal?
		Are you, or to the best of your knowledge, are any officers or key employees of your company or proposed sub-consultants an immediate family member of any current City or District member or employee?

Eastern Plumas County Local Emergency Services Study Group
Fire District Feasibility Study Request for Proposal

Yes	No	Indicate "Yes" or "No" on each row
		To the best of your knowledge, is a City or District employee or Board member seeking or being considered for employment by your company or by proposed sub-consultants?
		To the best of your knowledge, have you or any officers or key employees of your company or any proposed sub-consultants provided contributions directly or indirectly to a City or District Board member while this potential new contract is pending?
		To the best of your knowledge, have you or any officers or key employees of your company or any proposed sub-consultants ever served on the City or District's Board?
		Have you or any of your current employees been employed by the City or District in the past five years?
		Have you or any of your current employees been in direct or indirect communications with any of the City or the Districts' Board of Directors during this RFP procurement process? If "Yes," then please provide the date and the Contact's name.
		Have you made any contribution(s) in the last three (3) months to any member of the City or the Districts' Board of Directors? If "Yes," then please provide the recipient's name and the amount of the contribution.

I declare under penalty of perjury of the State of California laws that the foregoing is true and correct.

 Company Name

 Contact Name

 Authorized Signature

 Date

 Title

THIS COMPLETED FORM MUST BE RETURNED TO THE RFP MANAGER BY THE RESPONDENT WITH THEIR PROPOSAL. RETURN ON OR BEFORE 12:00 P.M. ON _____, 2021