

Instructions and Forms for Choosing a Pre-Qualified Grant Administrator

Applicants for grants in the 2018 TxCDBG Program Year (PY 2018) are responsible for identifying the person or firm that will provide administrative services for the project, if funded. In an effort to simplify the procurement process for communities, TDA has solicited Applications to Prequalify Grant Administrators from vendors interested in grant writing and administering projects for the 2018 program year. TDA reviewed the proposals based on satisfaction of the minimum qualifications and developed a pre-qualified list of vendors..

Although this process is primarily intended for procurement of administrative services needed to implement a project if funded, the community may choose to include grant writing services in the solicitation as well.

If an applicant anticipates that a contract will exceed \$50,000, then they may not use this streamlined process of selecting a preapproved grant administrator and will be required to conduct the full procurement process and complete all required steps in accordance with Chapter 5 (Procurement Procedures) of the TxCDBG Implementation Manual.

Procurement of a Grant Administrator – Phase 1 (completed)

Step i – Application to Prequalify Grant Administrators

TDA prepared an Application to Prequalify Grant Administrators, in order to collect qualifications. The opportunity was advertised across the state and open to any qualified respondents.

Step ii – Application submittal from Grant Administrators

Grant Administrators submitted their qualifications directly to TDA using the application form.

Step iii – Approved Vendor List of Prequalified Grant Administrators

TDA reviewed the submittals for responsiveness and prepared an Approved Vendor List of prequalified Grant Administrators. Preapproval of a grant administrator indicates that the application was complete and timely, and does not include an evaluation of the quality of services offered by the administrator.

Procurement of a Grant Administrator – Phase 2 (all 6 Steps to be completed by Applicant community)

Applicants for grant funding in PY 2018 may only use administrative service providers that are:

- Employees of the Applicant community (self-administering community),
- Councils of Government acting as sub-recipients to the applicant community, or
- Vendors included on the Approved Vendor List for the fund cycle **and** have been selected using the following procedures:

Step 1 – Identify Evaluation Team and Review Approved Vendor Applications

The applicant community must identify an Evaluation Team (at least 3 persons) to complete Phase 2. The committee must include at least one local official, such as a member of the elected governing body. The Evaluation Team members shall have no potential conflicts of interest with any of the individuals, firms, or agencies under review (e.g., family relationships, close friendships, business dealings).

The Evaluation Team should review the qualifications provided to TDA for each approved vendor.

Part 1 responses for each Application to Prequalify Grant Administrators identified on the Approved Vendor List can be found at:

[http://texasagriculture.gov/GrantsServices/RuralEconomicDevelopment/RuralCommunityDevelopmentBlockGrant\(CDBG\)/PrequalifiedProfessionalServices.aspx](http://texasagriculture.gov/GrantsServices/RuralEconomicDevelopment/RuralCommunityDevelopmentBlockGrant(CDBG)/PrequalifiedProfessionalServices.aspx)

Communities may request a copy of **Part 2** responses for any Approved Vendor by sending an email listing the requested vendors to CDBGapps@TexasAgriculture.gov. Part 2 includes responses to the following:

1. Describe the character, integrity and reputation of the respondent and key personnel, including whether the respondent is in good standing with TDA, and former and current clients.
2. Has the respondent ever had a contract terminated or denied renewal for noncompliance with policies or regulations of any state or federally funded program within the past five years?
3. Has the respondent or any of its principals ever been debarred, suspended or otherwise excluded from or ineligible for participation in federally-assisted programs?

Step 2 – Select Firms to consider further

Based on the available qualifications the Evaluation Team must select at least three individuals/firms from the Approved Vendor List to consider further. The committee may choose to consider as many approved vendors as it wishes.

The TDA website identifies each approved vendor that has self-identified as a minority-owned business (MBE), woman-owned business (WBE), Small business enterprise (SBE), or Section 3 business (S3). One or more of the approved vendors selected for further consideration must qualify under at least one of these categories.

Step 3 – Complete **Phase 2 Solicitation – Request for Project-Specific Proposal**

Enter information in each field of Form P506 to request a project-specific proposal, including services to be provided and costs.

- Description of Anticipated Project(s) – Provide any information available to describe the potential grant project. This description should help vendors understand the community's priorities, but is not binding for the final grant application. Examples include:
 - Water/Wastewater system improvements
 - Sidewalk and lighting improvements;
 - Public healthcare facilities;
 - Planning activities;
 - Drainage improvements
 - Street improvements; and
 - Housing rehabilitation
- Anticipated Scope of Work – check all that apply. For additional information, please see:

<http://texasagriculture.gov/Portals/0/Publications/RED/CDBG/RFQ/PY2018%20RFQ%20v2.pdf>

- Evaluation Criteria – Develop written weighted criteria that will be used to evaluate proposals. Form P506 lists several criteria that may be used, or the community may list additional elements to be considered. Cost must be included in the evaluation and selection criteria. The relative importance of each criteria must be identified:
 - If using scores, list the maximum number of points for each criterion.
 - The Evaluations Team may also use categories such as Very Important, Somewhat Important, or Minor Importance to describe the weight of each criterion.

Send Form P506 to each vendor identified in Step 2. Email contact information is provided on the Application to Prequalify Grant Administrators form for each vendor. Allow the vendors a reasonable period of time to prepare a proposal. TDA considers five to ten days to be reasonable for most projects, but the community must determine what is reasonable for the anticipated project. Print a copy of each Form P506 sent to the vendors for your files.

Step 4 – Receive and review the proposals

Vendors interested in competing for an administrative services contract will respond to the Phase 2 Solicitation. Vendors may use the optional form provided by TDA (Form P507) or may provide information in their own format. In either case, the proposal must outline the services being offered and the proposed cost of those services.

The proposal must also identify any conflict of interest, real or apparent, with the vendor and the project. Such a conflict would arise when:

- (i) The employee, officer or agent,
 - (ii) Any member of his immediate family,
 - (iii) his or her partner, or
 - (iv) An organization which employs, or is about to employ, any of the above,
- has a financial or other interest in the firm selected for award.

The Evaluation Team must review all proposals, evaluate the proposals using the specific criteria established in Step 3, and determine most responsive and responsible respondent whose proposal is most advantageous to the program, with price and other factors considered. The Evaluation Team makes a recommendation to the Applicant's governing body (City Council or Commissioners Court).

The Applicant may conduct negotiations with those respondents who are deemed responsive and responsible and fall within a competitive price range. Any negotiations must be fully documented. After negotiations, these respondents may be given the opportunity to submit a best and final offer.

Step 5 – Select a Grant Administrator using local procedures to award the contract

The Applicant's governing body must award the contract(s) for administrative services to the selected vendor.

Note: The local governing body has the final authority to award contracts and is encouraged to follow the committee's recommendation, but may select another

respondent if the minutes of the local governing body meeting include justification for the selection.

Appendix D of the TxCDBG Implementation Manual includes a sample contract that may be used for administrative services.

- If the applicant chooses to execute the contract(s) immediately, include language stating that payment for project implementation services are contingent on receipt of grant funds, such as:
“Payment of the fees associated with Part III – Payment Schedule of this Agreement shall be contingent upon CDBG funding. In the event that grant funds are not awarded to the City / County by TDA through the TxCDBG program, this agreement shall be terminated by the City / County.”.
- The applicant may also choose not to execute the contract(s) for project implementation services prior to funding, however, the award of the contract must be reflected in the minutes of the governing body.

Step 6 –Work with the Grant Administrator to prepare the Application.

Only after formal award of the administrative services contract may the Grant Administrator be involved in preparing the grant application.

If an administrator has been involved with discussions or decisions regarding the grant application prior to the procurement process for administrative services, that firm may NOT be selected as the Grant Administrator.

NOTE: Keep all documentation of the procurement process to demonstrate compliance if the grant application is funded.