



EXECUTIVE SEARCH FIRM REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (“RFP”)

ISSUE DATE: July 27, 2020

DUE DATE: **2:00 P.M.** on **August 18, 2020** (“Submission Deadline”)

INSTRUCTIONS: Please submit five (5) paper copies and one (1) electronic copy of the Request for Proposals (“RFP”) on a flash drive. Submittals must be delivered in a sealed envelope in person, via mail or courier. Please write **“Search Firm RFP”** clearly on the outside of the sealed envelope. Submittals received by email, fax, or after the Submission Deadline will be rejected.

SUBMIT TO: Houston First Corporation, Attn: Mitch Miskowski, 701 Avenida de las Americas, Suite 200, Houston, TX 77010.

CONTACT INFO: Any questions concerning this RFP must be submitted by email to bids@houstonfirst.com no later than **10:00 a.m.** on **August 13, 2020**. Questions will be answered collectively in the form of a Letter of Clarification made available at www.houstonfirst.com/do-business.

OVERVIEW

Responsive proposals are requested from experienced executive search firms able to conduct a successful, nationwide search for a dynamic, forward-thinking president for Houston First Corporation (“HFC”). Initial services will consist of working with HFC to develop position-specific qualifications and, based upon approved parameters and requirements, implementing a recruitment plan to attract a diverse group of exceptional candidates. The firm selected will receive resumes, scrutinize credentials and references, and prepare executive profiles for HFC on the most qualified candidates. The firm will assist in the scheduling of interviews as directed and support employment negotiations to the extent required by HFC. The successful Proposer will be a highly-skilled, professional firm with an extensive network of c-suite contacts capable of working expeditiously and committed to HFC’s goals of diversity and inclusion.

Candidate profiles for the president position must be presented to HFC four-to-six weeks after commencement of services; HFC anticipates that a final selection will be made and the position filled by January 1, 2021. The firm selected must remain in constant contact with HFC to ensure continuous progress of the selection process and provide regular updates to the appropriate HFC committees and Board of Directors as necessary.

BACKGROUND

HFC is a local government corporation created by the City of Houston to facilitate economic growth through the promotion of the greater Houston area and the business of conventions, meetings, tourism, and the arts. HFC is the primary entity responsible for marketing Houston and increasing awareness of its many attractions and amenities.

HFC is responsible for the operation and management of the George R. Brown Convention Center, Avenida Houston, Partnership Tower, Wortham Theater Center, Jones Hall for the Performing Arts, Miller Outdoor Theatre, an array of outdoor properties, and parking facilities that can accommodate nearly 10,000 vehicles.

HFC represents the consolidation of the former City of Houston Convention & Entertainment Facilities Department and the Houston Convention Center Hotel Corporation. The Houston Convention Center Hotel Corporation (now called Houston First Corporation) was organized in 2000. The consolidation with the Convention & Entertainment Facilities Department was effective on July 1, 2011.

PRE-PROPOSAL MEETING

A Pre-Proposal Meeting will be held for the benefit of all prospective Proposers by Zoom call at **10:00 a.m.** on **August 12, 2020**. Any Proposer who plans to attend the Pre-Proposal Meeting is asked to RSVP by sending an email confirming the planned attendance of their firm to bids@houstonfirst.com. Dial-in instructions will be provided in response to each email timely received, and also made available online at www.houstonfirst.com/do-business. Attendance at the Pre-Proposal Meeting is encouraged, but not mandatory.

PROPOSAL FORMAT

Although HFC prefers substance over form, to be considered responsive, Proposers are asked to review the following criteria/information requests and respond, in order, to the best of their ability:

- a. **Transmittal Letter:** Write a letter communicating effectively why the Proposer should be selected to perform executive search services on behalf of HFC. The letter must be signed by a person authorized to make representations on behalf of the Proposer and include a direct phone number and email address. Proposers must make a specific, unambiguous statement accepting and agreeing to comply, if selected, with the Executive Search Services Agreement available online at www.houstonfirst.com/do-business.
- b. **Firm Profile:** Provide a brief profile of the Proposer, noting its history, structure, strengths, and ability to meet the needs of its clients. Be sure to note any prior company names by which the firm has been known, the number of years the firm has been in business, and the location of the office from which the majority of work will be performed. Proposers must disclose if their firm has, within the past five years, (i) been party to a service contract terminated for cause, or (ii) received material, adverse findings from any governmental authority having regulatory oversight of services similar to those required under this RFP;
- c. **Methodology:** Discuss the Proposer's approach to recruitment services and proposed methodology for identifying the best c-suite candidates available nationwide. Articulate the firm's commitment to, and means by which it will ensure, diversity and inclusion. Include a tentative timeline noting selection-process milestones based on notice to proceed from HFC and consistent with the requirements of this RFP.
- d. **Essential Personnel:** Introduce the essential personnel who would be assigned to provide services, explain their respective functions, and include a brief summary of their experience and qualifications.
- e. **Pricing:** Proposers must provide comprehensive pricing for their services, preferably phased or otherwise corresponding to an identifiable stage or the selection process, including any reimbursable expenses, which must be at-cost.
- f. **Service Commitment:** Firms are asked to detail the extent of their guarantee or commitment, if any, to provide additional executive search services, at no cost to HFC, in the event an executive hired as a result of Proposer's services is terminated for cause or

resigns for any reason within a specified time. Proposer's who do not offer any such service commitment will receive zero points.

All information provided by Proposers should be organized, clear and concise. Although there are no page limits, Proposers are asked to avoid excessive graphics, title pages, or other extraneous information in their proposal other than requested by HFC.

EVALUATION

HFC will appoint a selection committee to review and rank every proposal received in response to this RFP based on the following weighted criteria: Transmittal Letter, including expressed acceptance of the Executive Search Services Agreement (10 points); Firm Profile (20 points); Methodology (25 points); Essential Personnel (20 points); Pricing (15 points); and Service Commitment (10 points).

HFC reserves the right to interview the top-ranked Proposers, not to exceed five, prior to selecting a proposal. If interviews are scheduled, then up to 20 additional points may be added to the existing proposal scores of the top-ranked Proposers, for a maximum possible total of 120 points, based on their responsiveness during the interview. The recommendation of the selection committee will be submitted to the HFC Board of Directors for their approval.

HFC intends to award the contract to the Proposer offering the best value to HFC, as measured by HFC utilizing the foregoing evaluation criteria, including the right to award the contract by criteria other than the lowest price proposed. HFC reserves the right to select or reject all or part of any proposal, waive minor technicalities, and select one or more proposals in the manner and to the extent that they are deemed to serve the best interests of HFC. This RFP does not commit HFC to award a contract, issue a purchase order, or to pay any costs incurred in the preparation of a proposal in response to this RFP. HFC reserves the right to request proposal clarifications/additional information from some or all Proposers.

LETTERS OF CLARIFICATION

Responses to all material questions timely submitted by potential Proposers, as well as revisions incorporated into this RFP by HFC, if any, will be confirmed in a letter made available online at <http://www.houstonfirst.com/do-business/> (each, a "Letter of Clarification"). When issued, Letters of Clarification become part of this RFP and automatically supersede any previous terms, conditions, specifications, or provisions in conflict therewith. By submitting their proposal, Proposers shall be deemed to have received all Letters of Clarification and to have considered all responses and any revisions and incorporated same into their submittal. Verbal responses by any HFC officer, director or employee cannot alter the terms, conditions, specifications, or provisions as stated herein. It is the responsibility of Proposers to monitor the foregoing link and ensure they receive any such Letters of Clarification and incorporate them in their proposal.

FORM OF AGREEMENT

By submitting a response to this RFP, Proposer accepts and agrees, upon notice of selection, to promptly enter into the Executive Search Services Agreement, a copy of which is available online at www.houstonfirst.com/do-business. Proposers are advised that alternative terms, pre-printed forms, or other objections submitted by a Proposer shall be disregarded and may result in a Proposal being deemed, in HFC's discretion, as non-responsive.

RESTRICTIONS ON COMMUNICATIONS

Throughout the selection process, commencing with the Issue Date, Proposers are directed not to communicate, directly or indirectly, with any HFC employee, officer, director, or selection committee member regarding their Proposal, or any matter relating to this RFP, other than through bids@houstonfirst.com or during the Pre-Proposal Meeting. Proposers are solely responsible for

observation and compliance with such restrictions, and HFC reserves the right to reject any proposal due to violation of this provision.

VENDOR CODE OF CONDUCT

Proposers who do business or seek to do business with HFC are expected to interact with HFC with high ethics and integrity. To promote ethical conduct by its existing and potential contractors, HFC has adopted a Code of Conduct for Vendors, available online at www.houstonfirst.com/do-business. HFC requires that all Proposers be familiar with and abide by the Code of Conduct for Vendors.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Proposers are advised that they have an affirmative obligation to disclose any affiliation or business relationship with an HFC employee, officer, or director creating a conflict of interest (or appearing to a reasonable person to potentially exist). Those who need the disclosure form may find it online at <http://www.ethics.state.tx.us/forms/CIQ.pdf>. By submitting a proposal, Proposers represent to HFC that they have complied with the requirements of Chapter 176 of the Texas Local Government Code.

PROTEST PROCEDURES

Any protest relating to the form, terms and conditions, selection criteria, specifications, exhibits, or any other material RFP content must be filed by the actual or potential Proposer with the Purchasing Agent no later than five business days prior to the Submission Deadline. If the protest consists of a dispute regarding the Proposer recommended by the selection committee, or otherwise relates to the alleged misapplication of selection criteria, then the Purchasing Agent must receive the protest from an actual Proposer after the Submission Deadline, but at least three business days prior to consideration of a contract resulting from this RFP by an HFC committee or Board of Directors, whichever is earlier.

All protests must be made in writing and delivered to Houston First Corporation, Attn: Purchasing Agent, 701 Avenida de las Americas, Ste. 200, Houston, TX 77010. To be considered by HFC, protests must be timely received and include, at a minimum, all of the following information: (a) The name, address and contact information of the Proposer, with sufficient information to establish that a bona fide Proposer is the person or entity filing the protest; (b) The full title of the RFP; (c) Material grounds for the protest, including the provisions of the RFP and the applicable law or regulation that serves as the basis for the protest; (d) A statement of the specific relief requested by the Proposer; (e) Reference to and attachment of any pertinent documents or sources relied upon by the protestor that the protesting party wishes to have HFC consider; and (f) An affidavit attached to support any factual allegations stated in the submission. The Purchasing Agent will notify the Proposer promptly to acknowledge receipt of a protest.

PUBLIC INFORMATION

HFC is subject to the Texas Public Information Act ("TPIA"). Information submitted by Proposers is subject to release under the provisions of the TPIA set forth in Chapter 552 of the Texas Government Code. Each page where confidential or proprietary information appears must be labeled as such clearly and unambiguously. Proposers will be advised of any request for public information that implicates their materials and may, in accordance with applicable law, elect to assert objections to disclosure with the Texas Attorney General at their cost and expense.

RFP PACKETS

A complete copy of this RFP, including exhibits, necessary forms and other relevant information is available on-line at www.houstonfirst.com/do-business. This RFP provides the information necessary to prepare and submit a proposal for consideration and ranking by HFC.

WITHDRAWAL; ERROR

Proposals may be withdrawn due to errors or for any other reason by a written request received by bids@houstonfirst.com prior to the Submission Deadline.