

June 2002

INVITATION TO BID - LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY SECRETARIAL AND TELEPHONE MESSAGE SERVICES

Please submit your bid in accordance with the instructions. Please use this invitation to submit your bid and attach supplemental pages as necessary. One copy of your bid must be received in the Legislative Council office no later than 10:00 a.m. on Tuesday, October 1, 2002. The bids will be opened and read on that date. The bids will be reviewed by the Legislative Management Committee on Monday, October 7, 2002. If your bid is accepted, your bid constitutes a binding contract and includes the specifications of this invitation to bid.

BACKGROUND - 2001 LEGISLATIVE SESSION Secretarial Services

In 2001 the Legislative Assembly contracted with a secretarial service to prepare correspondence and envelopes, news releases, and other miscellaneous documents, e.g., written testimony presented by legislators to committees. Secretarial service employees were assigned work without regard to the political affiliation of the requester. For example, no employee was assigned to do work solely for the majority party or solely for the minority party.

During the 2001 session, the secretarial service produced a variety of documents, which included 1,080 letters (1,789 copies), 148 merge mailings (7,052 copies), 237 floor speeches (1,008 copies), 304 news releases (1,012 copies), 36 charts and lists (707 copies), and 193 miscellaneous documents-- labels, etc. (9,430 copies). The secretarial service also made the number of photocopies as indicated.

During the 2001 session, the secretarial service contractor provided four employees, one of which was the onsite supervisor. Although the 2001 contract was for 77 days at \$333.20 per day, the contractor used flexible work scheduling and billed only for actual costs incurred at an average cost of \$324.36 per day for 77 days (total billing was \$24,975.97 rather than the contract price of \$25,656.40).

Telephone Message Services

In 2001 the Legislative Assembly contracted with the same secretarial service to staff a telephone message center through which North Dakota residents use toll-free incoming wide area telephone service (WATS) lines to obtain information about pending legislative proposals and to leave messages for their senators and representatives. In addition, materials faxed to the Legislative Assembly are received in the telephone room, are sorted, and are delivered to the appropriate individuals in the legislative chambers. Telephone calls are rotated to an available attendant or to the next available attendant on a basis that attempts to equalize the calls received by each attendant. Rather than a busy signal if all attendants are busy with calls, voice mail instruction gives the

caller an option to wait until the next available attendant or to leave a voice mail message. Calls received after hours are routed to voice mail, and these messages are handled the next business day by the first attendant on duty.

Telephone attendants usually receive two types of calls--either seeking information or leaving a message. If a caller asks for information on whether a bill on a particular subject has been introduced or on the status of a specific bill, the telephone attendant accesses the computerized bill status system through that attendant's personal computer and either uses the subject index to review the subject matter of bills introduced or accesses the bill by number to determine the current status of that proposal. The attendant then gives the information to the caller. If the caller asks to leave a message for a legislator (by policy a caller may leave a message only for that caller's senator and two representatives of the district in which that caller resides), the attendant determines who the caller's legislators are (if the caller does not know), accesses the computerized message system (LAWS), and enters the caller's name, address, telephone number, e-mail address, the specific bill number for the message, and the message. The legislator then receives this information on the legislator's personal computer. If a message is for a legislator who does not use a personal computer, the telephone attendant completes a message form and an employee of the secretarial service delivers the message to the legislator. During the 2001 session, 136 of the 147 legislators used personal computers.

Since 1993, telephone call statistics indicate the number of calls has gone down each session--62,320 calls were received in 1993; 41,668 in 1995; 28,433 in 1997; 22,491 in 1999; and 16,028 in 2001. In 2001, 3,786 calls were received in January; 6,819 in February; 3,426 in March; and 1,997 in April. These statistics include 239 voice mail messages in January; 900 in February; 160 in March; and 76 in April. It is unknown whether the number of calls will continue to decrease each session. Factors that may influence the number of calls include increased use of e-mail to contact legislators, increased use of information available from the legislative branch web site, and the extent of public interest in legislative issues.

The telephone message services also process e-mails by which e-mail messages to legislators are added to the constituent views feature of the LAWS system. During the 2001 session, 454 e-mails were processed in January; 1,895 in February; 882 in March; and 546 in April.

The fax machine for the Legislative Assembly is located in the telephone room and the telephone room personnel sort fax messages and deliver them to legislators as appropriate. During the 2001 session, 651 fax messages were received in January; 1,244 in February; 712 in March; and 404 in April.

During the 2001 session, the secretarial service contractor provided nine employees, one of which was the onsite supervisor. Although the 2001 contract was for 77 days at \$711.20 per day, the contractor used flexible work scheduling and transferred one employee between the telephone message center and the secretarial service area as needed and billed only for actual costs incurred at an average cost of \$583.93 per day for 77 days (total billing was \$44,963.29 rather than the contract price of \$54,762.40).

GENERAL SPECIFICATIONS

The successful bidder must provide personnel necessary to perform secretarial services and telephone message services required by the House of Representatives and the Senate of the 58th Legislative Assembly similar to that provided during the 2001 session. The period of the contract is from the first day of the 2003 regular session (January 7, 2003) through the last day of the legislative session (unknown, but probably in mid-April). The Legislative Assembly meets in session Monday through Friday, with the possibility of meeting in session on a few Saturdays. The Legislative Assembly may be in session on Martin Luther King, Jr., Day, George Washington's Birthday, and Good Friday. The Legislative Assembly is scheduled for a recess on February 24-25, 2003. The Legislative Assembly is responsible for paying any overtime required under state or federal law if the Legislative Assembly meets on a Saturday or Sunday. Otherwise, the contractor is responsible for overtime required to complete projects on a timely basis.

The contractor should be prepared to assign one or two employees in the secretarial service area and the telephone message area to either area, as workload requires.

The contractor is responsible for the discipline or the dismissal of any employee. The chairman of the House and Senate Employment Committees may discuss with the contractor the discipline or dismissal of any employee.

Employees of the contractor will be working with confidential information and are required to sign a nondisclosure agreement. The contractor must enforce this agreement and terminate an employee who violates the nondisclosure agreement.

The contractor must provide:

1. Continuous monitoring of the performance of employees and provide a replacement if a current employee does not perform as required.
2. Payroll services for its employees and maintenance of all required payroll records, including necessary employee forms, taxes, Social Security, and workers' compensation.
3. All recruiting and testing to ensure employees will possess high-quality skills and workmanship.
4. A signed nondisclosure form from each employee.

The contractor must designate an account manager or liaison to manage the communication process between the Legislative Council, the secretarial services area, the telephone message center, and the contractor.

Secretarial Services

Secretarial service employees will be located in a room to the west of the Senate balcony. Equipment, supplies, and postage will be provided by the Legislative Assembly. A fax machine and telephone services will be provided in the secretarial services room. Each legislator has personalized stationery. The contractor for secretarial services will be provided personal computers. Each personal computer is equipped with a color monitor and a mouse. The word processing software will be Lotus Word Pro Millennium edition for Windows 2000.

Operators will be required to use standardized formats, which will be furnished by the Legislative Council. Almost all the legislators have notebook personal computers and drafts of work may be sent to the secretarial service through a network connection.

The contractor, through the onsite supervisor, is accountable to the Chief Clerk of the House with respect to projects for representatives and is accountable to the Secretary of the Senate with respect to projects for senators.

The contractor must provide a secretarial services supervisor. The supervisor is to:

1. Supervise employees of the contractor and provide for flexible work schedules. The supervisor must designate an assistant to assign work when the supervisor is not at work. Secretarial services should be provided between the hours of 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. on each legislative day.
2. Assign all work, keeping track of all incoming and outgoing documents.
3. Supervise a proofreading process.
4. Answer the telephone and delegate this responsibility when necessary.
5. Supervise the checking in and checking out of handheld dictation units to legislators.
6. Notify the majority leader or minority leader of a request for a restricted work project in violation of the *Policy Regarding Secretarial Services to Legislators* by a member of that leader's caucus.

The staff employed to provide this contractual service must:

1. Possess proficiency in Microsoft Windows 95 or higher.
2. Possess proficiency in using Word Pro after attending two days' training provided by the Legislative Council. The Legislative Assembly will reimburse the contractor at the hourly rate the contractor pays the employee for the length of the training.
3. Be able to operate a copy machine and transcription equipment.
4. Be proficient in proofreading documents.
5. Be proficient in the English language and proper rules of grammar.
6. Be able to go to a legislator's desk in the chamber and take instructions or notes regarding a project.

- 7. Be able to deliver the finished product to the legislator, if necessary.

The normal turnaround for a project should be within 24 hours. A press release submitted by noon Friday must be completed by 5:00 p.m. Friday. For any extensive project or mailings, the turnaround time should be within a reasonable period, recognizing the importance of timely response to requests.

Telephone Message Services

Telephone message service employees will be located in a room to the east of the Senate chamber. Equipment and supplies will be provided by the Legislative Assembly. Each telephone attendant will have a personal computer and a telephone.

Telephone attendants will be required to answer calls, operate personal computers, access programs to obtain bill status information or transmit messages to legislators, and personally deliver telephone messages or faxes to legislators.

The contractor, through the onsite supervisor, is accountable to the Chief Clerk of the House with respect to messages for representatives and is accountable to the Secretary of the Senate with respect to messages for senators.

The contractor must designate one of its employees as the onsite telephone message service supervisor. The supervisor is to:

- 1. Supervise employees of the contractor and provide for flexible work schedules. Telephone message service should be provided between the hours of 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. on each legislative day.
- 2. Assign work to the employees.

The staff employed to provide this contractual service must:

- 1. Be able to operate a personal computer, telephone, and fax machine.
- 2. Possess proficiency in handling telephone messages after attending three hours of training provided by the Legislative Council. The Legislative Assembly will reimburse the contractor at the hourly rate the contractor pays the employee for the length of the training.
- 3. Be able to hear telephone callers in a room containing several other telephone attendants answering calls.
- 4. Be proficient and diplomatic in responding to telephone callers.
- 5. Be proficient in the English language.
- 6. Be able to go to a legislator's desk in the chamber and deliver messages.

BID SPECIFICATIONS

Your proposal must be accompanied by a list of similar projects you have handled and a list of no fewer than three references who can attest to your capability to handle a contract of this magnitude.

This contract can be amended only by a written modification signed by both parties to the contract.

Bids are requested based on the general specifications outlined above. For purposes of this proposal, a legislative day is a day when the Legislative Assembly is in session.

Bid proposal: Thirteen employees, which includes an onsite secretarial services supervisor and an onsite telephone message service supervisor for approximately 75 legislative days (amount per day)

\$ _____

Pay ranges: List the pay rate or ranges for employees included in the bid proposal (hourly rate of pay)

\$ _____

What arrangements will be made to adjust the daily contract amount if fewer or more employees are needed to adequately perform the work. For example, the telephone message center could operate with 1-3 fewer employees during the first two-three weeks of the session and during the last two-three weeks of the session:

If the Legislative Assembly meets for more than 75 legislative days, each additional day of secretarial service beyond 75 days will be provided for (amount per day) \$ _____

Bidder _____

Mailing address _____

Telephone _____

Signature _____

Date _____