

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

RFP COVER SHEET

Administrative Information

RFP Number	005-RFP-1783-2025	Title of RFP	Iowa Focal Area Forest Stewardship Project
Agency	Iowa Department of Administrative Services (DAS) on behalf of Iowa Department of Natural Resources		
Available to other State agencies?			No
Available to Political Subdivisions?			No
Available to other States or governmental entities outside of the State of Iowa?			No
State Issuing Officer: Katelyn Howells Phone: 515-721-7856 E-mail: Katelyn.Howells@iowa.gov			
PROCUREMENT TIMETABLE—Event or Action			Date/Time (Central Time)
State Posts Notice of RFP on the TSB website			May 19, 2025
State Issues RFP			May 21, 2025
Follow-up RFP written questions, requests for clarification, and suggested changes from Respondents due (no questions accepted or responded to after this date)			June 5, 2025 at 4:00PM
Proposals Due			June 13, 2025 at 2:00PM
Relevant Websites			
Internet website where the Addenda to this RFP will be posted http://bidopportunities.iowa.gov and IMPACS Electronic Procurement System .			
Internet website where contract terms and conditions are posted https://das.iowa.gov/sites/default/files/procurement/pdf/050116%20terms%20services.pdf			
Firm Proposal Terms			
The minimum number of days following the deadline for submitting proposals that the Respondent guarantees all proposal terms, including price, will remain firm is 120 Days.			

SECTION 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1. Purpose

The purpose of this Request for Proposals (RFP) is to solicit proposals from Responsible Respondents to provide the goods and/or services identified on the RFP cover sheet. The Agency intends to award a Contract(s) for the initial period identified on the RFP cover sheet, and the Agency, in its sole discretion, may extend the Contract(s) for up to the number of annual extensions identified on the RFP cover sheet.

1.2. Definitions

For the purposes of this RFP and the resulting contract, the following terms shall mean:

“Agency” means the agency identified on the RFP cover sheet that is issuing the RFP and any other agency that purchases from the Contract.

“Contract” means the contract(s) entered into with the successful Respondent(s) as described in Section 6.1.

“Contractor” means the awarded business/person to provide the contractual services agreed upon.

“Deliverable” means the completion of a milestone or accomplishment of a task.

“General Terms and Conditions” means the General Terms and Conditions for Services Contracts as referenced on the RFP cover page.

“Proposal” means the Respondent’s proposal submitted in response to the RFP.

“Respondent” means the company, organization or other business entity submitting a proposal in response to this RFP.

“Responsible Respondent” means a Respondent that has the capability in all material respects to perform the scope of work and specifications of the Contract. In determining whether a Respondent is a Responsible Respondent, the Agency may consider various factors including, but not limited to, the Respondent’s competence and qualifications to provide the goods or services requested, the Respondent’s integrity and reliability, the past performance of the Respondent and the best interest of the Agency and the State.

“Responsive Proposal” means a Proposal that complies with the material provisions of this RFP.

“RFP” means this Request for Proposals and any attachments, exhibits, schedules or addenda hereto.

“State” means the State of Iowa, the Agency, and all state agencies, boards, and commissions, and any political subdivisions making purchases from the Contract as permitted by this RFP.

1.3. Overview of the RFP Process

This RFP is designed to provide Respondents with the information necessary for the preparation of competitive Proposals. The RFP process is for the Agency's benefit and is intended to provide the Agency with competitive information to assist in the selection process. It is not intended to be comprehensive. Each Respondent is responsible for determining all factors necessary for the submission of a comprehensive Proposal.

Respondent should review Request for Confidentiality, for more information if its Proposal contains confidential information. Any Proposal marked "Confidential" or "Proprietary" on every page may be disqualified.

It is the Agency's intention to evaluate Proposals from all Respondents that submit timely Responsive Proposals, and award the Contract(s) in accordance with the evaluation and selection criteria provided in this RFP.

1.4. Background

The Wildlife Bureau is responsible for wildlife resource management on public and private lands, and the management, maintenance, and operation of all public fish and wildlife areas. These areas, termed wildlife management areas (WMA's) include wildlife areas, fishing access areas, some state preserves, and large lake sites that have been acquired specifically for the purpose of providing habitat and recreational opportunities in the form of hunting, fishing, trapping, and wildlife related non-consumptive activities. The Wildlife Bureau manages over 415,000 acres of land. Additionally, DNR biologists assist other Bureaus with wildlife management recommendations and habitat plans for State Parks, State Recreation Areas, and State Forests.

Wildlife management areas can be viewed spatially on Iowa's Public Hunting Atlas [here](#).

Forest/Woodland Habitat Management Activities

Nearly 115,000 acres of forest/ woodland habitat exists on Wildlife Management Areas, in addition to forested acres that occur on other state lands (e.g., State Parks, State Recreation Areas). These acres consist of shrubland, tree and shrub plantings, woodlands, savanna and forest and are managed to provide wildlife cover, restore native communities and promote forest health.

Management biologists and foresters are in the process of completing forest stewardship plans on all wildlife areas that have a forest component. These plans focus on creating habitat for indigenous and migratory wildlife species. They are developed with assistance from DNR District Foresters that provide timber stand inventory, harvest, and reforestation expertise. The primary objectives of these plans are improving habitat diversity, improving water quality benefits, providing wildlife dependent recreational opportunities, and protecting threatened and endangered species. These plans will promote the long-term health of the forest ecosystem through a variety of management practices including timber stand improvement, early successional management, timber harvest, invasive species control and reforestation. Some of the work recommended in these plans is implemented using contractors but other work is completed by DNR staff and individuals that work in partnership positions between DNR and other entities. In certain focal areas, the DNR now has ambitious forest management plans that will require constant attention to ensure that the implementation stays on track. We seek this

partnership in order to add the capacity to increased technical capacity to focus on forest project identification, design, and delivery in an identified focal landscape centered around public land with forest wildlife stewardship plans needing focused implementation.

Additionally, the Focal Area Forester will leverage the forest management on public lands to gain traction with forest owners in the vicinity wishing to carry out beneficial forest management. The DNR has a long history of assisting private landowners with conservation planning and implementation. In particular, the Wildlife Bureau maintains a Private Lands Program (PLP) which includes professional foresters and wildlife biologists that assist landowners in development and implementation of forestry and wildlife habitat improvements on their property. The Focal Area Forester will work closely with both public and private lands biologists and forestry staff to efficiently implement forestry plans to benefit forest and wildlife resources within priority areas.

The DNR seeks to partner with a conservation organization to encourage science-based forest management on both public and private land to achieve landscape-scale conservation benefits.

1.5. Objectives

The DNR Seeks to enter into an agreement with an entity that will hire and employ a Focal Area Forester to work on activities that are in support of the DNR Wildlife Bureau's mission. The purpose of this agreement is to increase professional forestry capacity to increase the quantity and quality of forest management and restoration in Iowa.

SECTION 2 ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

2.1. Issuing Officer

The Issuing Officer identified in the RFP cover sheet is the sole point of contact regarding the RFP from the date of issuance until a Notice of Intent to Award the Contract is issued.

2.2. Restriction on Communication

From the issue date of this RFP until a Notice of Intent to Award the Contract is issued, Respondents may contact only the Issuing Officer. The Issuing Officer will respond only to written questions regarding the procurement process. Questions related to the interpretation of this RFP must be submitted as provided in Section 2. Oral questions related to the interpretation of this RFP will not be accepted. Respondents may be disqualified if they contact any State employee other than the Issuing Officer about the RFP except that Respondents may contact the State Targeted Small Business Office on issues related to the preference for Targeted Small Businesses.

This section shall not be construed as restricting communications related to the administration of any contract currently in effect between a Respondent and the State.

2.3. Downloading the RFP from the Internet

The RFP and any addenda to the RFP will be posted at <http://bidopportunities.iowa.gov/> and [IMPACS Electronic Procurement System](#). The Respondent is advised to check the website periodically for addenda to this RFP, particularly if the Respondent downloaded the RFP from the Internet as the Respondent may not automatically receive addenda. It is the Respondent's sole responsibility to check daily for addenda to posted documents.

2.4. Procurement Timetable

The dates provided in the procurement timetable on the RFP cover sheet are provided for informational and planning purposes. The Agency reserves the right to change the dates. If the Agency changes any of the deadlines for Respondent submissions, the Agency will issue an addendum to the RFP.

2.5. Questions, Requests for Clarification, and Suggested Changes

Respondents are invited to submit written questions and requests for clarification regarding the RFP. Respondents may also submit suggestions for changes to the specifications of this RFP. The questions, requests for clarifications, or suggestions must be in IMPACS on or before the date and time listed. Oral questions will not be permitted. If the questions, requests for clarifications, or suggestions pertain to a specific section of the RFP, Respondent shall reference the page and section number(s). The Agency will post written responses to questions, requests for clarifications, or suggestions received from Respondents in IMPACS.

The Agency assumes no responsibility for oral representations made by its officers or employees unless such representations are confirmed in writing and incorporated into the RFP through an addendum.

2.6. Amendment to the RFP

The Agency reserves the right to amend the RFP at any time using an addendum. The Respondent shall acknowledge receipt of all addenda in its Proposal. If the Agency issues an addendum after the due date for receipt of Proposals, the Agency may, in its sole discretion, allow Respondents to amend their Proposals in response to the addendum.

2.7. Amendment and Withdrawal of Proposal

The Respondent may amend or withdraw and resubmit its Proposal at any time before the Proposals are due. The Proposal must be updated and submitted using IMPACS. Electronic mail and faxed amendments will not be accepted. Respondents must notify the Issuing Officer in writing prior to the due date for Proposals if they wish to completely withdraw their Proposal(s).

2.8. Submission of Proposals

Respondents must submit Proposals in the State's [IMPACS Electronic Procurement System](#) before the "Proposals Due" date and time listed on the RFP cover sheet. This is a mandatory specification and will not be waived by the Agency. Any Proposal received after this deadline will be rejected and returned unopened to the Respondent. Respondents sending Proposals must allow ample upload time to ensure timely receipt of their Proposals. It is the Respondent's responsibility to ensure that the Proposal is received prior to the deadline. Electronic mail and faxed Proposals will not be accepted. There is a 50MB per file size limitation, but no limit to the number of files. Plan accordingly.

Respondents must furnish all information necessary to enable the Agency to evaluate the Proposal. Oral information provided by the Respondent will not be considered part of the Respondent's Proposal unless it is reduced to writing.

2.9. Proposal Opening

The Agency will open Proposals after the deadline for submission of Proposals has passed. The Proposals will remain confidential until the Agency has issued a Notice of Intent to Award a Contract. See Iowa Code Section 72.3. However, the names of Respondents who submitted timely Proposals will be publicly available after the Proposal opening. The announcement of Respondents who timely submitted Proposals does not mean that an individual Proposal has been deemed technically compliant or accepted for evaluation.

2.10. Costs of Preparing the Proposal

The costs of preparation and delivery of the Proposal are solely the responsibility of the Respondent.

2.11. No Commitment to Contract

The Agency reserves the right to reject any or all Proposals received in response to this RFP at any time prior to the execution of the Contract. Issuance of this RFP in no way constitutes a commitment by the Agency to award a contract.

2.12. Rejection of Proposals

The Agency may reject outright and not evaluate a Proposal for reasons including, without limitation:

2.12.1. The Respondent fails to deliver the Cost Proposal in a separate file.

- 2.12.2.** The Respondent acknowledges that a mandatory specification of the RFP cannot be met.
- 2.12.3.** The Respondent's Proposal changes a material specification of the RFP or the Proposal is not compliant with the mandatory specifications of the RFP.
- 2.12.4.** The Respondent's Proposal limits the rights of the Agency.
- 2.12.5.** The Respondent fails to include information necessary to substantiate that it will be able to meet a specification of the RFP as provided in Section 5 of the RFP.
- 2.12.6.** The Respondent fails to timely respond to the Agency's request for information, documents, or references.
- 2.12.7.** The Respondent fails to include proposal security, if required.
- 2.12.8.** The Respondent fails to include any signature, certification, authorization, stipulation, disclosure, or guarantee as provided in Section 6.
- 2.12.9.** The Respondent presents the information requested by this RFP in a format inconsistent with the instructions of the RFP or otherwise fails to comply with the specifications of this RFP.
- 2.12.10.** The Respondent initiates unauthorized contact regarding the RFP with a State employee other than the Issuing Officer.
- 2.12.11.** The Respondent provides misleading or inaccurate responses.
- 2.12.12.** The Respondent's Proposal is materially unbalanced. A Proposal in which line item prices are structured so that it is possible that the Respondent who appears to be low will not end up having the lowest overall cost to the State due to high prices on particular line items.
- 2.12.13.** There is insufficient evidence (including evidence submitted by the Respondent and evidence obtained by the Agency from other sources) to satisfy the Agency that the Respondent is a Responsible Respondent.
- 2.12.14.** The Respondent is a "scrutinized company" included on a "scrutinized company list" created by a public fund pursuant to Iowa Code section 12J.3

2.13. Nonmaterial Variances

The Agency reserves the right to waive or permit cure of nonmaterial variances in the Proposal if, in the judgment of the Agency, it is in the State's best interest to do so. Nonmaterial variances include but are not limited to, minor failures to comply that: do not affect overall responsiveness, are merely a matter of form or format, do not change the relative standing or otherwise prejudice other Respondents, do not change the meaning or scope of the RFP, or do not reflect a material change in the specifications of the RFP. In the event the Agency waives or permits cure of nonmaterial variances, such waiver or cure will not modify the RFP specifications or excuse the Respondent from full compliance with RFP specifications or other Contract specifications if the Respondent is awarded the Contract. The determination of materiality is in the sole discretion of the Agency.

2.14. Reference Checks

The Agency reserves the right to contact any reference to assist in the evaluation of the Proposal, to verify information contained in the Proposal and to discuss the Respondent's qualifications and the qualifications of any subcontractor identified in the Proposal.

2.15. Information from Other Sources

The Agency reserves the right to obtain and consider information from other sources concerning a Respondent, such as the Respondent's capability and performance under other contracts, the qualification of any subcontractor identified in the Proposal, the Respondent's financial stability, past or pending litigation, and other publicly available information.

2.16. Verification of Proposal Contents

The content of a Proposal submitted by a Respondent is subject to verification. If the Agency determines in its sole discretion that the content is in any way misleading or inaccurate, the Agency may reject the Proposal.

2.17. Proposal Clarification Process

The Agency reserves the right to contact a Respondent after the submission of Proposals for the purpose of clarifying a Proposal. This contact may include written questions, interviews, site visits, a review of past performance if the Respondent has provided goods and/or services to the State or any other political subdivision wherever located, or requests for corrective pages in the Respondent's Proposal. The Agency will not consider information received from or through Respondent if the information materially alters the content of the Proposal or the type of goods and/or services the Respondent is offering to the Agency. An individual authorized to legally bind the Respondent shall sign responses to any request for clarification. Responses shall be submitted to the Agency within the time specified in the Agency's request. Failure to comply with requests for additional information may result in the rejection of the Proposal.

2.18. Disposition of Proposals

All Proposals become the property of the State and shall not be returned to the Respondent. Once the Agency issues a Notice of Intent to Award the Contract, the contents of all Proposals will be public records and be available for inspection by interested parties, except for information for which Respondent properly requests confidential treatment according to exceptions provided in Iowa Code Chapter 22 or other applicable law.

2.19. Public Records and Requests for Confidential Treatment

The Agency's release of public records is governed by Iowa Code Chapter 22. Respondents are encouraged to familiarize themselves with Chapter 22 before submitting a Proposal. The Agency will copy and produce public records upon request as required to comply with Chapter 22 and will treat all information submitted by a Respondent as non-confidential records unless the Respondent requests specific parts of the Proposal be treated as confidential at the time of the submission as set forth herein **AND the information is confidential under Iowa or other applicable law.**

2.20. Copyright Permission

By submitting a Proposal, the Respondent agrees that the Agency may copy the Proposal for purposes of facilitating the evaluation of the Proposal or to respond to requests for public records.

By submitting a Proposal, the Respondent consents to such copying and warrants that such copying will not violate the rights of any third-party. The Agency shall have the right to use ideas or adaptations of ideas that are presented in Proposals.

2.21. Release of Claims

By submitting a Proposal, the Respondent agrees that it will not bring any claim or cause of action against the Agency or the State based on Respondent's misunderstanding concerning the information provided in the RFP or concerning the Agency's or the State's failure, negligent or otherwise, to provide the Respondent with complete, pertinent, or accurate information in this RFP, or for any failure to provide information that any Respondent might consider relevant for purposes of making a decision to submit a Proposal or to enter into any Contract resulting from this RFP.

2.22. Respondent Presentations

Respondents may be required to make a presentation. The determination as to need for presentations, and the location, order, and schedule of the presentations is at the sole discretion of the Agency. The presentation may include slides, graphics and other media selected by the Respondent to illustrate the Respondent's Proposal. The presentation shall not materially change the information contained in the Proposal.

2.23. Evaluation of Proposals Submitted

Proposals that are timely submitted and are not rejected will be reviewed in accordance with Section 6 of the RFP. The Agency will not necessarily award a Contract resulting from this RFP to the Respondent offering the lowest cost. Instead, the Agency will award the Contract(s) to the Responsible Respondent(s) whose Responsive Proposal the Agency believes will provide the best value to the Agency and the State.

2.24. Award Notice and Acceptance Period

Notice of Intent to Award the Contract(s) will be sent to all Respondents submitting a timely Proposal and may be posted at the website shown on the RFP cover sheet. Negotiation and execution of the Contract(s) shall be completed no later than thirty (30) days from the date of the Notice of Intent to Award or such other time as designated by the Agency. If the successful Respondent fails to negotiate and deliver an executed Contract by that date, the Agency, in its sole discretion, may cancel the award and award the Contract to the remaining Respondent the Agency believes will provide the best value to the State.

2.25. No Contract Rights until Execution

No Respondent shall acquire any legal or equitable rights regarding the Contract unless and until the Contract has been fully executed by the successful Respondent and the Agency.

2.26. Choice of Law and Forum

This RFP and the Contract shall be governed by the laws of the State of Iowa. Changes in applicable laws and rules may affect the award process or the Contract. Respondents are responsible for ascertaining pertinent legal requirements and restrictions. Any and all litigation or actions commenced in connection with this RFP shall be brought in the appropriate Iowa forum.

2.27. Preference

By virtue of statutory authority, a preference will be given to products and provisions grown and coal produced within the state of Iowa. Preference application: Tied responses to solicitations, regardless of the type of solicitation, are decided in favor of Iowa products and Iowa-based businesses per 11 IAC 117.5(1)-(2), 117.12(4).

2.28. Restrictions on Gifts and Activities

Iowa Code Chapter 68B restricts gifts which may be given or received by State employees and requires certain individuals to disclose information concerning their activities with State government. Respondents are responsible to determine the applicability of this Chapter 68B to their activities and to comply with its requirements. In addition, pursuant to Iowa Code section 722.1, it is a felony offense to bribe or attempt to bribe a public official.

2.29. No Minimum Guaranteed

The Agency does not guarantee any minimum level of purchases under the Contract.

2.30. Post Solicitation Debriefing

A debriefing is available to any Respondent who submitted a proposal in response to this RFP. Respondent shall submit a written request for a debriefing to the Issuing Officer via email or other delivery method. All Respondents will be accorded fair and equal treatment with respect to its opportunity for debriefing. The debriefing shall be scheduled by the Agency as soon as practicable after the receipt of debriefing request.

2.31. Appeals

A Respondent whose Proposal has been timely filed and who is aggrieved by the Notice of Intent to Award of the Department may appeal the decision by emailing a written notice of appeal (in accordance with 11—Chapter 117.20, Iowa Administrative Code) to the Director of the Department of Administrative Services and carbon copy to the Issuing Officer. The notice must be filed within five (5) days of the date of the Notice of Intent to Award issued by the Department, exclusive of Saturdays, Sundays, and legal state holidays. The written notice may be filed by fax transmission to 515.725.2064. The notice of appeal must clearly and fully identify all issues being contested by reference to the page, section and line number(s) of the RFP and/or the Notice of Intent to Award. A notice of appeal may not stay negotiations with the apparent successful Respondent.

SECTION 3 FORM AND CONTENT OF PROPOSALS

3.1. Instructions

These instructions describe and define the format and content of the Proposal. They are designed to facilitate a uniform review process. Failure to adhere to the Proposal format may result in the rejection of the Proposal.

3.1.1. The Proposal shall be divided into two parts: (1) the Technical Proposal and (2) the Cost Proposal. The Technical Proposal and the Cost Proposal shall be labeled as such as separate files. The files shall be labeled with the following information:

005-RFP-1783-2025 - Respondent Name - Technical Proposal

005-RFP-1783-2025 - Respondent Name - Cost Proposal

Files must attach to Respondent's submission in the State's [IMPACS Electronic Procurement System](#).

3.1.2. If the Respondent designates any information in its Proposal as confidential pursuant to Section 2, the Respondent must also submit a public copy Proposal from which confidential information has been excised as provided in Section 2 and which is marked "Public Copy".

005-RFP-1783-2025 - Respondent Name - Public Copy

3.1.3. Proposal shall not contain promotional or display materials.

3.1.4. Attachments shall be referenced in the Proposal.

3.1.5. If a Respondent proposals more than one solution to the RFP specifications, each shall be labeled and submitted in a separate Proposal, and each will be evaluated separately.

3.2. Technical Proposal

Any information provided in the Technical Proposal is subject to consideration for consideration, evaluation, and scoring. The following documents and responses shall be included in the Technical Proposal in the order given below:

Exhibit 1 - Transmittal Letter

An individual authorized to legally bind the Respondent shall sign the transmittal letter. The letter shall include the Respondent's mailing address, electronic mail address, fax number, and telephone number.

Exhibit 2 - Executive Summary

The Respondent shall prepare an executive summary and overview of the goods and/or services it is offering, including all of the following information:

- Statements that demonstrate that the Respondent has read and understands the terms and conditions of the RFP including the Contract provisions in Section 6.
- An overview of the Respondent's plans for complying with the specifications of this RFP.
- Any other summary information the Respondent deems to be pertinent.

Exhibit 3 - Experience

The Respondent must provide the following information regarding its experience:

- Number of years in business.
- Number of years of experience with providing the types of services sought by the RFP.
- The level of technical experience in providing the types of services sought by the RFP.
- A list of all goods and/or services similar to those sought by this RFP that the Respondent has provided to other businesses or governmental entities in the past 3 years.
- Contact information for three (3) previous or current customers or clients knowledgeable of the Respondent's performance in providing goods and/or services similar to the goods and/or services described in this RFP.

Exhibit 4 - Mandatory Specifications

The Respondent shall answer whether or not it will comply with each specification in Section 5 of the RFP. Where the context requires more than a yes or no answer or the specific specifications so indicates, Respondent shall explain how it will comply with the specification. Merely repeating the Section 5 specifications may be considered non-responsive and result in the rejection of the Proposal. Proposals must identify any deviations from the specifications of the RFP or specifications the Respondent cannot satisfy. If the Respondent deviates from or cannot satisfy the specification(s) of this section, the Agency may reject the Proposal.

Exhibit 5 - Hiring Plan

Respondent shall demonstrate its understanding of the services requested under this RFP, the expertise of the personnel who will provide the requested services, and the Respondent's ability to logically plan and achieve the stated objectives and goals of this RFP.

Exhibit 6 - Capacity

Provide a description of respondent's organizational structure, including current and anticipated workloads for individuals who will be assigned to this project.

Exhibit 7 - Implementation Plan

Describe recommended implementation strategy including on-site coordination and support services, best practice consulting options and professional services. Identify any third-party Respondents involved in Respondent's implementation strategy and describe these relationships. Describe the skills and time required by State of Iowa personnel for implementation and support of the Scope of Work. Please provide a hiring and implementation schedule, based on weekly milestones (not dates).

Exhibit 8 - Personnel

Provide key staff/dedicated team background to include main point of contact(s) for customer service/support. Provide a brief resume of experience for all team members proposed to be assigned to the project. Detail how the Focal Area Forester position will be advertised and selected.

Exhibit 9 - Training

Describe the training Respondent will provide to the Focal Area Forester employed under this project.

Exhibit 10 - Aligned with Iowa Priorities

Detail how Respondent will work to ensure that all activities and work performed by the Focal Area Forester further and are in support of the Wildlife Bureau's Mission.

3.3. Cost Proposal

The Respondent shall provide its Cost Proposal in a separate file for the proposed goods and/or services. All prices are quoted pursuant to the terms and conditions of this RFP. Respondent's Cost Proposal shall include an all-inclusive, itemized, total cost in U.S. Dollars (including all travel, expenses, etc. in prices) for the proposed services. All pricing to be FOB Destination, freight cost, and all expenses included; and based on Net 60 Days Payment Terms. Cost proposals must include the following:

- Provide the pay and benefits for the Focal Area Forester that will be charged to the Agency.
- Provide any costs associated with the hiring process for the Focal Area Forester.
- Provide any one time and recurring costs for services. Recurring costs are to be for a 6-year period to cover the initial term and extensions to the Contract.
- Any other costs associated with proposed services.
- Pricing for optional services.

3.3.1. Respondent Discounts

Respondents shall state in their Cost Proposals whether they offer any payment discounts, including but not limited to:

3.3.1.1. Prompt Payment Discount

The State can agree to pay in less than sixty (60) days if an incentive for earlier payment is offered.

3.3.1.2. Cash Discount

The State may consider cash discounts when scoring Cost Proposals.

SECTION 4 SCOPE OF WORK

Overview

The Successful Respondent shall provide the services to the State in accordance with the requirements as provided in this Scope of Work.

4.1. Description of Work

Hire, employ and supervise a Focal Area Forester who will be responsible for delivering technical forestry projects that are in support of the Wildlife Bureau's objectives on both public and private lands, for a period up to 5 years.

Examples of work activities to be carried out by the Focal Area Forester include, but are not limited to: forest stand mapping, meeting with public land managers and private woodland owners to discuss forest management objectives and methods, forestry project plan development, reviewing work completed by contractors, and maintaining detailed records of work completed under the initiative.

4.2. Deliverables

Contractor must perform the following Tasks by the Task Milestone Dates set out in the following table:

Deliverable	Task Milestone Date
<p>Task 1: Employ a Focal Area Forester</p> <p>Description: Upon notification from DNR of the availability of funding, the contractor shall hire and employ a Focal Area Forester to work on activities that are in support of the Wildlife Bureau's Mission. Each individual Focal Area forester will be employed on a 1-year term basis, with opportunity for renewal. In completing this task, the contractor shall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Advertise vacant positions. Candidate qualifications shall indicate a minimum of a Bachelor's degree in Forestry or a closely related field from an accredited university. Contractor shall consult with the DNR in developing the job announcement.b) Supervise the employees throughout the term of this Agreement, with local leadership and guidance on activities from DNR.c) Prior to offering employment to any individual under this Agreement, the contractor shall consult with the DNR. The contractor and DNR will coordinate on candidate interviews.d) Pay the Focal Area Forester. Focal Area Forester hired under this agreement are expected to work 40 hours per week. The	<p>Hire staff no later than September 30, 2025; replace as needed for duration of agreement</p>

<p>wage and annual leave structure shall be established by mutual agreement of the Iowa DNR and the contractor.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> e) Provide the Focal Area Forester with standard benefits that are customarily available to other employees of a similar status or nature. f) Provide annual and other periodic, regular job-related training opportunities to the individuals, including opportunities to participate in DNR trainings. g) Require the Forestry Specialists to attend the DNR's Wildlife Bureau's annual Statewide Meeting. h) Provide reimbursement to Focal Area Forester for expenses required for performance of job duties (e.g., travel expenses for attending meetings, registration fees for required trainings). 	
<p>Task 2: Performance Plan Development</p> <p>Description: The Contractor in partnership with DNR Wildlife Supervisors, PLP Coordinator, District Foresters, and other applicable partners, shall develop Annual Performance Plans utilizing a standard template developed by the parties.</p> <p>Examples of work activities to be carried out by the Focal Area Forester include forest stand mapping, meeting with public land managers and private woodland owners to discuss forest management objectives and methods, forestry project plan development, reviewing work completed by contractors, and maintaining detailed records of work completed under the initiative. Performance Plan must be comprised of work that falls within the mission of the DNR.</p>	<p>Within 30 days of hire</p>

SECTION 5 SPECIFICATIONS

Overview

The successful Respondent shall provide the goods and/or services to the State in accordance with the specifications and technical specifications as provided in this Section. The Respondent shall address each specification in this Section and indicate whether or not it will comply with the specification. If the context requires more than a yes or no answer or the section specifically indicates, Respondent shall explain how it will comply with the specification. Proposals must address each specification. Merely repeating the specifications may be considered non-responsive and may disqualify the Respondent. Proposals must identify any deviations from the specifications of this RFP or specifications the Respondent cannot satisfy. If the Respondent deviates from or cannot satisfy the specification (s) of this section, the Agency may reject the Proposal.

All items listed in this section are Mandatory Specifications. Respondents must indicate either **“yes”** or **“no”** to each specification in their Proposals and provide an explanation as to how the specification is met. By indicating “yes” a Respondent agrees that it shall comply with that specification throughout the full term of the Contract, if the Respondent is successful. In addition, if specified by the specifications or if the context otherwise requires, the Respondent shall provide references and/or supportive materials to verify the Respondent’s compliance with the specification. The Agency shall have the right to determine whether the supportive information and materials submitted by the Respondent demonstrate that the Respondent will be able to comply with the Mandatory Specifications. If the Agency determines the responses and supportive materials do not demonstrate the Supplier will be able to comply with the Mandatory Specifications, the Agency may reject the Proposal.

5.1. Respondent Requirements

- 5.1.1. Ability to hire a Focal Area Forester by September 30, 2025 and replace as needed for the duration of the agreement.
- 5.1.2. Ability to employ a Focal Area Forester throughout the duration of the agreement, with all standard benefits that are available to other employees of a similar status or nature.

SECTION 6 EVALUATION AND SELECTION

6.1. Introduction

This Section describes the evaluation process that will be used to determine which Proposal(s) provides the greatest value to the State. Agency will not necessarily award the Contract to the Respondent offering the lowest cost to the Agency. Instead, the Agency will award to the Respondent whose Responsive Proposal the Agency believes will provide the best value to the State.

6.2. Evaluation Committee

The Agency will use an evaluation committee to conduct a comprehensive, fair, and impartial evaluation of Technical Proposals received in response to this RFP. The evaluation committee will recommend an award based on the results of their evaluation to the Agency or to another person or entity that must approve the recommendation.

6.3. Technical Proposal Evaluation and Scoring

All Technical Proposals will be evaluated to determine if they comply with the Mandatory Specifications. The evaluation committee will fully evaluate and score all Responsive Proposals submitted by Responsible Respondents in accordance with this Section. In addition to other RFP requirements, to be deemed a Responsive Proposal, the Technical Proposal must:

- Answer “Yes” to all parts of Section 5 and include supportive materials as required to demonstrate the Respondent will be able to comply with the Mandatory Specifications in that section and
- Obtain the minimum score for the Technical Proposal. If a Technical Proposal does not meet the minimum score, it will be rejected and the Respondent’s Cost Proposal will not be evaluated.

Technical Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

ROUND 1	RFP Section	
Mandatory Specifications	Section 5	Pass/Fail
ROUND 2*	RFP Section	Possible Points
Experience	Exhibit 3	200
Hiring Plan	Exhibit 5	200
Capacity	Exhibit 6	200
Implementation Plan	Exhibit 7	50
Personnel	Exhibit 8	50
Training	Exhibit 9	50
Aligned with Iowa Priorities	Exhibit 10	50
Total Possible Technical Proposal Points		800

ROUND 3	RFP Section	Possible Points
Cost Proposal	Section 6.4	200

*A Respondent must score a minimum Technical Score of 450 points to be eligible for the next round of evaluation and consideration for award.

6.4. Cost Proposal Scoring

After the Technical Proposals are evaluated and scored, the Cost Proposals will be opened and scored.

The Cost Proposals will remain sealed during the evaluation of the Technical Proposals and any demonstrations. Only prospective Respondents who obtain the minimum score for their Technical Proposal will be considered during the cost evaluation phase of the review process. When a Technical Proposal does not meet the minimum score, the associated Cost Proposal will remain unopened and will be returned to the Respondents upon request after the Lead State issues a Notice of Intent to Award the Contract. After the Technical Proposals are evaluated and scored, the Cost Proposals will be opened and scored.

The cost proposal for each respondent will be evaluated in comparison with the other cost proposals received; however, the number of points possible will be proportional to each respondent's technical evaluation score.

The technical evaluation points received (numerator) is divided by the technical evaluation points possible (denominator) and multiplied by the maximum number of points in the cost evaluation. This provides the total points possible for the respondent in the cost evaluation.

Points Possible for Respondent =

$\frac{\text{Technical Evaluation Points Received}}{\text{Technical Evaluation Points Possible}} \times \text{Maximum Points in Cost Evaluation}$

The lowest cost proposal (numerator) is divided by the cost proposal being evaluated (denominator) and multiplied by the points possible for the respondent. This provides the cost evaluation points awarded.

Cost Evaluation Points Awarded =

$\frac{\text{Lowest Cost Proposal Received}}{\text{Cost Proposal Being Evaluated}} \times \text{Points Possible for Respondent}$

For example, suppose there are 10 maximum points in the cost evaluation. A respondent that receives 100% of the points possible in the technical evaluation has the opportunity to earn 100% of the points possible in the cost evaluation (e.g., 10 points). If the cost proposal is the lowest cost, the full 10 points will be awarded.

However, a respondent that receives only 50% of the points possible in the technical evaluation has the opportunity to earn only 50% of the points possible in the cost evaluation (e.g., 5 points).

If the cost proposal is the lowest cost, only 5 points are awarded, compared to the 10 points that could have been awarded if the respondent had received the highest technical evaluation score.

6.5. Tied Score and Preferences

- 6.5.1.** An award shall be determined by a drawing when responses are received that are equal in all respects and tied in price. Whenever it is practical to do so, the drawing will be held in the presence of the Respondents who are tied in price. Otherwise the drawing will be made in front of at least three non-interested parties. All drawings shall be documented.
- 6.5.2.** Notwithstanding the foregoing, if a tied score involves an Iowa-based Respondent or products produced within the State of Iowa and a Respondent based or products produced outside the State of Iowa, the Iowa Respondent will receive preference. If a tied score involves one or more Iowa Respondents and one or more Respondents outside the state of Iowa, a drawing will be held among the Iowa Respondents only.
- 6.5.3.** In the event of a tied score between Iowa Respondents, the Agency shall contact the Iowa Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) committee for confirmation and verification as to whether the Respondents have complied with ESGR standards. Preference, in the case of a tied score, shall be given to Iowa Respondents complying with ESGR standards.
- 6.5.4.** Second preference in tied scores will be given to Respondents based in the United States or products produced in the United States over Respondents based or products produced outside the United States.
- 6.5.5.** Preferences required by applicable statute or rule shall also be applied, where appropriate.

SECTION 7 CONTRACT TERMS AND CONDITIONS

7.1. Contract Terms and Conditions

The Contract that the Agency expects to award as a result of this RFP shall comprise the specifications, terms and conditions of the RFP, written clarifications or changes made by the Agency to the RFP through an amendment to the RFP in accordance with the provisions of the RFP, the Terms and Conditions, the offer of the successful Respondent contained in its Proposal, and any other terms deemed necessary by the Agency. No objection or amendment by a Respondent to the provisions or terms and conditions of the RFP or the Terms and Conditions shall be incorporated into the Contract unless Agency has explicitly accepted the Respondent's objection or amendment in writing.

The Contract terms and conditions in this Section 7, the General Terms and Conditions to the extent referenced and linked to on the RFP cover page, and/or any Terms and Conditions attached to and accompanying this RFP as an attachment hereto, will be incorporated into the Contract. The Terms and Conditions may be supplemented at the time of contract execution and are provided to enable Respondents to better evaluate the costs associated with the RFP specifications and the Contract. All costs associated with complying with such Terms and Conditions should be included in any pricing quoted by the Respondent.

By submitting a Proposal, Respondent acknowledges its acceptance of the terms and conditions of the RFP and the Terms and Conditions without change except as otherwise expressly stated in its Proposal. If the Respondent takes exception to a provision, it must identify it by page and section number, state the reason for the exception, and set forth in its Proposal the specific RFP or Terms and Conditions language it proposes to include in place of the provision. If Respondent's exceptions or proposed responses materially alter the RFP, or if the Respondent submits its own terms and conditions or otherwise fails to follow the process described herein, the Agency may reject the Proposal, in its sole discretion.

The Agency will evaluate all Proposals without regard to any proposed modifications to any terms and conditions of the RFP or Terms and Conditions by Contractor. Once a Proposal has been identified as the one for which an Award recommendation has been made, but prior to notifying Respondents of the decision, the Agency, in its sole discretion, may consider any proposed modifications to the terms and conditions of the RFP or Terms and Conditions identified in that Proposal. The Agency reserves the right to either award a Contract(s) without further negotiation with the successful Respondent or to negotiate Contract terms with the successful Respondent if the best interests of the State would be served. As such, if any proposed modifications are not determined to be in the best interests of the State, or appear to pose a substantial impediment to reaching agreement, the Agency may, in its sole discretion:

- 7.1.1. Issue a Notice of Intent to Award in favor of the successful Respondent, but decline to agree to or further negotiate any proposed modifications to terms and conditions identified by the Respondent in its Proposal;

- 7.1.2.** Issue a Notice of Intent to Award in favor of the successful Respondent, and identify in the Notice proposed modifications to terms and conditions identified by the Respondent in its Proposal with which the agency will or will not agree or further negotiate;
- 7.1.3.** Enter open-ended negotiations with the successful Respondent; provided, that any such negotiations shall be limited to the proposed modifications to terms and conditions identified by Respondent in its Proposal;
- 7.1.4.** Change the Agency's recommendation for Award and issue a Notice of Intent to Award to a Respondent whose proposal does not pose as great of a challenge to the Agency.

Any ambiguity, vagueness, inconsistency or conflict, either internal to such modification(s) or arising when read in conjunction with other portions of the Contract, shall be construed strictly in favor of the State. Only those proposed modifications identified in the Notice of Intent to Award issued by the Agency as terms and conditions with which the agency will or will not agree or further negotiate shall be part of the Contract, and the State may ignore all proposed modifications, accept one or more and ignore others, accept all or, through negotiations after an award, agree to compromise language concerning one or more proposed modifications to be incorporated into a final Contract between the parties. By executing and submitting its Proposal in response to this RFP, Respondent understands and agrees that the State may exercise its discretion not to consider any or all proposed modifications Respondent may request and may accept Respondent's proposal under the terms and conditions of this RFP and the Terms and Conditions.

7.2. Contractual Terms and Conditions - No Material Changes/Non-Negotiable

Notwithstanding anything in this RFP to the contrary, Respondent may not take exception to or propose including language in any resulting contract that conflicts with or is otherwise inconsistent with the following:

7.2.1. Indemnification

Without specific authority to do so, the State, or agencies, cannot enter into agreements indemnifying Respondents, or any other entity, against third-party claims. A clause that intends to seek indemnification from the State, whether or not the clause contains the words "indemnity" or "indemnify," are not clauses to which the State may agree. The State will not agree to clause that includes the language "to the extent permitted by law" because, as explained, the State cannot indemnify Respondents to any extent.

7.2.2. Limitation of Liability

Iowa Code section 8A.311(22) and 11 Iowa Admin. Code Chapter 120 establish the rules to allow for the State to agree to a contractual limitation of vendor liability clause in limited circumstances. Any request by Respondent for the State to limit damages not in accordance with Iowa law or administrative rules is a request with which the State cannot agree.

7.2.3. Jurisdiction and Venue

Iowa Code chapter 13 establishes that the Iowa Attorney General is the State's attorney for all purposes, including management of litigation and claims against the state. The

State may not preempt the Attorney General's authority by agreeing in advance to control the way litigation may be managed in the event of a dispute. Likewise, the State cannot agree to the jurisdiction or laws of another state or its courts, cannot agree to venue in another state, and cannot agree to participate in any form of alternative dispute resolution.

7.2.4. Confidentiality

All Iowa state agencies are subject to Iowa public records laws. The State cannot agree to contractual terms that attempt to prevent it from disclosing or disseminating records that constitute public records under Iowa Code chapter 22.

7.2.5. Unliquidated Expenses (i.e. Attorney Fees, Add-ons, or Cost Increases)

The State may not agree to clauses which may obligate it to pay for claims that might exceed its current funding appropriation. The State may only obligate those funds that have been appropriated to it by the Iowa Legislative Assembly and may only obligate those funds for the purposes for which the funds were appropriated.

7.3. Special Terms and Conditions

7.3.1. Term Length

The Contract shall have an initial term of five (5) years, beginning on the date of contract execution (the **"Effective Date"**). At the end of the Contract's initial term, the State shall have the option, in its sole discretion to renew the Contract on the same terms and conditions for one (1) additional one-year term, for a total contract term not to exceed six (6) years. The State will give the Vendor written notice of its intent whether to exercise each option no later than ninety (90) days before the end of the Contract's then-current term.

7.3.2. Payment Terms

7.3.2.1. Payment Methods

The State of Iowa, in its sole discretion, will determine the method of payment for goods and/or services as part of the Contract. The State Pcard and EAP are preferred payment methods, but payments may be made by any of the following methods: Pcard/EAP, EFT/ACH, or State Warrant. Respondents shall indicate in their Cost Proposals all of the payment methods they will accept. This information will not be scored as part of the Cost Proposal or evaluated as part the Technical Proposal.

7.3.2.2. Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) by Automated Clearing House (ACH)

The State of Iowa may make payment by EFT by ACH. Payments are deposited into the financial institution of the claimant's choice three working days from the issue date of the direct deposit.

https://das.iowa.gov/sites/default/files/acct_sae/man_for_ref/forms/eft_authorization_form.pdf

7.3.2.3. State Warrant

The State of Iowa's warrant drawn on the Treasurer of State is used to pay claims against the departments of the State of Iowa. The warrant is issued upon receipt of proper documentation from the issuing department.

7.3.2.4. Credit Card or ePayables

The State of Iowa's Purchasing Cards (Pcards) and ePayable solution (EAP) are commercial payment methods utilizing the VISA credit card network. The State of Iowa will not accept price changes or pay additional fees if Respondent uses the Pcard or EAP payment methods. Pcard-accepting Respondents must abide by the State of Iowa's Terms of Pcard Acceptance. Respondents must provide a statement regarding their ability to meet the requirements in this subsection, as well as identifying their transaction reporting capabilities (Level I, II, or III).

7.3.2.5. Terms and Conditions for State of Iowa Purchasing Cards

The State of Iowa shall pay Contractor's invoices using its Purchasing Card Program (Pcard) whenever possible. The Pcard is a VISA credit card issued by U.S. Bank to allow authorized employees to make purchases on behalf of the State. It is a faster, more convenient alternative to traditional invoicing and remittance processing, allowing US Bank to pay the Contractor directly, generally within 48 hours of the transaction. Contractor shall comply with security measures for Pcard payments including:

- 7.3.2.5.1. Contractor shall comply with Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard (PCI DSS) to ensure confidential card information is not compromised;
- 7.3.2.5.2. Contractor shall adhere to Fair and Accurate Credit Transactions Act requirements that limit the amount of consumer and account information shared for greater security protection;
- 7.3.2.5.3. Contractor shall not write down card numbers or store card information. When accepting orders by phone, Contractor shall process the transaction during the call and send itemized receipts (excluding card numbers) to the cardholder by fax, email, or mail (with delivery);
- 7.3.2.5.4. Contractor shall process payment for items when an order is placed only for items currently in stock and available for shipment, and only for services already rendered;
- 7.3.2.5.5. Contractor shall confirm that the name of purchaser matches the name on the card;
- 7.3.2.5.6. Contractor shall ensure Internet orders are processed via secure websites, featuring Verisign, TRUSTe, BBBOnline, or "https" in the web address;
- 7.3.2.5.7. Contractor shall shred any documentation with credit card numbers.

7.3.2.6. Payment Terms

Per Iowa Code 8A.514 the State of Iowa is allowed sixty (60) days to pay an invoice submitted by a Contractor

7.3.2.7. Respondent Discounts

Respondent shall state in their Cost Proposals whether they offer any payment discounts.

7.3.2.8. Prompt Payment Discount

The State can agree to pay in less than sixty (60) days if an incentive for earlier payment is offered.

7.3.2.9. Invoices

Any invoices submitted must comply with applicable rules concerning payment of claims, including but not limited to those set forth in Iowa Administrative Code chapter 11-41.

7.3.3. Insurance

The Contract will require the successful Respondent to maintain insurance coverage(s) in accordance with the insurance provisions of the General Terms and Conditions and of the type and in the minimum amounts set forth below, unless otherwise required by the Agency.

Type of Insurance	LIMIT	AMOUNT
General Liability (including contractual liability) written on an occurrence basis	General Aggregate	\$2 million
	Products –	
	Comp/Op Aggregate	\$1 Million
	Personal injury	\$1 Million
	Each Occurrence	\$1 Million
Automobile Liability (including contractual liability) written on an occurrence basis	Combined single limit	\$1 Million
Excess Liability, Umbrella Form	Each Occurrence	\$1 Million
	Aggregate	\$1 Million
Property Damage	Each Occurrence	\$1 Million
	Aggregate	\$1 Million
Workers Compensation and Employer Liability	As Required by Iowa law	As required by Iowa law

Acceptance of the insurance certificates by the Department shall not act to relieve Contractor of any obligation under this Contract. It shall be the responsibility of Contractor to keep the respective insurance policies and coverages current and in force during the life of this Contract. Contractor shall be responsible for all premiums,

deductibles and for any inadequacy, absence or limitation of coverage, and the Contractor shall have no claim or other recourse against the State or the Department for any costs or loss attributable to any of the foregoing, all of which shall be borne solely by the Contractor. Notwithstanding any other provision of this Contract, Contractor shall be fully responsible and liable for meeting and fulfilling all of its obligations under this section of the Contract.

7.3.4. Annual Report

The Contractor shall provide an electronic detailed annual report on all services provided under this agreement within the State of Iowa via E-Mail to the Iowa Department of Administrative Services, Central Procurement, Attn: Katelyn Howells, Katelyn.Howells@iowa.gov. The report file format shall be Microsoft Excel compatible format. The report at minimum shall include the date of service, customer name and address, hourly rate charged, and number of hours invoiced. The State reserves the right to request more detailed information (ad-hoc reporting) at any time and on an individual or specific basis for a specific product, department, time frame, or for a range of products, departments or time frames.

7.4. Order of Precedence

If there is a conflict or inconsistency between any documents comprising the Terms and Conditions, such conflict or inconsistency shall be resolved according to the following priority, ranked in descending order: (1) any terms and conditions specifically set forth in this Section 7 (Contract Terms and Conditions & Administration) under a subsection with a heading entitled Special Terms & Conditions; (2) the General Terms and Conditions for Services Contracts or Goods Contracts to the extent referenced and linked to on the RFP cover page the Contract; (3) if neither the General Terms and Conditions for Service Contracts or Goods Contracts are linked to on the RFP cover page, any terms and conditions attached to and accompanying this RFP as a separate attachment (Terms and Conditions); and (4) any terms and conditions specifically set forth in this Section 7 (Contract Terms and Conditions & Administration) set forth under a subsection with a title other than Special Terms & Conditions.

Response Check List

RFP REFERENCE SECTION	RESPONSE INCLUDED	
	Yes	No
Technical Proposal		
Exhibit 1 - Transmittal Letter		
Exhibit 2 - Executive Summary		
Exhibit 3 - Experience		
Exhibit 4 - Mandatory Technical Specifications		
Exhibit 5 - Hiring Plan		
Exhibit 6 - Capacity		
Exhibit 7 - Implementation Plan		
Exhibit 8 - Personnel		
Exhibit 9 - Training		
Exhibit 10 - Aligned with Iowa Priorities		
Public Copy of Technical Proposal with Confidential Information Excised (Optional)		
Cost Proposal		