



**San Joaquin  
County SELPA**

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July 31, 2023

To Whom it May Concern,

San Joaquin County Office of Education (SJCOE) is seeking proposals from qualified individuals or law firms to provide professional legal service with an emphasis in Special Education. The purpose of this Request for Qualification & Proposal (“RFQ/P”) is to competitively solicit individuals/firms to provide sound, current legal advice and counsel to the SJCOE’s Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA) and SJCOE Special Education Program.

We appreciate your review and consideration of submitting a proposal to be considered for this collaborative service oriented relationship. If you have any questions please feel free to reach out to our office at any time via the contact information included in the request for proposals.

Thank you,

Brandie A. Brunni  
Assistant Superintendent of Special Education  
SELPA Director  
San Joaquin County Office of Education



**SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY  
OFFICE OF EDUCATION**

**REQUEST FOR  
QUALIFICATION &  
PROPOSAL**

**SPECIAL EDUCATION  
LEGAL SERVICES**

**PREPARED BY:  
SAN JOAQUIN  
COUNTY OFFICE OF  
EDUCATION**

Request for Proposals Issued: July 31, 2023

Deadline for Submittal of Proposals: August 15th, 2023

## **Request for Qualification & Proposal (RFQ/P) for Legal Services**

### **I. OBJECTIVE**

San Joaquin County Office of Education (SJCOE) is seeking proposals from qualified individuals or law firms to provide professional legal support with an emphasis in Special Education. The purpose of this Request for Qualification & Proposal (“RFQ/P”) is to competitively solicit individuals/firms and establish a pool of specialized consultants for advice and legal counsel to San Joaquin County Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA) and SJCOE Special Education Program. The interested individual/law firm will herein be designated as (“Proposer”). It is the intention of the SJCOE to enter into a contract for one (1) year, with an option to renew for four (4) additional years.

#### **Background**

The San Joaquin County SELPA coordinates special education efforts to ensure that resources are placed to meet student needs and provide services to students, families, and staff in school districts with fewer resources. San Joaquin County SELPA support is provided to these districts upon request and may include consultation and/or direct service. San Joaquin County SELPA acts as an interagency liaison and bridge between community resources and student needs.

The SJCOE as part of the San Joaquin County SELPA operates Special Education Programs to serve students from birth to age 22, who are enrolled in SJCOE's Special Education programs in Lincoln, Manteca, Escalon, Ripon, Linden, Lammersville, and Tracy Unified Districts, as well as Banta, Jefferson, and New Jerusalem Elementary School Districts.

### **II. INSTRUCTIONS**

Proposals may be submitted by U.S. Mail, hand-delivered or via overnight delivery service and shall include with one (1) original signed proposal, five (5) additional hard copies, and one (1) copy as a digital file, PDF format on a USB flash. SJCOE will not accept any proposals or proposal modifications submitted by facsimile or electronic mail transmission. The proposal shall be made in the format provided; and the complete proposal, together with any and all additional materials, shall be enclosed in a sealed envelope addressed and delivered no later than 4:00 p.m. on Tuesday, August 15, 2023, to the following address:

San Joaquin County Office of Education  
Attn: SELPA Department  
2707 Transworld Drive  
Stockton, CA 95206

The sealed envelope shall be marked on the outside lower left corner with the words “Legal Services RFQ/P”. It is the Proposer’s sole responsibility to ensure that their proposal is received prior to the scheduled closing time for receipt of proposals. No corrected or resubmitted proposals will be accepted after the deadline.

This RFQ/P does not commit SJCOE to award a contract or pay any costs incurred in the preparation of a proposal responsive to this request. SJCOE reserves the right to accept all or part of any proposal or to cancel in part or in its entirety this RFQ/P. SJCOE further reserves the right to accept the proposal that it considers to be in the best interest of SJCOE.

All requirements must be addressed in the proposal. Non-responsive proposals will not be considered.

### **Requests for Information**

Questions related to this RFQ/P should be submitted in writing to Brandie Brunni, Assistant Superintendent, Special Education/SELPA at [bbrunni@sjcoe.net](mailto:bbrunni@sjcoe.net). Specify “RFQ/P for Legal Services” in the subject line. Questions and the resulting answers will be sent to all interested Proposers by August 8, 2023.

## **III. SCOPE OF SERVICES**

The Proposers response to the Request for Qualification & Proposal must include sufficient evidence to document the firm's capability to sufficiently provide legal services, including but not limited to the areas of specialization noted below:

### **A. SPECIAL EDUCATION**

- Ability to review and provide consultation on OAH and CDE cases;
- Ability to attend Mediations and Due Process hearings;
- Ability to negotiate favorable settlements for SJCOE and its SELPA Districts;
- Ability to review records and provide consultation on appropriate action;
- Provide strategies/recommendations on how to reduce the number of filings we receive (examine trends/causes, develop protocols for Special Education Program)
- Availability for consultation regarding policies and procedures surrounding legal and compliance issues;
- Provide professional development regarding legal trends and changes in law;
- Provide recommendations regarding appropriate student placements under the Education of the Handicapped Act;
- Provide advice, consultation, and representation in connection with the placement of special needs students, including participation in hearings and representation in related administrative and judicial proceedings; and
- Provide such other services as are inherent in matters related to the provision of services to special needs students.

## **IV. CONTENTS FOR PROPOSALS**

The proposal must be clear, concise, complete, well organized, and demonstrate both Proposers' qualifications and their ability to follow instructions. The proposal shall be organized in the format listed below. Proposers shall read each item carefully and answer each of the following items accurately to ensure compliance with the requirements.

### **A. Submittal Cover Letter**

Include the RFQ/P's title and submittal due date and the name, address, fax number, and telephone number of the responding firm. Include a contact person and corresponding e-mail address. The letter shall state that the proposal shall be valid for a 60-day period and that the staff proposed is available immediately to work on this project. The person authorized by the firm to negotiate a contract with SJCOE shall sign the cover letter.

### **B. Description of Firm**

This section should provide an overview and history of your firm, and its practice in California, as well as the type of legal services for which your firm is submitting a proposal, and the approach that will be used in meeting the needs of the SJCOE. Please also include what areas of law are firm specialties.

### **C. Description of Experience**

Use this section to indicate the areas of expertise and experience you have with the subject scope of work. Identify specific qualifications and the approaches that you believe especially qualify you or your law firm to perform this work and in meeting the needs of SJCOE. Include at least three (3) school districts or County Office of Education with similar demographics, along with the name(s) of individuals familiar with your work at those school districts and submitted as references that can be contacted by SJCOE staff.

### **D. Team**

Please provide the names and résumés of staff who would be working with SJCOE, including their home office location in California. Specifically discuss the individual(s)' experience in providing legal and advisory services to an organization and program similar in size and scope as specified in this RFQ/P. Please indicate who the primary contact will be and who will be responsible for the day-to-day work with SJCOE.

### **E. Fee Schedule**

Describe in detail all fees to be charged, including hourly rates for each level of services. Describe how you might adjust your fees for subsequent years of the contract. Describe in detail charges for travel, telephone calls, and any other expenses to be separately billed. Indicate how billings are specific for each area/case. Also, identify billing increments (i.e., 1/10 hour, 1/4 hour, etc.).

## **F. Miscellaneous**

Please provide the following additional information:

- Include a sample billing statement.
- General communications protocol for responding to client questions.
- List any additional services that your firm provides but which were not listed in the RFQ/P.
- Provide details of any litigation against your firm within the last five (5) years.
- Copy of firm's Professional Liability Certificate of Insurance.

## **V. SELECTION CRITERIA**

The SJCOE selection committee will evaluate and select those firms deemed to be the most highly qualified to perform the required services. The evaluation of proposals and the basis of award will be based on the review and analysis of numerous factors, which will include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Background and experience in providing work as identified in the Scope of Services section of this RFQ/P. Possess at least ten (10) years of legal experience with at least five (5) years of experience representing a public-school district in California in a manner that demonstrates the respondents' trustworthiness.
- Qualifications of personnel.
- References of work done of similar nature.
- Costs, including hourly rates for all levels of service and personnel, travel time costs, and costs for support services of word processing, copying, etc.

Upon evaluation of all submitted proposals, a limited number of firms deemed most qualified to provide the requested legal services may be invited to present their qualifications and respond to questions from panel members. The panel may include, but will not be limited to, Superintendent, Cabinet members, and others qualified to rate providers.