



BAY AREA
AIR QUALITY
MANAGEMENT
DISTRICT

July 1, 2024

Request for Proposals# 2024-006

**Answering Services for
Air Quality Complaint Program**

SECTION I – SUMMARY 1

SECTION II – BACKGROUND..... 2

SECTION III – SCOPE OF WORK 3

SECTION IV – INSTRUCTIONS TO PROPOSERS 4

SECTION V – PROPOSAL FORMAT, CONTENT, AND SUBMITTAL..... 6

SECTION VI – PROPOSAL EVALUATION 9

SECTION VII – SAMPLE CONTRACT 10

SECTION I – SUMMARY

The Bay Area Air Quality Management District (“Air District”) seeks proposals from answering-service providers to provide communications support for the Air Quality Complaint Program, an essential Air District program that allows members of the public to report air quality concerns through the toll-free complaint hotline at 1-800-334-ODOR or through the online complaint form on the Air District’s website. The Air District often becomes aware of compliance concerns through members of the public and community, and responding to and investigating complaints is one of the Air District’s highest priorities to ensure compliance with air quality rules and regulations.

The Air District anticipates the contract to begin January 1, 2025, and continue for an initial term of three (3) years. The Air District may extend the contract for two (2) additional one-year terms at its sole discretion.

To respond to this Request for Proposals (“RFP”), an interested firm must submit one (1) electronic copy of its proposal in Adobe Acrobat PDF file format to the Air District’s Procurement Portal (“Portal”) to:

Cynthia Zhang, Senior Staff Specialist
Bay Area Air Quality Management District
375 Beale Street, Suite 600; San Francisco, CA 94105
Portal link: <https://baaqmd.bonfirehub.com>

**Proposals must be received by
4:00 p.m. Pacific Time (PT) on Friday, August 16, 2024 (“deadline”).
Late proposals will not be considered.**

Proposals must address all information requested in this RFP. A proposal may add information not requested in this RFP, but the information should be in addition to, not instead of, the requested information and format. Minority business enterprises, women's business enterprises, veteran's business enterprises, local businesses, and certified green businesses are encouraged to submit proposals. **Any questions regarding this RFP should be submitted through the Portal.**

SECTION II – BACKGROUND

A. Air District Overview

The Air District is the government agency responsible for protecting air quality in the San Francisco Bay Area. The Air District is tasked with regulating stationary sources of air pollution in the nine counties that surround San Francisco Bay: Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, southwestern Solano, and southern Sonoma counties. It is governed by a 24-member Board of Directors composed of locally elected officials from each of the nine counties. The Air District's mission is to create a healthy breathing environment for every Bay Area resident, while protecting and improving public health, air quality and the global climate.

The Air District aims to achieve its mission through many strategic goals, including reducing and eliminating health problems caused by air pollution, achieving and maintaining air quality standards, leading the Bay Area's efforts to fight global climate change, creating high-quality regulatory programs, and applying environmental best practices in all operations. To do so, the Air District regulates air pollution emissions from stationary emission sources such as factories, refineries, and power plants, and from smaller facilities like gas stations and dry cleaners. The Air District ensures that such facilities comply with air pollution laws and regulations, provides incentives to replace older, higher-emitting vehicles and equipment with cleaner alternatives, and gives grants and provides outreach to encourage healthy clean air choices by businesses and consumers. The Air District implements these efforts with an equity focus, aiming to reduce air quality disparities and promote environmental justice by targeting local air pollution in overburdened communities.

B. Air Quality Complaint Program

The Air Quality Complaint Program provides a platform for the public to report air quality concerns through the Air District's toll-free complaint line or through the online complaint form at www.baaqmd.gov/complaints. This program allows the public to communicate observations and/or concerns about odors, smoke, dust or other air pollutants from refineries, gas stations, asbestos, idling trucks, locomotives, buses, open burning, and other commercial, manufacturing, and industrial facilities and operations. By providing the public with a direct avenue for reporting air quality complaints, the Air District aims to facilitate early detection, intervention, and resolution of air quality concerns and violations. The public may report air quality complaints twenty-four (24) hours a day, seven (7) days a week.

During core business hours, Monday through Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., complaints are received through the Air District's Dispatch Center and dispatched to Air District

inspectors for investigation. Each complaint is assigned a complaint reference number (CPM#), which is provided to the complainant and can be used to obtain the complaint investigation details and final report.

Complaints received on weekends, holidays, and outside of core business hours are processed through a third-party answering service. During these times, the Air District has on-call staff available to respond to and investigate air pollution incidents that have the potential for significant air emission impacts.

SECTION III – SCOPE OF WORK

The answering-service provider will provide communication support for the Air District's Air Quality Complaint Program. The answering-service provider will be responsible for receiving, documenting, and routing air quality complaints reported through the odor complaint hotline and online complaint form.

Answering Service Requirements and Responsibilities:

1. **Availability:** Provide answering-services outside core business hours, Monday through Friday, from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 a.m., on weekends and holidays.
2. **Language Interpretation:** Provide language interpretation services for non-English speakers. Language interpretation services must, at minimum, include Spanish, Mandarin, Cantonese, Vietnamese and Tagalog to ensure effective communication and public service.
3. **Live Representatives:** Provide live and fully trained representatives to receive air quality complaints reported through the odor complaint hotline and online complaint form. For telephone complaints, calls shall be audio recorded. Representatives will follow a set of instructions provided by the Air District to gather details on the reported air quality complaint. The information collected includes the alleged site name, address, source of emissions, date and time when emission was first observed, if the emission is still ongoing, description and nature of the emission, along with complainant name, address, phone number and/or email address.
4. **Complaint Log/Database:** Accurately document and log in real-time all complaints received into a complaint log and/or database. The Air District shall have access to this complaint log or database.
5. **Routing and Reporting:**
 - a. **Time Sensitive and Urgent Reporting:** Route and communicate time-sensitive and urgent notifications and air quality complaints to designated Air District on-call staff within fifteen (15) minutes.
 - i. When three (3) or more air quality complaints are received (the third call) and associated with the same alleged facility name,

- the answering-service provider will contact the designated Air District on-call staff within 15 minutes of receipt of the third call.
- ii. When three (3) or more similar air quality complaints (e.g., similar complaints like odor, smoke, flaring, dust, etc.) are received (the third call) within the same geographical area (e.g., city, zip code, etc.), the answering-service provider will contact the designated Air District on-call staff within 15 minutes of receipt of the third call.
- b. **Regular Reporting:** Provide a summary report of all complaint information (urgent and non-urgent) received after hours and/or holidays by 7:30 am the next calendar day. The summary report must include the following: date and time of report, date and time complaint(s) received, alleged site name, address and source of emissions, date and time when emission was first observed, if the emission is still ongoing, description and nature of the emission, along with complainant name, address, phone number and/or email address.
6. **Documentation & Recordkeeping:** Archive all audio records of telephone complaints at the end of each calendar year and maintain as records for a minimum of seven (7) years to adhere to the Air District records retention policy. All records must be provided to Air District staff within two (2) business days when requested. If destruction of records is requested by the Air District, create a Certificate of Destruction retaining all metadata and date of destruction for auditing purposes.
 7. **High Quality Customer Service:** Ensure the highest level of customer service, professionalism, and empathy in all interactions with individuals reporting notifications and air quality complaints.
 8. **Training:** Provide comprehensive training to representatives and staff members responsible for receiving, logging, routing, reporting, and retaining records of all calls, notifications, and air quality complaint information.
 9. **Communications with Air District Staff:** Maintain open communications with Air District staff to relay important information, updates, and/or concerns related to all services provided. There may be occasions when there are minor changes to Air District protocols, during which Air District staff will communicate any changes in procedures to the answering service provider.

SECTION IV – INSTRUCTIONS TO PROPOSERS

A. General

1. Interested firms must create an account through the Portal described in this RFP to view and download RFP documents and addenda, and to submit questions and proposal documents.

2. All proposals must be made in accordance with the conditions of this RFP. Failure to address any of the requirements is grounds for rejection of the proposal.
3. All information should be complete, specific, and as concise as possible.
4. Proposals shall address all information requested in this RFP. A proposal may add information not requested in this RFP, but the information should be in addition to, not instead of, the requested information and format. Proposals should include any additional information that the proposer deems pertinent to the understanding and evaluation of the proposal.
5. The Air District may modify the RFP or issue supplementary information or guidelines during the proposal preparation period prior to the deadline. Please check the [Portal](#) for updates prior to the deadline.
6. All proposals shall constitute firm offers valid for one hundred and eighty (180) days from the deadline. Once submitted, proposals may be withdrawn, modified, and resubmitted through the Portal up until the deadline.
7. The Air District reserves the right to reject any and all proposals.
8. All questions regarding this RFP must be in written form and submitted through the Portal no later than **4:00 p.m. PT on Tuesday, July 16, 2024**. Proposers will not be able to submit questions after this time. All questions will be answered in writing and posted on the [Portal](#) by **6:00 p.m. PT on Tuesday, July 30, 2024**.
9. The cost for developing the proposal is the responsibility of the proposer, and shall not be chargeable to the Air District.

B. Submittal of Proposals

All proposals must be submitted according to the specifications set forth in Section V (A) – Contents of Proposal, and this section. Failure to adhere to these specifications may be cause for the rejection of the proposal.

1. **Deadline** – All proposals are due no later than **4:00 p.m. PT on Friday, August 16, 2024**. Late proposals will not be accepted.
2. **Submittal** – Submit one (1) electronic copy of the proposal in Adobe Acrobat PDF file format to the Portal. Electronic submissions submitted via the Portal will be acknowledged with a confirmation email receipt.

Portal link: <https://baaqmd.bonfirehub.com>

3. Uploading large documents may take significant time, depending on the size of the file(s) and internet connection speed. Proposers should plan sufficient time before the deadline to finalize their submissions and complete the uploading process. Proposers will not be able to submit documents after the deadline.

4. Grounds for Rejection – A proposal may be rejected if it arrives after the deadline, or is not in the prescribed format, or is not signed by an individual authorized to represent the firm.
5. Disposition of the Proposals – All responses to this RFP become property of the Air District and will be kept confidential until a recommendation for award of a contract has been announced. Thereafter, submittals are subject to public inspection and disclosure under the California Public Records Act. If a respondent believes that any portion of its submittal is exempt from public disclosure, it may mark that portion “confidential.” The Air District will use reasonable means to ensure that such confidential information is safeguarded, but will not be held liable for inadvertent disclosure of the information. Proposals marked “confidential” in their entirety will not be honored, and the Air District will not deny public disclosure of any portion of submittals so marked.

By submitting a proposal with portions marked “confidential,” a respondent represents it has a good faith belief that such portions are exempt from disclosure under the California Public Records Act and agrees to reimburse the Air District for, and to indemnify, defend, and hold harmless the Air District, its officers, employees, and agents, from and against any and all claims, damages, losses, liabilities, suits, judgments, fines, penalties, costs, and expenses, including without limitation, attorneys’ fees, expenses, and court costs of any nature whatsoever, arising from or relating to the District’s non-disclosure of any such designated portions of a proposal.

6. Modification – Once submitted, proposals, including the composition of the contracting team, may be altered up until the deadline. Proposals may not be modified after the deadline. Any correction or re-submission of proposals will not extend the submittal deadline.

C. Interviews

1. The Air District, at its option, may interview proposers. The interviews will be for the purpose of clarifying the proposals.
2. Submittal of new proposal material at an interview will not be permitted.
3. Interviews may involve a presentation and/or a question-and-answer session.

SECTION V – PROPOSAL FORMAT, CONTENT, AND SUBMITTAL

A. Contents of Proposal

Submitted proposals must follow the format outlined below and include all requested information. Failure to submit proposals in the required format may result in the proposal being eliminated from evaluation and consideration.

1. Technical Proposal

- a. Cover Letter (Section I) – Include the name, address, and telephone number of the firm. The proposal must be signed by the person(s) authorized to represent the firm.
- b. Contact Information – Provide the following information about the firm:
 - Address and telephone number of the office nearest to San Francisco, California and the address and phone number of the office that each of the proposed staff members are based out of, if different.
 - Name of firm's representative designated as the contact and his/her email address.
 - Name of project manager, if different from the individual designated as the contact, and his/her email address.
- c. Table of Contents – Clearly identify material contained in the proposal by section.
- d. Summary (Section II) – State overall approach to the services sought in this RFP, including the objectives and scope of work.
- e. Firm History, Experience, and Qualifications (Section III) – Provide an overview of your firm's history, number of years in business, firm ownership information, and an organizational chart. Describe your firm's related experience and qualifications in providing the services sought in this RFP to governmental organizations, if any.
- f. Approach and Methodology (Section IV) – Provide a detailed description of the approach and methodology to be used to accomplish the scope of work. Describe the systems, databases, and tools that will be used to log, record, and maintain information received. Please note whether these systems, databases, and tools are web-based and accessible to Air District staff.
- g. Language Interpretation (Section V) – Language interpretation services must, at minimum, include Spanish, Mandarin, Cantonese, Vietnamese and Tagalog. Describe whether your firm can provide language interpretation services for the aforementioned languages and include a list of language interpretation services offered by your firm.
- h. Project Organization and Personnel (Section VI) – Describe the proposed management structure and organization of the proposed team. Include a list of the specific team members who will provide services under the proposal, including individual experience, resumes, credentials. Describe any training program provided to, or required of, the staff identified for participation in the project. Provide a statement addressing your firm's ability and willingness to commit and maintain staffing to provide the services outlined in this RFP. Substitution of project manager or staff will not be permitted without prior written approval of the Air District's assigned

program manager.

- i. References (Section VII) - Provide a minimum of three (3) references of other, similar projects including company name or government entity, contact name, title, phone number and e-mail address for all references listed. For each reference, include a description of services provided and dates the services were provided.
 - j. Retention of Working Papers and Audio Records (Section VIII) – All working papers and audio records are the property of the Air District. Include a statement acknowledging that if your firm is awarded the contract, you will retain project related papers and related reports for a minimum of five (5) years and audio records for a minimum of seven (7) years.
 - k. Subcontractors (Section IX) – List any subcontractors that will be used, the work to be performed by them, and the total number of hours or percentage of time they will spend on the contract.
 - l. Conflict of Interest (Section X) – Address possible conflicts of interest with other clients affected by contractors' actions performed on behalf of the Air District. The Air District recognizes that prospective proposers may have contracts to perform similar services for other clients. Include a complete list of such clients for the past three (3) years with the type of work performed and the total number of years performing such tasks for each client. The Air District reserves the right to consider the nature and extent of such work in evaluating the proposal.
 - m. Additional Data (Section XI) – Provide other essential data that may assist in the evaluation of the proposal.
 - n. Self-Certification for Local Business (XII) - If applicable, include a statement self-certifying that your firm qualifies as a local business. "Local business" means that a firm's headquarters is located within the nine counties of the Air District's jurisdiction.
2. Cost Proposal

All costs shall remain fixed for the initial three-year term of the contract. Include the percentage increase, if any, applicable to each year the contract is extended by the Air District beyond the initial three (3) year term.

- a. List the fully-burdened hourly rates of professional and administrative staff that may be required to perform the tasks in this RFP.
- b. Provide the fixed monthly recurring fee, along with any other fees (e.g., per minute usage fees, holiday rates, etc.) that may be applicable. Include set-up or implementation fees, if any.
- c. Provide pricing for any optional value-added services offered, such as additional language support, advanced reporting features, customized solutions, service levels, etc.

- d. Any other fees or charges.

SECTION VI – PROPOSAL EVALUATION

A panel of Air District staff will evaluate all proposals. The panel will recommend the selection of the contractor to the Air Pollution Control Officer (APCO). The Air District Board of Directors may be required to approve the contract to carry out the work described in this RFP. A link to a typical contract for professional services used by the Air District is included in Section VII.

Proposals will be evaluated on the following criteria:

Criteria	Description	Points
Ability	Ability to meet the needs and requirements of the Air District and ability to perform the scope of work in a professional manner, including providing language interpretation services.	25
Experience and Qualifications	Experience and qualifications of the firm and, in particular, experience of the firm working on projects of similar scope for other governmental agencies.	25
Approach and Methodology	Quality and soundness of the approach and methodology to be used to accomplish the scope of work, with a clear understanding of the work to be performed.	20
Cost	Cost effectiveness and reasonableness.	20
References	Quality and applicability of references.	5
Firm's Specialty Focus Area	Local business.*	5
Total		100

* The Air District gives preferences to local businesses. "Local business" means that a firm's headquarters is located within the nine counties of the Air District's jurisdiction. The proposer must include a statement in their proposal self-certifying that the proposer qualifies as a local business to receive points for this criterion.

If two or more proposals receive the same number of points, the Air District will accept the lower cost offer.

SECTION VII – SAMPLE CONTRACT

A sample contract to carry out the work described in this RFP is available on the Air District's website at <http://www.baaqmd.gov/about-the-air-district/request-for-proposals-rfp-rfq/samples-previous>. (Click the + to the left of Sample Contracts, and then click on the Professional Services Contract link)