



**REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
FOR
PROJECT RECORDS AND GRANTS
MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**

**LEGISLATIVE-CITIZEN COMMISSION ON MINNESOTA RESOURCES
MINNESOTA STATE LEGISLATURE**

September 14, 2015

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

Project Records and Grants Management System

- Solicitor:** Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR)
- Deadline for Receipt of Proposals:** Proposals must be received by the LCCMR by **4:30 PM – October 23, 2015**. Late applications may not be accepted
- Proposal method:** Proposals may be submitted in writing or electronically by email (electronic submission preferred). If submitting by email, please note that the LCCMR’s email system has a 25 MB limit on incoming attachments. If you need to submit any attachments larger than 25 MB, contact us to make arrangements for submission using an alternate method.
- Deliver Proposals to:** Attn: Mike Banker
Re: Proposal for Project Records and Grants Management System
Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources
65 State Office Building
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55155
Email: mike.banker@lccmr.leg.mn
- Contact Person:** Mike Banker
Assistant Director
Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources
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mike.banker@lccmr.leg.mn

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SPECIFICATIONS

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL: PROJECT RECORDS AND GRANTS MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

I. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Request for Proposal (RFP) is for the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR) of the Minnesota Legislature to obtain competitive proposals from vendors to implement and provide ongoing support for an online project records and grants management system that will be used to centralize, facilitate, and manage all components of a state grants process from project proposal to project implementation to project completion. The LCCMR aims to move to a web-based project records and grants management system that will improve consistency, efficiency, and effectiveness across all components of its processes.

It is the LCCMR's preference to utilize a platform that is already fully developed and used by an existing client base, but which can be customized, as needed, to meet the specific needs and parameters of our organization. We are open to solutions that are either vendor hosted or internally hosted, but do desire a system that does not require extensive internal IT support. At this time we are generally not interested in supporting the development of a fully custom-built system.

Vendors should be able to provide software solutions for a project records and grants management system; system implementation guidance; system configuration and installation; data migration/conversion services; and training, support, and maintenance.

Proposals are **due by 4:30 PM on Friday, October 23, 2015**. In general, each proposal must contain the following information:

- Information on proposer's organization.
- Detailed information on proposed plan for software solution(s) and services to be provided, including an explanation of your software's ability to meet LCCMR's needs outlined in this RFP.
- References for similar clients, particularly government clients if available.
- Background on proposer organization's experience implementing the proposed solution, including experience implementing for a government entity/organization, if applicable, along with information on potential key personnel likely to be assigned to implement the proposed solution for LCCMR.
- Detailed cost proposal broken down by types of services provided and types of costs within those categories.

Specific instructions for proposal submission and related dates are provided below.

II. OVERVIEW OF THE LEGISLATIVE-CITIZEN COMMISSION ON MINNESOTA RESOURCES (LCCMR)

The LCCMR is a joint body of legislators (five senators and five representatives) and public members (seven appointed citizens) within the Minnesota Legislature. Additionally it has a staff of four full-time employees. The LCCMR is responsible for making funding recommendations to the legislature for special environment and natural resources projects, primarily from Minnesota's Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund – a constitutionally dedicated fund holding assets that can be appropriated by law. The LCCMR developed from a program initiated in 1963 and since then nearly \$900 million from a variety of funding sources has been appropriated to more than 2,000 projects throughout the state. The LCCMR is involved with and has an oversight role for projects funded through its processes throughout all stages of the project life cycle, including:

- Project proposals responding to a competitive, multi-step request for proposal process;
- Project work plan development, approval, and implementation; and
- Project completion and evaluation.

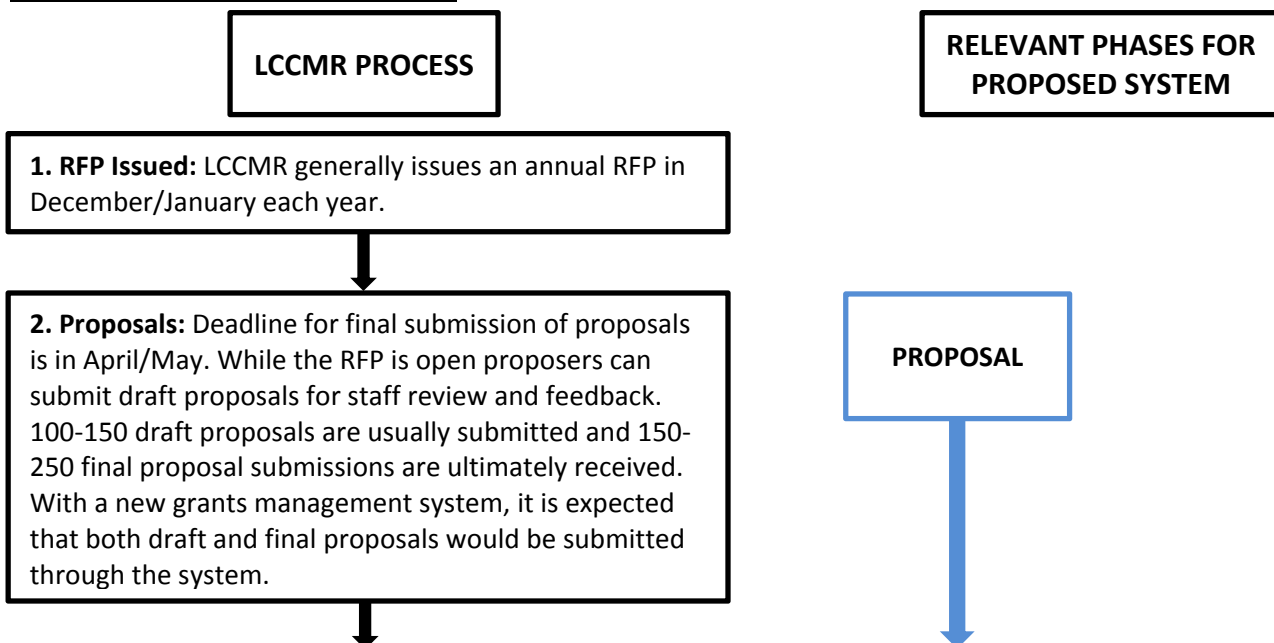
The LCCMR's proposal and funding processes and the funds received through them must comply with certain statutory and regulatory requirements and restrictions.

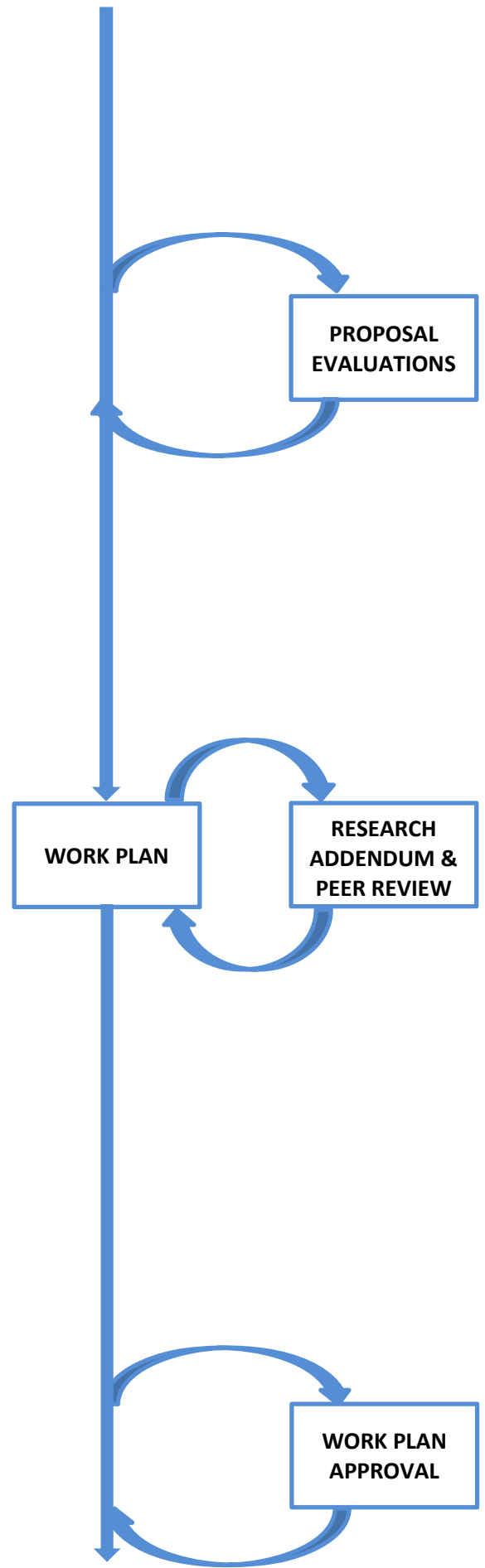
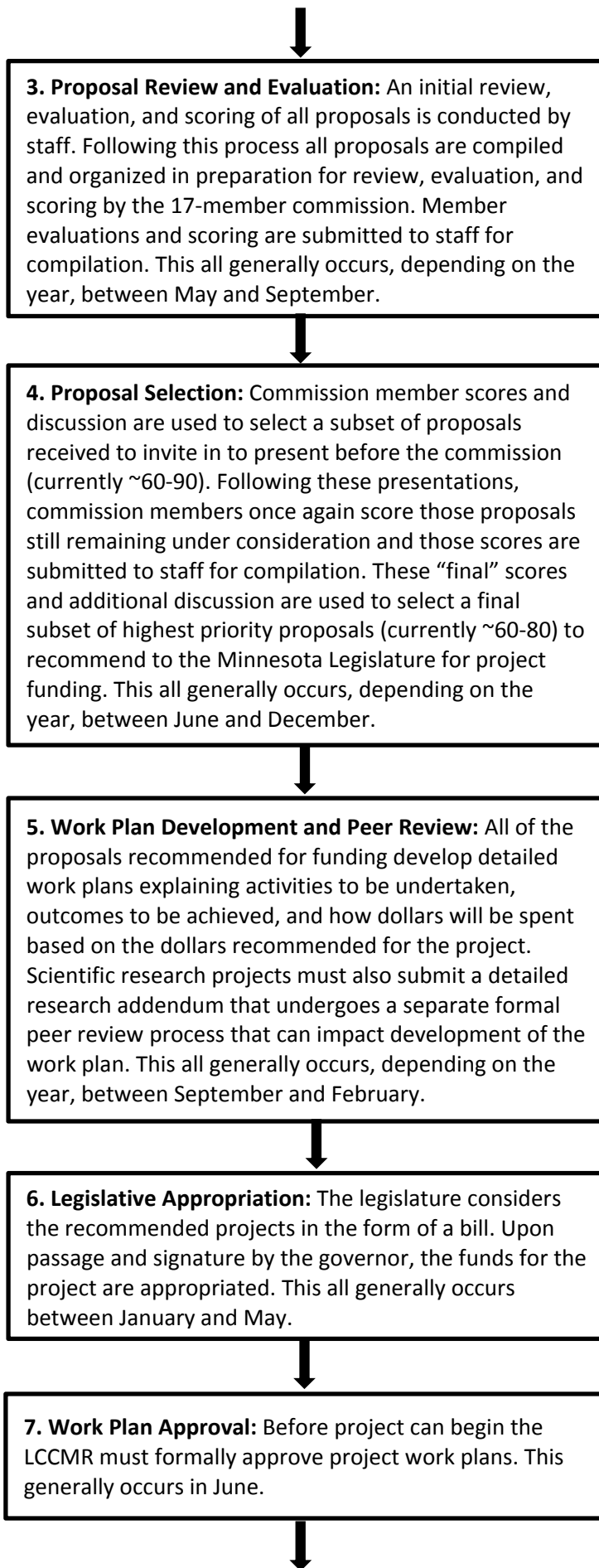
The Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF) is a permanent dedicated fund in the Minnesota state treasury that was established by 77% voter approval of a constitutional amendment in 1988. It was created to provide a long-term, consistent, and stable source of funding for innovative activities directed toward, "the public purpose of protection, conservation, preservation, and enhancement of the state's air, water, land, fish, wildlife, and other natural resources." The money in the ENRTF originates from a combination of contributions and investment income. The ENRTF receives forty percent of the net proceeds from the Minnesota State Lottery and assets in the ENRTF are invested in a combination of stocks and bonds. The Minnesota Constitution provides that up to 5.5% of the market value of the ENRTF can be utilized for projects each year, and a small portion of these funds are allowed to be used for the LCCMR's administrative expenses to conduct its proposal selection and project oversight processes. Since 1991 nearly \$500 million has been appropriated from the ENRTF in support of approximately 1,000 projects benefitting every county in the state; this amounts to approximately half of all funds appropriated and half of all projects funded through the LCCMR's process throughout its more than 50-year history.

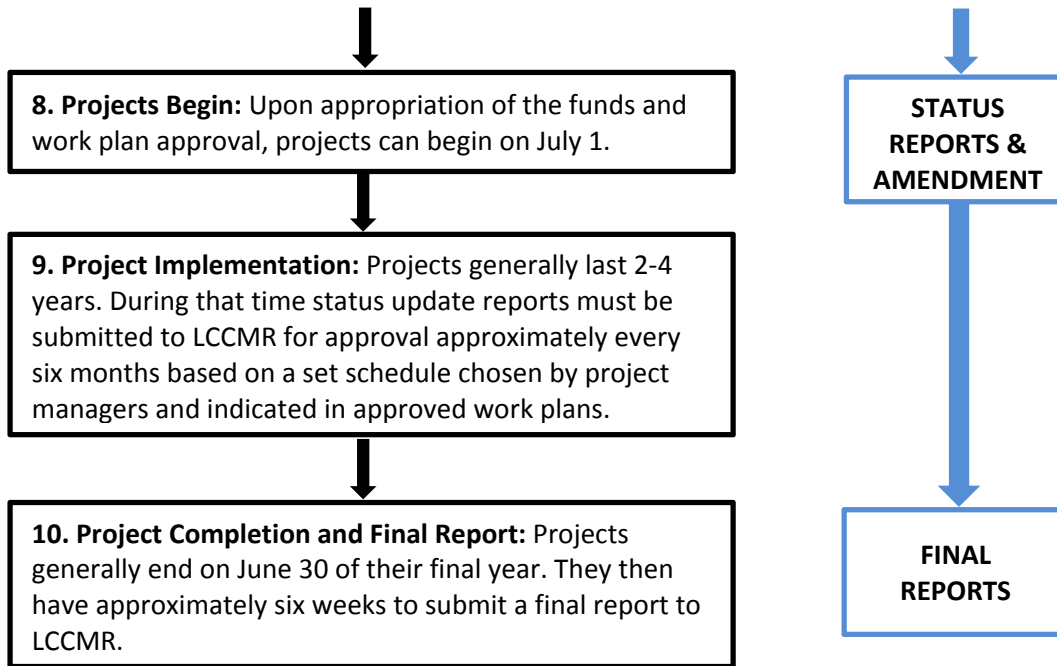
The LCCMR's current process for requesting funding through its processes is a competitive Request for Proposal (RFP) process that occurs on an annual cycle. Over the past five cycles the number of proposals received in response to the LCCMR's RFP has ranged from about 150-250 proposals per cycle. The current amount available for appropriation for the FY 2016-2017 biennium is approximately \$46 million each year (or per cycle). The amount of money available from the ENRTF each year will continue to grow into the future based on ongoing contributions and returns on investment of its assets. Presently about 60-80 new projects are funded each year. Funded projects generally last 2-4 years. In any given biennial period, the LCCMR currently provides administration and oversight for an average of approximately 275-325 open projects in various stages of their timelines from projects selected for funding and awaiting approval and adoption by the legislature to projects underway to projects completed and undergoing final evaluation.

It is relevant to note that LCCMR is not responsible for the fiscal management and accounting portion of grants management and *formal* fiscal management and accounting is therefore not a necessary component of a project records and grants management system for LCCMR's needs. Funds are appropriated to other state entities and formal fiscal management and accounting of the funds occurs separately within the accounting systems of those entities. However, projects do *report* to LCCMR on project expenditures within their status updates, amendments, and final reports, and so a level of fiscal reporting is a necessary component of LCCMR's desired system. Currently that reporting occurs using Excel documents.

LCCMR Proposal and Funding Process







III. GOALS FOR PROPOSED PROJECT RECORDS AND GRANTS MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

The LCCMR seeks to upgrade its project records and grants management procedures and system by implementing a user-friendly, web-based, dedicated platform that centralizes, facilitates, and manages all components of our grants management process. This includes:

- Project application, review, selection, and reporting;
- Storage of project records and documents;
- Management and tracking of project communications and grantee relationships; and
- Facilitation of analysis of project data and report compilation.

The new system is intended to become the main portal for all users – including both project applicants/personnel and the LCCMR – to submit, interact with, and manage project data and information.

To achieve this goal, the LCCMR is seeking to utilize one of the already fully-developed platforms available on the market and used by existing client bases. Ideally we seek a system that is flexible enough to be customized to our unique needs and parameters as necessary. We wish to minimize having to adjust current practices to fit within the constraints of an existing platform. However, in seeking an “off-the-shelf” solution we recognize that some minor adjustment to our current practices may be necessary based on the capabilities of available technologies and systems. We are generally not interested in supporting the development of a fully custom-built system to meet our needs due to the greater anticipated expenses associated with developing, supporting, and providing ongoing maintenance and upgrades to a newly-built, fully-customized system.

We are open to solutions that are either vendor hosted or internally hosted, but do desire a system that does not require extensive internal IT support. Internal IT support or maintenance processes for which a vendor can effectively train internal users who may have less extensive but competent IT expertise and background may be acceptable.

Through implementation of a new project records and grants management system, the LCCMR aims to achieve the following objectives:

- Improve efficiency of project application, review, reporting, oversight, and data compilation processes.
- Centralize and link all related project information and documents.
- Improve uniformity in data entry by applicants and projects.

- Standardize and modernize common practices and procedures.
- Leverage current technological capabilities to improve all components of our grants process.
- Improve our ability to aggregate accomplishments of similar project types across projects and report on those accomplishments.

IV. SYSTEM USERS

The anticipated users of the system are as follows:

USERS	ESTIMATED # OF USERS	NOTE
LCCMR Staff: Main users of system involving all components of grants process, including system administration, proposal review, project oversight, etc.	4	These are the “heavy” users of the system that will utilize it in their day-to-day workflow.
LCCMR Commission Members: Use generally limited to reviewing proposals and work plans submitted into the system, and potentially being able to score and/or make comments on them.	17	These users will only be active for limited timeframes during the year. It is desirable for this process to occur within the system, but it is not a necessity.
External Technical Review by Non-LCCMR Personnel: Use limited to reviewing proposals and research addendums to provide technical and peer review comments.	15-35 per year	Users will only be active for limited timeframes during the year. It is desirable for this process to occur within the system, but it is not a necessity.
External Compliance Review by Non-LCCMR Personnel: Use limited to reviewing documents associated with a project for auditing or to determine that a project is up-to-date on satisfying requirements. No data entry into the system necessary.	5-10 per year	Users will need to access the site throughout the year but their use would be limited to document review only. The numbers of this user type will vary slightly from year to year depending on whether official project audits are underway.
Project Proposers: Use of system is to submit project proposals in response to an annual Request for Proposal (RFP). Users can submit draft proposals for staff review before doing a final submission. Successful Project Proposer users become Project Manager users; unsuccessful proposers essentially become inactive but may become active again in the future when submitting a new proposal in a future year.	150-250 per year	These users will only be active for a limited timeframe during the year of approximately 3-5 months, although most use will be concentrated in the final 4-5 weeks before the RFP deadline.
Project Managers: Successful Project Proposal users become Project Manager users. Use of system is to create and finalize a work plan and then submit periodic status updates and amendments and a final report upon project completion. Typical project length is 2-4 years.	125-175 active per year	These users will be active throughout the year but will mostly only utilize the system periodically to submit status updates approximately every six months, occasional amendment requests on an as needed basis, and a final report. Status updates of individual projects are scattered throughout the year, but tend to be more concentrated in June/July and December/January. Final Reports in any given year are submitted in July/August.

V. BACKGROUND ON EXISTING PROJECT RECORDS AND GRANTS MANAGEMENT TECHNOLOGIES AND PROCEDURES

The LCCMR does not currently utilize a single dedicated and integrated grants management platform. The current grants management “system” is piecemeal and somewhat outdated, mainly utilizing Microsoft Office products. Additionally, it is only accessible internally to LCCMR staff. All base data¹ for projects, including legacy data going back to 1963, is maintained in an Access database. Access is used to store the data and generate some standard reports. Data is exported to Excel for more thorough manipulation and analysis and to generate more specific or customized reports. Electronic versions of all associated documents from project proposals and work plans are stored and maintained in their native formats – mostly Word, Excel, and PDF – along with related email communications from Outlook in a shared electronic file system. Compiled PDF versions of project documents (e.g., cover page, work plan, project budget, project graphic) are generated through Adobe Acrobat for posting on our website. Paper copies of documents and communications are also stored in a physical filing system.

Project proposals are currently submitted using an online form that allows for required proposal documents to be uploaded as attachments. Native file formats for the attached documents include Word, Excel, JPG, and PDF. Occasionally there are other file formats but these four types account for the majority of files received.

The online form is connected to a PostGreSQL database which automatically loads the form data into our Access database to create a project record and all the files attached to the form are automatically loaded into our file system, where they must be manually organized into project folders.

When projects are selected to be funded an additional set of documents must be completed called a work plan. The work plan is an expanded version of the proposal requiring more detailed information in some parallel sections and some additional information in some new sections. Like the project proposal, the file formats for work plans are primarily Word, Excel, JPG, and PDF. These documents are submitted by email as attachments and then manually distributed into our electronic file system.

During the course of a project period semiannual progress reports are required. These are essentially updated and amended versions of work plan documents with additional information inserted. All related documents are submitted via email as attachments and then manually distributed into our electronic file system. Ultimately, when a project reaches completion, a final report is submitted that also essentially consists of updated versions of the work plan documents, with a few additional elements, such as additional documents, added.

In addition to all of the steps mentioned above, in the case of funded projects that involve the purchase of an interest in real property (i.e., land acquisition), either fee title or conservation easement, there is yet another component of reporting that occurs. For these projects an initial land acquisition report and annual report must be submitted through an online form that gathers various details on land purchased along with additional files uploaded as attachments. The form works very similarly to the form used for the project proposals. The one difference is probably that this form also requires a shapefile – a file type containing geographic information system (GIS) data – of the parcel being reported on. Shapefiles are usually provided as .zip files that are then sent to GIS staff contracted with our office that process the files so that the parcel can be displayed as a polygon on an interactive map on the LCCMR website. Following submission of an initial land acquisition report, an annual report for a property is required that is essentially a brief questionnaire to receive an update as to whether anything has changed with the status of a property and to address changes as appropriate.

¹ “Base data” is intended to mean all higher level project data currently maintained in existing Access database fields, such as project manager, organization, project title, dollar amount, project type, subject area, appropriation language, and more. More detailed project information, such as narrative explanations of project activities and outcomes, is contained within project documents in their native file formats.

In order to post project proposals, work plans, final reports, and land acquisition reports onto the LCCMR website, all associated files for a project get combined into PDF files using Adobe Acrobat.

In seeking to upgrade the LCCMR's project records and grants management system, some of the challenges posed by our current system include:

- Time and labor intensive.
- Provides very little automation of standard, consistent tasks.
- Can be cumbersome to access or manipulate the data efficiently for ad hoc analysis and to respond to various types of inquiries.
- Project data and documents are not stored in a centralized manner and there is not a single, streamlined interface for accessing all project data and carrying out grants management tasks.
- Overly reliant on manual processes and institutional knowledge to locate data and complete grants management tasks.
- Various data components from proposals, work plans, and final reports is only stored within separate documents and not captured into our existing database in any manner. This includes information on specific project activities, outcomes, project narrative information, and budget information. This makes compilation and aggregate analysis of this data cumbersome.

VI. ELIGIBILITY AND BASIS OF SELECTION

Eligible Applicants

This RFP is open to all entities possessing the requisite capabilities, qualifications, and experience. Experience working with a government entity/organization is preferred, but not required.

Selection and Conditions

The LCCMR is seeking the most comprehensive solution from vendors for fulfilling the needs described in this RFP. Proposals should clearly articulate and demonstrate the vendor's available services and capabilities for fulfilling these needs. The LCCMR will award this contract to the vendor presenting the solution that best meets the needs of the LCCMR based on:

- System functionality and suitability.
- Qualifications and experience of the company and the personnel to be assigned to the work; additional weight will be given to proposers with experience working with other government entities/organizations.
- Depth and quality of peripheral services provided, including vendor training, support, and maintenance capabilities.
- Performance record and reliability of the solutions proposed.
- Financial condition and stability of the company.
- Cost of the proposed solution and ongoing services. Cost is an important factor but it will not be the driving factor in the selection process.

Based on the number and quality of the proposals received in response to this RFP, a group of finalists will likely be selected to participate in a subsequent round of questions or demonstrations, as needed, in order to assist in making a final determination of the vendor to be selected for this contract. Proposers selected as finalists may be asked to provide a best and final offer for their solution to the LCCMR.

The LCCMR reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, the right to waive any irregularity, the right to enter into a contract that varies from the specifications or general conditions, and the right to negotiate at any time with those that submit proposals or with any other party. The LCCMR will not necessarily select the proposal that offers the lowest price; the LCCMR reserves the right to consider price, quality, reliability, convenience, and

any other factors that the LCCMR deems relevant. General terms and conditions specified in this Request for Proposal beginning on page 19 must be included in the contract for the project.

VII. TIMELINE

September 14, 2015	Request for Proposal (RFP) Issued
October 1, 2015 @ 4:30 p.m.	Deadline for vendors to submit written questions electronically
October 9, 2015 @ 4:30 p.m.	Date by which LCCMR will post answers to vendor questions on website
October 23, 2015 @ 4:30 p.m.	Proposal Submission Deadline
October 26 – November 11, 2015	Proposal Evaluation
November 13, 2015	Finalists contacted for discussion/clarification and presentations (as needed)
November 23, 2015	Best and final offers (if needed)
December 4, 2015	Vendor Selected

The timeline is tentative and subject to revision, including extensions of deadlines, if deemed necessary, or earlier decisions on evaluations, if possible. Any changes to deadlines will be posted to the LCCMR website.

VIII. SCOPE OF WORK

LCCMR requires a vendor to implement and provide ongoing support for an online project records and grants management system that will be used to facilitate and manage all components of a state grants process. Specific services required include:

- Software Solutions for Project Records and Grants Management System
- System Implementation Guidance
- System Configuration and Installation
- Data Migration/Conversion Services
- Training, Support, and Maintenance

Software Solutions for Project Records and Grants Management System

Proposed software solutions should be able to address most, if not all, of LCCMR’s specific identified needs and desired features/functions outlined in greater detail below. More generally, this includes:

- Robust, user friendly, web-based interface allowing for LCCMR personnel and external users (e.g., applicants, project managers) to effectively link, track, manage, and search all project information throughout a project’s life cycle from proposal to completion.
- Secure, log in based system requiring user registration and account creation that can be revisited and used over time by:
 - Project managers to submit and review proposal applications, work plan documentation, status updates, final reports, and any other related documentation using customized LCCMR personnel created forms and/or by uploading attachments.
 - LCCMR personnel to review, comment on, score, alter, and approve submitted documentation.
 - External personnel to review project documents for the purpose of technical review, contract compliance, and auditing.
- Relationship management and communication integration that can:
 - Associate various contacts within an organization and related to a particular project.
 - Associate different projects by the same project manager or organization.
 - Allow for logging and linking to correspondence (e.g., email) and user interactions (e.g., input a log of a phone conversation).
 - Facilitate creation of templates for standard communications.

- Generate email notifications and reminders either manually or automatically based on specified parameters.
- External data generation to print submitted documentation, generate reports based on specified parameters, and export data to other formats for data manipulation.

LCCMR is seeking to utilize an already developed “off-the-shelf” grants management platform. Ideally there should be minimal need for any custom development of components to meet our needs. If any component outlined as an LCCMR need or desired feature/function would require some development as an add-on to an existing system that should be explicitly stated in a proposal along with the estimated time and cost that would be required.

LCCMR prefers a software solution for which some version has been in use by clients for more than three (3) years and has a client base of more than 30 clients currently using some version of the system.

System Implementation Guidance

The vendor must be able to work with the LCCMR to identify and understand its processes and procedures in order to provide advice on the best ways to integrate those processes and procedures with the proposed software solutions. This includes advising on grants management system best practices, providing guidance on enhancing and automating processes and procedures based on software capabilities, and consulting on how to overcome identified challenges of current practices and procedures by utilizing the software capabilities.

System Configuration and Installation

The vendor must be able to manage the implementation of the system. This includes customizing and configuring the system to the specific identified needs and parameters of the LCCMR, and installing the system into the LCCMR workflow and, if necessary, working with all relevant IT personnel working on behalf of the LCCMR to set up the system within the LCCMR’s existing IT systems and capabilities.

Data Migration/Conversion Services

The vendor must be able to work with LCCMR staff to migrate as much of the relevant existing data residing in the LCCMR’s current systems over to the new system as possible. The intent of the new system is that it mostly be guided by looking forward toward how it can best benefit existing and future grants management. However, there is a significant amount of legacy data that, to the extent feasible, we would like to be able to integrate and preserve in the new system. The goals for implementing a new project records and grants management system will take precedence in the following order:

1. Set up the system to handle all data and documents for all new projects going forward.
2. Integrate data and documents, as feasible, for all current live projects in various stages of their life cycles from project proposal to project implementation to project completion and evaluation (~300 projects)
3. Integrate data and final report documents (mostly PDF format), as feasible, for all projects completed between 2005-2015 (~400 projects).
4. Integrate base data (data currently existing in Access database fields – see footnote on p.8) only for legacy data on projects completed between 1963-2004 (~1,300 projects).

LCCMR will retain ownership of all data entered into the system.

Support, Maintenance, and Training

The vendor must be able to provide training and ongoing support and maintenance for the system in a manner that ensures sufficient knowledge transfer occurs for assigned LCCMR staff to technically maintain and administer standard function of the system into the future. When applicable, the vendor should be able to provide maintenance and troubleshooting of the system along with assistance in implementing updates and upgrades. There will be a variety of different users with different user roles and permissions. This includes

internal LCCMR users, such as system administrators, staff users, and reviewers, and external users, such as project proposers, project managers, and reviewers. The vendor must be able to train and provide support for system administrators on the full scope of the system and train and provide support for staff users on how to utilize the system as set up to facilitate the LCCMR's workflow as applicable to their roles. Additionally, the vendor should be able to provide instructional documentation for their system that can be customized, as needed, for the other user types and their more limited roles and permissions. Training, ongoing support, and instructional documentation may be in the form of one-on-one training, as needed and appropriate; manuals; instructional videos; user groups or vendor-led discussion boards; or other.

IX. SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS AND DESIRED FUNCTIONS/FEATURES

To help identify and articulate our needs and desired functions and features for a project records and grants management system and develop this request for proposal, we reviewed the free online publication *A Consumer's Guide to Grants Management Software* (November 2013) developed by Idealware, The Grant Managers Network, and The Technology Affinity Group. The below list is mostly adapted from that publication. Functions and features have been grouped into categories. In some instances a particular function or feature relates to multiple categories and descriptions of a function or feature may be partly or wholly duplicative as to what also appears under another category. See "Attachment A: System Requirements and Desired Functions/Features Worksheet" for additional comments and a ranking of the priority of particular features and functions being part of the system. Attachment A must be completed as part of proposal submission.

A. Data Management and Internal Tracking

1. Can track a project throughout its entire life cycle from proposal to project implementation to project completion.
2. Information about projects is stored in an easily retrievable manner.
3. Can keep all project record information linked together.
4. Ability to link/associate related project records – e.g., projects at the same organization, projects by the same project manager, different phases or years of related projects, parent-child projects and sub-projects.
5. Ability to upload or link additional files/documents to project record.
6. Ability to define structure of filenames created for uploaded files.
7. Ability to automatically convert uploaded documents into PDF format.
8. Submitted information and attachments automatically integrated into the system.
9. System provides file management capabilities to document, maintain and/or organize different versions of documents over time.
10. Ability to retrieve and re-use proposal/project information for various fields from one stage to the next (e.g., proposal to work plan) or from one application period to the next.
11. Ability of staff or administrator to easily alter information pertaining to a project independently of project personnel.
12. Ability to prevent any modifications to a submission unless allowed by an administrator.
13. Ability to categorize and search proposals and projects by various parameters, such as proposal/funding cycle, geography, organization type, subject area.
14. Ability to export data from the system into other formats (e.g. CSV, Excel) to work with the data in a different manner.
15. Ability to have multiple project managers assigned to a project.
16. Ability for multiple individual applicants/users at a single organization to have different accounts and different projects.
17. Ability to check for duplicate user accounts within the system.

B. System Interface

1. Password protected system that allows a user to create an account that can be returned to for use in submitting proposals, project work plans, status updates, etc., using text fields, custom dropdown menus, checkboxes, budget tables/spreadsheets, etc., as appropriate.
2. Ability to copy text from other documents (e.g., Word, Excel) and paste into online forms without losing or with minimal loss of formatting.
3. Ability to do basic text formatting within text fields (e.g., add bullets or numbering, font style, possibly put information into simple tables).
4. Branching capabilities in online forms to collect different information based on information provided. For example: if a project indicated it is a land acquisition project, a certain set of questions can be set to become available that wouldn't appear if a project indicated it is an environmental education project.
5. Ability for proposers and project personnel to upload files/documents. Minimally: Word, Excel, PDF, JPG.
6. Save feature to avoid loss of entered data on entry forms and ability to save incomplete submissions and return to them later.
7. Supports checklist functionality that tracks and shows users what information has been submitted to meet specified requirements.
8. Ability for users to review their submitted information and attachments, check status, update or submit new information, etc.
9. Ability for users to print their submitted information and attachments off of the system, potentially as a complete, finalized packet (e.g., all required proposal materials following successfully completed submission become available as a PDF).
10. Notification of user when a field has not been filled out or required information or attachments have not been provided.
11. Confirmation emails sent out to users upon submission of proposals, work plans, status updates, etc.
12. Provides a dashboard navigation portal with customizable labeling so that users can easily find actions they wish to take and access specified information contained in or linked to a user account.
13. System interface should be ADA (Americans with Disability Act) accessible utilizing or compatible with adaptive technologies according to the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 of the State of Minnesota's Accessibility Standard (http://mn.gov/mnit/images/Stnd_State_Accessibility.pdf).

C. System Customization and Flexibility

1. Ability to customize information requested in data entry fields for online forms.
2. Ability to add/modify internal use fields.
3. Ability to customize and modify forms and field names for proposal and work plan entry.
4. Ability for data entry using text fields, custom dropdown menus, checkboxes, budget tables/spreadsheets, etc.
5. Ability to upload files/documents of various formats. Minimally: Word, Excel, PDF, JPG.
6. Ability to create and customize budget forms in a table or spreadsheet, if possible.
7. Ability to define and adjust character or word counts for form fields. Minimally: character count. Ideally: word count.
8. Ability to display character/word counts for a field as it is being filled out.
9. Ability to customize look/feel of forms to match look/feel of LCCMR branding. Minimally: add logos and other identifying information to the forms.
10. In-system help can be customized and altered/updated over time.

D. Mapping and GIS Capabilities

1. Ability to collect and store geospatial data and related attributable data for land parcels entered through an online form and an ability to upload a geographic information system (GIS) file type as attachments to a form either in native format or as a .zip file. The geospatial data format currently used by our system is shapefile, but any geospatial data format that can be used to create a polygon for displaying

parcel information on a map is probably workable, including shapefile, well-known text (WKT), keyhole markup language (KML), geoJSON, etc.

2. As an alternative to using geospatial data formats to collect information on land parcels, an ability to connect to or utilize a new state parcel database and related map layers generated by it for selecting and displaying land parcels associated with a project. The new database is currently under development by the Minnesota Geospatial Information Office (MnGeo) and is expected to come online sometime in 2016.
3. Ability to utilize GIS information to display location information on a map generated through the system as a polygon on the map OR an ability to store GIS information entered as form data and attachments and then link to or provide data to (i.e., export process) a customized mapping system utilized by our office.

E. Proposal and Work Plan Review

1. Checklist to ensure all requested information has been provided and a submission is complete.
2. Ability to view and print all submitted information and attachments during review.
3. Ability for internal reviewers (LCCMR staff and commission members) to submit comments and scores for a proposal through the system.
4. Ability to have and manage external review by people from outside organizations (e.g., peer review process, technical review). This would include the ability for reviewers to submit comments on a proposal or work plan.
5. Ability for reviewers to flag conflicts of interest.
6. Ability to see or link to a history of projects/relationships on past projects when reviewing a new submission.
7. Notification of staff when a reviewer has completed their review.
8. Ability to aggregate reviewer comments and scores into a customized report or export the data for external manipulation (e.g., in Excel).

F. Relationship Management

1. Ability to track organizations and contacts within the system separately from individual projects.
2. Ability to track/log interactions and relationships over time and across projects with people and organizations – both from communications sent from within the system and for logging communications that occur outside of the system.
3. Ability to associate multiple contacts within an organization and define their relationships to a particular project.
4. Ability to retain records/history of former project personnel that were previously associated with a project (e.g., by making them inactive but retaining record).
5. Ability to export contact data to other formats.

G. Correspondence

1. Ability to track, store, and/or link to electronic communications for a project.
2. Ability to generate email communications through the system.
3. Ability to define or select a population of users to send an email communication.
4. Ability to create/customize letter and email templates that mail-merge data from the system.
5. Ability to set-up and send automated emails from system based on specified trigger events – e.g., when due date approaching, receipt of a status update submission.
6. Ability to attach files to emails generated through the system, either automatically or manually.
7. Ability to review individual emails generated through a mail-merge within the system and make changes to text or attachments before sending.
8. Ability to capture or link to emails from external email system (i.e., Outlook) into the system.

H. Grant Requirements and Evaluation

1. Ability to track completion of requirements being met, such as submission of status updates.
2. Ability to affiliate documents with project managers and/or project records within the system. This could include manually affiliating documents that weren't submitted by a project manager or that otherwise weren't automatically affiliated at the time of submission.
3. Ability to compile project accomplishments and metrics (e.g., acres acquired, people served, technical evaluations completed) present within the system via information submitted by a project manager in a field.
4. Ability to enter or update project accomplishments and metrics (e.g., acres acquired, people served, technical evaluations completed) that may not have been entered correctly or at all into the system via information provided in a field by a project manager. This may include transferring information from one field to another field.
5. Ability to summarize metrics across multiple projects and parameters based on information contained in specified fields (e.g., acres acquired by ENRTF projects between 2008-2012).
6. Ability to export data to other formats for manipulation.

I. Querying and Reporting

1. Ability to search or filter to find a particular group of projects based on factors such as project type, project status, project stage, project cycle, location, and other factors.
2. Ability to customize or modify standard reports built into the system.
3. Ability to create ad hoc reports using various combinations of fields within the system, or an ability to export data to another format (e.g. Excel) to manipulate it.
4. Process for running reports is easy for all user types to do independently.

J. Data Access and Work Flow

1. Ability to alter interfaces and available functions and define data access permissions for different user roles – e.g., system administrator, staff users, proposal reviewers, project proposers, project managers – depending on the needs of the user.
2. Ability to assign, define, and manage workflow within the system to individual staff users, such as making a particular user the primary staff contact for a particular project, assigning tasks to a user, or flagging an item requiring a particular user to review or take action on.
3. Dashboard navigation portal for staff users to easily see all of the options for actions they can take and information they can access.
4. Ability to track actions taken within the system by different users in a log.
5. Ability to set up an API with another database, specifically a Drupal-based website².
6. Ability to export all data visible into other file formats (e.g., CSV).
7. Ability for LCCMR to retain ownership of all data entered into the system and transfer all data out of the system if at a future date LCCMR were to ever change systems or vendors.

K. Security

1. Integrated virus scan or security feature to prevent malicious files from being uploaded into the system.
2. Password protection of user accounts.
3. Process available to easily retrieve/reset forgotten usernames and passwords.
4. Mechanisms to help prevent Internet bots from creating fake accounts and accessing the system.

² The website *Minnesota's Legacy* (<http://www.legacy.leg.mn>) tracks expenditures of the ENRTF and other related constitutionally-dedicated funds of the State of Minnesota. An API (Application Programming Interface) was created to allow different agencies with funded projects to programmatically add and update project information from independent database servers rather than manually entering the information. Currently ENRTF information is manually imported and updated, but with a new project records and grants management system we would be interested in looking at utilizing the API.

L. Support, Maintenance, and Training

1. Vendor provides ongoing support, maintenance, and applicable updates and upgrades of system.
2. Vendor provides training.
3. Vendor provides manuals and other related instructional documentation.
4. Potentially an online user group or vendor-led discussion board exists to interact with users at other organizations for questions.
5. Customizable help system functionality, which might include a means of providing instructions for specific fields (by clicking or scrolling over a "?"), instruction pop-up windows, or access to searchable help pages or topics.

M. System Compatibility and Reliability

1. Online system is able to display and properly function across common platforms (e.g., personal computers, tablets, mobile devices), operating systems (e.g., Windows, Mac) and common web browsers (e.g., Mozilla Firefox, Google Chrome, Internet Explorer).
2. Hosted systems are built upon reasonably up-to-date technological infrastructure designed to promote security and reliable access with minimal down-time.

X. QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS RFP

All questions regarding this RFP must be submitted in writing by **4:30 p.m. on October 1, 2015**. No phone call questions will be accepted. Questions are to be submitted by email to:

Mike Banker
Assistant Director
Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources
mike.banker@lccmr.leg.mn

This is the only person designated to answer questions regarding this RFP by interested vendors.

Following the deadline for questions, a list of all questions received from all respondents will be compiled and responses to all inquiries will be posted to <http://www.lccmr.leg.mn> no later than **4:30 p.m. on October 9, 2015**. All proposers will be notified when the questions and answers are posted.

XI. CONTENTS OF PROPOSAL

Proposals should include the following information:

1. **Transmittal Letter:** Overview of proposal being submitted, including:
 - a. Indication of intent to respond to this RFP and acknowledgement of all terms, conditions, and specifications outlined in the RFP.
 - b. Summary of proposer's understanding of the project outlined in this RFP and proposer's ability to perform the services requested.
 - c. Pertinent contact information of proposer's principal contact for the proposal.
 - d. Signature of authorized representative.
2. **Technical Proposal:** Detailed description of proposer's plan to manage the project and accomplish the elements of the work identified in this RFP, including:
 - a. Overall project approach.
 - b. Profile of proposed software solutions along with background information on the history of the software system (e.g., number of years in use, product's current release level/version), number

of clients currently using the system, approximate breakdown of clients by type (e.g., government, corporate foundation, private foundation), and long-term outlook/sustainability of the system (e.g., does revenue earned from the system currently cover the personnel and operational expenses required to support it).

- c. Completed "Attachment A: System Requirements and Desired Functions/Features Worksheet" indicating how the proposed software satisfies the system requirements and desired functions/features outlined in this RFP. Proposer can indicate whether a function/feature is currently available, will be available at a future date, requires customization, or is not available in the proposer's software along with any related comments.
- d. Overview of the strategies and methods for completing the work and all related work stages, such as project planning and management; design and configuration; custom programming; system implementation; data conversion/migration; risk mitigation; quality control and testing; and training, support, and maintenance.
- e. Proposed Timeline: Realistic project schedule detailing items such as key tasks, anticipated milestones, and responsible parties.
- f. Statement that clearly identifies obligations and responsibilities separate from financial payment for services (e.g., staff time, IT resources) that would be required of the LCCMR in order for proposer to meet the proposed timeline for the project.

3. Past Project Experience, References, and Demonstrations:

- a. Proposers must provide contact information for a minimum of three (3) reference organizations for which the contractor has provided similar services within the past three (3) years. If applicable, including at least one government entity/organization as a reference would be helpful. Information provided should include:
 - i. Organization name, telephone number, and address;
 - ii. Organization contact, including name, title, telephone, and email address;
 - iii. Description of services provided;
 - iv. Dates of service.
- b. If proposer has any online demonstrations (e.g., videos, demo systems) or examples of clients utilizing the software that could be accessed or reviewed independent of vendor involvement to learn more about or explore the system, please provide website links and information on how to access those sites.

4. Background and Qualifications:

- a. Organization Background: Description of organization that covers the following:
 - i. General overview of organization, number of employees, products, and services;
 - ii. History, including year established;
 - iii. Financial strength and stability, including annual revenues;
 - iv. Customer satisfaction, including brief explanation of any clients that have stopped using the software/services in the past 18 months and the reason;
 - v. Qualifications and experience in providing services to complete projects for other organizations of similar size and scope to the project identified in this RFP, particularly government entities, if applicable.
- b. Project Team: List of primary staff contacts proposed to be involved on the project and summary description of their related backgrounds and experience.

5. **Other Services (if applicable):** The proposer may include information on any optional items or services that may not have been identified in the scope of work outlined in this RFP but that the proposer believes might be of interest or use to the LCCMR. Optional items outlined must include a cost estimate.

6. **Cost Estimate:** Detailed cost proposal outlining all fees and other anticipated costs with breakdowns by types of services provided (as appropriate) and types of cost inputs (e.g., labor, travel) within the service categories. Amounts quoted should be indicative of a best estimate anticipated amount, but as appropriate amounts could also reference potential costs within low to high ranges, as appropriate.

Costs to be described include:

- a. Initial and ongoing costs for software licensing, hosting, and maintenance;
- b. Implementation;
- c. Configuration and installation;
- d. Data migration/conversion;
- e. Training and support, including any fees for support above what is included in a standard license agreement;
- f. Software customization (if applicable);
- g. Other/optional services;
- h. Options for potential cost savings approaches (if applicable), such as having LCCMR staff conduct certain elements of data migration, form design, etc., or providing services that are narrower or less extensive in scope but would still functionally meet the LCCMR's needs.

As part of the cost estimate, please indicate any assumptions made by your organization in deriving cost estimates, along with any related thresholds or parameters (e.g. database size, number of users) that could impact any quoted fees upwards or downwards.

Proposals should be written in a clear, concise manner and avoid jargon and overly complex technical discussions. Please do not include promotional sales or marketing materials unless they contain information directly relevant to the information requested in the RFP.

LCCMR reserves the right to request additional information as an addendum to any proposals received.

XII. PROPOSALS DUE

Proposals must be received by the LCCMR by **4:30 p.m. on October 23, 2015**. Electronic submission is preferred. Electronic documents can be e-mailed to the address below. Proposals are to be submitted to:

Attn: Mike Banker
Re: Proposal for Project Records and Grants Management System
Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources
65 State Office Building
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55155
(651) 296-2668 (voice)
Email: mike.banker@lccmr.leg.mn

If submitting a proposal via email, please note that the LCCMR's email system has a 25 MB limit on incoming attachments. If you need to submit any attachments larger than 25 MB, contact us to make arrangements for submission using an alternate electronic method. If it is necessary to split up files into multiple emails, please indicate the number of emails and/or clearly specify in a list all documents we should expect to receive.

Proposals must be received by the specified deadline. Late submissions may not be accepted. All expenses incurred in responding to this request for proposal shall be borne by the responder.

All information provided in proposal submissions must remain valid and open for acceptance in all respects for a minimum period of 75 days after the deadline for submission.

XIII. GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS

- A.** “LCCMR” means the Minnesota Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources. In matters arising out of this proposal or out of any resulting contract, the authorized agent for the LCCMR are the Co-Chairs of the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources or the Director of the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources.
- B.** The LCCMR reserves the right to reject any and all consultant proposals received as a result of this Request for Proposal, or to negotiate separately with any consultant in any manner necessary to serve the best interests of the Legislature.
- C.** Proposals will be received and considered in accordance with Minnesota Statutes 2013, Section 13.591, subdivision 3, Business as Vendor, paragraph (b) which provides as follows:

“(b) Data submitted by a business to a government entity in response to a request for proposal, as defined in section 16C.02, subdivision 12, are private or nonpublic until the time and date specified in the solicitation that proposals are due, at which time the name of the responder becomes public. All other data in a responder's response to a request for proposal are private or nonpublic data until completion of the evaluation process. For purposes of this section, "completion of the evaluation process" means that the government entity has completed negotiating the contract with the selected vendor. After a government entity has completed the evaluation process, all remaining data submitted by all responders are public with the exception of trade secret data as defined and classified in section 13.37. A statement by a responder that submitted data are copyrighted or otherwise protected does not prevent public access to the data contained in the response.

If all responses to a request for proposal are rejected prior to completion of the evaluation process, all data, other than the names of the responders, remain private or nonpublic until a resolicitation of the requests for proposal results in completion of the evaluation process or a determination is made to abandon the purchase. If the rejection occurs after the completion of the evaluation process, the data remain public. If a resolicitation of proposals does not occur within one year of the proposal opening date, the remaining data become public.”

- D.** The LCCMR reserves the right to require a consultant to make an oral presentation of its proposal to the LCCMR to permit a better understanding of the specifics of a consultant’s proposal.
- E.** The LCCMR is not responsible for any cost incurred by the consultant in responding to this Request for Proposal.
- F.** Payment for any contract entered into as a result of the Request for Proposal will be made on a negotiated periodic basis after receipt of billings accompanied by the appropriate verification of work time and satisfactory completion of tasks to billing date. In accordance with Minnesota Statutes 3.225, subdivision 6, paragraph (b), no more than 90 percent of the amount due under the contract may be paid until the LCCMR’s authorized agent has certified that the consultant has satisfactorily fulfilled the terms of the contract.
- G.** All contractors and subcontractors must conform to the labor laws of the State of Minnesota, and to all other laws, ordinances, and legal requirements affecting the work in this state. The consultant must conform with and agree to the provisions of Minnesota Statutes, Section 181.59, which prohibits discrimination in the hiring of labor by reason of race, creed, or color. That statute reads as follows:

181.59 DISCRIMINATION ON ACCOUNT OF RACE, CREED OR COLOR PROHIBITED IN CONTRACT.

Every contract for or on behalf of the State of Minnesota, or any county, city, town, township, school, school district, or any other district in the state, for materials, supplies, or construction shall contain provisions by which the contractor agrees:

- (1) That, in the hiring of common or skilled labor for the performance of any work under any contract, or any subcontract, no contractor, material supplier, or vendor, shall, by reason of race, creed, or color, discriminate against the person or persons who are citizens of the United States or resident aliens who are qualified and available to perform the work to which the employment relates;
- (2) That no contractor, material supplier, or vendor, shall, in any manner, discriminate against, or intimidate, or present the employment of any person or persons identified in clause (1) of this section, or on being hired, prevent, or conspire to prevent, the person or persons from the performance of work under any contract on account of race, creed or color;
- (3) That a violation of this section is a misdemeanor; and
- (4) That this agreement may be cancelled or terminated by the state, county, city, town, school board, or any other person authorized to grant the contracts for employment, and all money due, or to become due under the agreement may be forfeited for a second or any subsequent violation of the terms or conditions of this contract.

H. In accordance with Minnesota Statutes, section 176.182, the consultant must provide to the LCCMR acceptable evidence of compliance with the worker's compensation insurance coverage requirement of Minnesota Statutes, section 176.181, subdivision 2.

I. If the amount of this contract exceeds \$100,000 and the consultant has employed more than 40 full-time employees in this state or in the state in which the consultant has its primary place of business on a single working day in the 12 months immediately preceding the due date for the proposal, the consultant must comply with the affirmative action plan requirements of Minnesota Statutes, section 363A.36, as follows:

- (a) If the 40 full-time employees were employed in Minnesota, consultant must, prior to submission of the proposal, either have a certificate of compliance issued by Minnesota Commissioner of Human Rights or that commissioner must have received from the consultant an application for such a certificate. Prior to signing a contract resulting from a successful proposal, the consultant must have the certificate of compliance.
- (b) If the consultant did not have more than 40 full-time employees in Minnesota but did have that number in another state in which the consultant has its primary place of business, the consultant must, prior to signing a contract resulting from a successful proposal, either have a certificate of compliance issued by the Minnesota Commissioner of Human Rights or certify that the consultant is in compliance with federal affirmative action requirements.

Minnesota Statutes, section 363A.073 and Minnesota Rules, parts 5000.3400 to 5000.3600 are hereby incorporated into this Request for Proposal and will be incorporated into any resulting contract, by reference.

J. As required by Minnesota Statutes, section 270C.65 subdivision 3, a consultant must provide to the LCCMR either its federal taxpayer identification number or its Social Security number and its Minnesota tax identification number (if applicable). This information may be used in the enforcement of federal and state

tax laws. Supplying these numbers could result in action to require consultant to file state tax returns and pay delinquent state tax liabilities. This contract will not be approved unless these numbers are provided. These numbers will be available to federal and state tax authorities and state personnel involved in approving the contract and the payment and audit of state obligations. These numbers will not be made available to any other person without the express written permission of the consultant.

- K.** The consultant must agree to comply with the Government Data Practices Act, Minnesota Statutes, chapter 13, as it applies to all data provided by the Commission in accordance with this agreement and as it applies to all data created, gathered, generated, or acquired in accordance with this agreement.

All work product and interim and final reports prepared by the consultant in the performance of its obligations under this agreement are the property of the LCCMR and must be remitted to the LCCMR upon completion or termination of this agreement. The consultant must not use, willingly allow the use of, or cause to have the materials used for any purpose other than performance of the obligations under this agreement without the prior written consent of the LCCMR.

- L.** Work must begin within the timeframe set in the signed contract between the LCCMR and the consultant. The signed agreement will terminate upon full performance by both parties of the contract agreement.
- M.** This contract may be terminated by the LCCMR as permitted under Minnesota Statutes 3.225, subdivision 6, in whole or in part, whenever the LCCMR determines that termination is in the interest of the LCCMR. The LCCMR will pay all reasonable costs associated with this agreement that the consultant has incurred up to the termination date of the agreement and all reasonable costs associated with termination of the agreement.