



RFR General Legal Services for MCSW

Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women

One Ashburton Place, Ste 16220, Boston, MA 02108

MCSW@mass.gov | 617-670-8261

REQUEST FOR RESPONSE

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Purchasing Department | Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women |
| Address | 1 Ashburton Place, Suite 16220 |
| City, State Zip Code | Boston, MA 02108 |
| Procurement Contact Person | Marjorie C. Bernadeau-Alexandre |
| Telephone Number | 351-667-9748 |
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| RFR Name/Title | General Legal Services |
| RFR Number | RFR |
| COMMBUYS Bid Number | BD |

1. Description or Purpose of Procurement

The Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women ([MCSW](#)) is an independent state agency whose mission advances the lives of all women and girls in the Commonwealth. **The MCSW requests responses from firms that are interested and qualified to provide general legal services to the Agency. We are interested in establishing a rate contract with a qualified firm, with an anticipated need of five (5) to ten (10) hours of monthly work.**

The mission of the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women ([MCSW](#)) is to provide a permanent effective voice for women and girls across Massachusetts. The agency was established to advance the rights and lives of women in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The MCSW works through research, policy advocacy, education, and public engagement to promote equality and opportunity for women and girls across the state. It is governed by nine Commissioners appointed by the Governor, House Speaker, Senate President and Caucus of Women Legislators.

We are seeking to procure a firm to provide general legal services to the Agency, including but not limited to advice regarding:

- Municipal law
- State law
- Public procurement law
- Open meeting law
- General legal advice

This RFR will be used to establish a rate contract with a firm, which will be set to commence on August 01, 2026, with four optional one-year extensions. Additional renewals may be initiated in the best interest of the MCSW depending on current projects. The services detailed under “Scope of Services” as well as the firm’s response, including the fee proposal, will form the basis for this proposed contract.

2. Applicable Procurement Law

| Check Appropriate Box (“X”): | Type of Purchase | Applicable Laws |
|-------------------------------------|--|---|
| | Executive Branch Goods and Services | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Goods and Services | MGL c. 7, § 22; c. 30, § 51, § 52; 801 CMR 21.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Human and Social Services | MGL c. 7, § 22, § 22N; c. 30, § 51, § 52; 801 CMR 21.00; 808 CMR 1.00 |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Legal Services | MGL c. 30, § 51, § 52 and § 65; c. 7, § 22; and 801 CMR 21.01(2) (b) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Grants | MGL c. 7A, § 7; St. 1986 c. 206, § 17; 815 CMR 2.00 |

3. Acquisition Method

| Check All Applicable (“X”): | Category |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Fee-For-Service |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Outright Purchase |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Rental (not to exceed 6 months) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Term Lease |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | License |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Other: [specify, e.g., TELP] |

4. Whether Single or Multiple Contractors are Required for Contract

| Check One (“X”): | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Single Contractor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Multiple Contractors |

4.1 Estimated Number of Awards

The target maximum number of Contractors is one (1); the Purchasing Department may award more or fewer contracts, if it is in the best interests of the Commonwealth to do so.

4.2 Adding Contractors After Initial Contract Award

If, over the life of the contract, the Purchasing Department determines that additional Contractors may be added, these may be drawn from qualified companies which responded to this Solicitation but were not awarded Contracts. If necessary to meet the requirements of the Commonwealth, the Solicitation may be reopened to obtain additional Bids.

5. Entities Eligible to Use the Resulting Contract

| Check One ("X"): | Eligible Entities |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Limited User Contract – Restricted to Use by Defined Entities Only. Any Contract(s) resulting from this Bid will be open for use by the issuing Purchasing Department and the following other entities: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• [Identify additional Eligible Entities by name] |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Limited User Contract – Restricted to Use by Issuing Entity Only. |

6. Expected Duration of Contract (Initial Duration and any Options to Renew)

The anticipated duration of this contract is from August 01, 2026, to June 30, 2027, with four (1) year renewals.

| Contract Duration | Number of Options | Number of Years | Instructions |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|--|
| Initial Duration | | 1 | August 01, 2026 – June 30, 2027 |
| Renewal Options | | 4 | July 1, 2027 – June 30, 2028 July 1, 2028 – June 30, 2029 July 1, 2029 – June 30, 2030 July 1, 2030 – June 30, 2031 |
| Total Maximum Contract Duration | | 5 | August 01, 2026 – June 30, 2031 |

7. **Anticipated Expenditures, Funding, or Compensation**

The Commonwealth makes no guarantee that any commodities or services will be purchased from any Contract resulting from this bid. Any estimates or past procurement volumes referenced in this bid are included only for the convenience of bidders and are not to be relied upon as any indication of future purchase levels.

8. **Contract Performance and Business Specifications**

8.1 Scope of Services

In order to respond to this RFR, firms must demonstrate that they have met the following minimum qualifications:

- Firms must have a minimum of three years of providing state and/or municipal legal services.
- Firms must be members in good standing of the Massachusetts Bar.
- The primary responsibility of the general legal services firm is to provide legal advice to the MCSW. Attendance at Commission meetings as needed.
- In addition to these scope specifications, the following services may also be required on an as needed basis:
 - Interpretation, advice, and implementation assistance regarding the MCSW enabling statute, regulations, and trust fund, MCSW specific legislative mandates, proposed legislation, and other relevant legislation and regulations.
 - Review and modification of the Commission's governing documents.
 - Interpretation, advice, and implementation assistance with Massachusetts Public Laws, including conflict of interest laws, state finance law, Chapter 78, public records, Code of Massachusetts Regulations (605) CMR, and open meeting laws. (See Appendix C)
 - Interpretation, advice, and implementation assistance regarding issues of professional liability.
 - Legal advice and assistance with drafting, negotiating and terminating contracts with vendors and other government entities.
 - Compliance and Advisory Services: Advise the agency on compliance with various state employment laws to mitigate litigation risks and address potential employment-related claims.
 - Represent MCSW in any legal matters.
 - Additional Legal Services as needed.

While the MCSW does not have an immediate need for general litigation services or representation, the MCSW requires expeditious access to providers of such services in the event the need arises. Any such litigation services on behalf of the Commonwealth require the appointment by the Attorney General of all attorneys, representing the Commonwealth in court, as Special Assistant Attorneys General. In your response, please include a list of all current SAAG appointments.

In addition to the General Legal Services specified above, the MCSW invites respondents to identify in their responses any additional categories of services that it is qualified to provide and for which it would like to be considered for selection under this RFR.

8.2 Failure to Perform

Failure to perform contractual obligations is outlined in the Standard Contract Form, Terms and Conditions, Section 4 regarding termination and suspension of contract.

9. Form of the Response

Responses will be divided into two main parts: Narrative Proposal and a Cost Proposal. The Narrative Proposal and Cost Proposal must be two separate documents.

9.1 Narrative Proposal

The vendor shall write a narrative that is detailed enough to help the procurement team understand how they would provide the services required and how they would work with the Agency throughout the process.

9.1.1 Vendor Qualifications

The vendor will provide a brief narrative of their business history and focus of their mission, as well as their interest in undertaking this work for the Agency. The vendor will describe in detail their qualifications to perform the duties enumerated in Section 8 Scope of Services and must be addressed individually. Vendor responses will use the same numbering scheme as in this document (*e.g.*, 8.2.1, 8.2.2, 8.2.3...).

All qualifications must be addressed. Please include the following information:

- a. Please identify the personnel that will comprise your team. Please provide a brief description of the relevant experience of each individual including their professional background, knowledge, and technical abilities, the role each will serve their title and their office location. Highlight the specific team members' experience in context of the description in the Scope of Services.
- b. Please demonstrate any specific experience in the following areas:
 - i. Experience in organizational governance issues, in particular those issues related to non-profit entities.
 - ii. Experience with boards and subcommittees.
 - iii. Experience with Massachusetts Public Records, Open Meeting, and Conflict of Interest Laws and related issues.
 - iv. Experience with Government contracts and Massachusetts State procurement laws, regulations, procedures and policies.
 - v. Experience with Municipal or State Government Finance.
 - vi. Experience working on legal issues with government agencies.
 - vii. Experience working with Massachusetts municipalities and/or state government.

- c. Please identify and include details of any pertinent judgment, criminal conviction, investigation or litigation related to performance of legal services or malpractice, pending against the Respondent or any of its officers, directors, employees, agents or subcontractors of which the Respondent has knowledge or a statement that there are none.

9.2 Cost Proposal

This RFR seeks a comprehensive cost proposal for all services outlined in **Section 8.1 Scope of Services**. The cost proposal must be all-inclusive, and the vendor should detail any proposed discounts for expedited payments. The Cost Proposal must be submitted as a separate document.

The following breakdowns are required in the Cost Proposal:

9.2.1 Overall Costs based on Term of Contract

9.2.2 Costs by Service / Project

9.3 Other Required Documents

9.3.1 Business References

The vendor will provide at least three client references that the Agency may contact about previous work, using the **Business Reference form** included with this RFR. If possible, references will be from clients of a similar size and with similar requirements. The Agency is particularly interested in any previous experience vendors may have with other educational, non-profit, or governmental organizations. The vendor must have documented experience providing legal counsel for at least 3 municipalities and/or government agencies. If any Commonwealth agency is an existing customer, the vendor must provide that agency's contact as a reference.

10. Evaluation Criteria

Contractors must submit responses that meet all the submission requirements of the RFR. Only responsive proposals that meet the submission requirements will be evaluated, scored, and ranked by the evaluation team according to the evaluation criteria. Additional information may be requested for evaluation purposes.

All proposals will be evaluated by the members of the MCSW's Procurement Team: MCSW'S Executive Director, MCSW's Administrative & Finance Director & MCSW State Commission Representative. Responses will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

| Criteria | Value |
|---------------------|------------|
| Narrative Proposal | 50 points |
| Cost Proposal | 40 points |
| Business References | 10 points |
| Total | 100 points |

11. Required Forms

Responses to this RFR must contain the following documents:

| Check if applicable ("X") | Form/Document | Notes/Instructions |
|-------------------------------------|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Narrative Proposal | Electronic Submission |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Cost Proposal | Electronic Submission |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Business Reference Form | Electronic Submission |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Prompt Payment Discount Form | Electronic Submission |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | RFR Submission Checklist | Electronic Submission |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Authorization for Electronic Funds Transfer | Upon Contract Award – can be submitted electronically |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | W9 Form | Upon Contract Award – can be submitted electronically |

The above attachments are available as part of the Bid record on [COMMBUYS \(WWW.COMMBUYS.COM\)](http://COMMBUYS.COM).

12. Instructions for Submission of Responses

Only electronic quotes submitted via COMMBUYS will be accepted in response to this RFR. Responses must be sent via the "Create Quote" functionality in COMMBUYS. For instructions concerning how to submit a Quote, please see Appendix B.

Any submission that fails to meet the submission requirements of the RFR will be found non-responsive without further evaluation unless the evaluation team, at its discretion, determines that the non-compliance is insubstantial and may be corrected. In these cases, the evaluation team may allow the vendor to make minor corrections to the submission.

12.1 COMMBUYS Quote Submission Training and Instructions

The following resources are provided to assist Bidders in submitting Quotes:

- **Appendix B Instructions for Vendors Responding to Bids Electronically through COMMBUYS, which is part of this document;**
- Training sessions focused on online Quote submission, if offered, are noted in the Estimated Procurement Calendar;
- An online job aid on [How to Create a Quote](#)

- Webcast video on [How to Find Bids \(Solicitations\) and Submit Quotes \(Responses\) through COMMBUYS](#).

12.2 COMMBUYS Support

Technical assistance is available during the procurement process. Every effort is made to respond to inquiries within one business day.

Website: Go to www.mass.gov/osd/commbuys to access COMMBUYS resources, including new bid postings, job aids, and training schedules for buyers, among others.

Email: Send inquiries to the OSD Help Desk at OSDHelpDesk@mass.gov

Telephone: Call the OSD Help Desk at 1-888-MA-STATE (1-888-627-8283). The Help Desk is staffed from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday Eastern Time, except on federal and state holidays.

Bidders are advised that COMMBUYS will be unavailable during regularly scheduled maintenance hours of which all users will be notified.

13. Estimated Procurement Calendar

| Procurement Activity | Date | Time |
|---|----------------|----------|
| Bid Release Date | June 10, 2026 | 9:00 AM |
| Deadline for Submission of Questions through COMMBUYS "Bid Q&A" | June 17, 2026 | 5:00 PM |
| Official Answers for Bid Q&A published (Estimated) | June 22, 2026 | 5:00 PM |
| Bid Amendment Deadline / Online Quote Submission Begins. (Bid documents will not be amended after this date.) | July 01, 2026 | 11:00 AM |
| Deadline for Quotes/Bid Responses ("Bid Opening Date/Time" in COMMBUYS) | July 10, 2026 | 5:00 PM |
| Notification of Apparent Successful Bidder(s) (Estimated) | July 17, 2026 | |
| Estimated Contract Start Date | August 1, 2026 | |

Bidders are required to monitor COMMBUYS for changes to the procurement calendar for this Bid.

Times are Eastern Standard/Daylight Savings (US), as displayed on the COMMBUYS system clock displayed to Bidders after logging in. If there is a conflict between the dates in this Procurement Calendar and dates in the Bid's Header, the dates in the Bid's Header on COMMBUYS shall prevail. Bidders are responsible for checking the Bid record, including Bid Q&A, on COMMBUYS for Procurement Calendar updates. Bidders are required to monitor COMMBUYS for changes to the procurement

13.1 Online Questions (Bid Q&A)

Written questions must be entered using the “Bid Q&A” tab for the Bid in COMMBUYS no later than the “Online Questions Due” date and time indicated in the Estimated Procurement Calendar (above). The issuing department reserves the right to not respond to questions submitted after this date. It is the Bidder’s responsibility to verify receipt of questions.

It is the responsibility of the prospective Bidder and awarded Contractor to maintain an active registration in COMMBUYS and to keep current the email address of the Bidder’s contact person and prospective contract manager, if awarded a contract, and to monitor that email inbox for communications from the Purchasing Department, including requests for clarification. The Purchasing Department and the Commonwealth assume no responsibility if a prospective Bidder’s/awarded.

Contractor’s designated email address is not current, or if technical problems, including those with the prospective Bidder’s/awarded Contractor’s computer, network, or internet service provider (ISP) cause email communications sent to/from the prospective Bidder/Awarded contractor and the Purchasing Department to be lost or rejected by any means including email or spam filtering.

Written Responses to Questions will be released on or about the “Responses to Questions Posted Online” date indicated in the Estimated Procurement Calendar (above).

(Written questions and responses will be posted on the Bid Q&A Tab for this Bid in COMMBUYS.)

13.2 Bid Amendment Deadline

The Purchasing Department reserves the right to make amendments to the Bid after initial publication. It is each Bidder’s responsibility to check COMMBUYS for amendments, addenda, or modifications to this Bid, and any Bid Q&A records related to this Bid. The Purchasing Department and the Commonwealth accept no responsibility and will provide no accommodation to Bidders who submit a Quote based on an out-of-date Bid or on information received from a source other than COMMBUYS.

13.3 Quotes (Bid Responses) Deadline (Bid Opening Date/Time)

See the Quotes (Bid Responses) Deadline (Bid Opening) Date and Time indicated in the Estimated Procurement Calendar (above).

13.4 Estimated Contract Start Date

This is the approximate start date. The actual start date will be the Contract Effective Date which is the date the Contract is executed by the parties.

14. Fiscal Terms

14.1 Prompt Pay Discounts

All Bidders must agree to offer discounts through participation in the Commonwealth Prompt Payment Discount (PPD) initiative for receiving early and/or on-time payments, unless the Bidder can provide compelling proof that it would be unduly burdensome.

Bidders must submit agreeable terms for Prompt Payment Discount unless otherwise specified by the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women (MCSW). The MCSW will review, negotiate, or reject the offering as deemed in the best interest of the Commonwealth.

The requirement to offer a PPD may be waived by the MCSW on a case-by-case basis if participation in the program would be unduly burdensome on the Bidder. If a Bidder is claiming that this requirement is a hardship or unduly burdensome, the specific reason must be documented in the Response.

14.2 Commonwealth Tax Exemption

Invoices submitted to the MBLC must not include sales tax.

14.3 VendorWeb

Vendors can see their scheduled payments and payment history by logging on to VendorWeb. On-line vendors can find the tentative scheduled payment date or the actual payment date, payment number, vendor invoice number, contract number, line amount, any associated text information and the Department making the payment. VendorWeb is located at <https://massfinance.state.ma.us/VendorWeb/vendor.asp>.

The VendorWeb application was created to help the Commonwealth's vendors get their payment information freely and easily. Vendors access VendorWeb with their Commonwealth VC code and the last 4 digits of their TIN. Vendors can view or download information for payments made in the current or prior fiscal year or scheduled to be paid. Payment information can be generated using date ranges and selected Department(s). Payment information can be sorted by payment number or Department payer(s).

VendorWeb also provides vendors on-line access to 1099 tax forms.

14.4 Payments

The selected vendor will be required to submit payment invoices in accordance with the procedures outlined above in order to receive payments. Departments are required to make payments on approved invoices within forty-five (45) calendar days of receipt unless a prompt payment discount is negotiated for this contract. Please note: Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) is the expected form of issuing Commonwealth payments to our vendors. The Commonwealth's policy is to pay its bills through EFT while maximizing the use of prompt payment discounts (PPD). EFT is a benefit to both vendors and the Commonwealth because it ensures fast, safe and reliable payment directly to the vendor's account and saves both parties the cost of processing checks.

BILLS ARE PAYABLE IN ACCORDANCE WITH CTR'S BILL PAYMENT POLICY: <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/understanding-commonwealth-payments>

15. Small Business Purchasing Program

15.1 Program Background

The Massachusetts [Small Business Purchasing Program](#) (SBPP) was established pursuant to [Executive Order 523](#) to increase state contracting opportunities with small businesses having their principal place of business within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Pursuant to the SBPP, it is the intention of the issuing department to award this Small Procurement to one or more SBPP participating business(es) as described below.

15.2 SBPP Award Preference

While all businesses, no matter the size or principal place of business, may submit responses to this solicitation, should an SBPP participant respond and meet the best value criteria as described in this solicitation, the SBPP participant shall be awarded the contract. The Strategic Sourcing Services Team (SSST) will not evaluate submissions from non-SBPP participants unless no SBPP Bidder meets the SSST's best value evaluation criteria.

15.3 SBPP Participation Eligibility

To be eligible to participate in this procurement as an SBPP participant, an entity must meet the following criteria, and be marked as an SBPP-registered business in [COMMBUYS](#):

1. Have its principal place of business in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts;
2. Be in business for at least one year;
3. Employ a combined total of 50 or fewer full-time equivalent employees in all locations, or employees work less than a combined total of 26,000 hours per quarter; and
4. Have gross revenues, as reported on appropriate tax forms, of \$15 million or less, based on a three-year average.

Non-profit firms also must be registered as a non-profit or charitable organization with the MA Attorney General's Office and be up to date with all filings required by that office and be tax exempt under Section 501(c) of the Internal Revenue Code.

15.4 SBPP Compliance Requirements

It is the responsibility of the Bidder to ensure that their SBPP status is current at the time of submitting a response and throughout the life of any resulting contract. Misrepresentation of SBPP status will result in disqualification from consideration, and may result in debarment, contract termination, and other actions. To learn more about the SBPP, including how to apply, visit the [SBPP Webpage](#).

15.5 Program Resources and Assistance

Bidders and Contractors seeking assistance regarding SBPP may visit the SBPP webpage, <http://www.mass.gov/sbpp>, or contact the SBPP Help Desk at sbpp@mass.gov.

16. **Acceptable Forms of Signature**

Effective June 15, 2021, for all 1) CTR forms, including the Standard Contract Form, W-9s, Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) forms, ISAs, and other CTR-issued documents and forms, or 2) documents related to state finance and within the statutory area of authority or control of CTR (i.e. contracts, payrolls, and related supporting documentation), CTR will accept signatures executed by an authorized signatory in any of the following ways:

1. Traditional “wet signature” (ink on paper);
2. Electronic signature that is either:
 - a. Hand drawn using a mouse or finger if working from a touch screen device; or
 - b. An uploaded picture of the signatory’s hand drawn signature
3. Electronic signatures affixed using a digital tool such as Adobe Sign or DocuSign. If using an electronic signature, the signature must be visible, include the signatory’s name and title, and must be accompanied by a signature date. Please be advised that typed text of a name not generated by a digital tool such as Adobe Sign or DocuSign, even in computer-generated cursive script, or an electronic symbol, are not acceptable forms of electronic signature.

17. **RFR Attachments**

- **Appendix A: Required Specifications**
- <https://www.mass.gov/doc/rfr-required-specifications-of-commodities-and-services>
- **Appendix B: Electronic Quote Submission Instructions**
- <https://www.mass.gov/doc/instructions-for-vendors-responding-to-bids>
- **Appendix C: RFR – Massachusetts General Laws**
- **Chapter 78: Libraries** - <https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleXII/Chapter78>
- **Public Records** - <https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleX/Chapter66/Section10>
- **Procurement** - <https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleIII/Chapter30B>
- **Finance Law** - <https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleIII/Chapter29/Section66>
- **Open Meeting Law** - <https://www.mass.gov/doc/new-open-meeting-law-regulations-clean-version/download>
- **Code of Massachusetts Regulations (605) CMR** - <https://mblc.state.ma.us/about-us/laws-and-regulations/code.php>