



SANTA ANA WATERSHED PROJECT AUTHORITY

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
For
ON-CALL GRANT WRITING AND FUNDING SUPPORT
SERVICES**

June 16th 2026

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1. INTRODUCTION

SAWPA seeks proposals from qualified consultants to provide grant writing and funding support services for projects and programs associated with water resources, watershed management, groundwater sustainability, water quality improvement, habitat restoration, invasive species management, PFAS and emerging contaminants, climate resilience, environmental planning, and related regional initiatives.

SAWPA routinely coordinates with member agencies, local governments, state and federal agencies, non-governmental organizations, academic institutions, and other stakeholders to advance regional priorities and pursue external funding opportunities. Funding opportunities may include federal, state, regional, local, and private grant programs.

The purpose of this RFP is to establish a professional services agreement with a qualified consultant capable of assisting SAWPA with identifying, evaluating, developing, coordinating, and submitting competitive grant applications and related funding opportunities. Services will be authorized through individual task orders issued on an as-needed basis.

2. ABOUT SAWPA

The Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority (SAWPA) is a Joint Powers Authority formed in 1968 under California law and composed of five member agencies: Eastern Municipal Water District, Inland Empire Utilities Agency, Orange County Water District, San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District, and Western Municipal Water District.

SAWPA provides regional leadership, planning, coordination, and implementation support for water resource and watershed management initiatives throughout the Santa Ana River Watershed. Working collaboratively with its member agencies and regional partners, SAWPA addresses a broad range of water resource challenges, including water supply reliability, groundwater management, water quality improvement, recycled water, watershed resilience, habitat restoration, climate adaptation, emerging contaminants, and integrated regional planning.

Through programs such as One Water One Watershed (OWOW), SAWPA serves as a regional convener, grant applicant, grant administrator, and program manager for watershed-scale initiatives.

3. PURPOSE OF GRANT WRITING AND FUNDING SUPPORT SERVICES

SAWPA seeks to establish an on-call professional services agreement with a qualified consultant to assist with identifying, evaluating, developing, coordinating, and submitting competitive grant applications and funding opportunities.

Services may support projects related to water resources, watershed management, groundwater sustainability, water quality improvement, habitat restoration, invasive

species management, PFAS and emerging contaminants, climate resilience, environmental planning, and related regional initiatives.

Services will be authorized through individual task orders issued by SAWPA on an as-needed basis.

4. TERMS OF CONTRACT

The contract with SAWPA will include two documents – the General Services Agreement (GSA) and Scope of Work (SOW), both attached to this RFP. SAWPA anticipates entering into a professional services agreements with an initial term of two (2) years, with the option to extend subject to mutual agreement and available funding.

Task orders will be issued on an as-needed basis and will identify the scope, deliverables, schedule, budget, funding source requirements, and any applicable federal or state compliance requirements. For terms of the Contract, please see the GSA and Scope attached as exhibits to this RFP.

Invoicing and payment procedures are described in Article III of the GSA. The consultant shall invoice for the hourly billable rates that they provide in their RFP Response (Exhibit B).

5. SCOPE OF WORK

SAWPA is requesting proposals from qualified consultants to provide on-call grant writing and funding support services. Services may include support for federal, state, regional, local, and private funding opportunities associated with water resources, watershed management, groundwater sustainability, water quality improvement, habitat restoration, invasive species management, PFAS and emerging contaminants, climate resilience, environmental planning, and related regional initiatives.

The detailed Scope of Work is provided in Exhibit A and shall govern the services to be provided under the resulting agreement and associated task orders.

6. PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

Responses to this RFP must be made according to the requirements set forth in this section. The proposal should be formatted for legibility and no more than 15 pages long (on pages sized 8.5” wide by 11” long), not including resume(s) or the pricing exhibit.

Proposals will be accepted until July 3rd, Monday at 4:00 p.m. Proposals must be submitted and uploaded onto PlanetBids at: <https://vendors.planetbids.com/portal/52676/portal-home> as a complete electronic/PDF version by the date and time herein above set forth, along with the pricing exhibit (Exhibit B), which shall be submitted as a Microsoft Excel file.

SAWPA will not accept hand-delivered proposals.

Submittal of boilerplate marketing materials is discouraged.

All proposals must include the following information listed below. When responding to this RFP, number responses and order them sequentially using the same numbering used below:

1. Title page, including name, telephone number, address of the firm, and signature of individual qualified to submit a proposal on behalf of the firm and enter into a contract with SAWPA.
2. Background information about the proposer, including technical qualifications, and any licenses or certifications. Include a description of the proposer's business (i.e., whether individual, partnership, joint venture, etc.), and background information of any subcontractors to be used. For each example project, identify:
 - Funding agency and program;
 - Amount requested;
 - Amount awarded;
 - Consultant's role in application development;
 - Year awarded.
3. A list of similar services and project descriptions undertaken by the proposer with beginning and ending dates, name, address, phone number, fax number, and e-mail address of a contact person to act as a reference for each service/project. The names and qualifications of staff who will participate in the services/projects.
4. Describe the firm's approach to identifying funding opportunities, developing competitive grant applications, coordinating with agency staff and project partners, and supporting successful grant submissions.
5. Describe anticipated response times and availability for supporting grant opportunities with compressed application schedules.
6. A fee proposal using **Exhibit B** shall be completed by the proposer. The completed exhibit shall include breakdown of labor hours, billing rates, and cost of non-labor services over the two SAWPA fiscal years – FYE 2027 and FYE 2028. Fee proposal shall be submitted as an Excel file.
7. Respondents shall thoroughly review the contents of this RFP's Scope of Work and shall submit any proposed exceptions to the scope.
8. Respondents shall thoroughly review SAWPA's standard consultant General Services Agreement and shall submit any proposed exceptions to the document.

7. SUBMITTALS

Submit **only an electronic copy** of the proposal into PlanetBids as a complete electronic PDF version. Exhibit B shall be submitted into PlanetBids as an Excel file. Proposals

must be received per the schedule shown in Section 8. Proposals received after the stated time will be deleted and not considered.

PlanetBids Link to Submit:

<https://demo.planetbids.com/portal/13675/portal-home>

A panel composed of SAWPA staff will review proposals and may conduct interviews with selected firms. If interviews are needed, proposers will be contacted to schedule a virtual meeting during the time period shown in the schedule in Section 8.

Pre-Proposal Meeting:

SAWPA does not currently anticipate holding a pre-proposal meeting for this solicitation. However, SAWPA reserves the right to schedule an optional virtual pre-proposal meeting if deemed necessary. Any such meeting will be announced through PlanetBids.

Questions Regarding this RFP

Questions regarding this RFP shall be submitted through PlanetBids no later than the deadline identified in Table 2. Responses to questions and any resulting clarifications or addenda will be posted through PlanetBids and made available to all prospective proposers.

If you have questions, please contact Project Manager Erika Beyer, Water Resources Planning Manager, ebeyer@sawpa.gov.

8. PROCUREMENT SCHEDULE

Table 2: RFP Schedule Milestones

Milestone	Timing	
RFP Issued	June 17 th 2026	4:00 p.m. PST
Questions Due	June 23 rd 2026	4:00 p.m. PST
SAWPA Responses Posted*	June 30 th 2026	4:00 p.m. PST
Proposals Due	July 3 rd 2026	4:00 p.m. PST
Interviews (if needed)	July 8 th 2026	4:00 p.m. PST
Selection	July 10 th 2026	4:00 p.m. PST
Contract Execution	July 11 th 2026	4:00 p.m. PST

*Questions from potential responses and SAWPA's answer will be posted on the PlanetBids' Q&A section for this project. As questions come in, SAWPA will update the Q&A section accordingly, so all questions and responses are shown. No more updates to the Q&A section will be made after **June 30th**, per the schedule shown in Table 2.

9. EVALUATION CRITERIA

Proposals will be evaluated by SAWPA staff. The selection process may include interviews with selected firms.

Evaluation will be based on the following criteria:

- Experience and qualifications of the firm and assigned personnel (40%)
- Understanding of SAWPA's needs and proposed approach (35%)
- Cost competitiveness and overall value (15%)
- Responsiveness, completeness, and quality of proposal (10%)

In evaluating proposals, SAWPA may consider:

- Experience preparing successful grant applications for public agencies and regional organizations.
- Experience with California and federal funding programs.
- Experience supporting water resources, watershed management, groundwater, water quality, habitat restoration, invasive species management, PFAS and emerging contaminants, climate resilience, and related environmental initiatives.
- Technical writing, project coordination, and grant administration capabilities.
- Ability to manage compressed schedules and multiple concurrent funding opportunities.

- Experience coordinating with public agencies, regulatory agencies, stakeholders, and technical consultants.
- Demonstrated familiarity with funding programs administered by agencies such as the Bureau of Reclamation (USBR), California Department of Water Resources (DWR), State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB), U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and other applicable funding entities.

10. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

- A. All proposers are hereby advised that this RFP is an informal solicitation and is not a commitment or offer to enter into an agreement or engage into any competitive bidding or negotiation pursuant to any statute, ordinance, rule, or regulation. SAWPA reserves the right to negotiate with any qualified source. SAWPA reserves the right to reject any or all proposals for any reason or for no reason at all.
- B. SAWPA reserves the sole right to evaluate and select the successful proposal(s) and may choose to award a contract to one or more qualified consultants.
- C. Any correction and resubmission by the proposer will not extend the time for evaluation of the proposal.
- D. SAWPA reserves the right to request further information from the proposer either in writing or orally. Such request will be addressed to that person or persons authorized by the proposer to represent the proposer.
- E. SAWPA reserves the sole right to judge the proposers' representations, either written or oral.
- F. Proposers understand and agree that submission of a proposal constitutes acknowledgement and acceptance of, and a willingness to comply with, all of the terms, conditions, and criteria contained in this RFP.
- G. False, incomplete, or unresponsive statements in connection with a proposal may be sufficient cause for the rejection of the proposal. The valuation and determination of the fulfillment of the above requirement will be SAWPA's responsibility and its decision shall be final.

- H. SAWPA reserves the right to interpret or change any provisions of this RFP at any time prior to the proposal submission date. Such interpretations or changes will be in the form of addenda to this RFP. Such addenda will become part of this RFP and may become part of any resultant contract. Such addenda will be made available to each person or organization that has received an RFP. Should such addenda require additional information not previously requested, a proposer's failure to address the requirements of such addenda might result in the proposal not being considered.
- I. All proposals submitted in response to this RFP will become the exclusive property of SAWPA. At such time as SAWPA's recommendation to the SAWPA governing board relative to proposal selection appears on the SAWPA governing board agenda, all such proposals become a matter of public record, and shall be regarded as public records, with the exception of those parts of each proposal which are defined by the proposer as business or trade secrets, and so marked, as "confidential" or "proprietary." SAWPA shall not in any way be liable or responsible for the disclosure of any such proposals or any part thereof if disclosure of any such proposals or any part thereof is required under the Public Records Act.
- J. SAWPA shall not in any way be liable for any costs incurred in connection with the preparation of any proposal submitted in response to this RFP.
- K. Certain task orders may be funded in whole or in part through federal funding sources. Consultants shall comply with all applicable federal, state, and local requirements associated with assigned task orders.
- L. Consultants shall disclose any actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest associated with services performed under the resulting agreement.

11. RFP EXHIBIT LIST

- Exhibit A – Scope of Work
- Exhibit B – Pricing Exhibit
- Exhibit C – SAWPA Contract
 - 1. General Services Agreement
 - 2. Task Order (template for reference)