# No. OCAST – 26-12015

# OKLAHOMA CENTER FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

## Request for Proposal

**For Legal Services with Specialized Experience in Federal Funding Programs, Regulatory Compliance, Contract Development and Administration, Science and Technology, and Venture Capital and Investment Structures.**

Responses due by

Tuesday, December 4, 2026, 5:00 p.m.

**OCAST Point of Contact**

Kristi Howes, Director, Administration & Finance

(405) 319-8424

Kristi.Howes@ocast.ok.gov

**THIS REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL PROCESS IS GOVERNED BY 74 O.S.SUPP.2022, § 20i AND NOT THE CENTRAL PURCHASING ACT.**

# Respondent Instructions Cover Page

| | |
|---|---|
| **Solicitation#:** OCAST – 26-12015 | **Solicitation Issue Date:** November 20, 2026 |

**DUE DATES AND TIME (CENTRAL STANDARD TIME):**

**Bid Response:**
5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, December 4, 2026[1]

**Questions:**
Kristi.Howes@ocast.ok.gov

**SOLICITATION TYPE:**

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| X | **Request for Proposal** | | **Request for Quote** | | **Invitation to Bid** |

| **RETURN SEALED BID TO:** | **OCAST Point of Contact/Contracting Official** |
|---|---|
| Kristi.Howes@ocast.ok.gov | Name: Kristi Howes<br>Email: Kristi.Howes@ocast.ok.gov<br>Phone No. (405) 319-8424 |

[1] Amendments may change the Bid Response Due Date (read "Amendments" in these Instructions)

**Oklahoma Center for the Advancement of Science and Technology Bid Instructions**

## 1. Purpose and Background

The Oklahoma Center for the Advancement of Science and Technology ("OCAST"), in accordance with 74 O.S. § 20i, hereby gives notice that it is issuing this request for proposals ("RFP") from qualified law firms with specialized experience in federal funding programs, regulatory compliance, contract development and administration, science and technology, and venture capital and investment structures.

The organization is evaluating several programmatic, regulatory, contractual, and investment-related matters involving state-administered federal funding programs, including funding made available through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and the State Small Business Credit Initiative (SSBCI).

The engagement will involve an assessment of applicable federal and state requirements, program administration, contractual obligations, and the structures through which federal funding is deployed and managed.

OCAST is seeking a law firm with the ability to address these matters across multiple disciplines and provide both legal guidance and strategic counsel.

Due to the confidential nature of the project, additional background information and specific matters for review will be provided to qualified firms as appropriate.

## 2. Scope of Legal Services

The selected law firm will initially assist with a defined set of project matters. The scope may include, but is not limited to, the following areas:

### A. Federal Funding and Regulatory Compliance

- Review of federal grant requirements, regulations, and applicable funding guidelines.
- Assessment of compliance obligations associated with ARPA and SSBCI funding.
- Review of federal and state program requirements, including reporting, documentation, monitoring, and oversight.
- Evaluation of funding restrictions, allowable uses, and potential compliance considerations.
- Review of programmatic structures and administration to identify potential gaps, risks, or areas requiring additional oversight.
- Guidance on applicable federal agency requirements and regulatory frameworks.

**B. Contracts and Contract Administration**

- Review and assessment of existing contracts, agreements, and related documentation.
- Evaluation of contractual obligations between state agencies, program administrators, investment entities, and other participating parties.
- Review of contract structures involving science, technology, biotechnology, and other specialized industries.
- Assessment of contract administration, performance requirements, reporting obligations, and accountability.
- Recommendations regarding contract development, revisions, and ongoing administration.
- Identification of potential contractual, regulatory, and operational risks.

**C. Venture Capital, Investment Structures, and Financial Oversight**

- Experience with venture capital, private equity, angel investment, and related funding structures.
- Review of investment agreements and contractual arrangements involving public and federal funding.
- Understanding of how federal funds are deployed through venture capital firms, investment managers, and other intermediaries.
- Evaluation of investment structures, governance, fiduciary considerations, and oversight responsibilities.
- Assessment of compliance requirements associated with the use and distribution of federal funds through investment vehicles.
- Guidance regarding investment strategies, risk management, and accountability.

**D. Science, Technology, and Strategic Business Development**

- Legal experience supporting science and technology organizations and emerging industries.
- Experience with biotechnology, life sciences, intellectual property, technology commercialization, and strategic partnerships.
- Understanding of the relationship between public funding, private investment, commercialization, and economic development.
- Guidance on legal structures and strategies that support technology development, innovation, and market expansion.

**E. Program Strategy and Risk Assessment**

- Evaluation of existing program structures and funding strategies.
- Identification of potential legal, regulatory, financial, and operational risks.
- Assessment of opportunities to strengthen program administration and oversight.
- Recommendations for improving funding deployment, investment structures, and long-term program sustainability.

- Development of a strategic framework to address identified issues and support future decision-making.

**3. Firm Qualifications and Experience**

Proposals should demonstrate the firm's ability to provide multidisciplinary legal services and address the various regulatory, financial, contractual, and strategic components of this engagement.

Firms should provide information regarding:

1. Experience with federal grant programs, including ARPA, SSBCI, and other federally funded economic development initiatives.
2. Experience advising state agencies, public entities, and organizations receiving or administering federal funding.
3. Knowledge of U.S. Department of the Treasury requirements and other applicable federal regulatory frameworks.
4. Experience with venture capital, angel investment, private equity, and investment agreements.
5. Experience in contracts and contract administration involving science, technology, biotechnology, and life sciences.
6. Experience with federal funding compliance, monitoring, reporting, and oversight.
7. Experience evaluating complex funding structures involving public and private investment.
8. Ability to provide strategic legal counsel across multiple practice areas.

Firms may propose a multidisciplinary team or identify specialized attorneys within their organization who would support the engagement.

**4. Proposed Approach and Initial Engagement**

The initial engagement is expected to focus on a defined set of legal and programmatic matters.

The selected firm should be prepared to:

- Participate in an initial discovery and assessment process.
- Review relevant documents, contracts, agreements, and program materials.
- Identify applicable regulatory and compliance requirements.
- Evaluate the legal and contractual structures associated with the project.
- Identify areas requiring further investigation or legal analysis.
- Provide preliminary findings and recommendations.
- Develop a proposed approach for addressing additional matters as they are identified.

The initial scope of work will be established with the selected firm. Additional services may be requested depending on the findings, project requirements, and organizational needs.

The organization reserves the option to extend the engagement or establish additional scopes of work as appropriate.

Any law firm or sole practitioner is eligible to respond, provided the law firm or sole practitioner has been approved by the Attorney General according to 74 O.S.2021, § 20i and meets all requirements set forth in that section.

Information related to the Bid submission process is contained in these Instructions. **Prospective respondents are urged to read the documents provided by OCAST and these Instructions carefully. Failure to do so shall be at the Respondent's risk.**

## 1 Definitions

The following terms, when used in these Instructions, shall have the following meanings:

**1.1 Alternate Bid** means a Bid which contains an intentional substantive variation to a basic provision, specification, term or condition.

**1.2 Amendment** means a written change, addition, correction or revision to terms, conditions or requirements by OCAST.

**1.3 Bid** means an offer a Respondent submits in response to the Solicitation.

**1.4 Respondent** means an individual or business entity that submits a Bid in response.

## 2 Instructions Compliance

Compliance with these Instructions is material to the determination of whether a Bid is responsive. Terms, requirements and specifications may be stated or phrased differently than in a previous solicitation irrespective of past interpretations, practices or customs. Bid requirements are altered only by written Amendment and verbal communications from any source whatsoever are of no effect. In no event shall the Respondent's failure to read and understand a term, condition or requirement in any of the documents provided by OCAST constitute grounds for a claim after an award to a successful Respondent has been made.

## 3 Communications and Questions

The Contracting Officer listed on the Instructions Cover Page is the only individual the Respondent should contact, or communicate with, regarding any questions or issues with the Acquisition. Failure to comply with this requirement may result in the Bid being considered non-responsive or not considered for further evaluation.

### 3.1 General Questions

Questions should be concise, identify the relevant document, include specific section references and avoid use of tables or special formatting (use simple lists).

### 3.2 Clarification Questions

OCAST reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to request clarifications of Bid information or to conduct discussions for the purpose of clarification with any or all Respondents. The purpose of any such discussion shall be to ensure full understanding of the Bid. If clarifications are made because of such discussion, the Respondent(s) shall submit such clarifications in writing to the Contracting Officer. Respondent answers that are outside scope of the clarification questions shall be disregarded. Oral explanations or instructions provided to a potential Respondent are not binding.

## 4 Amendments

**4.1** Any Amendment shall be set forth at the same online link as the Solicitation.

**4.2** It is the Respondent's responsibility to check OCAST's website frequently for any possible Amendments that may be issued. OCAST is not responsible for the Respondent's failure to download any amendment documents required to complete a Bid.

## 5 Confidentiality Request

Unless otherwise specified in the Oklahoma Open Records Act or other applicable law, documents and information a Respondent submits as part of or in connection with a Bid may be public records and subject to disclosure. All material submitted by a Respondent becomes the property of OCAST.

## 6 Award of Contract

**6.1** Subsequent to the evaluation of all submitted bids, as provided herein, OCAST will notify the successful supplier and the parties will execute a contract (the "Contract"), a generalized template of which is found at Attachments "A".

**6.2** Prior to award, OCAST may choose to request information from the Respondent to demonstrate its financial status and performance. If the Respondent is a subsidiary of another entity, tax returns for the last three years for the parent company may also be required. OCAST reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to determine a Respondent's financial status and to withhold award to a Respondent who is not deemed financially responsible.

## 7 Required Bid Structure

### 7.1 Preparation of Bid

**A.** The Bid is required to be structured into separate, labelled and easily identifiable sections using the Bid Packet format provided below. A Bid submitted using any other format may not be accepted. Except for items listed in Section Three of the Bid Packet (information requested to be held confidential), the Bid should not contain duplicative content. Any section of the Bid Packet that is not applicable to the Bid shall have a page inserted to denote the section is not applicable. For instance, if business references are not required, the Bid should contain a page after the

"Business References" section heading that reads "Not Applicable", "N/A" or some similar notation.

**B.** The Bid will be evaluated using best value criteria, based on the following:

**a.** Price;
**b.** Quality;
**c.** Experience and expertise of key personnel; and
**d.** Capacity and ability.

**C.** The Bid shall show the ability of the Respondent to meet or exceed the following mandatory specifications:

**a.** Technical proposal providing a description of the proposed scope of work to be performed, including but not limited to:

**i.** Evaluation and consideration of potential causes of action, defendants and a damages model;
**ii.** Development of a successful legal strategy that focuses first and foremost on the best possible outcome for Oklahoma citizens and Oklahoma employers;
**iii.** Pre-litigation;
**iv.** Litigation, including appeals;
**v.** Litigation support;
**vi.** Settlement;
**vii.** Post-litigation;
**viii.** Use of experts to provide data regarding potential deceptive trade, data privacy and related claims;2
**ix.** Regular reporting and communication with OCAST, including designated representatives.

**b.** Pricing, which shall be proposed for all services, staff levels and scenarios (jury award, settlement, etc.) and include proposed contingency fee structure and, separately, customary billable hourly rates, that comply with the requirements of 74 O.S. § 20i;

**c.** Three (3) business references are required to establish that a Respondent has successful implementation experience.

**d.** Firm information, including:

**i.** Length of time the Respondent has been in business;
**ii.** A brief description of the Firm;
**iii.** Firm size and organization;
**iv.** Whether the Respondent is currently engaged in litigation against OCAST, and if so, information pertaining to the case (case number, venue, causes of action, etc.)

**v.** The core competency of the Firm, including the relevant experience and expertise of each member, shareholder, director or employee who will work on the project, if awarded, and any matter relating to this Solicitation.
**vi.** Relevant experience, including contracts the Respondent has been awarded by a governmental entity in the last three (3) years;
**vii.** Number of employees allocated strictly for research, litigation and support (separately);
**viii.** Number of active clients, and separate identification of current or former clients engaged in the business of online market commerce and any other potential conflicts of interest;
**ix.** Average client size (i.e., employee count);
**x.** Relevant instances where the Respondent's services have been deployed;
**xi.** Instances where the Respondent's contract with a governmental entity was terminated for failure to perform

**e.** Any activity or interest that conflicts or may conflict with the best interest of OCAST.

**8 Submission of Bid**

**8.1 IT IS THE RESPONDENT'S SOLE RESPONSIBILITY TO SUBMIT INFORMATION IN THE BID AS REQUESTED.** A submitted Bid is rendered as a legal offer and is required to be in strict conformity with these Respondent Instructions.

**8.2 A Bid shall be submitted via email solely to Kristi.Howes@ocast.ok.gov. Please note that it is possible a Respondent's email system may have limitations on the size of outgoing email attachments and plan accordingly for the entire Bid to be received by the Bid Response Due Date and Time. OCAST is not responsible for incorrect link information or its inability to access a submitted Bid. Receipt of the Bid by OCAST is the responsibility of the Respondent.**

**8.3** Bids shall remain a firm offer for a minimum of one hundred twenty (120) days after the Bid Response Due Date. Any usage amounts provided by OCAST are estimates and are not guaranteed to be purchased.

**8.4** Unless specified otherwise, a Respondent shall submit a firm, fixed price for the term, including optional renewal terms, of the Contract. The Respondent guarantees unit prices to be correct.

**8.5** All travel expenses to be incurred by Supplier in performance of the Contract shall be included in the total Bid price. Travel expenses include, but are not limited to, transportation, lodging and meals.

**8.6** All costs incurred by the Respondent for Bid preparation and participation shall be the sole responsibility of the Respondent and the Respondent shall not be reimbursed for any such costs. By submitting a Bid, Respondent agrees not to make any claims for damages or have any rights to damages in connection with the Bid.

**8.7** After review of a Respondent's submitted documents and information, OCAST may require additional terms for an Acquisition in which OCAST or citizen data will be accessed, processed, stored or transmitted by a Firm.

**8.8** Each Bid is required to include relevant information for a designated contact to receive notice, approvals and requests.

**9 Bid Withdrawal, Bid Change and Alternate Bid**

**9.1** If the Respondent wishes to withdraw a Bid prior to the Bid Response Due Date and Time, the Respondent shall submit a written withdrawal request to at the email address listed in Section 8 above.

**9.2** Except as requested by OCAST, a Bid may not be changed after the Bid Response Due Date and Time. If the Respondent needs to change a submitted Bid prior to the Bid Response Due Date and Time, the Respondent shall withdraw the originally submitted Bid and a new Bid shall be submitted to OCAST by the Bid Response Due Date and Time and include the following statement on the superseding Bid cover page: **"THIS BID SUPERSEDES THE BID PREVIOUSLY SUBMITTED" AND**

**"SUPERSEDING BID" MUST APPEAR IN THE SUBJECT LINE OF THE EMAIL.**

**10 Bid Rejection**

**10.1** The Respondent's failure to submit required information may cause its Bid to be rejected. Additionally, a Bid received after the Bid Response Due Date and Time **SHALL BE DEEMED NON-RESPONSIVE AND SHALL NOT BE CONSIDERED.**

**10.2** A Bid may be rejected when the Respondent imposes terms or conditions that would modify requirements.

**10.3** Attempts to impose unacceptable conditions on OCAST or impose alternative terms not in the best interest of OCAST may result in rejection of the Bid even if initially determined to be responsive or OCAST may cease any negotiations regarding the Bid.

**10.4** Whenever the terms "shall", "must", "will", or "is required" are used, the specification being referred to is a mandatory specification. Failure to meet any mandatory specification may cause rejection of a Bid.

**10.5** Whenever the terms "can", "may", or "should" are used, the specification being referred to is a desirable item and failure to provide any item so termed shall not be cause for rejection of a Bid.

## 11 Evaluation

**11.1** A responsive Bid will proceed to the evaluation process. A contract award for legal representation by one or more private attorneys or firms shall be made using the criteria established in this request for proposal and shall be based on the response to the request which is the most economical and provides the most competent service which furthers the best interests of OCAST. Most economical and most competent shall not be construed to mean the least expensive proposal.

**11.2** Respondent's past performance as a Supplier may be considered when evaluating a Bid.