Questions and Answers

Q1. You’ve asked us to include training in the price proposal. How many people will be trained?


Q2. In my prior experience, the challenge is sustaining this type of work throughout the organization. Are there cultural elements that would get folks to sustain the work, not just at the top or bottom?

A2. We would like assistance from the chosen proposer in creating metrics so that there will be accountability moving forward. We are a mission driven organization with many progressive, committed staff who have a real desire to be more impactful internally and externally. We need assistance with organizing and prioritizing. We also have a long-standing Equity Team at MAPC that helps with accountability and tracking. All levels of the organization need to understand their role in DEI. One of their primary goals is to have the DEIA undertaken. The Equity Team includes managers and leadership along with staff. MAPC is also undergoing a reorganization. We have brought on two Deputy Executive Directors and plan to add one more to support the Executive Director and our departments.

Q3. Is there a steering committee that the consultant will be interfacing with?

A3. Yes, and the consultant will interact with Board members and community stakeholders too.

Q4. Is the steering committee made up of members with varying levels of power and diversity?

A4. Yes, the steering committee has approximately 10 members and is a diverse group with members across levels of power, age, tenure, race, gender, orientation, and identity. It has representatives from staff, our Board, and from the community.

Q5. Will the Advisory Committee govern the process of both the Strategic Plan and the DEI Assessment?

A5. Yes, the Advisory Committee will guide both processes. We anticipate that staff will be more heavily involved in the DEIA. For the SP we expect a more even mix of external folks and staff to be interviewed.

Q6. You have laid out a highly detailed summary of the phases for and deliverables for the DEIA and a less extensive plan for the Strategic Plan portion. Is this something you envision fleshing out a bit more? Do you envision that the consultant will propose the summary and deliverables to you?

A6. If proposers have thoughts and ideas about how to add more detail to timelines and deliverables for the Strategic Plan or the DEIA, we would be receptive.
Q7. One of the concerns you mentioned was the high level of staff turnover over the past year. Could you elaborate on any discoveries you have made on this?

A7. One reason for this is that our professional development structure and career advancement opportunities can limit growth. Some staff have moved out of the area and want to work 100% remotely. As a governmental agency, we are unable to offer 100% remote work. We have also lost staff because we cannot pay them as much as the private sector, especially in some of our disciplines where there is a high demand for staff such as clean energy. As administrations have changed in our local governments, some staff have gone to work for municipalities. We anticipate this will happen again when our new governor is elected. We are also looking for ideas on how to strengthen our workplace culture in a hybrid world. There is an expectation that staff come into the office or be in the field two days per week. Our goal is making sure that staff, whether in the office or remote, are excited about their work, have high job satisfaction, and a strong sense of belonging.

Q8. I want to clarify: you are a government agency where some staff members work remotely and others do not? And staff come into the office two days? Some staff choose to come into the office more often? And this is not in writing?

A8. It is in writing. Staff are asked to come in an average of two days per week over a three month period. It comes out to around 26 days. Staff have the flexibility to determine the days since it’s an average. HR works with individual staff regarding unique circumstances.

Q9. You give employees the option to choose which days they come into the office?

A9. Yes. Employees may choose. They work with their managers to determine their schedules.

Q10. When we provide service to you, are you looking for in-person or remote?

A10. Please see Addendum #1, Answer A2. We are generally flexible. We prefer about 3-4 in-person sessions throughout the contract.

Q11. The RFP wants us to be available for in-office meetings. Are these in-person or virtual meetings? I am not sure how to price this.

A11. We have no set numerical count. We are open to reasonable project management practices.

Q12. I heard that there is a DEI Board that has existed for a while. Where are things currently with those initiatives? How has that work been integrated into what you do across the organization?

A12. The Equity Team has been a big focus of Angela Howard’s work over the last 16 months. The Team has been working hard to make sure the DEIA gets done. There has been a lot of time working with the Executive Team. In the past, we have conducted trainings and brown bag lunches and are working to incorporate those efforts into the work plan for the upcoming year. We are hoping to incorporate work with our future strategic plan. MAPC embraces equity throughout its work. During the past two years of working planning, every department answers
two main questions: 1. what are you doing to advance equity and 2) what are you doing to ensure an equitable recovery since the pandemic?

Q13. In the proposed budget, it’s an even split. Can you say more about the logic behind this 50/50 structure? Is that firm?

A13. We are open to adjustments here or there, but we believe each process requires an equivalent level of effort.

Q14. You mentioned a Steering Committee with ten people, and the RFP says there is an Advisory Committee. Are these two the same?

A14. Yes.

Q15. Do you have any concerns that you don’t feel you have buy-in or are getting pushback?

A15. The Executive Director, Deputy Executive Directors, and the Director of Finance will all participate at various parts of the process. Some staff have expressed a lack of trust and concerns about transparency in general, not specific to this project. They have also expressed concerns about how decisions are made and who makes the decisions. These concerns vary by tenure and age. There is also a lack of understanding about roles and responsibilities for each group in the process. We expect to work with the consultant to bring along certain groups. We provide Technical Assistance [“TA”] to 101 cities and towns. They seem to vary widely on their commitment to advancing equity, which can be a point of tension in working with them.

Q16. Has there been an equity audit and would the data from the audit be available to the consultant?

A16. There was an organizational assessment done but not necessarily through an equity lens. It will be made available.

Q17. If you had to place this work on a continuum of growth, how would you distinguish these efforts across the municipalities you cover?

A17. Although we are a public agency, we function as a consultancy. We provide consulting services with a mission in mind. We are not values-neutral. We also have a regionally focused lens and strive to see communities working together towards common goals. We also provide research services and advocacy. Our Government Affairs team does a lot of work in the State House and at the federal level.

Q18. Are you conducting a needs assessment and job analysis to ensure that open positions are indeed need and that the posting is up to date?

A18. As positions become vacant on a case-by-case basis they are reviewed. There is no overarching initiative. When new jobs are created Angela Howard assesses them. She also reviews positions for exempt/non-exempt status and for essential functions. We haven’t yet gotten to the point where everything is on the job descriptions.
Q19. Regarding your performance management system, does it measure an employee’s behavior?

A19. No. Our system is lacking in certain areas. We expect that the DEIA will show that there is room for improvement. We need the data to indicate which improvement actions are needed.

Q20. Are you aware of critical incidents that have resulted in people being treated unfairly?

A20. We have BIPOC and white affinity groups. They meet regularly and are very vocal with staff and leadership. The BIPOC group crafted a letter to the Executive Director about what they see are problems. Angela Howard is supporting the BIPOC group with re-drafting that letter. There have been a couple of incidents in public meetings where our planning staff have been exposed to racist comments, both explicit and coded. We want to minimize these types of incidents and prepare staff for how to best address these situations when they arise.

Q21. Can you provide the attendance list of today’s meeting?

A21.

Dr. Preston Lindsay, The Lindsay Group
Azya Allston, The Lindsay Group
Roger Knutson, The Lindsay Group
Robert Principe, Organizational Change for Social Impact
Celia Pivo, TDC
Shannon Burke, Leading Culture Solutions
Laura Jestings, Dr. Maria Church International
Susan White, Letterman White Consulting
Jen Allen, Elevate USA
Diane Gordon, solo practitioner
April Ballard, ActOne Government Solutions, Inc.

Q22a. Page 6 also mentions engagement with Council Members: Are they subject to Open Meeting Laws?

Q22b. If so, can you offer the requirements for that?

Q22c. Since you are not a government agency, per se, I’m thinking that these laws do not apply but I am not sure ...

A22a. The MAPC Council (as well as the Executive Committee and Officers) are subject to the Open Meeting Law.

In short, a meeting must be open to the public when the members are deliberating upon a matter within the public body’s jurisdiction. A deliberation requires a quorum of the body to be present. In the case of the Council, a quorum ranges between 55 and 60 members.

A22c. The MAPC is a public agency subject to the Open Meeting Law and the Public Records Law.

Q23. Page 14 requests the proposer be available to participate at your offices within 2 weeks’ notice. This appears to be on a when-needed basis; if so, should we offer separate pricing for that? And I assume this should be within your published budget?

A23. We would suggest that Respondents propose a schedule that includes some in-person meetings and the budget should reflect that. And yes, it should be within the published budget.

Q23a. Or should we offer to you how many visits like this we can accommodate and still stay within your budget??

A23a. Yes, please propose what you can reasonably accommodate.

Q24. Just clarifying that the Executive Committee cited in the RFP is the Steering Committee (10 team members).

A24. No, the Executive Committee is the Board that governs MAPC and they will be asked to approve the Strategic Plan. The Advisory/Steering Committee is the group of staff and Council members that will be guiding this process.

Q25. How many subregional councils are there?

A25. We have eight subregions that typically meet on a monthly basis, staffed by an MAPC employee.

Q26. We would also invite the client to consider modifying the language in section 6.4 to include “Qualification/experience of Proposer in developing diversity, equity, and inclusion assessments or human capital-related assessments…”

A26. We do not plan on making this modification.

Q27. We would also encourage the client to consider expanding the section 6.4 to include demonstrated private-sector work instead of limiting experiences to government and non-profit entities.

A27. We do not plan on making this modification.

Q28. We would appreciate being notified, should the client choose to modify the MQRs to reflect general assessment experience with the demonstrated capability to design customized assessments for human capital topics which may include DEI, and the Comparative Evaluation Criteria (CEC) to include human capital-related assessments and private sector experience.

A28. We will post any modifications to the RFP in CommBUYS.
Q29. Page 6 mentions an assessment of internal policies, procedures, and practices: Do you have an estimate/quantifier of how much this is and/or what this involves?

A29. This involves the review, analysis and providing recommendations on our handbook, hiring, employee engagement, professional development, employee engagement and career advancement.