

TOWN OF PANTEGO, TEXAS RFP for Employee Benefits Consulting Services

To: Prospective Vendors
Date: March 9, 2015
Subject: Request for Proposal for Employee Benefits Consulting Services

You are invited to submit Proposals for Benefits Consulting Services for health, dental, vision, life, and supplemental and voluntary employee benefits for the Town of Pantego, Texas, (the "Town"). THIS IS NOT A REQUEST FOR INSURANCE COVERAGE.

This RFP is not an authorization to approach insurance companies or other underwriting sources on behalf of the Town. The Town of Pantego specifically requests that no insurance market contact or solicitation be made at this time.

Attached are the Request for Proposal overview, general conditions, technical specifications and submittal forms.

The written requirements contained in this Request for Proposal (RFP) shall not be changed or superceded except by written addendum from the Town of Pantego City Manager. Failure to comply with the written requirements for this RFP may result in disqualification of the submittal by the Town of Pantego.

Proposals are to be sealed, marked with the submitting firm's name and address and labeled: "RFP - Employee Benefits Consulting Services" and delivered to:

Town of Pantego
Attention: Finance Department
1614 S. Bowen Rd.
Pantego, TX 76013

Proposals must be delivered by no later than March 26, 2015 at 4:00 p.m. local time.

The Town of Pantego reserves the right to reject any and all submittals, to waive any technicalities or irregularities and to award contracts based on the highest and best interest of the Town.

Inquiries regarding this Request for Proposal (RFP) should be made in writing to Matthew Fielder, City Manager at mfielder@townofpantego.com

SECTION I – REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL OVERVIEW

A. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Request for Proposal (RFP) is to seek qualified brokers to assist the Town of Pantego with strategically planning, designing, negotiating and implementing the best coverage and cost for selective employee benefits programs to include health, dental, vision, life, and supplemental and voluntary benefits.

B. INFORMATION TO OFFERORS

1. RFP TIME FRAME: The anticipated schedule for the RFP is as follows:

Bid Publication:	March 11, 2015
Deadline for Questions:	March 20, 2015
Due Date:	March 26, 2015, 4:00 p.m. local time
Tentative Council Approval:	April 13, 2015

2. BID SUBMISSION: One (1) original and (6) copies of the complete signed submittal must be received by Thursday, March 26, 2015, 4:00 p.m. local time. Proposals must be submitted in a sealed envelope stating on the outside, the submitting firm name, address, and title "RFP - Employee Benefits Consulting Services" to:

Town of Pantego
Attention: Finance Department
1614 S. Bowen Rd.
Pantego, TX 76013

Respondents must complete the following forms:

- References
- Execution of Proposal
- Conflict of Interest Form
- Addenda Acknowledgement (if applicable)

Failure to complete and return these forms will automatically disqualify a respondent.

No oral, telegraphic, telephonic, e-mailed, or facsimile proposals will be considered. All bids must be submitted in a sealed envelope. Hand-delivered copies may be delivered to the above address ONLY between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. local time, Monday through Friday, excluding holidays observed by the Town.

Submitting firms are responsible for informing any commercial delivery services, if used, of all delivery requirements and for ensuring that the required address information appears on the outer wrapper or envelop used by such service.

The submittal must be signed by a company officer who is legally authorized to enter into a contractual relationship in the name of the submitting firm.

Bids received by the T o w n after submission deadline shall be returned unopened and will be considered void and unacceptable. The Town is not responsible for lateness of mail, carrier, etc. Elaborate proposals in the form of brochures or other presentations beyond that necessary to present a complete and effective proposal are not desired.

3. CONTACT PERSON. Submitting firms are encouraged to contact Matthew Fielder, City Manager at mfielder@townofpantego.com or at (817) 617-3705 with questions regarding the RFP requirements. All questions that arise prior to the deadline for questions due date shall be directed to the contact person in WRITING. Any unauthorized contact shall not be used as a basis for responding to this RFP and also may result in the disqualification of the prospective vendor's submittal.
4. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION/ADDENDA. The Town of Pantego will issue responses to inquiries and any other correction or amendments it deems necessary in written addenda issued prior to the due date. Submitting firms should not reply on representations, statements or explanations other than those made in the RFP or any addendum to this RFP. Where there appears to be a conflict between the RFP and any addenda issued, the last addendum issued will prevail. Offerors must acknowledge any issued addenda by including Addenda Acknowledgement form with the submittal. Proposals which fail to acknowledge the offeror's receipt of any addendum will result in the rejection of the offer if the addendum contains information which substantially changes the RFP requirements.
5. ALTERING/WITHDRAWAL OF BIDS/REJECTION OF PROPOSALS. Bids cannot be altered or amended after submission deadline. The signer of the bid, guaranteeing authenticity, must initial any interlineations alteration, or erasure made before opening time. No bid may be withdrawn after opening time without first submitting a written reason to the Finance Department and obtaining the City Manager's approval.

Brokers are cautioned that this is request for proposal, not a request for contract and the Town reserves the unqualified right to reject any and all offers when such rejection is deemed to be in the best interest of the Town.

The Town of Pantego may reject any and all proposals and reserves the right to waive any irregularities or informalities in any proposal or in the submittal procedure. Submittals received after said time or at any place other than the time and place as stated in the notice will not be considered.

6. MINIMUM RFP ACCEPTANCE PERIOD. Proposal shall be valid and may not be withdrawn for a period of 60 days from the date specified for receipt of proposal.

7. **NON-COLLUSION AFFIDAVIT.** By submitting a proposal, the offeror represents and warrants that such proposal is genuine and not a sham or collusive or made in the interest or on behalf of any person not therein named; that the offeror has not directly or indirectly induced or solicited any other offeror to put in a sham proposal, or any other person, firm or corporation to refrain from submitting a proposal; and that the offeror has not in any manner sought by collusion to secure to that offer any advantage over any other offeror. By submitting a proposal, the offeror represents and warrants that no official or employee of the Town of Pantego has in any manner an interest, directly or indirectly, in the proposal or in the contract which may under it, or in any expected profits to arise therefrom.
8. **DISCLOSURE OF CERTAIN RELATIONSHIPS.** Chapter 176 of the Texas Local Government Code requires that any vendor or person considering doing business with a local government entity disclose in the Questionnaire Form CIQ, the vendor or person's affiliation or business relationship that might cause a conflict of interest with a local government entity.

By law, this questionnaire must be filed with the Town administration office no later than the 7th business day after the date the person becomes aware of facts that require that statement to be filed. An offense under Section 176.006, Local Government Code, is a Class C Misdemeanor.

In addition, no public official shall have interest in this Contract, in accordance with Local Government Code Title 5 Subtitle C, Chapter 171. By submitting a response to this request, vendor represents that it is in compliance with the requirements of Chapter 176 of the Texas Local Government Code.

9. **LEGAL.** All parties submitting proposals are expected to comply with federal, state, and local law and regulations relative to the preparation of the RFP and services provided. Specifically, the services to be provided are expected to be in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA); as well as with federal and state confidentiality laws. All proposals that are submitted will be presumed to be in compliance with all applicable laws.
10. **COST INCURRED BY OFFERORS.** All expenses involved with the preparation and submission of the RFP to the Town of Pantego, or any work performed in connection therewith is the responsibility of the offeror(s).
11. **RFP OPENINGS:** Submitted proposals will not be opened or read aloud publicly. A list of names of firms providing proposals may be obtained from Julie Arrington, City Secretary, after the proposal due date and time stated herein.
12. **PROTESTS:** All protests regarding the bid solicitation process must be submitted in writing to the T o w n within five (5) working days following the opening of bids. This includes all protests relating to advertising of bid notices, deadlines, bid opening, and all other related procedures under the Local Government Code, as well as any protests relating to alleged improprieties or ambiguities in the specifications.

This limitation does not include protests relating to staff recommendations as to award of this bid. Protests relating to staff recommendations may be directed to the City Manager within in five (5) days of the staff recommendation memo. Unless otherwise provided by law, all staff recommendations will be made available for public review prior to consideration by the Town Council.

13. **BID AWARD:** The Town reserves the right to award a separate contract to separate bidders for each item/group or to award one contract for the entire bid. Unless stipulated in the attached bid specifications, the contract will be awarded to the lowest responsible bidder or to the bidder who provides the goods or services specified herein at the best value for the Town in compliance with Texas Local Government Code, Section 252.043.

The Town will make a determination as to the responsiveness of bids submitted based upon compliance with all applicable laws, the Town of Pantego Purchasing Guidelines, and project documents, including but not limited to the project specifications and contract documents. The Town will notify the successful bidder upon award of the contract and according to state law; all bids received will be available for inspection at that time, unless otherwise provided by law.

BID RESULTS WILL NOT BE GIVEN BY TELEPHONE. You can also download a copy on our website, www.townofpantego.com. If you have any questions, please contact the Town of Pantego, Finance Department, at (817)617-3707.

14. **TAXES:** The Town is exempt from Federal Excise and State sales taxes. **TAX MUST NOT BE INCLUDED IN PRICING.** Tax exemption certificates will be executed by the Town and furnished upon request by the Finance Department.

SECTION II – GENERAL CONDITIONS

A. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Request for Proposal (RFP) is to seek qualified brokers to assist the Town of Pantego with strategically planning, designing and negotiating the best coverage and cost for selective employee benefit programs. The Town has approximately 44 full-time employees. The Town of Pantego is constantly competing to recruit and retain employees. The Town must continue to meet challenges related to the Affordable Care Act regulations and requirements in addition to contain costs of providing benefits in a changing marketplace, including innovative ways to offset risk to obtain the best coverage at the lowest cost possible. Our leadership is looking to ensure that the Town of Pantego has financially competitive and affordable benefit programs to offer its employees.

B. CONTRACT PERIOD

Any contract resulting from this proposal shall be effective immediately after favorable Council approval. The Town will hold the option to continue services under the terms and conditions stated in the contract for three (3) additional one-year extensions should it be in the best interest of the Town and its employees to retain said services.

C. PRICING

It is the Town of Pantego's expectation that brokerage fees and commissions will be borne by the selected insurance carrier/provider. If additional brokerage fees are expected of the Town, or if your firm offers additional fee-supported services which are supplemental to your proposal, please clearly outline such costs and services on a separate fee addendum.

D. RESPONDENT QUALIFICATIONS

The Town of Pantego requires qualified respondents to this RFP to be Licensed Brokers in the State of Texas, independent and not affiliated with any insurance company, third party administrative agency or provider network. The brokerage firm must have no less than 5 years experience in providing brokerage services to employers with at least 50 employees. Experience in the provision of brokerage services to public sector employers is required.

E. SCOPE OF WORK

Provisions of consulting and brokerage services to the Town of Pantego for employee benefit programs including health, dental, vision, life and supplemental and voluntary benefits under any agreement ensuring this proposal to entail the following, at a minimum:

1. Auditing resulting contracts for accuracy of coverage, terms and conditions.
2. Assisting with annual benefits renewals, including negotiation of changes in contracts.
3. Assisting the Town in determining specifications for future insurance coverage.
4. Marketing the Town's desired insurance package through identification of appropriate carriers, analysis of proposals, provisions for recommendations, and assistance in contract negotiation.
5. Preparing, disseminating and analyzing proposal packages in accordance with Town specifications.
6. Reviewing the employee benefit package for quality of benefits provided, cost effectiveness, competitiveness and plan administration on an annual basis.
7. Monitor ongoing contracts, including third party administrators to ensure contract compliance.
8. Analyzing claims history and insurance utilization at least quarterly.
9. Providing information on employee benefit issues, trends and proposed or new legislation.
10. Meeting with the Town administrative staff as needed.
11. Assisting in the design of employee benefit communications and participating in benefit fairs and annual enrollment process.
12. Providing key contract person to be available to answer questions and resolve issues that arise during the year regarding employee benefits, contract administration, and service provisions.
13. Evaluating various insurance products submitted for consideration by insurance carriers.
14. Perform other related consultation services as needed or requested.
15. Assist with compliance in IRS, Legislative updates, FMLA regulations, employee communications, open enrollment communication and any other related employee benefit requirements.

F. PRESENTATIONS

During the evaluation process, the Town of Pantego may at its discretion, request oral presentations from any or all respondents for the purpose of clarification or amplifying the materials presented. However, respondents are cautioned that the Town is not required to request clarification; therefore, all proposals should be completed and reflect the most favorable terms available from the broker.

G. FINAL SELECTION

Following review of all qualified proposals, selection of a suitable vendor, and preliminary contract negotiations, a recommendation will be made to the Mayor and Town Council. Following Council approval, the Town will complete contract negotiations. The selected vendor should be prepared to commence work on the employee benefit package immediately following contract execution.

Note: The Town of Pantego reserves the right to accept the response that is determined to be in the best interest of the Town and its employees. The Town reserves the right to reject any or all proposals.

H. VENDOR PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

The proposal response must clearly demonstrate the required qualifications, expertise, competence and capability of the vendor. Please provide a concise description of your firm's ability to provide the services required in the Scope of this document. Costs incurred by firms responding to this RFP are solely their responsibility. Additionally, please include the answers to the following questions (Address each by number):

1. Confirm that you are a licensed broker in the State of Texas and provide documentation. Confirm that you serve as a broker, independently, and are not employed by any insurance company, third party administrative agency or provider network.
2. Briefly describe your company's organization, philosophy, and management. Also, please provide a brief company history.
3. Describe your contractual relationships, if any, with organizations or entities necessary to your proposal's implementation (i.e. actuarial services, data information services, etc.).
4. How long has your organization been providing brokerage services?
5. How many public sector clients does your firm currently provide brokerage services to?
6. Please provide a list of four verifiable public sector references, all of whom are able to comment of your organization's relevant experience. Private sector references may be submitted for public ones, if none are available. Please include group name, contact name, and telephone number. Please furnish:
 - a. Services you provided
 - b. Benefit programs addressed

- c. Time period covered
- d. Number of covered employees
- e. Contact name and phone number

It is the vendor's responsibility to provide valid reference information and the Town reserves the right to use reference checks in its evaluation of proposals.

7. Indicate the method of service provision your organization would utilize in implementing your proposal (i.e. individual broker, individual broker with supporting back up, team of brokers). Include a **brief** professional history for each key individual who would work closely with the Town and how they are qualified to provide services to the Town.
8. Briefly describe the level of service and support provided to the Town of Pantego by your broker(s) on a day-to-day basis.
9. How does your firm provide continuing education to ensure that each broker is educated on current market trends and legislative developments? How is this information communicated to your clients?
10. Describe how you build an understanding of the direction and priorities of the Town employee benefit program and how you would utilize this information to recommend changes and project future trends.
11. Detail how your organization assists clients in developing a strategic benefit plan.
12. Describe your organization's anticipated involvement in the annual renewal process. Include information regarding process, timeframes, negotiation of rates and vendor selection. **NOTE: The Town of Pantego's current plan year for health, dental and vision insurance is October 1 through September 30.**
13. How does your firm assist the Town of Pantego in developing plan specifications? Explain your process for providing plan recommendations to your clients.
14. Explain the process your organization would utilize to assist the Town in selecting an insurance vendor. How would your company's experience and expertise benefit the Town of Pantego in this process?
15. Please provide a list of the vendors you have relationships with in regard to health, disability, life, supplemental health, and dental/vision insurance plans.
16. Describe how your organization strives to streamline benefit administration for your clients. Include any services you provide for automation of the benefit process (i.e. electronic capabilities, outsourcing options). Attach any associated costs for these services on a separate fee schedule.
17. Describe how your organization has assisted other vendors in the evaluation and /or formulation of Healthcare Reimbursement Accounts or Healthcare Spending Accounts. Attach any associated costs for these services on a separate fee schedule.

18. Detail how you develop a benefit communication strategy with your clients. Include what tools or resources you have available to assist your clients in effectively communicating not only the specific plan details but also the value of the benefits offered?
19. What training resources does your organization provide to assist your clients in educating and training their benefit staff?
20. How will you facilitate or participate in the implementation, communication, and enrollment process to assure a seamless product transition?
21. Provide any additional information regarding your organization or services that you feel would be beneficial in helping the Town of Pantego to select a benefits broker.
22. Please detail your administrative capabilities on benefits plan compliance issues.
23. Please provide any background company data that will help identify financial stability.

QUESTIONS MUST BE COMPLETED AND SUBMITTED AS PART OF YOUR PROPOSAL

I. CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION

All proposals will be evaluated according to, but not necessarily limited to, the following:

1. Your firm's indicated ability to provide a level of service sufficient to meet the Town's Scope of Services and Vendor Proposal Requirements. All consultants should provide evidence of the appropriate license for insurance consulting in the State of Texas.
2. Extent and success of previous work your firm has provided to organizations similar in nature and size to the Town of Pantego, as determined by contact with listed references.
3. The proposal itself as an example of your firm's work product.
4. Qualifications/experience of key personnel to be assigned to the project.
5. Adherence to RFP requirements, including: completion of all required forms; provision of all requested information; adequacy of responses, and return of the RFP by the stated deadline.

Initial evaluation of the proposals will focus on the qualifications of the vendors. The Town of Pantego may conduct discussions with vendors who are determined to be reasonably qualified for the award of the contract. Vendors will be treated fairly and equally with respect to any opportunity for discussion of proposals. To obtain the best final offers, revisions may be permitted after submission of proposals and before the award of the contract. The contract will be awarded to the responsible vendor whose proposal is determined to be the most advantageous to the Town of Pantego considering the relative importance of price and the other evaluation factors included in this request for proposal.

COMPANY NAME _____

REFERENCES

PROPOSALS MUST LIST FOUR (4) PUBLIC SECTOR REFERENCES FOR WHOM SIMILAR WORK HAS BEEN PERFORMED DURING THE PAST THREE (3) YEARS.

- (1) CLIENT NAME _____
ADDRESS (Street) _____
ADDRESS (City, St, Zip) _____
CONTACT NAME _____
TELEPHONE/E-MAIL _____
- (2) CLIENT NAME _____
ADDRESS (Street) _____
ADDRESS (City, St, Zip) _____
CONTACT NAME _____
TELEPHONE/E-MAIL _____
- (3) CLIENT NAME _____
ADDRESS (Street) _____
ADDRESS (City, St, Zip) _____
CONTACT NAME _____
TELEPHONE/E-MAIL _____
- (4) CLIENT NAME _____
ADDRESS (Street) _____
ADDRESS (City, St, Zip) _____
CONTACT NAME _____
TELEPHONE/E-MAIL _____

THIS PAGE MUST BE COMPLETED AND SUBMITTED AS A PART OF YOUR PROPOSAL.

EXECUTION OF PROPOSAL

DATE: _____

The potential Contractor certifies the following by placing an "X" in all blank spaces:

_____ That this proposal was signed by an authorized representative of the firm.

_____ That the potential Contractor has determined the cost and availability of all materials and supplies associated with performing the services outlined herein.

_____ That all labor costs associated with this project have been determined, including all direct and indirect costs.

_____ That the potential Contractor agrees to the conditions as set forth in this Request for Proposal with no exceptions.

Therefore, in compliance with the foregoing Request for Proposal, and subject to all terms and conditions thereof, the undersigned offers and agrees, if this proposal is accepted within sixty (60) days from the date of the opening, to furnish the services for the prices quoted within the timeframe required.

ADDENDA ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Offeror has examined and carefully studied the Request for Proposals and the following Addenda, receipt of all of which is hereby acknowledged:

Addendum No. _____

Addendum No _____

Addendum No. _____

Addendum No. _____

Authorized Representative/Title Authorized Representative Date
(Print or Type)

Authorized Representative/Title Authorized Representative Date
(Signature)

Offerors must acknowledge any issued addenda. Proposals which fail to acknowledge the offeror's receipt of any addendum will result in the rejection of the offer if the addendum contained information which substantively changes the Town's requirements.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST QUESTIONNAIRE

FORM CIQ

For vendor or other person doing business with local governmental entity

This questionnaire is being filed in accordance with chapter 176 of the Local Government Code by a person doing business with the governmental entity.

By law this questionnaire must be filed with the records administrator of the local government not later than the 7th business day after the date the person becomes aware of facts that require the statement to be filed. See Section 176.006, Local Government Code.

A person commits an offense if the person violates Section 176.006, Local Government Code. An offense under this section is a Class C misdemeanor.

OFFICE USE ONLY

Date Received

1 Name of person doing business with local governmental entity.

2 **D Check this box if you are filing an update to a previously filed questionnaire.**

(The law requires that you file an updated completed questionnaire with the appropriate filing authority not later than September 1 of the year for which an activity described in Section 176.006(a), Local Government Code, is pending and not later than the 7th business day after the date the originally filed questionnaire becomes incomplete or inaccurate.)

3 Name each employee or contractor of the local governmental entity who makes recommendations to a local government officer of the governmental entity with respect to expenditures of money AND describe the affiliation or business relationship.

4 Name each local government officer who appoints or employs local government officers of the governmental entity for which this questionnaire is filed AND describe the affiliation or business relationship.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST QUESTIONNAIRE

For vendor or other person doing business with local governmental entity

5 Name of local government officer with whom filer has affiliation or business relationship. (Complete this section only if the answer to A, B, or C is YES.

This section, item 5 including subparts A, B, C & D, must be completed for each officer with whom the filer has affiliation or other relationship. Attach additional pages to this Form CIQ as necessary.

A. Is the local government officer named in this section receiving or likely to receive taxable income from the filer of the questionnaire? Yes No

B. Is the filer of the questionnaire receiving or likely to receive taxable income from or at the direction of the local government officer named in this section AND the taxable income is not from the local governmental entity? Yes No

C. Is the filer of this questionnaire affiliated with a corporation or other business entity that the local government officer serves as an officer or director, or holds an ownership of 10 percent or more? Yes No

D. Describe each affiliation or business relationship.

6

Signature of person doing business with the governmental entity

Date