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| **RFP NUMBER AND TITLE:** | RFP#202504057 Natural Gas Consultant for the Maine Public Advocate |
| **RFP ISSUED BY:** | Office of the Public Advocate |
| **SUBMITTED QUESTIONS DUE DATE:** | May 14, 2025 |
| **QUESTION & ANSWER SUMMARY ISSUED:** | May 20, 2025 |
| **PROPOSAL DUE DATE:** | May 28, 2025, no later than 11:59 p.m., local time |
| **PROPOSALS DUE TO:** | [Proposals@maine.gov](mailto:Proposals@maine.gov) |
| **Unless specifically addressed below, all other provisions and clauses of the RFP remain unchanged.** | |
| **DESCRIPTION OF CHANGES IN RFP:**   1. **Amendment to Part I.D: Adding a clarification that bidders that wish to provide services in both General Service Area 1 and 2 should submit a separate proposal for each, with the understanding that there may be some duplication in the materials submitted.** | |
| **REVISED LANGUAGE IN RFP:**   1. **Additional sentence in Part I.D: Bidders that wish to provide services in both General Service Area 1 and 2 should submit a separate proposal for each, with the understanding that there may be some duplication in the materials submitted.** | |

**Provided below are submitted written questions received and the Department’s answer.**

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| **1** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II, A, 1a, page 8, Appendix D, and Part II, A, 2, page 8, Appendix E | How should budgets be structured when the number of cases to be addressed and the service to be provided are unknown and the issues to be addressed in each case are unknown? |
| **Answer** | |
| We ask that bidders refer to the General Service Areas 1 & 2 to create an estimated budget (showing hourly rates as part of the calculation of the estimated budget) for a case that could occur in each Service Area for which the bidder intends to bid (1: “LDC rate cases”, and 2: “cost of gas” (COG) and proceedings related to approval of “long term firm transportation contracts”, etc. (please see Part II, A, 1-2 for service and issues expected to occur under each of these General Service Areas). For a PUC proceeding in either General Service area, a list of the tasks that are likely to occur in any PUC proceeding is provided in Part 2, Section B. A list of issues for which the bidder is expected to provide expert advice is shown in the last paragraph on Page 5 of the RFP. The 4 LDCs have a COG proceeding at least once per year, and the rate cases are less frequent (once every couple years).  If a bidder is interested in bidding on providing services in both General Service areas, we ask for the bidder to submit both Appendices D and E (a separate Cost Proposal Form), and to provide a separate proposal for each General Service Area, understanding that there may be some duplication in the content. (Please refer to amendment/clarification, above.) | |

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| **2** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II, A, 1 and 2, page 8 | Who are the current incumbents for General Service Areas 1 and 2? |
| **Answer** | |
| To the extent the question is asking for the identities currently under contract to provide the requested services, there are currently no incumbent service providers to the Office. To the extent that the question seeks information as to the utilities whose cases the Office will participate in, those are typically Northern Utilities, Inc. d/b/a Unitil, Bangor Natural Gas Company, Maine Natural Gas Corporation, Summit Natural Gas, Portland Natural Gas Transmission System, Granite State Gas Transmission, Inc., Algonquin Gas Transmission Company, Maritimes & Northeast Pipeline. | |

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| **3** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part 1A – Page 5 | Does the Office anticipate requiring consulting support in evaluating and responding to rate design proposals? Is rate design a component of the “cost of service issues” for which the Office is seeking support? |
| **Answer** | |
| Yes, rate design is an issue in some of the PUC proceedings, mostly in LDC rate cases. | |

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| **4** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part 1A - Page 5 | Will the OPA accept proposals for selected specialized areas within a General Service Area for which the bidder has exceptional expertise (i.e., return on equity, cost of service, rate design, future of gas issues such as gas planning, load forecasting, line extension policies, pipeline replacement programs, and mergers & acquisition) |
| **Answer** | |
| We are interested to hear about the expertise bidders have in select specialized areas within a General Service Area, but please note that we are looking for bidders that are able to address all the services within a General Service Area (please see Part II, A, 1-2 for service and issues expected to occur under each of these General Service Areas). A proposal must cover all of at least one of the two General Service Areas.  If a bidder is interested in bidding on providing services in both General Service areas, we ask for the bidder to submit both Appendices D and E (a separate Cost Proposal Form), and to provide a separate proposal for each General Service Area, understanding that there may be some duplication in the content. (Please refer to amendment/clarification, above.) | |

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| **5** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Cost Proposal Form | The form specifies that “The proposed cost must be presented as an hourly rate.” Yet, the tables in the form ask for totals for each cost subcategory. Given that the scope of work (number of cases, etc.) is still to be determined, is OPA asking bidders to develop a single rate that encompasses all cost subcategories? How should we present the “Total Cost” amounts within the form? |
| **Answer** | |
| Please refer to the Answer for Question 1. | |

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| **6** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Appendix D, Appendix E | Are bidders expected to present their hourly rates or an estimate of the total cost (including the number of hours of effort) for any work for the OPA? |
| **Answer** | |
| Yes. Please refer to the Answer for Question 1. | |

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| **7** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II, A, p. 8 | Does the Maine Public Advocate have an interest in pursuing performance-based ratemaking (“PBR”) for gas utilities and if so, which scope of work should interested bidders complete? |
| **Answer** | |
| It is possible PBR could come up in a PUC proceeding, and this would fall under General Service Area 2 “Other issues that may arise related to natural gas policy”. Please see Part II, Section A.2.j. | |

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| **8** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II, A, p. 8 | Can a bidder propose to provide only part of the Scope of Services for a General Service Area? |
| **Answer** | |
| No. Please refer to the Answer for Question 4. | |

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| **9** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part VI, p. 18 | If a bidder has an exception to any provision of the State of Maine Service Contract, how should the bidder indicate this? |
| **Answer** | |
| Bidders are expected to sign the State of Maine Service Contract as is (please see Part VI.A.1). Any negotiation regarding the terms of that Contract would occur after a bidder is notified of conditional award. | |

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| **10** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Appendix D, Appendix E | How many trips to the Public Advocate’s Office or the Maine PUC offices should be assumed in the presentation of a budget? |
| **Answer** | |
| The RFP process is conducted remotely. | |