



**REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS (RFQ)
GENERAL COUNSEL and
LEGAL ADVISING SERVICES**

FOR

**THE ROCKY RIVER CITY SCHOOL
DISTRICT BOARD OF EDUCATION**

Proposals Due: Electronic copies of the statement of qualifications must be submitted to the Treasurer at the email address below no later than 4:00 p.m. (Eastern Standard Time) on 8/1/2025. Incomplete statements of qualifications or statements of qualifications received after this deadline will not be accepted or considered.

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**REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS OF
LEGAL SERVICES FOR
THE ROCKY RIVER CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF EDUCATION**

1. INTENT

The Rocky River City School District Board of Education (the “Board”) invites qualified licensed full service law firm(s)/attorney(s) to submit a proposal to represent the Board in basic legal matters and litigation, excluding litigation handled by attorneys selected by the Board’s insurance carriers.

The Board reserves the right to select one or multiple law firms/attorneys to represent the Board. The best interest of the Rocky River City Schools shall be the determining factor.

The Board emphasizes that the selected law firm(s)/attorney(s) represent the Board and not individual board members or administrators. The selected law firm(s)/attorney(s) will be responsible for ensuring that the Board is fully advised of all legal matters affecting the Rocky River City Schools.

The Board will consider any proposal that serves the best interest of the Rocky River City Schools including, but not limited to, an all-inclusive flat fee agreement, a subject area flat fee agreement (e.g. special education, labor and employment, etc.), a case type flat fee agreement (e.g., arbitrations, collective bargaining, etc.), and/or hourly rates.

The Board anticipates entering into an agreement with the selected firm(s)/attorney(s) starting on or before 8/28/2025.

2. QUALIFICATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS

Firms/attorneys who respond to this Request for Qualifications (RFQ) must meet the following minimum requirements:

- 2.1 Member in good standing of the Ohio Bar Association.
- 2.2 Significant experience working with or for Ohio school districts.
- 2.3 Ability to provide same day response.
- 2.4 Assignment of a lead attorney with appropriate experience.
- 2.5 Must have no substantive conflict of interest in representing the Board.
- 2.6 Commitment to the Rocky River City School District.

3. SCOPE OF SERVICES

3.1 Background Information

The Board provides a system of public education to approximately 2,600 students in grades Pre-K through 12. The Rocky River City School District is located in Northeast Ohio, approximately 10 miles west of the downtown area of the City of Cleveland. The district has 5 buildings: District Office/Pre-K; Elementary (K-2), Intermediate (3-5), Middle (6-8), and High School (9-12). We have 215 certified, 140 classified, and 21 administrative employees, and three bargaining units.

3.2 **Specific Tasks**

The School District Legal Counsel serves as chief legal advisor to the Board of Education and its administrative staff. The Board reserves the right to select one or multiple law firms/attorneys to represent the Board. Successful firms should be well-versed in Public Education Law; Public and Local Finance Law; Employment Law; Public Records and Sunshine Laws; Collective Bargaining; Special Education; Economic Development; Contract Law and Construction.

The successful firm(s)/attorney(s) will provide services including, but not limited to:

- 3.2.1 IRS matters.
- 3.2.2 Labor relations/collective bargaining/human resources.
- 3.2.3 Special education/student services.
- 3.2.4 Construction.
- 3.2.5 General counsel.
- 3.2.6 Business contracts.
- 3.2.7 Bonds and General Finance Matters
- 3.2.8 Property Tax valuation complaints
- 3.2.9 Student Discipline

The District prefers a single firm to handle the various matters listed above, as these areas reflect the breadth of issues that school districts are required to address. If a firm wishes to limit their services to a specific practice area, they may submit a proposal for consideration (i.e., solely bond counsel or solely general counsel). If a firm seeks only to propose certain services, those responses will be considered and evaluated in relation to the breadth of services available from firms otherwise eligible to serve as general counsel on the full range of issues.

4. **TIMEFRAME**

The successful legal firm(s)/attorney(s) will be expected to commence the provision of services commencing on or before 8/29/2025 and the term of the resultant contract will be “at will” with the expectation that another RFQ may be done in the future.

5. **PROJECT MANAGEMENT**

The RFQ process shall be managed for the Board by the Treasurer.

6. **SCHEDULE OF QUALIFICATIONS**

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| 7/11/2025: | Distribute RFQ |
| 8/1/2025: | Response Deadline @ 4:00 p.m. |
| 8/11-8/20/2025: | Board/Treasurer/Superintendent meet with finalists |
| 8/21-8/25/2025: | Additional interviews, as needed; Reference satisfaction |
| 8/28/2025: | Board approval of attorney(s)/firm(s) |

All firms/attorneys who are furnished a copy of this RFQ, but who decide not to offer a proposal to the Board, are asked to submit a negative reply. Specific comments and observations are encouraged.

6.1 **Submittal Letter**

Firms/attorneys shall submit a cover letter, addressed to the Treasurer, signed by an authorized principal or agent of the firm/attorney, which provides an overview of the firm/attorney's offer, as well as the name, title and phone number of the person to whom the Treasurer may direct questions concerning the proposal. The letter should also include a statement by the firm/attorney accepting all terms and conditions contained in this RFQ, signed by an officer or other individual with authority to bind the firm/attorney.

6.2 **Experience and Commitment to the Rocky River City School District**

Firms/attorneys are to provide a summary of the firm/attorney's experience on similar types and sizes of engagements with emphasis on school boards in the State of Ohio, and detail on experience with education law. This summary must include your firm/attorney's experience in the areas of services described in Section 3, provide detailed resumes of persons proposed to work directly with the Board and indicate the level of responsibility of each person (excluding clerical staff). The principal attorney(s) must have a minimum of five (5) years of experience in one or more areas of law specified in the Scope of Services. This summary should also demonstrate a commitment to the Rocky River City Schools (e.g. past performance, Rocky River City School District professional staff residents, etc.). Resumes are to include educational qualifications and previous work assignments that relate to this RFQ.

6.3 **References**

A minimum of five (5) client references, which encompass the areas outlined in this RFQ must be provided. The client references must include the name of the organization, address, telephone number, individual contact person, the dates services were performed and a description of the services provided. The Board will not be asking for disclosure of attorney-client privileged information but, rather, a general description of services rendered and satisfaction with the same.

6.4 **Budget/Fee Qualifications**

Consistent with the type of Qualifications being submitted (see Section 1), all firms/attorneys are required to complete and submit an itemized fee schedule and expected schedule of payment to perform all services. Note that the Board expects that all reimbursable charges will be charged at the firm/attorney's actual cost, without additional mark-up, and with prior approval of the Treasurer and/or Superintendent.

6.5 Form of Contract

The Board's treasurer and/or superintendent intends to negotiate with the most responsible firm(s)/attorney(s) whose proposal is determined to be in the best interest of the Rocky River City Schools. The form of contract for any award made as a result of this proposal will be a Board purchase order, referencing this RFQ, which shall be considered as part of such a contract. The amount will be based on the fees shown in this proposal as modified, if necessary, during negotiations. If your firm/attorney will be requiring the Board to sign an additional or separate contract, a copy of the proposed contract must be included with the proposal. In the event of a discrepancy between the firm/attorney's proposed contract and this RFQ, the terms of this RFQ shall govern.

7. EVALUATION AND AWARD

The following criteria will be used in no particular order and without limitation, in evaluating proposals and determining the most responsive legal firm:

7.1 Proposals in response to this RFQ will be reviewed against the criteria listed below.

- 7.1a The firm's technical understanding of the scope of services and proposed professional services as evidenced by the proposal submitted.
- 7.1b The background and experience of the firm/attorney in providing similar services as well as specific background, education, qualifications and relevant experience of key personnel to be assigned to this contract.
- 7.1c Office location and/or accessibility.
- 7.1d Proposed fees and costs, although the Board is not bound to select firm(s)/attorney(s) who proposes the lowest fees. The Board reserves the right to negotiate fees with the selected legal firm(s)/attorney(s).
- 7.1e Information obtained from the firm/attorney's references or other clients.
- 7.1f Commitment to the Rocky River City School District.
- 7.1g Best interests of the Rocky River City School District.

7.2 Selection Procedures

The Board intends to enter into a contract with the most responsible, responsive firm(s)/attorney(s) with qualifications which are determined to be in the best interest of the Rocky River City School District.

- 7.2a The Board reserves the right to reject any or all proposals or part thereof for any reason, to negotiate changes to proposal terms, to waive minor inconsistencies with the RFQ, and to negotiate a contract with the successful legal firm.
- 7.2b The Board will initially review all proposals to determine responsiveness. Any proposal that does not address all requested requirements or is incomplete may not be considered.
- 7.2c The Board will evaluate all responsive and responsible proposals based on the criteria enumerated in Section 7. The Board may afford firm(s)/attorney(s) the

opportunity to clarify proposals for the purpose of assuring a full understanding of their responsiveness to the RFQ.

- 7.2d The Superintendent, Treasurer, and/or Board Officer(s) may conduct interviews of the firm(s)/attorney(s) it judges to be the most qualified to perform the services required, based upon the criteria in this RFQ. Necessary interviews will be conducted as outlined herein. The firm(s)/attorney(s) will be notified in advance of the proposed interview date. The firm(s)/attorney(s) are advised that the Board reserves the right to award this contract solely on the basis of the submitted proposals.

The Board reserves the right to cancel at any time for any reason this solicitation and to reject all qualification statements. The Board shall have no liability to any firm/attorney arising out of such cancellation or rejection. The Board reserves the right to waive minor variations in the selection process.

8. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS AND CONDITIONS

Firm(s)/attorney(s) responding to this RFQ will be expected to adhere to the following conditions and must make a positive statement to that effect in its proposal submitted:

- 8.1 Agree to have an office or facility in Ohio. The specific location of the facility must be identified in the Qualifications submitted.
- 8.2 Agree to have personnel/resources reserve sufficient to assure service continuity, and agree to maintain an adequate level of qualified personnel for the term of the Agreement.
- 8.3 Agree to maintain and preserve confidentiality in all matters relating to the resultant contract and services provided under it.
- 8.4 Agree that the Board and the firm/attorney may terminate the contract at any time. In the event of termination, the Board shall pay the firm/attorney for any services rendered prior to termination. However, if the selected firm(s)/attorney(s) has damaged the Board in any way, such payment may be withheld until the Board determines whether or by how much such payment should be reduced.
- 8.5 Agree to accept and follow management direction from the Board and specifically, the Board's designated personnel (e.g., Board President, Treasurer, Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Human Resources Director, Student Services Director, Principals, etc.).
- 8.6 Agree to conform to all applicable laws and policies of the Board.
- 8.7 Agree that if the Board cannot in good faith negotiate a written contract arising out of this RFQ within a reasonable time with the selected firm(s)/attorney(s), the Board may unilaterally cancel its selection of that firm(s)/attorney(s).
- 8.8 Agree that the contract between the Board and the firm(s)/attorney(s) shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the State of Ohio and the policies of the Board.
- 8.9 Agree that the firm(s)/attorney(s) shall maintain adequate liability insurance and provide proof thereof.
- 8.10 Agree to provide the Treasurer with detailed billing and statements as requested by the Treasurer.

9. NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

As a condition of doing business with the Board, the firm(s)/attorney(s) must comply with all applicable non-discrimination laws.

10. TAXPAYER'S IDENTIFICATION NUMBER

The selected respondent whether as individual, proprietor, partnership or a non-profit corporation or organization must fill out and submit the *Internal Revenue Service Form W-9, Payers Request for Taxpayer Identification Number*.

11. ALTERNATIVES AND EXCEPTIONS

Only slight additions or changes would be expected to be negotiated with the successful firm(s)/attorney(s) in order to resolve any variances between the proposal and the final contract. A firm/attorney may submit alternate proposals or take exceptions to this RFQ which deviate from the RFQ; however, alternates and exceptions shall be clearly identified as such, and shall include a discussion of the purpose and benefits to such alternate/exception, and the Board is not bound to accept them if it determines that they are not in the best interest of the Rocky River City School District.

12. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND REVISION TO PROPOSALS

Information may be provided to potential respondents for the purpose of clarification to assure full understanding of, and responsiveness to, the solicitation requirements. Prospective respondents shall be afforded fair and equal treatment with respect to access to additional information and revision of the proposal.

13. QUESTIONS, COMMUNICATIONS, AND SUBMISSION

Questions regarding this RFQ shall be in writing via email as outlined below. Answers to any questions will be sent to any/all firm(s)/attorney(s) on record with the Board as having requested and been furnished a copy of the RFQ via the Treasurer. It is imperative that any/all firm(s)/attorney(s) provide full and accurate contact information to the Treasurer.

Any firm(s)/attorney(s) considering responding to this RFQ are strictly prohibited from communicating directly with any Board of Education member or staff member other than the Treasurer or Superintendent of the Rocky River City School District.

Electronic copies of the statement of qualifications must be submitted to the Treasurer at the email address below by not later than 4:00 p.m. (Eastern Standard Time) on 8/1/2025.

Incomplete statements of qualifications or statements of qualifications received after this deadline will not be accepted or considered. The Board assumes no responsibility for costs incurred in the preparation, presentation, or submission of the statement of qualifications required.

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