



## METROPLAN

### REQUEST FOR AUDIT PROPOSALS

Notice is hereby given that Metroplan, the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Little Rock/North Little Rock/Conway Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), is accepting proposals from qualified certified public accounting (CPA) firms to provide audit services for our organization for the fiscal year ending December 31, 2024. These services may be extended annually for each of the five (5) years thereafter, at the discretion of Metroplan's Board of Directors.

**NOTICE OF INTENT:** If your firm is interested in submitting a proposal for consideration, please indicate your intent via email to Tammy Gillis, Administrator, ([tgillis@metroplan.org](mailto:tgillis@metroplan.org)), no later than 4:00 p.m. Friday, November 1, 2024.

**QUESTIONS:** Questions regarding Metroplan or the contents of this request for proposal should be communicated in email to Ms. Gillis no later than 4:00 p.m. Friday, November 1, 2024. Questions and responses will be shared with all firms proposing.

**PROPOSAL DUE DATE:** Proposal submissions are due no later than 2:00 p.m. on Monday, November 18, 2024. Please send your submission in PDF form to Ms. Gillis.

**NOTIFICATION:** Notification of the selected firm is expected by 4:00 p.m. on Friday, November 29, 2024. Notification may be made prior to this date.

**Notice of Nondiscrimination:**

Metroplan complies with all civil rights provisions of federal statutes and related authorities that prohibit discrimination in programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance. Therefore, Metroplan does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, color, age, national origin, religion, disability, or income status, in admission or access to and treatment in Metroplan's programs and activities, as well as Metroplan's hiring or employment practices. Complaints of alleged discrimination and inquiries regarding Metroplan's nondiscrimination policies may be directed to Sydney Dozier, Title VI/ADA/504 Coordinator, 501 West Markham Street, Suite B, Little Rock, AR 72201, (501) 372-3300, or the following e-mail address: [sdozier@metroplan.org](mailto:sdozier@metroplan.org). (Hearing and speech impaired may dial 711.) This notice is available upon request from the Title VI/ADA/504 Coordinator in large print, audiotape or braille.



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#### **A. METROPLAN BACKGROUND AND GENERAL INFORMATION**

Metroplan is a council of governments and has functioned as an MPO since 1972, with a primary mission of working with local governments, the state department of transportation, and local transit providers to determine transportation needs and funding priorities for federal transportation investments. Metroplan also provides general planning, mapping, and technical assistance to local governments.

Metroplan is a 501(c)(4) organization, with a budget of approximately \$2.2 million, and currently employs 14 people in 1 location. Metroplan's office is located at 501 West Markham, Suite B; Little Rock, AR 72201.

The activities of Metroplan are subject to oversight provided by Board of Directors (the Board) that consists of the county judges of member counties and mayors of member cities or their designees.

In 2024, was awarded a \$100 million Tri-Regional Coalition Grant – Energy and Environment for the Natural State by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Metroplan will serve as the administrator for this grant, primarily responsible for acting as pass-through agent to non-profits and local government subrecipients in the Central Arkansas, Northwest Arkansas and Ft. Smith metro regions of the state. It is expected that most of the funding awarded under this grant will be expended in 2025/2026.

Metroplan's audit has previously been performed by Landmark PLC, Certified Public Accountants (Landmark). In 2024, Metroplan's Board contracted with Landmark to provide ongoing accounting, financial reporting, tax compliance and consulting services, and as such, Landmark is no longer independent with respect to Metroplan and may no longer perform the annual audit.

Metroplan's prior audit report will be made available upon request, which should be communicated in the notice of intent.

#### **B. AUDIT SCOPE/OBJECTIVES**

The selected firm will be expected to perform an audit of and opine on the financial statements of Metroplan, which comprise the statement of financial position, and the related statements of activities, functional expenses and cash flows, and the notes to the financial statements, all of which will be prepared by Metroplan's management, with assistance from Landmark. The audit will be conducted in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States (U.S. GAAS) and *Government Auditing Standards*, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States.



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The schedule of expenditures of federal awards will be presented for purposes of additional analysis, as required by Title 2 of the U.S. *Code of Federal Regulations* (CFR) Part 200, *Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards* (Uniform Guidance). In addition, Metroplan will present a combining schedule of activities, a schedule of activities – budget vs. actual, a schedule of local member contributions and a schedule of findings and questioned costs. All of these supplementary schedules will be prepared by Metroplan’s management, with assistance from Landmark. It is expected that the auditor will subject the information in these supplementary schedules to auditing procedures applied in the audit of the financial statements and certain additional procedures as required under professional standards, and the auditor will issue an opinion on the information in these schedules in relation to the financial statements as a whole.

The auditor is expected to issue a report on internal control over financial reporting and on compliance and other matters based on an audit of financial statements performed in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards*, as well as a report on compliance for the major federal program and report on internal control over compliance in accordance with the Uniform Guidance.

Significant deficiencies or material weaknesses in internal control over financial reporting or compliance, if any, as well as any observations for improving Metroplan’s system of internal controls, are expected to be communicated to management and the Board of Directors in writing.

#### **C. PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS**

In responding to this request the following items should be addressed:

1. Provide a general overview of your firm, including the year founded, the number and location of offices; the number of total staff, professional staff, and partners/members; and the number of certified public accountants.
2. Detail your firm’s experience in providing audit services to entities in the not-for-profit sector, focusing on those that receive federal awards subject to audit under Uniform Guidance.
3. Discuss the firm’s independence with respect to Metroplan. Explain how your firm will monitor and maintain independence on an ongoing basis.
4. Identify the location of the office that will be responsible for performing the audit.
5. Identify the engagement partner, manager, and senior accountant who will be assigned to Metroplan’s audit if your firm is selected to provide audit



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- services, and provide resumes for these individuals. Indicate whether these individuals are certified public accountants, as well as the number of years of experience in public accounting. Indicate any complaints that have been leveled against them by the state board of accountancy or other regulatory authority, if any. Indicate any corrective actions that have been taken by the firm with respect to these individuals.
6. Discuss commitments you will make to staff continuity. Indicate your staff turnover experience in the last three years.
  7. Identify the anticipated areas of risk that will receive primary emphasis during the audit.
  8. Provide a description of the work the engagement team would perform during the various phases of the audit – preliminary planning, planning and risk assessment, interim work, final field work, and wrap up and reporting. In addition, provide a timeline detailing when the engagement team would perform various phases of audit work.
  9. Discuss how the firm will use technology in Metroplan’s audit.
  10. Discuss the communication process that will be used by the engagement team to review findings and issues with management and the Board of Directors.
  11. Provide a copy of your firm’s most recent peer review report, related findings, and the firm’s response to any findings.
  12. Describe the firm’s approach to the resolution of technical disagreements (a) among engagement personnel, and (b) between the firm and the client.
  13. Describe technology used by your firm to share information with the firm’s clients.
  14. Provide three (3) client references to include the name and contact information of the organization’s chief financial officer, a description of services provided to each client and number of years served. Preferably the client references have first-hand experience with one or more members of the proposed engagement team.
  15. Provide an estimate of fees for the 2024 audit and each of the five years thereafter, to include level of professional staff or administrative staff, anticipated hours to be incurred by each level of professional staff or administrative staff, and rate per hour.
  16. Describe your firm’s policy for billing out-of-pocket expenses, and if such expenses will be billed separately, provide an estimate of those out-of-pocket expenses.



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17. Describe how your firm bills for questions on technical matters that may arise throughout the year.

#### **D. SELECTION CRITERIA AND PROCEDURE**

Metroplan's objective is to select the most qualified firm at compensation determined as fair and reasonable. A committee will be selected to evaluate and score each submittal. Interviews of firms may be conducted.

##### **Basis of Evaluation:**

1. Qualifications, experience, and competence (40 points)
2. Responsiveness to proposal requirements (30 points)
3. Schedule and cost (30 points)

#### **E. ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS**

1. The proposals will be evaluated to ensure that all mandatory requirements have been met. Failure to meet all of these requirements may result in rejection of the entire bid without further consideration.
2. Metroplan reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, to waive minor formalities and technicalities in any proposal, to solicit new proposals, or to accept any proposals which are deemed to be more advantageous to Metroplan.
3. In the process of evaluations, Metroplan may acquire and utilize, to the extent deemed necessary, information obtained from the following sources:
  - a) Respondents, including representations and other data contained in the response, or from references.
  - b) Other existing information available to Metroplan concerning the respondent's performance.
  - c) Background investigations of respondents, which may be made to verify information furnished or to secure additional information Metroplan may deem necessary or desirable.



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#### F. GENERAL PROVISIONS

1. Metroplan's auditor selection and contracting process is subject to all applicable provisions of federal, state and local laws and ordinances.
2. The selected audit firm will be required to comply with all applicable Equal Employment Opportunity (EEOC) laws and regulations, including assurance of nondiscrimination under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act.
3. It is Metroplan's policy to contract with Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBEs) whenever possible. Non-DBEs are requested to use DBE firms whenever appropriate and to inform Metroplan of said use.
4. Vendors that are on the U.S. Comptroller General's list of ineligible contractors should not respond to this solicitation. Metroplan will not contract with said firms.
5. Metroplan will not be liable for any costs incurred in preparing, submitting, or presenting a respondent's submittals or any associated travel costs.
6. Although discussions may be conducted with respondents submitting acceptable proposals, selection may be made without any discussion.
7. Metroplan reserves the right to postpone the opening and/or review of respondent submittals for cause or convenience. Metroplan also reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, in whole or in part, and to waive any information thereon.
8. If only one qualified respondent responds by the due date, Metroplan may enter into contract negotiations with that firm.
9. Metroplan shall make partial payments for work completed under the contract and satisfactorily detailed in each valid invoice with accompanying progress report.
10. The selected auditor will be required to adhere to standard FTA assurances. [FY2024 Annual List of Certifications and Assurances for FTA Grants and Cooperative Agreements | FTA \(dot.gov\)](#)
11. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACCESS -- All documents submitted in connection with this request for proposals are the property of Metroplan. The respondent(s) must identify, in writing, all copyrighted material, trade secrets or other proprietary information that the respondent(s) claim are exempt from disclosure pursuant to the Arkansas Freedom of Information Act.