

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Lobbyist/Consultant

Association of Community Mental Health Authorities of Illinois (ACMHAI), is accepting proposals from firms to provide the services of a state of Illinois Lobbyist/Legislative Relations Consultant(s) to support and represent the interests of the membership related to promoting, monitoring, and reporting on state legislative initiatives and priorities. ACMHAI is a professional association of organizations rooted in our communities and accountable to our citizens. Our member organizations are comprised of “708” Boards governed by the Illinois Community Mental Health Act and “553” and “377” Boards whose statutory authority derives from public health legislation or legislation specific to intellectual and developmental disabilities.

As community-based boards we take responsibility for assessing the needs of our communities and funding services to meet those needs. We are the voice that speaks on behalf of behavioral health authorities, communities and people facing mental health, substance use and intellectual and developmental challenges.

ACMHAI envisions a statewide system of collaborative communities that advocate for individuals and innovate for better delivery of mental health and intellectual or developmental disability services. We work to:

- Improve the development and delivery of comprehensive services and facilities for person with mental disabilities
- Promote the exchange of information
- Develop a unified state-wide voice
- Foster cooperation with other private and public mental health, substance abuse, and developmental disability provider, consumer, advocacy and trade organizations
- Initiate and influence policy reform and legislative action

ACMHAI seeks an innovative approach to lobbying and is requesting proposals with fees for a full-year contract for general consulting services invoiced monthly.

SCOPE OF SERVICES

The Consultant will work under the direction of the Executive Committee and Legislative Committee and act as a liaison with state government officials. It is anticipated that the full-year contract engagement, if selected, will include at least the following activities and tasks:

- Assist ACMHAI in executing its legislative priorities (as defined by the Legislative and Executive Committees) by representing the position of ACMHAI on public policy issues before members and staff of the Illinois General Assembly, officers and staff of state agencies, registered lobbyists, state associations and interest groups;
- Communicate positions on substantive legislation, appropriations and administrative rules that advance ACMHAI’s advocacy agenda and goals. When necessary, communicate

ACMHAI positions directly to House and Senate leaders, chairpersons, and members of House and Senate Committees, and officers and staff in the Governor's Office;

- Engage in good faith communication and exchange of information with the ACMHAI regarding the interests and needs of its membership. This includes but is not limited to attending relevant ACMHAI meetings; providing timely notices to the ACMHAI Legislative Committee of meetings, hearings and deadlines pertaining to substantive legislation and appropriations; providing real-time communication with Legislative Committee co-chairs on the status of bills of interest; and providing reports to Legislative Committee co-chairs regarding relevant communication with legislators or legislative staff;
- Track and review legislation affecting mental health, developmental disabilities and substance use, and provide regular communication to ACMHAI. This includes developing a system for prioritizing bills based on the likelihood of their passage and their relevance to ACMHAI legislative priorities;
- Equally weighting the legislative priorities with respect to mental health, substance use, and developmental disabilities;
- Assist ACMHAI in reviewing and commenting on draft legislation when requested by members of the IL General Assembly and their staffs;
- Assist ACMHAI by initiating contacts and sustaining persistent follow-up with sponsors, proponents, and opponents to advance proposed legislation, appropriations and administrative rules supported by ACMHAI. Communication must be proactive, when possible, and at a rate that is reasonable given the expectation of legislative activity;
- Assist the ACMHAI Legislative Committee in monitoring, reviewing and verifying state Illinois appropriations for programs and services impacting mental health, developmental disabilities and substance abuse in Illinois;
- Maintain regular communications with ACMHAI through attendance at membership meetings, and participation in conference calls conducted primarily during legislative sessions hosted and convened by ACMHAI, and initiate and provide timely responses to e-mail and telephone contacts with members of the ACMHAI Legislative Committee. Provide a detailed presentation and training annually at a membership meeting regarding relevant bills and advocacy tools (as needed);
- Provide monthly written reports recording the activities of the Consultant and progress as it pertains to ACMHAI's legislative priorities as well as regular (at least weekly) updates on emerging legislative issues during the legislative session;
- Submit all requisite expenditure reports for ACMHAI with the office of the Illinois Secretary of State. ACMHAI shall be responsible for reimbursing the annual lobbying entity registration payment (to the IL Secretary of State's Office), if necessary.

OVERVIEW OF THE TIMELINE

Applications are due to ACMHAI on June 30, 2024. The Consultant will be selected based on their experience, depth of network, and accomplishments for like units of behavioral health interests on legislative initiatives. A final selection will be made based on the criteria and communicated no later than August 23, 2024. We anticipate a contract start date of October 1, 2024.

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Interested individuals/firms shall submit one (1) electronic version of a proposal in pdf format, including a cover letter expressing their interest in providing these services to ACMHAI, to Jodi Dart jdart@acmhai.org.

Proposals shall not exceed 10 single-spaced pages in length. Any attachments may be included with no guarantee of review. Proposals shall correspond with the format indicated below:

- Cover letter - This section should contain the name of the Consultant, the address of the proposing office(s), and the contact individuals authorized to answer technical, price, and/or contract questions together with their telephone numbers and mailing addresses. The cover letter must also include why the Consultant is interested in working with ACMHAI.
- Background and Statement of Staff Experience – Describe the firm’s experience and how this relates to ACMHAI’s legislative needs, as described in the above scope of work. Describe the firm’s experience in mental health, substance use, and I/DD legislative policy in Illinois.
- Qualifications and Availability - Provide information concerning the qualifications, registrations, and availability of all persons who will be involved in the responsibilities and specific assignments related to lobbying activities. Proposals shall also include the role and the percent of time that each member will be assigned to this contract.
- Examples of Past Successes – Please provide 3-4 examples of past successes you have had working with legislators on behalf of clients.
- Statement of Conflict of Interest Practices – ACMHAI understands and respects that Consultants usually have multiple clients who may have complimentary or competing legislative interests. Please describe the Consultant’s policies and practice for managing conflicts of interest between clients as well as between Consultant and client.
- Proposed Work Plan – Please provide a detailed description of how you propose to implement the work needed. Please describe the amount of time the Consultant plans to spend on ACMHAI, the frequency and type of communication, and the specific activities to be provided.
- Cost – Please provide an estimate of the cost for your services. This must include a total contract cost for the full year. It is not necessary, but if the firm/individual utilizes a per hour rate, please include that calculation in addition to the total annual cost.
- References (please provide two) – Please provide at least two references whom we may contact to confirm the statement laid out in the proposal and the efficacy of the Consultant. This may include current and past clients.

SELECTION PROCESS AND QUALIFICATIONS CRITERIA

The Consultant will be selected based on experience in Illinois as a legislative Lobbyist/Consultant for clients with similar interests. It is expected that the Consultant have a strong background in legislative advocacy and analysis as well as experience representing mental health, substance use, and I/DD interests. The proposal evaluation will focus on the Consultant's experience and capabilities to perform the services needed and the creativity of their solution and their understanding of the State of Illinois legislative process as it relates to ACHMAI's legislative needs.

The following items will be considered when evaluating the Consultant's proposal:

- Depth and comprehensiveness of legislative resources. (20%)
- Experience of proposed staff members with local government, legislative advocacy or analysis. (20%)
- Proposed solution and understanding of the ACMHAI's legislative needs including the experience of proposed staff members with the Community Mental Health Act and related public health and other legislation specific to intellectual and developmental disabilities. (30%)
- Clarity and reasonability of the proposed work plan. (10%)
- Clarity and reasonability of the conflict of interest practices (10%)
- Reasonability of contract cost (5%)
- References (5%)

The evaluation of these categories will yield a score. This score will be on a scale of 0 to 100. The Consultant that yields the highest score will be awarded a one-year contract that is renewable based on performance.