



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR

General Counsel Legal Services

Solicitation Issue Date: May 18, 2026

Responses Due: June 8, 2026

Please submit proposals electronically to ckuehn@sonomarc.d.org

Hard copy proposals will not be accepted.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Sonoma Resource Conservation District (RCD) is pleased to invite you to respond to this Request for Proposals (RFP) for General Legal Counsel Services. This RFP intends to solicit responses and formal proposals from qualified law firms or individuals with experience representing local public agencies to provide general counsel legal services, representing the District in legal proceedings and, as determined necessary, managing the engagement and coordination of special counsel. The firm/individual must be qualified to provide expertise in the areas of general municipal law, land use, open meeting and conflict of interest laws, and other matters as they may arise. Counsel serves under the supervision of the Executive Director and acts as their legal advisor. The District reserves the right to retain or employ other attorneys or special counsel as may be needed, in its sole judgment, to take charge of any litigation or legal matters or to assist the District.

II. ORGANIZATION BACKGROUND

Sonoma RCD's mission is to bridge the needs of the community and natural resources by empowering people through reliable expertise and action to strengthen the resilience of Sonoma County, California.

Resource Conservation Districts are established under Division 9 of the California Public Resources Code. Since 1946, the Sonoma RCD has facilitated natural resource conservation through community involvement, education, technical expertise and scientific research. organized to support natural resource management solutions through partnerships with individuals, organizations and agencies. We collaborate to drive conservation initiatives locally, regionally and statewide.

We are overseen by a seven-member Board of Directors who volunteer their time for the benefit of local landowners and land managers and their natural resource concerns. The RCD receives between 3-5% of our annual budget from the county tax base. The remainder of RCD's annual budget comes from competitively sought grant funding, direct contracts, and fee-for-service contracts to support our mission and the conservation needs of Sonoma County.

III. SCOPE OF SERVICES SOUGHT

Counsel is hired by and reports to the Executive Director and is responsible for advising on all legal business matters. Upon request of the Board of Directors, counsel may provide legal advice to the Board, but only under the discretion of the Executive Director. The primary responsibilities the District will require of its counsel shall include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Represent and provide legal advice and consultation on a regular basis to the District and Executive Director as requested or required. Contact is usually made by email or telephone, and next-day response is typically expected, but no later than 1-2 business days.
- Recommend policies and procedures that comply with the requirements of the law.
- Prepare, review and revise District documents, including, but not limited to, initiation of memorandums concerning legal issues, contracts, agreements, ordinances, resolutions, and policies for the legal support of District functions and duties.
- Provide guidance on local, state, and federal award contracts of the District, prevailing wage requirements, local and state agency regulations, and business leases and contracts.
- Provide guidance concerning the requirements of the Ralph M. Brown Act, Conflict of Interest (AB 1234), the Political Reform Act, the Public Records Act, due process, and other legal requirements imposed by statute and common law.
- Assist with responses to Public Records Act requests.
- Research and interpret laws, court decisions and other legal authorities to prepare legal opinions and to advise on legal matters pertaining to District operations, as needed.
- Represent the District as requested before other governmental bodies and agencies to promote the interest of the District.
- Perform other legal duties as may be required by the District as may be necessary to complete the performance and functions mentioned above.
- Promptly return all phone calls from the Executive Director.

IV. MINIMUM FIRM REQUIREMENTS

All attorneys performing services for the District on behalf of the firm must be admitted to practice in the State of California and be members in good standing with the State Bar of California. The firm members with primary responsibility for the services provided to the District must have at least 10 years' experience providing general counsel legal services to public agencies. The firm must have demonstrated legal experience in the following practices in California:

- Laws and regulations governing local public agencies in California;
- Preparation, review and adoption of legal opinions, contracts, memorandum of understanding, resolutions, and policies; and
- Supervision of special counsel in litigation matters.

V. INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS

The Proposer shall, provide proof of insurance coverage as part of the proposal and shall include the insurance types, notably their Errors & Omissions (E&O) insurance policy.

VI. PROPOSAL

Proposals should not include any materials to be returned to the responding firm. The District is subject to the Public Records Act, California Government Code Section 6250 et. Seq. As such, all required submittal information is subject to disclosure to the general public.

All proposals must be emailed to ckuehn@sonomarcd.org by 5:00 pm (PST) on June 8, 2026. Hard copy proposals will not be accepted. All proposals must include and will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- A detailed scope of services that reflects the firm's understanding of the District's requirements.
- Written responses to each of the "Minimum Firm Requirements" listed above, demonstrating the firm's experience and expertise for each subject area.
- Any potential conflicts of interest for the firm or its attorneys to provide the District with the legal services requested through this RFP.
- The lead counsel who will be primarily responsible for providing legal services to the District, and other attorneys and staff to be assigned to the District's legal matters.
- Please include the qualifications, training and certifications of lead counsel and all other attorneys and staff who will perform the services outlined herein.
- A list of public agencies and/or other nonprofit entities represented by the firm during the last five (5) years with contact information (including email and phone number of contact person) for each client and a brief description of the type of services provided. The District reserves the right to contact any of the references provided.
- A list of hourly rates and all cost reimbursements to perform the requested legal services for the District, including rates for lead counsel and all other attorneys and staff that would perform services for District.
- Provide a sample contract that the firm proposes to use for this engagement.
- Disclosure of insurance coverage.

VII. SCHEDULE

To the extent achievable, the following schedule shall govern the Request for Proposals (RFP). Sonoma RCD reserves the right to modify the dates below, and will notify all known respondents of any schedule changes.

1. RFP released: **Monday, May 18, 2026.**
2. Deadline for submission of interpretation requests and/or questions: **Tuesday, May 26, 2026, at 5:00 p.m. PST.** All questions should be submitted via email to: ckuehn@sonomarc.org.
3. Answers to questions released: **Thursday, May 28, 2026 at 5:00 p.m. PST.** Firms/individuals interested in this RFP may email ckuehn@sonomarc.org to be included on an email list to receive answers to questions and any RFP Addenda generated. The questions and answers and any RFP Addenda will also be posted on the RFP website at: [Contractors and Consultants | Sonoma Resource Conservation District](#)
4. Proposals due: **Monday, June 8, 2026, at 5:00 p.m. PST.** Responses shall be submitted by email to ckuehn@sonomarc.org as a single PDF file containing all required contents. Hard copy responses will not be accepted.
5. Interviews conducted: TBD, only if necessary.
6. Successful respondents notified: **Monday, June 15, 2026, at 5:00 p.m. PST.**
7. Contracts executed: As-Needed contracts will be executed between Sonoma RCD and the firm(s)/individual(s) selected.

VIII. QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS SOLICITATION

The RCD will respond to questions and requests for clarification to the Request for Proposal in written RFP Addendum(s) as needed, to be posted on the RCD website in the same location as this solicitation. Inquiries should be directed by email to ckuehn@sonomarc.org. No verbal requests will be accepted.

Firms or individuals interested in this RFP may email ckuehn@sonomarc.org to be included on an email list to receive any RFP Addendum(s) generated.

IX. PRE-CONTRACTUAL EXPENSES

No reimbursement will be made by the RCD for costs incurred in the preparation of the response to this Request for Proposal. Submitted materials will not be returned and become the property of the RCD. The District shall not, under any circumstances, be liable for any pre-contractual expenses incurred by Respondents in the preparation of their Proposals. Respondents shall not include any such expenses as part of their Proposals. Pre-contractual expenses are defined as expenses incurred by the Respondent in preparing its Proposal in response to this solicitation, submitting the Proposal to the District, negotiating with the District on any matter related to the Proposal, and any other expenses incurred by the Respondent prior to the date of award and execution of an Agreement.

X. PROPOSAL EVALUATION

Proposals will be evaluated using criteria that may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Depth and breadth of experience and expertise in the practice of law, most specifically in those areas most often encountered in district operations;

- Understanding of municipal government issues and municipal law;
- Capability to perform legal services promptly and in a manner that permits the Board and District Staff to meet established deadlines and operate in an effective and efficient manner;
- Qualifications of the key staff that will be assigned to the District under this proposal;
- Communication skills;
- References of past or current municipal law clients or municipal practice;
- Proposed fee structure, including but not necessarily limited to, a monthly retainer, services included in monthly retainer, hourly rates for services not included in monthly retainer.
- Cost of providing services.

The District may, at its discretion, invite one or more firms/individuals for interviews with the Board Executive Committee and/or Executive Director before making a selection.

During the evaluation process, the District reserves the right, where it may serve the Districts' best interest, to request additional information or clarification from proposing firms/individuals to allow corrections of errors or omissions. The District reserves the right to verify any information contained in proposals, including references, resumes, etc. The District reserves the right to investigate and research proposals, including facts and opinions that could be helpful in evaluating the capabilities of firms/individuals whether or not they were specifically included in the proposals.

XI. GENERAL CONDITIONS

The District reserves the right to:

- Reject any or all Proposals as described further below;
- Select the Proposal most advantageous to the District;
- Verify all information submitted in the Proposal;
- Withdraw this solicitation at any time without prior notice and furthermore, makes no representation that any Agreement will be awarded to any Respondent responding to this solicitation;
- Award its total requirements to one Respondent or to apportion those requirements among two or more Respondents as the District may deem to be in its best interests;
- Negotiate the final Agreement with any Respondent(s) as necessary to serve the best interests of the District;
- Amend this solicitation;
- Amend the first Agreement to incorporate necessary attachments and exhibits or to reflect negotiations between the District and the successful Respondent.

XII. RIGHT TO REJECT PROPOSALS

Submission of a proposal indicates acceptance by the firm or individual of the conditions contained in this request for proposal unless clearly and specifically noted in the proposal submitted and confirmed in the agreement between the RCD and the firm selected. The RCD reserves the right without prejudice to reject any or all proposals.