

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR
GOVERNMENT RELATIONS, RESEARCH, AND PUBLIC RELATIONS SERVICES**



**DATE ISSUED:
July 28, 2015**

**RESPONSES DUE:
August 14, 2015**

Georgia Hotel & Lodging Association, Inc.

Request for Proposals for Government Relations, Research, and Public Relations Services

Overview

The Georgia Hotel & Lodging Association, Inc. (“GHLA”) is inviting governmental affairs, law, and other qualified firms that provide governmental affairs and public relations services at the state level to submit sealed proposals for services to develop and execute a state legislative and policy agenda for the 2016 Legislative Session of the Georgia General Assembly.

The selected firm would work with GHLA and hotel industry leaders to develop a strategy that will build and leverage partnerships with the Governor’s Office, the General Assembly, and state agencies in connection with the State Hotel-Motel Fee, the proposed state Religious Freedom Restoration Act, and other related issues.

Contract Information

The successful firm may be offered a contract for services for a term up to twelve (“12”) months with the possibility of one (“1”) additional twelve (“12”) month extension.

No Contact with GHLA During the Request for Proposal Period

During the entire period of solicitation, meaning from the date this Request for Proposal is issued, until the date that the contract is awarded, no firm and/or its representative shall contact any GHLA staff member, including members of the GHLA Board of Directors, other than by following the appropriate method outlined below for submitting questions, concerning this Request for Proposal.

Scope of Services to be Provided

The firm will act as a liaison on GHLA’s behalf to the Governor’s Office, the General Assembly, and state agencies.

GHLA seeks proposals that encompass providing strategic legislative counsel and engagement services to GHLA as GHLA implements its legislative strategy for the 2016 Legislative Session.

The selected firm will represent GHLA’s interest within the Governor’s Office and the General Assembly to ensure that the appropriate legislative and policy goals are achieved and protected.

Government Relations Services: The selected firm must be able to effectively represent and advise GHLA on matters pertaining to the Governor’s Office and the General Assembly. The selected firm shall monitor bills and regulations which may impact GHLA, assist with drafting legislation, performing policy research and policy development, assisting with appropriate presentations, and providing strategic counseling.

The selected firm shall meet with representatives of various governmental entities and represent GHLA’s interests in relation to all aspects of public policy. The selected firm shall meet with and discuss ongoing strategic public policy planning and ensure that GHLA maintains adequate visibility with the executive branch, the legislative branch, and state agencies.

The selected firm is expected to communicate regularly with GHLA about the selected firm's activities and attend GHLA Board of Director meetings, if the selected firm's attendance is requested. The selected firm should attend at least one ("1") meeting with GHLA prior to the convening of the Georgia General Assembly to discuss legislative strategy and a meeting after the conclusion of the legislative session to provide a report on the legislative developments which may impact GHLA.

GHLA expects on-going written and oral reports while the Georgia General Assembly is in session and when the General Assembly is out of legislative session.

The responsibilities and tasks for the selected firm include:

1. Develop a 2016 Legislative Session plan and work with GHLA staff and hotel industry leaders to assess needs, develop a strategy, and set priorities to develop a state legislative program. This includes development of the plan, organizing briefings to present GHLA's priorities to the Governor's Office, the General Assembly, and relevant state agencies.
2. Work closely with GHLA staff to ensure an integrated approach to the legislative branch and executive branch.
3. Work closely with GHLA staff to coordinate with hospitality industry stakeholders on legislative efforts and the involvement of private sector partners for support.
4. Stay abreast of the State of Georgia's legislative session. Track and monitor legislation and provide updates and advice on the appropriate response.
5. Inform GHLA's Executive Director of any harmful legislation during the 2016 Legislative Session that could be detrimental to Georgia's lodging industry. The firm will advise GHLA on the matter and represent GHLA's position to the appropriate legislators, regulatory officials, and other key stakeholders as appropriate.
6. Coordinate and identify the need for written comment to the Governor's Office and the General Assembly.
7. Provide a legislative overview and assist in the preparation of written comments as appropriate.
8. Provide summaries and copies of bills, committee reports, agency rules and reports or other information reasonably available which are pertinent to issues identified in GHLA's 2016 legislative program.
9. Work with GHLA to produce briefing books, issue papers, talking points, and facts sheets for use by GHLA staff, hotel industry partners, and hospitality stakeholders when addressing state legislators, the Governor's Office, and state agencies.
10. Work with GHLA to produce regular member communications (email newsletters and alerts) on the issues and status of governmental affairs work.
11. Coordinate efforts to develop strategy with industry stakeholders with similar goals to leverage interest and impact state legislation.
12. Schedule regular updates with GHLA's Executive Director, the GHLA Board of Directors, and/or GHLA's Executive Committee and coordinate all responses and/or actions taken in a timely manner.
13. Provide monthly reports and a year-end report detailing all activities relative to legislation.

Research Services: The selected firm will provide research and possible solutions in connection with repealing or reducing the State Hotel-Motel Fee associated with House Bill 170, the Transportation Funding Act of 2015. The selected firm will aid GHLA in developing and demonstrating how Georgia can repeal or reduce the State Hotel-Motel Fee and still achieve its annual revenue goal. The selected firm will provide research and possible solutions in connection with pending and proposed Religious Freedom bills.

Public Relations Services: The selected firm should have an ongoing relationship with key Georgia media outlets in order to facilitate positive press and awareness relating to GHLA’s work and Georgia’s lodging industry. The selected firm will also work with reporters and editors to identify possible stories and provide advice to GHLA with responses to media questions.

Firm Selection Process

Selection of the firm will be a qualifications-based process. GHLA reserves the right to select one or more firms, or reject any or all statements of qualifications, and to waive technicalities and informalities at GHLA’s discretion.

Qualification Statement Requirements

GHLA will evaluate the written proposal and oral interview on a combination of factors. Submissions must include a cover letter providing an introduction to the firm, team, and the organization’s areas of expertise.

The cover letter should also state the firm’s full name, address, phone and fax numbers of the organization, and the individuals which will perform the requested services.

If responding as a team, the lead firm should be designated with a project manager identified as a single point of contact. Indicate the type of firm ownership (individual, partnership, limited liability company, or corporation) and explain any proposed joint venture relationships.

Include the state in which the firm is incorporated, formed, or licensed to operate and provide a valid insurance certification.

Firms will be evaluated on the basis of overall experience and depth of resources.

It is critically important that responses contain the information requested. Submittal must include one (“1”) original and twelve (“12”) hard copies and one (“1”) USB flash drive containing the proposal in Adobe Acrobat format.

EVERY EFFORT SHOULD BE MADE TO MAKE PROPOSALS AS CONCISE AS POSSIBLE. PROPOSALS WITH CORRESPONDING MATERIALS SHOULD NOT EXCEED TWENTY-FIVE (“25”) PAGES.

All responses must be submitted in the following tabbed format:

A. Section I – Cover Letter

- a. Name, address, telephone and fax numbers of the firm (or firms) submitting the qualification statement.
- b. Summary of the nature of the firm’s services and number of years of experience.
- c. Summary of the firm’s interest in the project and the name of one or more individuals authorized to represent the firm in its dealings on a contractual basis.

[Remainder of Page Intentionally Left Blank. Please Turn the Page.]

B. Section II – Corporate Information

- a. History of the firm, including present ownership and key management individuals. Describe any anticipated or recent changes in overall corporate management ownership.
- b. Location of corporate headquarters and other divisional offices. Specify which office or offices will be involved in providing consulting services. Include contact names, addresses, and phone numbers.
- c. A company organization chart showing authority structure and depth of resources.
- d. Resumes of any personnel anticipated to be assigned to the team.
- e. List any litigation the firm was involved in during the last five (“5”) years. List any current, pending, or threatened litigation and provide a description.
- f. A disclosure statement listing all potential conflicts of interest related to this proposal and how the firm will address the proposed conflict. This disclosure statement must be addressed specifically in your response, even if no conflict exists.
- g. Include a list of clients represented with interests similar to GHLA and include three (“3”) references that can be contacted by the review panel.

C. Section III – Proposed Approach to Government Relations

- a. Identify proposed services, including firm’s capabilities and anticipated approach to state engagement for GHLA. Provide sample reports, legislative alerts, summaries, or other work product samples that you provide to clients.
- b. Describe the resources that will be dedicated to the team and specifically how the team will address the proposed strategy to engage the Governor’s Office, the General Assembly, and state agencies.
- c. Discuss the team’s strategy to provide services at the state level with an emphasis on identifying strategic meetings, legislative updates, tracking legislation, and impacting policy under consideration. Include strategies that will incorporate potential partners that will strengthen GHLA’s legislative position.
- d. Provide separate price breakdown for the proposed government relations services.

D. Section IV – Proposed Approach to Research

- a. Identify proposed solutions on how to address the State Hotel-Motel Fee by providing economic options for repealing or reducing the State Hotel-Motel Fee.
- b. Provide guidance on the state of Georgia’s budget process and the State Hotel-Motel Fee’s impact on transportation funding.
- c. Conduct best practice research and provide insight on proposed strategy to repeal or reduce the State Hotel-Motel Fee.
- d. Include the proposed research services pricing in the government relations services price breakdown.

E. Section V – Proposed Approach to Public Relations

- a. Identify proposed services, including firm’s capabilities and anticipated approach to public affairs. Provide sample public relations materials such as earned media and paid media and related digital communications that you provide to clients.
- b. Discuss firm’s strategic relationship with public relations firms and/or experts if the firm does not have a public affairs practice or group.
- c. Provide a list of established relationships with media outlets in key Georgia markets.
- d. Discuss the team’s strategy to provide public relations services on issues such as the State Hotel-Motel Fee and the state Religious Freedom Restoration Act.

- e. Provide separate price breakdown for public relations services.

F. Section VI – Cost Proposal

- a. The submission should include the firm’s best estimate of a lump-sum (“not to exceed”) fee, that itemizes the monthly retainer including all costs and reimbursable expenses for the contract.
- b. The firm should also provide a summary of any assumptions used to determine its fee, including but not limited to members of the team (and their rates), hours, deliverables, required resources, and reimbursable costs. The costs should be itemized so the cost for specific components can be identified.
- c. While the firm will be asked to provide an estimated lump sum fee for the requested services, final fees will be negotiated following the selection. If fee negotiations with the firm determined most qualified are not successful, and/or the fees discussed are outside the budgetary constraints for the project, GHLA reserves the right to suspend negotiations with the most qualified firm, and proceed to negotiations with other firms.

Schedule of Events

This represents GHLA’s best estimate of the schedule that may be followed. All times indicated will be prevailing times in Atlanta, Georgia. GHLA reserves the right to adjust the schedule as GHLA deems necessary.

July 28, 2015:	Request for Proposal (“RFP”) issued.
August 7, 2015:	Last day to submit questions.
August 10, 2015:	GHLA will provide responses to questions.
August 14, 2015:	All RFP submissions due by 5:00 pm.
Week of August 24, 2015:	Interviews conducted by GHLA.
September 2015:	Selected firm contract begins.

Interview

Each finalist firm may be requested to interview with GHLA’s Selection Committee during the week of **August 24, 2015**. If applicable, each finalist firm shall be informed of the place and time for the interview session.

Inquiries

Formal requests for information must be made in writing, preferably by e-mail. Unwritten questions and any verbal responses and/or comments will not be binding. All inquiries must be received by GHLA on **August 7, 2015 at 5:00 pm**.

Inquiries regarding this RFP should be directed by e-mail to:

Jim Sprouse
Executive Director
Georgia Hotel & Lodging Association, Inc.
Jim Sprouse, Executive Director, E-mail Address: j.sprouse@ghla.net

Submittal Deadline

All responses to this RFP must be submitted in hard copy one (“1”) original, twelve (“12”) hard copies, by e-mail, and one (“1”) USB flash drive containing the proposal in Adobe Acrobat format by **August 14, 2015 at 5:00 pm**. Submittals received after this time and date will not be considered.

Please address the submission to:

Jim Sprouse

Executive Director

J.Sprouse@GHLA.net

Georgia Hotel & Lodging Association, Inc.

233 Peachtree Street NE

Suite 1400

Atlanta, GA 30303