



July 20, 2026

To: Board of City Commissioners
Fr: Michael Redlinger, City Administrator
Re: Approve 2026 Government Relations & Legislative Advocacy Request for Qualifications (RFQ)

In preparation for the 70th Legislative Assembly that will commence on January 5, 2027, the City Commission is requested to consider and approve a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for Government Relations & Legislative Advocacy services. The City previously conducted competitive RFP and RFQ processes in 2018 and 2022, respectively, and will issue an RFQ at this time to support the City of Fargo's legislative interests in the 2027 Legislative Session.

The City of Fargo utilizes a professional service provider based in Bismarck to support the City's legislative and policy agenda. The City's approach pairs knowledgeable consultants working at the State Capitol with the expertise, strategy, and policy guidance of the City's elected officials and professional staff. This cost-effective partnership provides the City with a consistent presence in Bismarck that is directed by, and accountable to, the City Commission.

The proposed RFQ contains a statement of purpose, background information on the City of Fargo, and the City's desired scope of services to prospective respondents. Proposal responses will be due on August 14, 2026, and a screening/interview process will be utilized to determine the most responsive and responsible firm or individual(s) to serve the City's proposed scope of service. Following the screening and interview process, the City Commission will consider and approve a professional services agreement with the selected firm/individual(s) for the 2027 Legislative Session.

Recommended Action: Approve the Government Relations & Legislative Advocacy Request for Qualifications (RFQ) and direct City staff to advertise and distribute the RFQ per the schedule contained within.

Attachment: Government Relations & Legislative Advocacy Request for Qualifications (RFQ)



Request for Qualifications (RFQ)

Professional Consultant Services for:
Government Relations & Legislative Advocacy

Proposals Due: August 14, 2026 by 4:30 p.m.

To the attention of:

Michael Redlinger
City Administrator
City Administrator's Office
225 4th St. N.
Fargo, ND 58102

Email: MRedlinger@FargoND.gov

INTRODUCTION & STATEMENT OF PURPOSE:

The City of Fargo, North Dakota (City) is issuing a Request for Qualification (RFQ) from qualified firms or individuals to provide government relations and legislative advocacy services for the City during the 70th North Dakota Legislative Assembly at the State Capitol in Bismarck, ND. The selected firm or individuals will be expected to provide a wide range of professional services and will work closely with the City Commission, City Administrator, and City staff on all legislative matters.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The Fargo City Administrator coordinates the City's legislative program on behalf of the City Commission and the organization. The Board of City Commissioners identifies, considers, and approves legislative and policy positions that are consistent with advancing the City's legislative agenda. The City's government relations contractor(s) work in collaboration with the City Commission, City Administrator, and City staff to prepare legislative advocacy materials (e.g. written testimony and exhibits); coordinate with other cities and the North Dakota League of Cities (NDLC); and communicate regular, timely updates to the City Commission and City staff throughout the Legislative Session.

Interested firms or individuals should prepare and submit a proposal consistent with the instructions contained in this RFQ. The City of Fargo reserves the right to select one, more than one, or none of the proposals submitted to the City for consideration.

SCOPE OF SERVICES:

The scope of work presented below is representative, although not exhaustive, of tasks assigned by the City to the government relations and legislative advocacy contractor(s). These tasks include:

- Initiate, organize, and conduct internal planning/coordination sessions with the City Commission and City staff on legislative matters of significance to Fargo. The service provider(s) shall develop a comprehensive understanding of the City's legislative initiatives and history on specific issues.
- Assist the City's elected officials and staff to prioritize current legislative interests. Provide strategy, guidance, and background information to focus the City's legislative interests to ensure success.
- Assess the capacity of the City's elected officials and staff to assist with direct government relations activities. Advise the client when supplementary professional services may add value or assist in advancing the City's interests. Include City Commissioners in legislative appearances and testimony opportunities, as well as written communications when deemed appropriate.
- Prepare legislation and testify at the direction of the City Administrator at hearings, meetings, and in informal interactions with legislators. Communications will be consistent with the City's legislative program, and information gathered from these interactions will be provided to City leadership.

- Draft letters or written communications (e.g. position statements) as recommended by the provider(s) and approved by the City Administrator.
- Identify and recommend affirmative legislative opportunities that may benefit the City that arise during the Legislative Session.
- Annually prepare a written summary of accomplishments to the City Commission; forecasting potential legislative or agency issues the City should monitor in the future.

THE PROPOSAL:

- A. Responses must provide complete information as outlined in the RFQ. An electronic or mailed copy of the proposal shall be submitted by **4:30 p.m. on August 14, 2026**. The proposal shall be marked: "City of Fargo Government Relations & Legislative Advocacy RFQ" and be sent to one of the following:

U.S. Mail: Michael Redlinger
City Administrator
City Administrator's Office
City of Fargo
225 4th St. N.
Fargo, ND 58102

Email: MRedlinger@FargoND.gov

- B. The City will not reimburse any expenses incurred by the firm or individual submitting responses, including but not limited to expenses associated with the preparation and submission of the response and attendance at interviews.
- C. The City reserves the right to accept one, accept more than one, or reject any and all proposals; to request additional information from any or all Proposers; and to suggest modifications to the terms and conditions offered by a Proposer.

Proposal Content

Proposals must contain the following elements:

- A. **Title Page** which contains the name of the proposing firm/individual, its address, telephone number, name of the contact person, and the date of submittal.
- B. **Firm/Individual Profile** that contains the firm or individual's organizational history and credentials, including:
 - Who will be assigned to the project and a description of their responsibilities.
 - The size of firm and its capacity/availability to perform work on behalf of the City.
 - The experience of the firm or individual in providing previous government relations and legislative advocacy services for a local unit of government or municipality.
- C. **A Comprehensive Response to the City's Requested Scope of Services**, including:
 - A clear understanding of the requested services.
 - An overview of the firm or individual's approach to meeting the goals, performance expectations, and desired policy outcomes of the City.
 - The process utilized to understand proposed legislation; potential impact or benefit to the City; and strategies to position the City for success.
 - How the firm or individual will communicate with City leadership at the various stages of the legislative process, including:
 - Urgent matters during the Legislative Session that require immediate attention of the City;
 - Routine matters and coordination during the Legislative Session; and
 - The requested "end of Legislative Session" written report to the City Commission.
- D. **Rates, Fees and Charges**

Proposals must provide a complete description of the rate, fee, and charge structure proposed for the services. Proposers should also indicate whether, and to what extent, they are willing to consider the use of a retainer. Such retainer would be a fixed annual fee covering all services rendered.
- E. **Conflict Check**
 - Indicate whether Proposer (firm or individual) represents or has represented any government relations client whose representation may conflict with the Proposer's ability to provide effective government relations and legislative advocacy services to the City.

- Does the Proposer currently represent any other local units of government having jurisdiction contiguous to the City of Fargo?
- What procedures does your firm utilize to identify and resolve conflicts of interest?

EVALUATION AND SELECTION PROCESS:

The City Administrator will review all submitted proposals pursuant to the RFQ and may choose to conduct in-person or telephone interviews. After this initial screening process, the City Administrator will make a recommendation (or recommendations) to the Fargo City Commission. At its discretion, the City Commission may or may not conduct additional interviews with respondents.

At the conclusion of the selection process, the City intends to enter into a professional services agreement with the selected firm or individual(s). Based upon a review of the proposals and such other evaluation as may be necessary, the City Administrator will request that the City Commission approve the appointment of the firm/individual(s) determined to be the most responsive and responsible. Approval of the recommendation and authorization of the professional services agreement is at the sole discretion of the City Commission.

SCHEDULE:

City Commission Approval of RFQ	July 20, 2026
Distribute/Advertise RFQ	July 21 – August 14, 2026
RFQ Due Date	DUE August 14, 2026 by 4:30 p.m.*
Interviews <i>(to be scheduled)</i>	August 20 – 21, 2026
City Commission Appointment & Approval of Professional Service Agreement(s)	August 31, 2026

**Proposals received after August 14, 2026 at 4:30 p.m. will be considered non-responsive and rejected.*