



Request for Proposal: Policy Consultant Services

CISGS Background:

Communities In Schools of the Gulf South, Inc. (CISGS) is part of the nation's leading dropout prevention organization. We work in public schools to surround students with a community of support, empowering them to stay in school and achieve in life. CIS-GS implements our model of Integrated Student Support (ISS) in 35 schools across 5 parishes in southeast Louisiana to deliver local solutions to address unique barriers to student success. Please visit cisgulfsouth.org for more information about our work.

Purpose:

CISGS requests proposals to contract with a policy and lobbying consultant to pursue several policy and advocacy goals over the next 10 months. The contract would run approximately from September, 1st 2024 through June 30th 2025, with the potential to renew annually. CISGS seeks a consultant with sound knowledge of budgetary issues, human services and education policy, a clear understanding of the legislative process, and effective communication skills.

CISGS Goals:

1. Secure direct appropriations for the FY25 budget (final budget proposal of the Governor)

Background: CIS-GS currently receives \$0 per year in funding from the state of Louisiana. In FY22 CIS-GS received a \$450,000 appropriation from the Department of Education, and in FY23 CIS-GS received a \$350,000 appropriation from the state's general fund.

Need: In response to the great urgency in need for CIS's support to mitigate learning loss and non-academic challenges as evidenced by the LDOE's Let Teachers Teach (LTT) recommendations, CIS needs support to reach more schools and students. CISGS completed a strategic plan in 23-24 for a large-scale expansion plan to reach all Title I schools in Louisiana. Strong public-private partnerships will be necessary, and finding new funding sources from other relevant state agencies, such as the Louisiana Department of Health, the Department of Children and Family Services, and the Department of Juvenile Justice, is paramount.

2. Provide consultation and positioning to support the changes to LA laws around mental health professional ratios inside LA public schools.

Background: LA currently only provides legislation requiring 1 mental health

professional for every 450 students in high schools, while there are no ratio requirements for grades K-8. The American School Counselor Association and the National Association of Social Workers recommend schools have a minimum of 1 mental health professional for every 250 students.

Need: Louisiana schools, students, teachers, and communities need mental health support inside schools. The need is even greater for Title 1 schools which have students living below national poverty levels and come to school with a myriad of needs and barriers to their success.

3. Advocate for legislation designating Communities In Schools as the leading provider of integrated student supports, with particular emphasis on supporting Title I schools.

Background: Many CIS affiliates around the country have successfully advocated for legislation that establishes the need for Integrated Student Supports in schools and designated CIS as the leading provider of these services.

Need: CIS-GS seeks sponsorship of a bill identifying the necessity of Integrated Student Supports to school systems and linking CIS as the leading provider of such supports. This bill would underscore the importance of prioritizing Title I-eligible schools and supporting the use of Title I funds for integrated school supports. Several precedents exist within the national CIS network.

Scope of Services

CISGS office seeks to retain the services of a consultant to work with the President and Director of Advocacy to identify opportunities to advance the CIS mission through policy change and state funding. Consultant services will include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Develop positioning for direct appropriations in the governor's budget.
- Assist CIS-VA in the development and implementation of its legislative agenda, key proposals, and policy positions in partnership with the board of directors and affiliate network.
- Identify existing avenues for funding outside of the Department of Education, leveraging CIS's work and impact in the areas of mental and physical health, criminal justice, social justice/equity, workforce development, and economic welfare.
- Develop a strategy for initiating policies that would assist in creating new funding streams, encourage local education agency (LEA) partnership with CIS, and more directly link CIS as a preferred investment for Title I funds.
- Develop and maintain strong communication with key legislative members (specifically members who represent New Orleans, East Baton Rouge, and Acadiana), and facilitate regular meetings with identified stakeholders.
- Report activities at a minimum through the following:
 - Brief weekly written updates to the CIS-GS Director of Advocacy
 - Monthly strategy call with CIS-GS Director of Advocacy and President

Fees/ Compensation:

CIS-GS prefers the proposer(s) offer their fee as a firm, fixed fee schedule which includes all expenses, including travel for the services outlined in this RFP. Final prices will be negotiated between the Proposer and CISGS. CISGS reserves the right to cancel the contract award if the Proposer cannot commit to a contract that has prices within 5% of what is initially quoted.

Proposals requirements:

1. Letter of Interest
 - a. Please address how your work aligns with our core values:
 - i. Advocacy
 - ii. Community Connection
 - iii. Resilient Determination
 - iv. Equity and Inclusion
 - v. Strong Spirited Character
 - vi. Exemplary Professionalism
2. Names of the individual(s) who will be working on the project and their areas of responsibility, including the individual(s) responsible for managing the state office relationship and communication, administering the contract, and lobbying on the agency's behalf
3. Experience and qualification of the individuals named above, highlighting their capacity to perform the related functions as outlined in this proposal
4. A list of at least three clients for whom you have lobbied within the past five years and an example of a success achieved with them. Include the client, contact name, email address, and phone number
5. Proposed fee structure for lobbying services

Proposal Evaluation:

Evaluation: A variety of weighted criteria, given below, will be considered in evaluating proposals. This evaluation will be made based on information provided within the proposal by the Proposer during RFP-specific presentations or negotiations, client references, and industry references.

Component	Scoring Scale	Evaluation Criteria
Proposal Quality	0-50 points	Award of a contract is based on the best value to CISGS: quality, experience, and fitness for the particular purpose. When a solicitation requires an oral presentation, or interview submissions, these factors are part of the component evaluation.
Price	0-30 points for each (Price & Professional References) The highest score is 30 points; however, applicants failing to address a Component entirely will receive a score of zero.	Lowest bid(s) receive 30 points; Highest bid(s) receive 0 points; all other bids receive between 29 and 1 points.
Professional References		Relevant professional experience, but no expertise in project subject; between 5 and 10 years of specified expertise in project subject; more than 10 years of expertise in specific project subject.
Headquartered Location	0-20 points each Applicant has provided verifiable evidence of	20 Points: Principal of Business and Registered Office in Orleans, Iberia, Lafayette, or Baton Rouge Parishes as listed with the Louisiana Secretary of State. 10 Points: Principal of Business and Registered in other LA parish as listed with the Louisiana Secretary of State.

<p>State & Local Disadvantaged Business Enterprise and/or Minority Owned Business</p>	<p>component described by the Evaluation Criteria</p>	<p>20 Points: Certified DBE, a certificate issued by a certifying agency and must be provided with the submission. 15 Points: Principal of Business (owns at least 51% interest and also controls management and daily business operations), as listed with the Louisiana Secretary of State, is a minority- or women-owned business. We will require a copy of the principal business owner(s) driver's license or other state-issued identification. 15 Points: More than 50% of employees are minorities, we will require signature verification of this statement.</p>
<p>Executive Resumes</p>	<p>0-10 points for each Applicant can successfully demonstrate the Component as described by the Evaluation Criteria</p>	<p>Consideration is also given to the applicants' potential ability to perform successfully under the terms and conditions and their past performance record.</p>

Submission of Proposals:

Please submit an electronic version of the proposal to Erin Sims, Director of Advocacy at erins@cisgulfsouth.org.