

**VILLAGE FIRE DEPARTMENT
REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS
PROFESSIONAL LEGAL SERVICES
DEPARTMENT ATTORNEY**

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Responses shall be submitted no later than:

10:00 am, August 21, 2026

Responses received after the stated deadline will not be considered. Respondents shall submit:

- One (1) original signed response; and
- One (1) electronic PDF copy.

Responses shall be clearly marked: "RFQ – VFD ATTORNEY SERVICES" and delivered to:

**Village Fire Department
Attn: Administrator/Finance Director
901 Corbindale Rd.
Houston, TX 77024**

abuckert@villagefire.org

Electronic submissions by email are acceptable and encouraged. Emailed responses shall be submitted as a single PDF document and clearly identified in the subject line as:

"RFQ Submission – VFD Attorney Services." The Department is not responsible for incomplete, corrupted, late, or undelivered electronic submissions.

Respondents may provide information regarding billing practices, hourly rates, retainer structures, and alternative fee arrangements. Such information is requested for informational purposes only and shall not be used as a primary factor in the selection process. The Department reserves the right to negotiate fees with the most qualified respondent in accordance with applicable Texas law.

Questions regarding this RFQ shall be directed to the Administrator/Finance Director. No respondent shall contact individual Commissioners regarding this solicitation outside publicly authorized processes.

If questions are submitted, the Department may need to issue clarifications. Any material changes or clarifications will be issued by written addendum, and respondents are responsible for acknowledging addenda.

I. PURPOSE

The Village Fire Department ("Department") is soliciting responses from qualified attorneys or law firms to provide professional legal services as Department Attorney.

The Department Attorney's client shall be the Village Fire Department as a governmental entity, acting through the Fire Commission Board of Commissioners and authorized Department officials. The Department Attorney shall serve as legal counsel to the Fire Commission Board of Commissioners, Board of Commissioners ("Board"), Fire Chief, Administrator/Finance Director, and Department staff on matters relating to Department operations, governance, employment matters, procurement, contracts, grants, and compliance with applicable federal, state, and local laws.

II. DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

The Village Fire Department is governed by a Fire Commission Board of Commissioners, also referred to as the Board of Commissioners or Board. The Chair serves as the presiding officer of the Fire Commission Board of Commissioners.

The Fire Chief serves as the Department's highest management official and chief executive officer for operational matters.

The Administrator/Finance Director serves as the Department's chief administrative and financial officer and shall serve as the primary point of contact for this solicitation.

The Department Attorney shall provide legal advice and representation to the Fire Commission Board of Commissioners, Fire Chief, Administrator/Finance Director, and Department staff as authorized by the Board.

III. TERM OF AGREEMENT

The Department intends to enter into a professional services agreement for an initial term of two (2) years. The agreement may be renewed for up to two (2) additional two-year terms upon mutual agreement of the parties and approval by the Fire Commission Board of Commissioners. Either party may terminate the agreement with thirty (30) days' written notice.

IV. MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

Respondents must demonstrate:

1. Active licensure and good standing with the State Bar of Texas.
2. A minimum of five (5) years of experience providing legal services to Texas municipalities, special districts, emergency services districts, fire departments, or other governmental entities.
3. Demonstrated experience advising governmental boards, commissions, governing bodies, or elected officials.

4. Demonstrated knowledge of appropriate and applicable Texas laws and statutes involving
 - Texas Open Meetings Act;
 - Texas Public Information Act;
 - Texas Local Government Code;
 - Texas Government Code;
 - Texas Health and Safety Code provisions applicable to fire departments and emergency services organizations;
 - Public-sector personnel and employment law;
 - Government procurement and contracting requirements;
 - Ethics and conflict-of-interest laws.
5. Ability to provide timely legal advice and response to Department officials and staff.
6. Ability to provide periodic training regarding Open Meetings Act, Public Information Act, ethics requirements, and conflict-of-interest laws.

V. PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS

Preference may be given to respondents demonstrating experience in the following areas:

1. Texas Health and Safety Code provisions applicable to fire departments, emergency services districts, emergency response agencies, and related governmental entities.
2. Governmental risk management, liability issues, insurance coverage matters, and experience working with Texas Municipal League (TML), TML Risk Pool, Texas Municipal Risk Pool, or similar governmental insurance programs.
3. Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), workers' compensation, employment classification, disciplinary actions, personnel policies, workplace investigations, and public-sector employment law.
4. Mutual aid agreements, automatic aid agreements, interlocal cooperation agreements, and regional emergency response agreements.
5. Public procurement, competitive bidding requirements, cooperative purchasing programs, purchasing statutes, and contract administration.
6. Federal, state, and local grant compliance, including FEMA, Assistance to Firefighters Grants (AFG), SAFER Grants, Homeland Security Grants, and related funding programs.
7. Public records management, records retention requirements, cybersecurity-related legal issues, and governmental transparency requirements.
8. Experience representing fire departments, emergency services districts, emergency response agencies, or similar public safety organizations.

VI. SCOPE OF SERVICES

A. General Legal Services

1. Provide legal advice and counsel to the Fire Commission Board of Commissioners, Fire Chief, Administrator/Finance Director, and Department staff.
2. Review, draft, revise, and negotiate:
 - Contracts;
 - Interlocal agreements;

- Mutual aid agreements;
 - Automatic aid agreements;
 - Memoranda of understanding;
 - Leases;
 - Policies and procedures;
 - Resolutions;
 - Other governing documents.
3. Advice regarding:
 - Open Meetings Act compliance;
 - Public Information Act compliance;
 - Ethics requirements;
 - Conflict-of-interest matters;
 - Procurement and purchasing requirements;
 - Personnel matters;
 - Employment issues;
 - Governmental operations;
 - Regulatory compliance;
 - Public records requirements.
 4. Provide legal opinions upon request of the Fire Commission Board of Commissioners, Fire Chief, or Administrator/Finance Director.
 5. Assist with Public Information Act requests and Attorney General submissions when necessary.
 6. Monitor changes in federal and state laws affecting the Department and advise the Department regarding operational impacts.

B. Meetings

1. Attend all regular Fire Commission Board of Commissioners meetings in person.
2. Attend special meetings, workshops, public hearings, committee meetings, and other meetings as requested by the Fire Commission Board of Commissioners, Fire Chief, or Administrator/Finance Director.
3. Provide legal advice regarding procedural, governance, and compliance matters during meetings.
4. If the designated Department Attorney is unable to attend a regular Fire Commission Board of Commissioners meeting, the respondent shall provide qualified substitute counsel acceptable to the Department unless excused in advance by the Fire Commission Board of Commissioners.

C. Training

Provide periodic training to Commissioners and Department staff regarding:

- Texas Open Meetings Act;
- Texas Public Information Act;
- Ethics requirements;
- Conflict-of-interest requirements;
- Public records obligations;
- Other legal topics relevant to Department operations.

D. Personnel and Employment Matters

1. Provide legal advice regarding personnel policies and procedures.
2. Assist with disciplinary matters, investigations, employment practices, workplace issues, and compliance with applicable employment laws.
3. Provide advice regarding FLSA compliance, workers' compensation matters, employment classifications, and related personnel issues.

E. Procurement and Contracting

1. Advise the Department regarding public procurement requirements and purchasing procedures.
2. Review bid documents, requests for responses/qualifications, contracts, and purchasing agreements.
3. Assist with compliance relating to grants, purchasing cooperatives, and state and federal funding requirements.

F. Emergency Services Agreements

1. Draft and review mutual aid agreements, automatic aid agreements, dispatch agreements, communications agreements, EMS agreements, and other intergovernmental service agreements.
2. Advise regarding regional emergency response partnerships and cooperative service arrangements.

G. Special Projects

Provide legal assistance for major projects including:

- Intergovernmental agreements;
- Strategic initiatives;
- Governance matters;
- Policy development;
- Property acquisition;
- Facility development;
- Other projects authorized by the Fire Commission Board of Commissioners.

H. Litigation

Provide legal representation or coordinate legal services for litigation matters not assigned to insurance counsel, special counsel, or other attorneys retained by the Department. Respondents shall identify any services excluded from their standard representation, including litigation, appeals, labor proceedings, or special counsel matters. The Department reserves the right to retain separate litigation counsel when deemed appropriate.

VII. RESPONSE EXPECTATIONS

The Department expects:

1. Routine inquiries to receive acknowledgment within one (1) business day.
2. Urgent operational matters to receive same-day response when reasonably possible.
3. Attendance in person at all regular Fire Commission Board of Commissioners meetings.
4. Attendance at special meetings and workshops as reasonably requested by the Department.

5. Availability to consult with the Fire Chief, Administrator/Finance Director, and Commissioners regarding operational, governance, personnel, procurement, grant, and compliance matters.

Respondents should describe their availability, staffing, after-hours accessibility, emergency contact procedures, and methods for handling urgent legal matters.

VIII. RESPONSE REQUIREMENTS

Each response shall include:

1. Firm name, address, organizational structure, and years in business.
2. Identification of the attorney who will serve as lead Department Attorney.
3. Identify the office location of the lead attorney and estimated travel time to regular Fire Commission Board of Commissioners meetings.
4. Qualifications, education, certifications, and experience of all attorneys anticipated to provide services.
5. Description of municipal, governmental, emergency services district, fire department, or public safety legal experience.
6. List of current governmental clients.
7. List of former governmental clients represented during the previous five (5) years.
8. If selected, confirm you have no known conflicts of interest with the Village Fire Department, employees, or Commissioners.
9. A minimum of five (5) governmental references.
10. Proof of professional liability insurance coverage.
11. Disclosure of any disciplinary actions, claims, lawsuits, investigations, or proceedings involving the firm or proposed attorneys during the previous five (5) years.
12. Describe your philosophy regarding the attorney-client relationship with governmental entities.
13. Description of experience with:
 - Open Meetings Act compliance;
 - Public Information Act compliance;
 - Employment law;
 - Procurement law;
 - Grant compliance;
 - Mutual aid and emergency service agreements;
 - Any other experiences the firm may find relevant.

IX. CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURES

Respondents shall comply with Chapter 176 of the Texas Local Government Code and all applicable ethics and disclosure laws. Respondents shall disclose any actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest involving the Department, Commissioners, Fire Chief, Administrator/Finance Director, employees, contractors, or related governmental entities. Describe procedures for handling conflicts of interest and the use of substitute or special counsel when required.

X. INSURANCE

Respondents shall maintain professional liability insurance appropriate for the provision of legal services and shall provide proof of coverage upon request.

XI. EVALUATION CRITERIA

Responses may be evaluated using the following criteria:

Qualifications and Experience – **25 Points**

Governmental, Municipal, and Fire Service Legal Experience – **25 Points**

Personnel, Employment, Procurement, and Governance Experience – **20 Points**

Approach, Availability, and Responsiveness – **15 Points**

References – **15 Points**

The Department reserves the right to interview one or more respondents as part of the evaluation process.

XII. INQUIRIES

All inquiries regarding this Request for Qualifications shall be directed to: Administrator/Finance Director, Village Fire Department at **abuckert@villagefire.org**. No respondent shall contact individual Commissioners regarding this solicitation outside publicly authorized processes.

XIII. RESERVATION OF RIGHTS

The Department reserves the right to:

1. Reject any or all responses;
2. Waive informalities or irregularities;
3. Request additional information;
4. Conduct interviews;
5. Negotiate with one or more respondents;
6. Select the response determined to provide the best interest to the Department;
7. Cancel this solicitation at any time.