REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

UTILITY BILL PRINTING AND MAILING SERVICES

Prepared by:

CITY OF GRASS VALLEY
FINANCE DEPARTMENT
125 EAST MAIN STREET
GRASS VALLEY, CA. 95945
1.0 Introduction

1.1 Proposed Solicitation

The City of Grass Valley, hereinafter referred to as the “City” is soliciting proposals for qualified vendors to process, print and mail utility bills on a monthly basis.

1.2 General Information about the City of Grass Valley

The City is located in Nevada County, California. It is situated in the Sierra Nevada foothills, approximately 45 miles northeast of Sacramento. In March 1893, Grass Valley became a Charter City. The Charter has been amended several times since it was established. The most recent changes were developed by an appointed Charter Review Committee in January 1993, and approved by Grass Valley voters in May 1996.

Grass Valley's revised Charter establishes a Council-Administrator type of government, in which the elected Council provides political leadership and sets policy while a professional administrator directs the various City departments in carrying out that policy. It has a five-member council. The five members of the City Council are elected at-large. The Council meets on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month.

The vendor’s principal contact will be Deborah Sultan, Finance Manager. Other City staff will coordinate requests for information, scheduling of meetings and other communication between the City. Grass Valley City Hall is located at 125 East Main Street, Grass Valley, California 94945. The telephone number is (530) 274-4300.

2.0 Scope of Services

2.1 Description of City Utility Billing Process

The City of Grass Valley’s Utility Billing provides for the billing and collection of all utility accounts for water and sewer services. It is a current function of the Finance Department.

Utility Billing data is processed monthly with all accounts billed on a bi-monthly basis. The number of bills mailed out monthly fluctuates based on the routes being billed. There are approximately 1,300 bills mailed on the odd months and 2,900 bills mailed in the even months. The bills are currently printed on 6.5 x 4 postcards. In addition, approximately 500 reminder notices are mailed out each month. The reminder notices are printed on 6.5 x 4 forms mailed in a 6 ¾ envelope.
2.2 Objective

The objective of the Request for Proposal (RFP) is to provide qualified suppliers with the necessary information for preparing quotes to print, stuff, and mail utility bills monthly. In addition the City seeks to develop an improved design for its utility bill format using 8.5 x 11 inch printed stock with a perforation for the tear off payment stub. The City is seeking a supplier that can provide design and format services that would result in a flexible, professional and easy to understand billing statement. Specific requirements for the services requested are listed in Section 2.3 “Scope of Work”.

2.3 Scope of Work

1. Supplier must be a full service supplier who is capable of providing all services requested with no subcontracting of any portions of the project, including presorting, artwork, programming and electronic present of bills and statements.
2. Supplier must provide programming and bill design services as required. The design should be able to accommodate the use of graphics, bar graphs and color where feasible.
3. The supplier must provide a means for secure data transmission and confirm receipt of the data.
4. The supplier will be required to print, insert, meter and mail via first class postage the completed statements the same business day. Supplier must make every effort to mail it the same-day, and if this is not possible the bills must be mailed the next business day. Supplier must contractually guarantee this schedule.
5. Supplier must store/warehouse all forms and envelopes used to process City bills. Supplier must provide one per-unit fee that includes all services, except postage. Per-unit fee must include all materials, data processing, printing and warehousing required printing and mailing each bill. Per-unit price must be all-inclusive and there can be no additional charges for jammed/wasted materials or other overhead.
6. The supplier must provide for the City to view and approve sample bills online before the bills are printed and mailed, at no additional cost to the City.
7. Upon City request, supplier must be willing to provide at no cost parallel data processing for one to two month, or until City’s satisfaction before official start of service. Supplier will provide data processing and display bills in PDF format.
8. The supplier must support bill inserts printed by the City and provide insert printing services as well.
9. Supplier must provide electronic pre-sorting services to maximize postal discounts and mail bills at lowest first class rate. Software used to pre-sort must be USPS approved.
10. There are two preprinted forms. 1. Utility Services Statement, and 2. Reminder Notice. Each form should have a tear off payment stub.
11. Supplier to provide window #10 mailing envelope with security tinting to mask bill contents. Return envelope should be a single window #9 with security tinting.
12. Supplier must provide software with the ability to filter (remove) statements from the electronic database for the following exceptions:
• Statements that are recalculated during the billing period
• Statements where the account had had an adjustment
• Statements where the account has had a classification change
• Previously identified problem accounts

13. Access to two years historical statement data will be required along with the ability by the Finance staff to remotely reprint statements on a real-time basis. Vendor will supply an Excel spreadsheet template capable of printing a statement on a pre-printed form by the Finance staff.

14. Supplier must have a disaster recovery facility to process City bills if the supplier’s main facility becomes inoperable. List locations and information on all facilities.

15. Experience with Corbin Willits Systems, MOM’s Software (Multiple Operations Manager) is preferred.

2.4 Services to be conducted by Supplier

1. Conduct initial discussion with the City to develop an in-depth understanding of utility billing process.
2. Submit written data or other requests for information to the City.
3. Supply a time schedule for initial implementation to process, print and mail utility bills, as well as on-going provision of same services.
4. Implement all services described in Section 2.3 “Scope of Work”

2.5 Services to be conducted by the City of Grass Valley

City staff will provide the supplier with all relevant information necessary for implementation of requested services.

3.0 Conditions and Requirements

3.1 Cost Proposal and Pricing

The supplier will provide detailed costs of all services pertaining to Section 2.3 “Scope of Work”. Prices quoted by suppliers will be firm prices, not subject to increase during the term of the contractual agreement arising with the City as a result of this proposal. Suppliers quoted prices shall include any applicable state and federal tax. Suppliers are to stipulate the expiration date of their quoted proposal.

3.2 Evaluation Criteria

The City’s final selection will not be dictated on any single factor including price. The City’s RFP team will evaluate proposals and will include both objective and subjective analysis. Proposals will be evaluated on the basis of experience, qualifications, technology and resources, and any innovative ideas presented for making the utility billing process proceed quickly and smoothly.
1. Comprehensiveness of Services Provided: The supplier must have the capability to meet the required service levels described in this RFP.
2. Public Sector Experience and References: The supplier's experience in providing services to the public sector as well as client references.
3. Assigned Relationship Management Team: The credentials and experience of staff assigned to our relationship.
4. Technology and Resources: The available technology and resources necessary to perform both utility bill design and format services as well as monthly utility bill printing, stuffing and mailing services.

Final selection will be based on the evaluation of proposals unless it is deemed necessary by the RFP team to conduct interviews of closely scored firms. The supplier determined best qualified to perform this project will be recommended to the City Council for contract award.

3.3 Right to Request Additional Information

During the evaluation process, the RFP team and the City reserve the right, where it may serve the best interest of the City, to request additional information and clarification from suppliers.

3.4 Right to Reject Any or All Proposals

The City reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, to waive technicalities or formalities and to accept any proposal deemed in the best interest of the City. When two or more suppliers are deemed equal, the City reserves the right to make the award to one of the two suppliers.

3.5 Contracts

It is recognized that the formal basis of any agreement between the City and the supplier is a contract rather than a proposal. In submitting proposals, suppliers must indicate that they are prepared to complete a contract containing all the information submitted in their proposals. The proposal will become part of the contract between the City and the successful supplier.

3.6 Undue Influence

The supplier declares and warrants that no undue influence or pressure is used against or in concert with any officer or employee of the City in connection with the award or terms of the Contract that will be executed as a result of this RFP, including any method of coercion, confidential financial arrangement, or financial inducement. Nor officer or employee of the City will receive compensation, directly or indirectly, from the supplier, or from any officer, employee or agent of the supplier, in connection with the award of the Contract or any work to be conducted as a result of the RFP. Violation of this Section shall be a material breach of the Contract entitling the City to any and all remedies by law or in equity.

Agenda Item 12-
3.7 Non Discrimination

The City maintains various policies related to contractual service providers. Among these is an anti-discrimination policy, which requires that contractors not discriminate in hiring on the basis of age, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, or medical condition. Upon acceptance of a proposal, the City may request that the selected supplier sign a statement affirming their compliance with this policy.

4.0 Vendor Proposal Format

4.1 Proposal Format:

To assist the City in its evaluation of submitted proposals, it is required that each proposal adheres to the following format:

1. **Summary Sheet** - The first page of the proposal must be a completed Supplier Summary Sheet (see Appendix A)
2. **Letter of Transmittal** – In the letter of transmittal the supplier shall describe their understanding of the work to be performed and why the vendor is the best qualified to perform the services requested. This letter of transmittal must state the names of the individual(s) authorized to negotiate with the City and sign contracts on behalf of the supplier.
3. **Company Overview**: Provide a brief background and history of the company. State whether the vendor is local, national or international. Identify nearest full service branch that will assist us with our immediate utility billing needs.
4. **Experience**: Describe the supplier’s experience in providing services to the public sector and any exclusive resources dedicated to the public sector. Supplier should list at least three (3) references with similar requirements to the City of Grass Valley. Include a brief description of the services provided, how long such services have been provided and a contact person and telephone number for each client described.
5. **Relationship Management**: Describe the team that will be assigned to service our relationship. Provide the name, title, and experience of each individual and the roles, responsibilities and a brief account of their credentials and related utility billing experience. Give the name(s) of the person(s) who will be authorized to make representations for the supplier, their title(s), addresses and telephone numbers.
6. **Data Requirements**: List all data requirements, other than what has been indentified in the RFP, that will be required to implement the requested services and in what type of format the data must be provided.
7. **Pricing Schedule**: Supplier must provide a per statement fee that includes data processing, bill printing, mail preparation and delivery to USPS. Supplier must also provide an itemization of setup fees, including initial programming, assistance on re-design of bill, testing and implementation.
8. **Pricing Terms & Conditions**: Describe all proposed terms and conditions, including, with limitation, written warranties, maintenance/service agreements, and license agreements.
9. **Samples**: Supplier should provide utility bill samples from other clients. Samples should be provided on actual bill stock and printed using a production printer. Supplier should also show sample reports and screenshots on key account management features on supplier’s website.

10. **Conversion Plan**: The supplier must provide on-sight training to our staff for the operation and use of its utility billing services. Describe the plan the supplier will coordinate to ensure a smooth transition.

11. **Service Enhancements**: Based upon the information presented in this RFP and the supplier’s knowledge of the public sector, describe any enhancements, technological or otherwise, that the City should consider to improve operational efficiency.

12. **Additional Information**: Supplier should describe any information not previously mentioned that the supplier believes should be considered.

**4.1 Certification of Proposals**

Submit a completed Certification of Proposal to the City (see Appendix A).

**5.0 Proposal Schedule**

**5.1 Distribution of RFP**: June 25, 2008

**5.2 Final Date for Receipt of Proposals**: July 25, 2008 @ 5:00 PM

Proposals must be received at City Hall no later than 5:00 PM on Friday July 25, 2008. Proposals received in the mail after this deadline will not be accepted regardless of their postmarked date. Facsimiles will not be accepted. Please include the original proposal and two (2) copies.

**5.3 Evaluation and Review**: The RFP team will evaluate proposals through August 8, 2008.

**5.4 Notification to Suppliers**: August 12, 2008

The RFP team will recommend a supplier to the City Administrator and a notification will be sent to all participating suppliers about the results of the review and the contract award process.

**5.5 Finalist Negotiations Complete**: August 12-31st, 2008

The RFP team will negotiate with the successful supplier on contract details during the period of August 2008.

**5.6 City Council Approval**: August 12th or 26th, 2008

The contract for services will be submitted to the City Council for approval.

**5.7 Training/Implementation**: Within 30 days from contract approval. The successful supplier will begin training and transition activities with staff in the Finance Department, in preparation for mailing the billings the following month.
Appendix A

Supplier Summary Sheet

Supplier Name:________________________________________________________

Supplier Parent or Ownership:____________________________________________

Supplier Address:______________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

Supplier Phone Number_____________________ Fax Number_________________

Management person responsible for direct contact with the City and the services required for this Request for Proposal (RFP):

Name:_______________________________________________________________

Title:________________________________________________________________

Phone Number________________________________________________________

Email Address:________________________________________________________

Person responsible for day-to-day servicing of the account:

Name:_______________________________________________________________

Title:________________________________________________________________

Phone Number:________________________________________________________

Email Address:________________________________________________________
Appendix B

Certification of Proposal to the City of Grass Valley

1. The undersigned hereby submits its proposal and, by doing so, agrees to furnish services to the City in accordance with the Request for Proposal (RFP) and to be bound by the terms and conditions of the RFP.

2. This supplier has carefully reviewed its proposal and understands and agrees that the City is not responsible for any errors or omissions on the part of the supplier and that the supplier is responsible for these.

3. It is understood and agreed that the City reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals and to waive any informality or irregularity in any proposal received by the City.

4. The proposal includes all the commentary, figures and data required by the Request for Proposal.

5. This supplier has carefully read and understands all of the items contained in Section 3, Conditions and Requirements.

6. The proposal by this supplier is an irrevocable offer and shall be valid for 120 days from date of submission.

Name of Supplier:______________________________________________________

By (Authorized Signature):______________________________ Date:____________

Name:_______________________________________________________________

Title:________________________________________________________________

Address:_____________________________________________________________

Phone Number:________________________  Fax number:_____________________ 

Email Address:________________________________________________________

Agenda Item 12-