



NPCC Request for Proposal Independent Contractor

A. Background

Northeast Power Coordinating Council, Inc. (NPCC) is a not-for-profit corporation responsible for promoting and improving the reliability of the international, interconnected bulk power system in Northeastern North America. More information about NPCC can be found on its website at <https://www.npcc.org>

NPCC is soliciting proposals to retain Independent Contractor services to assist NPCC in conducting compliance audits and internal controls reviews of registered entities in the Northeastern United States and Canada. Section B describes the scope of the services being sought.

NPCC is seeking Independent Contractors in two areas:

1. Those who have experience and knowledge of electric utility industry Operations and Planning (O&P) concepts and practices. In a team environment, the Independent Contractor would audit and assess the associated internal controls of the registered entity against the NERC Operations and Planning Reliability Standards. Aspects of relevant experience include:
 - a. Familiarity in the development and/or implementation of NERC compliance programs.
 - b. Transmission system operations working as a System Operator.
 - c. Energy Management System (EMS) engineering.
 - d. Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) modeling.
 - e. Transmission planning.
 - f. Substation design and maintenance.
 - g. Protection system design and/or maintenance.
 - h. Transmission line design and maintenance.

2. Those who have experience and knowledge of electric utility industry cyber security and physical security concepts and practices. In a team environment, the Independent Contractor would audit and assess the associated internal controls of the registered entity against the NERC Critical Infrastructure Protection (CIP) Reliability Standards. Aspects of relevant experience include:
 - a. Familiarity in the development and/or implementation of NERC CIP compliance programs.
 - b. Providing technical support for industrial control systems such as SCADA/EMS.
 - c. Designing, implementing and/or supporting cyber and physical security controls for industrial control systems such as SCADA/EMS.
 - d. Strong knowledge of information security concepts and practices.
 - e. Strong knowledge of networking infrastructure.
 - f. Working knowledge of electric utility operations.

- g. CISSP in good standing preferred.
- h. CISA in good standing preferred.

B. The Scope of Services

Respondents must be qualified to:

1. Participate in compliance audits, including technical review of submitted material. Ensure that all aspects of the audit have been conducted consistent with NPCC procedures and policies.
2. Evaluate technical evidence to become reasonable assured that audited entities are in compliance with applicable NERC CIP and O&P Standards.
3. Review the facts and circumstances of each discovery of noncompliance to provide input on initial root cause and risk to the Bulk Power System.
4. Participate in the assessment of entities internal controls during audits and evidentiary review periods.
5. Evaluate of the Risk and Mitigation actions of Self-Reported non-compliances.
6. Create evidentiary record to ensure there is sufficient documentation to support NPCC's compliance determination and that a complete and final record exists.
7. Participate in NERC and NPCC informational sessions.
8. Document the review of evidence and rationale for audit findings and internal control results on NPCC/NERC templates while also making data entries into NPCC systems.
9. Other activities as appropriate and assigned.

C. Minimum Insurance Requirements

Respondents who apply to be retained as an Independent Contractor at NPCC must be self-insured and are required to maintain, as a minimum, the following coverages and limits:

1. Commercial General Liability Insurance with contractual liability coverage (for all contracts related to the work) and bodily injury, property damage, and personal injury in policy or policies of insurance such that the total available limits combined shall not be less than \$1,000,000 per person, \$1,000,000 each occurrence, and \$1,000,000 general aggregate limit.
2. Automobile Liability Insurance covering all owned, non-owned, and hired automobile, trucks and trailers. Such insurance shall provide coverage not less than that of a Standard Commercial Automobile Liability policy (or business Auto Policy) including owned, non-owned or hired vehicles in limits not less than \$1,000,000 Combined Single Limit each occurrence for bodily Injury and Property Damage on an annual basis.
3. Excess Umbrella Liability of \$1,000,000.
4. Worker's Compensation Insurance in statutory limits of the worker's compensation laws for the state(s) in which the work is performed and Employer's Liability Insurance limits of \$1,000,000 per occurrence, \$1,000,000 for bodily injury by disease policy limit, and

\$1,000,000 for bodily injury by disease for each employee. This is not required if independent contractor has no employees (e.g., a sole proprietor).

5. Insurance specified herein above shall be minimum requirements and the Independent Contractor is responsible for providing any additional insurance deemed necessary to protect Independent Contractor interests from other hazards or claims in excess of the minimum coverage requirements. The liability of the Independent Contractor to the Company is not limited to Independent Contractor's insurance coverage.
6. All certificates of insurance shall also indicate in the special items section that "Yoh Services, LLC" and "NPCC, Inc." have been endorsed on the insurance policies as additional insureds as their interests may apply.

D. Confidentiality, Code of Conduct, Conflict of Interest, Background Check

Independent Contractor(s) selected shall be required to maintain the confidentiality of information performed under the scope of work. As such, the selected Independent Contractor(s) shall be required to execute a confidentiality agreement.

Independent Contractor(s) selected shall be required to adhere to the NPCC Code of Conduct Policy and shall execute a conflict of interest agreement.

Independent Contractor(s) selected shall be subject to a background check that requires results satisfactory to NPCC.

E. Fees

Respondent shall propose remuneration for Independent Contracting services on an hourly basis not to exceed:

1. \$150/hour for audits and assessment of internal controls
2. \$100/hour for NERC and NPCC informational and training sessions
3. \$50/hour for travel time

All payments for services rendered will be in United States dollars.

NPCC will provide reimbursement for reasonable travel expenses. The per diem for meals and incidental expenses is \$100.00 consistent with the NPCC Business Expense Policy.

F. Costs Related to Responding to this RFP

All costs and expenses incurred by respondents related to the preparation of the response to this proposal shall be borne by the respondent. NPCC is not liable to pay such costs and expenses, to reimburse, or to compensate the respondent under any circumstance.

G. Selection

All bids/proposals will be treated confidentially by NPCC.

All bids/proposals must be submitted without collusion. NPCC reserves the right to reject a proposal that has not been derived independently.

A response to the RFP creates no contractual or other rights or obligations. Failure by NPCC to select a Respondent for negotiations shall create no claim, or cause of action, legal or equitable, including but not limited to, damages for Respondent's cost of preparation.

A contract is expected to be made to one or more respondents based on the proposals/bids that are the most cost effective, fair, reasonable, and in the best interest of NPCC.

The contract is expected to have a 12 month duration (Starting on the 1st of Month 1 and ending on the 30th/31st of Month 11). However, NPCC reserves its right to terminate at any time.

At minimum, active membership in the Institute of Internal Auditors (IIA) shall be required and maintained and be in effect no later than the first day of the contract.

Evidence or certificate of the completion of mandatory NYC sexual harassment training shall be provided no later than the first day of the contract. More information is available here: <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/cchr/law/sexual-harassment-training.page>

NPCC does not provide materials or equipment. Independent Contractors are required to supply and maintain their own cyber asset. Independent Contractors must afford the following minimum protections to personal cyber assets that are being used to perform NPCC objectives:

1. Security patching
2. Antivirus software
3. Full-disk encryption with authentication

H. Form of Responses

Respondents should provide a detailed description of qualifications that responds to the RFP information in Section B, which includes a resume, and a description of the firm including name of firm, complete mailing address, contact person, telephone number, and email.

If selected, respondent should be prepared to provide the following:

1. Proof of valid insurance as specified in Section C.
2. Proof of one of the following active accreditations:
 - CISSP, CISA, CIA, CGAP:
 - Or
 - Proof of active annual membership in the Institute of Internal Auditors (IIA)
3. Proof of completed sexual harassment training
4. Proof of cyber asset protection

Proposals and/or questions should be delivered to Filloreta Bicaj at fbicaj@npcc.org.