



REQUEST FOR INFORMATION (RFI)
PROPOSED
NATIONAL PROCUREMENT
FOR
PRIVATE SECTOR FLEETS

Issued by:

National Association of Regional Councils (NARC)
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INTRODUCTION:

The Aggregated Alternative Technology Alliance, known as “Fleets for the Future” (F4F), seeks to achieve nationwide economies of scale for alternative fuel vehicles (AFVs) through aggregated procurement initiatives. F4F plans to accomplish these economies of scale through a coordinated strategy designed to increase knowledge, lower the transaction costs of procurement, achieve better pricing, and address potential challenges arising from large-scale procurement initiatives, thereby increasing the deployment of alternative fuel vehicles in public and private sector fleets. The F4F team received a competitive award from the U.S. Department of Energy’s Clean Cities program to establish national and regional aggregate purchasing programs. The team is comprised of national and regional partners with extended networks and relationships that can increase and aggregate the demand for alternative fuels and advanced vehicles. The project includes a regional procurement initiative spearheaded by each of the team’s five participating regional councils, as well as a national procurement effort.

Lead Agency: National Association of Regional Councils (NARC)

Regional Planning Councils:

Mid-America Regional Council, Kansas City, MO
Metropolitan Washington COG, Washington, DC
Metropolitan Area Planning Council, Boston, MA
North Central Texas COG, Dallas/Fort Worth, TX
Pima Association of Governments, Tucson, AZ

Clean Cities Coalitions:

Metropolitan Energy Center /Kansas City Regional CCC
Clean Communities of Central New York
Dallas-Fort Worth CCC
Greater Washington Region CCC
Massachusetts CCC
Tucson Regional CCC
Utah Clean Cities

Western Washington CCC
Clean Fuels Ohio

Technical Partners:

Meister Consultants Group, Inc.
Electrification Coalition
Yborra & Associates, LLC
ICM, Inc.
Propane Education & Research Council

Overall, F4F will enable fleets to obtain vehicles that will both reduce emissions and operate at a lower total cost of ownership. AFVs that use electricity, propane autogas, and natural gas all have desirable benefits, including less reliance on foreign petroleum, reduced fuel costs, reduced maintenance costs, and contributions to local air quality improvement. In order to achieve these savings, fleet managers must justify the higher upfront cost of investing in AFVs. By harnessing the power of cooperative procurement to reduce transaction costs and to obtain bulk pricing, F4F aims to reduce the upfront cost premium and make an even stronger case for investing in AFVs.

The F4F team has also compiled fleet management and procurement best practices specifically relevant to alternative fuels. These best practices build upon both the extensive information provided by the U.S. DOE and a number of recent successful case studies. The specific goal of these best practice guides is to educate procurement officers, fleet managers and other interested stakeholders to plan for a large scale deployment of AFVs.

The F4F team has also produced a series of four best practice guides. They are:

1. Guide to Financing Alternative Fuel Vehicle Procurement
2. Fleet Transition Planning for Alternative Fuel Vehicles
3. Electric Vehicle Procurement Best Practices Guide
4. Gaseous Fuel Vehicle Procurement Best Practices Guide

The guides can be accessed by going to <http://www.fleetsforthefuture.org/best-practices/>

A. RFI PURPOSE AND INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Request for Information (“RFI”) is to facilitate a process to gauge interest from trade associations or other agencies that have a national membership base or the capacity to reach a national target audience to create a cooperative procurement program that includes alternative fuel vehicles (AFV). The target audience is private sector fleets, or the commercial market. The F4F project currently includes a national-scale **public sector** procurement initiative for AFVs along with fleet services, parts and equipment. The [National Joint Powers Alliance](#) (NJPA) and the F4F team have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding to join forces in promoting AFVs through NJPA’s national vehicle program already in place. NJPA has nine national vendors under contract that offer a selection of fleet services, parts, equipment, school buses, and vehicles and chassis, with AFV upfit options for purchase and possible leasing arrangements. It would be ideal to set up a program similar, yet smaller in scale, to the NJPA program to respond to the needs of the private sector fleet market.

The fleet services, parts, equipment, vehicles and chassis that have been identified by the F4F team for possible inclusion in a private sector cooperative procurement program are listed below. The F4F team is considering selecting small number of vehicle/platforms (three or more AFV models) that have the largest potential for an aggregated procurement project to begin the National Cooperative Purchasing program.

Propane Vehicles
Class 4-7 cab and chassis w utility body and F450/550/650/750/F53/F59 platforms
¾-ton/1-ton pickup (dedicated CNG)
Low Cab Forward (LCF) or Cab Over Engine (COE) refuse truck w side loader or front loader (e.g. Mack LR/LE, Crane Carrier LET, Autocar Xpeditor)
Compact sedan/SUV (bi-fuel and dedicated CNG)
Class 7 dump/plow truck (e.g. Freightliner M2-112, SD 114; Peterbilt 348; Kenworth T440/470)
Ford Transit
Natural Gas Vehicle
Class 4-7 cab and chassis w utility body and F450/550/650/750/F53/F59 platforms
¾-ton/1-ton pickup (dedicated CNG)
Low Cab Forward (LCF) or Cab Over Engine (COE) refuse truck w side loader or front loader (e.g. Mack LR/LE, Crane Carrier LET, Autocar Xpeditor)
Compact sedan/SUV (bi-fuel and dedicated CNG)
Class 7 dump/plow truck (e.g. Freightliner M2-112, SD 114; Peterbilt 348; Kenworth T440/470)
Ford Transit
Electric Vehicles
Plug-in Hybrid Electric Vehicle (PHEV) (e.g. Ford Fusion, Chevy Volt, and Ford C-Max)
Battery Electric Vehicle (BEV) (e.g. Nissan Leaf; Chevy Bolt, BMW i3, and Smart For Two)
Low Speed Vehicles (LSEV) (e.g. GEM)
Transit buses (e.g. Proterra, BYD)

B. NATIONAL COOPERATIVE PROCUREMENT MODEL SCOPE OF WORK

Background: A national cooperative purchasing program provides contract purchasing solutions on behalf of its private sector member/client agencies. These cooperative contract opportunities offer both time and money savings for their users by consolidating the efforts of numerous individually prepared solicitations to one national, cooperatively shared process. This process leverages the aggregation of volume from members/clients nationwide.

There is no funding associated with this RFI or any resulting agreements. A cooperative procurement model can be funded and sustained through vendor rebates/administrative fees set up at the contracting stage. Such a model can be based on vendors realizing substantial efficiencies through their ability to respond to one solicitation or Request for Proposal (RFP) that will potentially earn thousands of sales opportunities. Vendors may pay an administrative fee calculated as a percentage of sales processed through the competitively solicited and/or negotiated procurement contracts awarded and held by the vendor. This rebate/administrative fee should not be an added cost to the member/client – it covers the costs of contract marketing and facilitation and it offsets operating expenses incurred by the program. Vendor awards can be issued for multiple-year increments, and can be renewable or extended for added terms upon satisfactory performance.

The benefits to the members/clients are:

- The solicitation and contract process is completed and satisfied on behalf of the member/client.
- National aggregation of product and equipment demand and volume, resulting in aggressive and competitive pricing.
- Choice of equipment, products and services offered under awarded contracts should result in the highest quality solutions from industry-leading and nationally acclaimed vendors.
- Member/clients enjoy a broad range of product and equipment selections complimented by substantial time savings and multiple other related benefits for participating companies.
- Contract solutions offer choice with the ability to continue to perform one's own competitive solicitation process, if needed.

Business Process Steps: In creating a contract pathway through a unified and commonly embraced contracting process, the national cooperative purchasing model successfully recovers costs while serving its membership/client base.

The key steps in managing a national cooperative purchasing process includes:

1. Recruit members and identify their needs;
2. Research solutions available in the marketplace;
3. Develop a vendor outreach strategy and facilitate connections in the supply chain to ensure that respondents can collaborate to provide turnkey solutions in major regional markets. This should include ARS manufacturers, installers, OEMs, and dealers at a minimum.
4. Draft a solicitation, advertisement and notice;
5. Conduct a pre-proposal conference followed by receipt of responses;
6. Evaluate and review proposers' responses;
7. Negotiate terms of contract(s);
8. Award vendor(s);
9. Post approved contract documents;
10. Develop and implement a joint marketing plan with awarded vendor(s); and
11. Review and maintain contract throughout its term.

National Cooperative Purchase Model Transaction Flow: Member/clients are encouraged to begin communications with their local dealer/representative of the contract holder, as they are the experts in helping customers determine their specific needs and thereby defining the best solution for equipment, products and services needed. Member/clients communicate with the vendors through contract proposals that include pricing. To execute a purchase, a member/client should issue a purchase order according to their normal organizational procedures.

Contract awards process: The preferred contract award would be at the manufacturer level when possible. Contract awards to manufacturers are made on behalf of that manufacturer's dealer network through the established relationship between manufacturer and authorized dealers. Likewise, contract awards made to a re-seller are made on behalf of the re-seller's manufacturers, again through the established relationship between the re-seller and their manufacturers. In many cases, some products or equipment are only available through re-sellers. Whichever is the case, the cooperative purchasing program member/clients have a single source of responsibility in the awarded contractor, and that awarded contractor takes responsibility for all third party sub-contractors used in the acquiring and delivering of products and services to be delivered.

C. RFI DETAILS

Issuing Agency: The National Association of Regional Councils (NARC) is the issuing agency for this RFI and all subsequent addenda relating to it. If Responders received this document from sources other than direct mailing, you must contact NARC to be added to the distribution list for any addenda, clarifications, or other proposal notices.

Important Dates

The following dates are significant for this RFI:

RFI Dated and Issued	Monday, April 17, 2017
Respond Due Date	Open

Inquiries

Requests for clarification or questions, must be submitted in writing to NARC, Attention Sarah Reed (sarah@narc.org). Responses will be addressed by addendum and posted on NARC's F4F webpage, <http://www.fleetsforthefuture.org/>.

Submission Due Date

Submit your response electronically to sarah@narc.org. NARC requests the document(s) be in PDF format. It is the responsibility of the respondent submitting a proposal by email to ensure that the proposal has been received by the appropriate NARC staff, and not blocked by a spam filter or rejected because of large attachments. To confirm receipt, you may contact Sarah Reed.

Time for Evaluation

All responses shall remain valid for a minimum of 60 calendar days after the Response Due Date to allow adequate time for evaluation.

D. RESPONSE REQUIREMENTS

Demonstrated ability to meet the ‘Scope of Work’ for a National Cooperative Purchasing Program host

The respondent(s) profile should address the following components:

- a) Firm size and association membership size or client base;
- b) Organization/association stated mission, purpose, vision.
- c) Names, titles of key staff that will be assigned to the program, indicating their experience and responsibilities as they relate to this initiative.
- d) Demonstrate sufficient capacity to develop and implement the national cooperative purchasing program model.
- e) Ability to serve the needs of the private sector fleet community. For purposes of this RFI, private sector fleets would include all for-profit companies that maintain a fleet of vehicles for staff use and/or product or service deliveries.
- f) Ability to commit to implement national cooperative purchasing program model (selecting three or more alternative fuel vehicles/platforms) in 12- to 18-month time period.
- g) Provide a current insurance certificate, evidencing organization’s current insurance coverage.

E. Response Format

COVER LETTER – The letter of transmittal should include an introduction of the responder’s organization/association, as well as contact information for those persons who are authorized to represent the association in dealing with this RFI, as well as authorized to negotiate any partnership with NARC/F4F. Please list the name, title, office address, telephone number, and email address of the person(s) authorized to represent the association regarding the RFI response submitted.

RESPONSE NARRATIVE. The narrative should constitute the major portion of the RFI response and include a description of the association's qualifications, contain information to address the above section “Demonstrated ability to meet the ‘Scope of Work’” and respond to the following items/questions:

1. Please describe your organization’s current suite of services? How is your organization structured? Nonprofit. For profit. Other.
2. Detail current work in AFVs and/or aggregated purchasing or state any plans to include AFVs and/or purchasing cooperative services in future development.
3. Is your organization/association membership- or client- based? National in scope? Describe your organization’s current member/clients and the process and capacity for adding new. ? How many members/clients represent private-sector companies?
4. Please describe your organization’s history/longevity and provide documentation of financial stability.

ATTACHMENTS. Certificates of insurance and any supplemental materials or documentation should be included as attachments to the response package.

F. Evaluation Process

The RFI evaluation process will include a review of all responses timely received. Each respondent bears sole responsibility for the items included or not included in the response submitted by that organization. All respondents will receive notification of the results of the evaluation. Those responders that meet the preferred qualifications will be enter into a further interview process to explore specifics of a partnership.