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December 11, 2009

RE: Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for Sonoma County Conflict
Counsel-Indigent Criminal Defense Contract

Dear Interested Parties:

The County of Sonoma is interested in reviewing qualifications for the administration and operation of its indigent criminal defense conflict counsel program for at least a two year term beginning July 1, 2010. The program administrator need not be an attorney.

The County has an obligation to provide a defense to indigent criminal defendants in cases where the Public Defender has a conflict of interest. The County has a contract with an attorney who has provided a conflict counsel program. This contractor sub-contracts with 20 attorneys. This contract ends June 30, 2010.

The contractor is currently obligated to provide daily court coverage in 16 courtrooms and to provide 10 "levels" of coverage for felony cases, including Capital cases, and 9 "levels" each for misdemeanor and juvenile cases. This means that, for felony cases, the contractor contracts with at least ten qualified attorneys so that there would not need to be an appointment outside the contract unless all ten attorneys conflicted out and/or there was a very large multi-defendant case. This is designed to insure, as best as possible, that the Court need not appoint an attorney outside the contract, as the County would then have to pay that attorney at an hourly rate, which is much more costly than a fixed rate agreement. Currently, there are approximately 275, 325 and 225 cases pending, respectively, for these three categories.

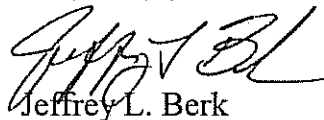
The contractor is also required to carry certain levels of insurance and to provide, periodic, detailed statistical information. (See paragraphs 13 and 16 of the attached current contract.)

Please provide both electronically to jberk@sonoma-county.org and by hard copy the following information by 5:00 p.m. on January 15, 2010:

1. Your qualifications to administer this program;
2. A possible list of attorneys you would contract with to meet the contract requirements;
3. Qualifications of these attorneys (or otherwise required experience to handle the above-referenced categories of cases (felonies include Capital cases, non-Capital murder cases and complex felonies));
4. A draft agreement;
5. Background in administering legal services programs or equivalent experience;
6. At least three references with contact information;
7. Demonstration of fiscal capability, financial stability and resources to handle scope of contract;
8. Ability to provide statistical and other analytic data regarding numbers, types and costs of cases handled; and
9. Summary of workplan to implement program by July 1, 2010.

Your response will be kept confidential until a final contract is entered into.

Very truly yours,



Jeffrey L. Berk

Deputy County Counsel

JLB:ao
Enclosure