CAROLINAS PUBLIC GAS ASSOCIATION

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Association Management Services

1. Introduction and Background

The Carolinas Public Gas Association (CPGA) invites proposals from qualified association management firms to provide professional administrative, financial, membership, and organizational support services.

CPGA is a nonprofit association representing approximately 22 municipal and public natural gas systems throughout North Carolina and South Carolina. CPGA seeks a qualified firm to provide part-time management services supporting ongoing operations, membership activities, meetings, training programs, and administrative responsibilities.

CPGA anticipates awarding a multi-year agreement with an initial term of two years beginning on the preferred start date, with the option to renew for up to two (2) additional one-year terms by mutual written agreement. CPGA values long-term continuity and a lasting partnership with the selected firm. Continuation beyond the initial term and each renewal is subject to satisfactory performance and annual approval of CPGA's budget by its leadership.

The purpose of this RFP is to select a firm that will deliver dependable, responsive, and cost-effective association management services; provide continuity of leadership and institutional knowledge; and allow CPGA's volunteer officers and member systems to focus on the technical and operational priorities of the association. Proposers should demonstrate a clear understanding of the needs of a multi-state association of public utilities.

2. Scope of Services

The selected firm will be responsible for the services described below. Proposers should clearly identify any service that is excluded from the base fee or that would be billed separately.

A. Financial Administration

- Process invoices and coordinate payment of association expenses.
- Prepare and distribute membership dues invoices; track and collect annual dues.
- Maintain accurate financial records and assist with annual budget preparation.
- Provide periodic financial statements and reports to association leadership.
- Coordinate with CPGA officers and designated financial representatives.
- Prepare and file all required federal and state tax and regulatory filings (such as IRS Form 990), in coordination with CPGA's designated accountant or financial representatives.
- Support an annual financial review or audit, and maintain appropriate internal controls over association funds, as directed by CPGA leadership.

B. Membership and General Administration

- Maintain current membership records and contact information.

- Coordinate membership correspondence and respond to routine inquiries.
- Assist officers and committees with administrative responsibilities.
- Maintain association records and important documents.
- Prepare and distribute member communications, including meeting notices, announcements, and periodic updates.
- Maintain officer, board, and committee rosters and governance documents, and support annual elections, officer transitions, and compliance with CPGA bylaws.

C. Website Management

- Monitor and maintain the CPGA website.
- Update meeting schedules, announcements, membership information, and activities.
- Coordinate website changes and technical assistance as needed.

D. Meetings and Board Support

- Coordinate monthly virtual Executive Committee meetings
- Coordinate two major annual association meetings within North & South Carolina. These meetings will include a board meeting and an operators meeting
- Provide an association management representative to attend meetings in person.
- Assist with meeting locations, scheduling, agendas, registration, materials, minutes, and follow-up as requested.
- Negotiate and administer venue, catering, and vendor arrangements, and manage meeting budgets and related payments in coordination with CPGA leadership.

E. Training Programs and Special Events

- Coordinate up to 8 training events annually throughout North Carolina and South Carolina.
- Assist with planning and coordinating training programs
- Coordinate facilities, speakers, registrations, and logistics.
- Support conferences, workshops, and other association events; communicate program information to members.
- Support the annual CPGA Natural Gas Rodeo, including sponsor and vendor outreach, registration, and event logistics, as directed by CPGA. The rodeo may serve as one of the two major annual association meetings.

F. Dedicated Management and Continuity

- Assign a primary individual responsible for CPGA management and identify a qualified backup representative(s).
- Maintain continuity during personnel changes, vacations, or unexpected absences.
- Provide timely communication with CPGA officers and leadership.
- Respond to inquiries from officers and members within a defined and reasonable timeframe (proposers should state their standard response times).

G. Data Security and Records Management

The selected firm will hold CPGA's financial, membership, and governance records on CPGA's behalf and must, at a minimum:

- **Access control:** Keep CPGA data logically separate from other clients' data; limit access to personnel with a business need; require unique user credentials and multi-factor authentication for any system holding CPGA data; and promptly remove access when personnel leave or change roles.
- **Encryption and safeguards:** Encrypt CPGA data in transit and at rest, and maintain current security updates, malware protection, and written information security practices.
- **Backup and recovery:** Perform automated backups at least daily, store backups in a separate secure location, and test restoration at least annually.
- **Financial and payment data:** Protect bank account and payment card information in accordance with applicable standards, and maintain separate duties for initiating, approving, and reconciling payments.
- **Confidentiality and permitted use:** Use CPGA data, including member contact lists, only to perform services for CPGA; never sell, share, or use it for marketing or for another client; and bind all personnel and subcontractors to equivalent confidentiality obligations. Identify all subcontractors and third-party platforms that will store or access CPGA data.
- **Incident notification:** Notify CPGA's designated officer in writing of any actual or suspected unauthorized access to, or loss of, CPGA data within 72 hours of discovery; cooperate in the investigation and response; and comply with applicable North Carolina and South Carolina breach notification laws.
- **Records retention:** Retain association records in accordance with a retention schedule approved by CPGA and applicable legal requirements, and do not destroy any CPGA record without CPGA's written approval.
- **Access and ownership:** Acknowledge that all CPGA records, data, and work product are the property of CPGA; provide copies to authorized CPGA officers within ten business days of request; and hold the website domain, hosting, and administrative accounts in CPGA's name or in a form that can be transferred to CPGA.
- **Return and destruction at termination:** Within 30 days after termination or expiration, deliver a complete and current copy of all CPGA records and data in a commonly used, non-proprietary format (such as PDF, CSV, or Excel), transfer all accounts and credentials, and, after CPGA confirms receipt, securely delete CPGA data from all systems and backups and certify the destruction in writing. The firm must cooperate with the successor manager during transition.

3. Proposal Requirements

1. **Company Background:** Company history, location, organizational structure, and association management experience.
2. **Relevant Experience:** Comparable nonprofit, professional, or membership associations currently or previously managed.
3. **Assigned Personnel:** Name, qualifications, résumé, and experience of proposed primary CPGA representative.
4. **Backup and Continuity:** Backup personnel and continuity arrangements.
5. **Proposed Services:** Detailed inclusions and exclusions.
6. **Financial Controls:** Accounting, payment authorization, dues collection, and reporting procedures.
7. **Technology:** Systems used for accounting, membership, communications, and website administration.
8. **Meeting Coverage:** Ability to attend meetings throughout North Carolina and South Carolina
9. **References:** Contact information for at least three current comparable association clients.

10. **Fee Proposal:** Monthly fee, included services, and list of any expenses to be billed separately,including travel.**Transition Plan:** Process and estimated time required to assume management responsibilities.
11. **Insurance and Bonding:** Evidence of general liability, professional liability, and fidelity or crime coverage, including coverage for personnel who handle association funds.
12. **Data Security and Records:** Describe the safeguards that will protect CPGA's member data, financial records, and association documents, including access controls and multi-factor authentication, encryption, backup and recovery, hosting locations, and any subcontractors or third-party platforms with access to CPGA data. Describe your incident response and notification procedures, records retention practices, and your process and timeline for returning and securely destroying CPGA data at termination. Identify any independent security assessment or certification (such as SOC 2) and any security incidents in the past three years that required notification to a client. Confirm acceptance of the requirements in Section 2.G.
13. **Conflicts of Interest:** Disclosure of any current clients, relationships, or commitments that could present an actual or perceived conflict of interest with CPGA or its member systems.

4. Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be reviewed by a selection committee designated by CPGA leadership and evaluated using the following criteria.

A. Weighted Criteria

Each responsive proposal will be scored on a 100-point scale. The weights below reflect CPGA's priorities: demonstrated ability and sound financial and data stewardship carry more weight than price alone.

- **Experience managing comparable associations (15 points):** Number, size, and type of comparable associations managed; length of service; demonstrated results (Sections 3.1–3.2).
- **Familiarity with the municipal and/or public natural gas industry (10 points):** Understanding of CPGA's member systems, the Carolinas operating environment, and industry events such as training programs and the Natural Gas Rodeo.
- **Qualifications and availability of assigned personnel (15 points):** Credentials and experience of the primary representative and backup, and the time committed to CPGA (Sections 3.3–3.4).
- **Ability to deliver the requested services and provide backup coverage (15 points):** Completeness of the proposed services against Section 2, meeting coverage in both states, and continuity and transition plans (Sections 3.5, 3.8, 3.11).
- **Financial management capabilities and internal controls (10 points):** Accounting, payment authorization, dues collection, reporting, segregation of duties, and insurance and bonding (Sections 3.6, 3.12).
- **Data security and records management (5 points):** Strength of the safeguards, incident response, and data return and destruction commitments (Section 3.13 and Section 2.G).
    - **Responsiveness and communication practices (5 points):** Stated response times, reporting practices, and communication tools (Sections 2.F and 3.7).
- **References and demonstrated performance (10 points):** Reference feedback on reliability, financial accuracy, and member service (Section 3.9).
- **Overall proposed cost and value (15 points):** Total annual cost, including estimated travel and separately billed expenses, relative to the services provided (Section 3.10). Scored by formula as described below.

- **Total: 100 points.**

B. Rating Scale

Each evaluator will rate every criterion other than cost on a scale of 0 to 5. The criterion score equals the rating divided by 5, multiplied by the criterion's point value. For example, a rating of 4 on a 15-point criterion earns 12 points.

- **5 – Excellent:** Fully meets all requirements and exceeds expectations in ways that add clear value to CPGA; supported by specific, verifiable detail.
- **4 – Good:** Fully meets all requirements; response is well supported with minor or no weaknesses.
- **3 – Satisfactory:** Meets the basic requirements; some weaknesses or gaps that are not expected to affect performance.
- **2 – Marginal:** Partially meets requirements; notable gaps or limited supporting detail that create risk to CPGA.
- **1 – Poor:** Largely fails to meet requirements; significant deficiencies or unsupported claims.
- **0 – Non-responsive:** No response, or the response does not address the criterion.

C. Cost Scoring

Cost will be scored by formula rather than by subjective rating. The proposal with the lowest total annual cost will receive the full 15 points. Every other proposal will receive points equal to 15 multiplied by the lowest total annual cost, divided by that proposer's total annual cost. Total annual cost includes the base fee, estimated travel, and any separately billed expenses, calculated on the same basis for all proposers using the meeting schedule described in Section 2.D. Proposals that omit or understate expected costs may be adjusted by the selection committee to permit a fair comparison.

D. Evaluation Process

1. **Compliance screening:** Proposals will first be checked for timeliness and for inclusion of all items required in Section 3. CPGA may waive minor informalities but may reject a proposal that omits a material requirement.
2. **Independent scoring:** Each selection committee member will review and score every proposal independently, and will record a brief written basis for each rating before the committee discusses the results.
3. **Consensus review:** The committee will compare scores and discuss significant differences. Members may revise a score only to correct an error or reflect information in the proposal that was overlooked, and each revision will be documented. Final scores are the average of the committee members' scores.
4. **Minimum qualifying score:** A proposal must earn at least 70 of 100 points, and a rating of at least 3 on the Financial Management and Data Security criteria, to be considered for award.
5. **Interviews and reference checks:** The highest-scoring proposers (generally no more than three) may be invited to interview, and CPGA may contact references. Following interviews, the committee may adjust scores for non-cost criteria using the same rating scale. The cost score will not change.
6. **Recommendation and tie-breaker:** The committee will recommend the highest-scoring qualifying proposer to authorized CPGA leadership. If scores are tied, the proposer with the higher Experience score will be ranked first, and if still tied, the lower total annual cost.

7. **Conflicts and records:** Committee members must disclose any relationship with a proposer and will be recused where a conflict exists. Score sheets and written rationales will be retained by CPGA as part of the selection record.

CPGA reserves the right to request additional information, conduct interviews, negotiate terms, or reject any or all proposals.

5. Proposal Submission

Proposal deadline	**Thursday, December 10th, 2026 5pm**
Preferred start date	March 1st, 2027
Questions Contact	Casey Pilgreen casey.pilgreen@rockymountnc.gov
Questions Deadline	Tuesday, December 8th, 2026 5pm (email only)
Submission contact	Bradley Walters william.walters@rockymountnc.gov
Submission method	Electronic proposal (email only)

Proposals must be submitted electronically to the designated submission contact on or before the deadline above. Late proposals may not be considered. Questions regarding this RFP must be submitted in writing to the questions contact listed above, and responses of general interest will be shared with all known proposers. Proposers must not contact CPGA officers, directors, or member representatives regarding this RFP except through the designated submission contact.

6. General Conditions

Issuance of this RFP does not obligate CPGA to enter into an agreement or reimburse firms for proposal preparation expenses. CPGA may clarify proposal information, request interviews, or negotiate the final scope of services with the selected firm. Final selection and contractual arrangements will be subject to approval by authorized CPGA leadership.

Proposals must remain valid for at least 90 days after the submission deadline. The selected firm will be required to enter into a written agreement with CPGA that defines the scope of services, fees, term, performance expectations, and termination provisions. All CPGA funds, records, and member data remain the property of CPGA and must be returned or transferred to CPGA upon request or upon termination of the agreement.

The written agreement will incorporate the data security and records requirements in Section 2.G, including incident notification, records return, and secure destruction. CPGA may request evidence of compliance at any time, such as backup and access reports or independent security assessments, and material failure to comply will be grounds for termination of the agreement.