

Independent Decision Review

CAPABILITIES SAMPLE

Subject: McGrath Human Resources Group — proposal to the Village of Grafton, Wisconsin for a Classification and Compensation Study (RFP response, February 19, 2025; a public municipal procurement record).

Type: Independent read of the proposal as presented — findings, gaps, and the questions a procurement evaluator (or the proposal's own author) should resolve before relying on it.

This is a demonstration sample prepared entirely from a public municipal proposal to illustrate the review format. It reads the document on its own terms and is decision support, not a procurement recommendation.

BOTTOM LINE

This is a strong, professional proposal — a thorough methodology, deeply relevant public-sector experience, and the assured feel of a firm that has done this many times. A decision review doesn't dispute that. Its job is to surface what an evaluator, or the proposal's own author, should tighten: a few headline claims asserted without backing, a fixed price resting on an estimated scope, and internal inconsistencies in the consultant and pricing detail that a careful reader will notice.

The pattern: the substance is sound; the exposure is in precision — specific numbers and firm assurances that the document states but does not substantiate or reconcile.

MATERIAL FINDINGS

1 Headline performance claims are asserted without substantiation.

The proposal states that "99% of our projects have been fully adopted and implemented" — a strong, specific figure carried with no denominator, timeframe, or definition of "fully adopted." Similar weight rests on "over 600 clients in 41 states" and "hundreds of comprehensive studies." In a competitively evaluated proposal, an unbacked statistic is precisely the soft spot a rival firm or a diligent reviewer can puncture.

Ask → the basis for the 99% figure — over how many projects, across what period, and how "fully adopted and implemented" is defined.

2 The fixed price rests on an "estimated" scope, and the overflow rule is ambiguous.

The study is priced for "an estimated 46 titles" as a Project Not-to-Exceed amount. If the actual title count runs higher, two passages point in opposite directions: the firm says it has "never increased the agreed upon price," while the Optional Services section says work beyond the original scope "will be billed at an hourly rate." A reader cannot tell from the document whether a count above 46 titles is absorbed within the fixed price or treated as billable out-of-scope work.

Ask → what happens to the not-to-exceed price if the position count exceeds the estimated 46 — absorbed, or billed as out-of-scope?

3 The consultant and firm data contradicts itself in several places.

One consultant's biography states she has "been with the Firm for 19 years," while her own header lists "Years with Firm: 21." Another named consultant, alone among the team, carries no "Years with Firm" figure at all. And the firm is presented throughout as being in its "25th year" with "25 years of service," yet the Optional Services section refers to "the 24 years" it has been in business. None of these is fatal, but on a document whose product is careful analysis, self-inconsistent numbers invite doubt about the figures that matter more.

Ask → corrected, internally consistent tenure figures for each named consultant and for the firm itself.

4 The "no subcontracting" assurance sits against stated reliance on a separate entity.

The proposal states plainly that "all consultants are McGrath consultants, and there is no subcontracting." It then describes partnering with "the parent company — McGrath Consulting Group" for public-safety expertise, naming two advisors who head that separate company's divisions. Whether drawing on a parent company is consistent with a flat "no subcontracting" representation is a fair question on its face, and the assurance and the parent-company reliance should be reconciled explicitly — particularly if any public-safety positions fall within scope.

Ask → confirmation of whether parent-company involvement is consistent with the proposal's no-subcontracting representation, and whether any positions would draw on that support.

SECONDARY FLAGS

- Two price totals, relationship unstated. The fee table shows a \$27,750 not-to-exceed; Terms of Payment shows installments totaling \$24,750. They reconcile — the \$24,750 is base fees, and travel of up to \$3,000 is billed on top to the \$27,750 ceiling — but the proposal never says so, so a quick reader could misjudge the commitment. Confirm travel sits inside the \$27,750 cap.
- "City" where the client is a "Village." The timeline table ("Review Findings with City," "Cost with City") and the references introduction carry "City" language on a proposal to a Village — copy-paste residue from prior work, on a document selling attention to detail.
- Compliance is not fully testable here. Without the RFP itself, this review cannot certify that the proposal answers every stated requirement. In a paid engagement, the first step would be a requirement-by-requirement compliance matrix against the solicitation — the single highest-value check for any competitive bid.

QUESTIONS TO RESOLVE BEFORE PROCEEDING

- The basis for the 99% adoption claim: denominator, period, and definition of "fully adopted."

2. Whether a title count above the estimated 46 is absorbed within the fixed price or billed as out-of-scope.
3. Corrected, consistent tenure figures for each consultant and for the firm.
4. Whether parent-company public-safety support is consistent with the proposal's no-subcontracting representation.
5. Confirmation that travel is billed inside the \$27,750 not-to-exceed ceiling.

Method & sourcing. Every factual statement resolves to the proposal itself; no external fact is asserted. Because the underlying RFP was not provided, this review does not certify requirement-by-requirement compliance — the one check that requires the solicitation text — and names that as the priority for a full engagement. A deeper read would test the proposal line by line against the RFP's stated requirements and evaluation criteria.