



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS: OZONE FORECASTING SERVICES

January 13th, 2026

A. PURPOSE AND INTRODUCTION

The Mid – America Regional Council (MARC), the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the bi-state Kansas City metropolitan area, is seeking proposals from qualified firms to produce and disseminate ozone forecasts to the public during the 2026, 2027 and 2028 ozone seasons and to provide occasional reports to the Air Quality Forum – the air quality policymaking body for the MARC region.

B. BACKGROUND

The Mid-America Regional Council (MARC) coordinates the AirQ voluntary air quality program for the five-county, bi-state Kansas City air quality maintenance area. One element of the AirQ program is providing the public daily ozone forecast from March 1 to October 31, known as “SkyCast”, for the Kansas City region.

C. SCOPE OF SERVICES:

Forecasting: The applicant to this RFP must be prepared to ensure that any staff members assigned to produce air quality forecasts have a detailed understanding of ozone forecasting; knowledge of the underlying issues of transport and dispersion relevant to producing accurate ozone forecasts; have sufficient time availability and meteorological data resources required to produce ozone forecasts; and have contacts and resources to communicate ozone forecast information to all appropriate area media.

Professional services must be provided to generate daily ozone forecasts from March 1 – October 31, during 2026, 2027 and 2028. Throughout the contracting period the ozone forecasts will reflect the revised National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS) for ozone that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued on October 26, 2015 or as may be amended. The ozone forecasts will be based on ranges of ozone concentrations from EPA’s revised Air Quality Index (AQI) as referenced by the National Weather Service at https://www.weather.gov/sti/stimodeling_airquality_faq. Colors and health messages used in the forecast communications will be consistent with those in the AQI.

The applicant will assist in SkyCast evaluations by keeping a log of meteorological input data used to produce ozone forecasts; compile actual meteorological data for comparison to input data for ozone forecasts; and compare ozone forecasts with actual monitored air quality data. When forecasted ozone levels and monitored air quality readings do not reasonably correspond the proposer shall determine whether discrepancies are due to inaccurate input data or due to inaccurate model performance; in consultation with MARC staff propose, implement, and document any

(Revised 01/13/2026)

changes to the eight-hour predictive ozone model; compile forecasting performance statistics; and provide to MARC on a monthly basis evaluation reports that document satisfactory completion of these activities.

Communication of Forecasts: Throughout the ozone seasons, forecasts and Air Quality Index results must be updated *daily* on several public outlets. MARC utilizes the EPA's EnviroFlash notification system which requires submission of the daily air quality forecast to the EPA's AIRNOW website each day before 3pm local time. The actual (Air Quality Index) and forecasted air quality information must also be published to a regional website and updated on a regional air quality information phone line (816-701-8287).

During the ozone seasons, the applicant will be expected to communicate Ozone Action Day forecasts by 3 p.m. CST via phone call to MARC, to the person/organization responsible for producing the weather page of *The Kansas City Star*, to other media outlets designated by MARC, RideKC, and others as needed and mutually agreed upon. Furthermore, the applicant will be required to provide a telephone number for use by the media to verify or ask questions about ozone forecasts.

To increase regional air quality decision makers' understanding of the nature of Kansas City's air quality problems, the applicant will give presentations at up to two Air Quality Forum meetings annually. The content of these presentations to the Air Quality Forum will be determined by mutual agreement between the applicant and MARC staff.

The applicant will work cooperatively with MARC to find more effective ways to communicate the air quality forecasts to the media in order to optimize the public's ability to understand and effectively use the information and will assist in the development and distribution of educational materials about air quality forecasts. The proposer will also log and prepare quarterly reports of all promotional and educational activities undertaken on behalf of the AirQ Program.

The Following Deliverables are expected under this proposal:

Ozone Forecasts: Produced and communicated daily from March 1, 2026 through October 31, 2026; again from March 1, 2027 through October 31, 2027; and again March 1, 2028 through October 31, 2028.

Air Quality Forecast Evaluation Reports: Completed and transmitted to MARC within 10 business days of the end of each forecasted month.

Air Quality Index Logs: Kept and transmitted to MARC within 10 business days of the end of each forecasted month.

Promotional/Educational Activity Reports: Completed and transmitted to MARC within 30 business days of the end of each quarter.

G. PROPOSAL SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS

To be eligible for consideration an electronic copy of the response to the RFP must be received by MARC no later than **5:00pm** Central Time, **January 28, 2026**.

Submittals are limited to 12 pages. The title page, table of contents and attachments do not count toward the limit, but all written samples, literature/reference lists, client lists, and resumes count. Inclusion of website links to reference similar projects is acceptable. The submittal must use no smaller than size 12, Times New Roman or Arial font.

Submittal packages should be emailed to dnorsby@marc.org as a .pdf document with the subject line "**Ozone Forecasting 2026-2028**". Late submittals will not be considered.

The following items must be addressed in all proposals:

1. **SCOPE OF WORK:** MARC Air Quality program staff has developed work tasks associated with the Scope of Work. The Contractor will be required to comport with the elements as described, but they may expand and/or revise upon the Scope of Work if they feel their recommendations will maximize the cost-effectiveness of providing these services without compromising quality. If deviating from the work tasks as described, respondents must provide a detailed scope of work including specific methodologies and/or approaches on the proposed strategies that will be used to implement those changes in Ozone Forecasting during 2026, 2027 and 2028. Innovative approaches for completion of the Scope of Work are encouraged.
 - A. The name and address of the contracting firm, together with the name, telephone and e-mail address of the primary contact person for purposes of this proposal.
 - B. A listing of all proposed subcontractors, if any.
 - C. See Attachments A, B, C and D.
2. **CONTRACT PRICE:** Proposals should indicate the cost of services to be provided. Also required is a schedule by task of person-hours, equipment, and services. See Attachment B.
3. **QUALIFICATIONS:** Proposals should indicate general and specific qualification of the proposer in disciplines appropriate to this project. A brief narrative (four pages maximum) regarding the firm's capabilities to carry out this project, including special assets, areas of expertise, analytical tools, and data sources, etc. to which the firm may have access. Proposals shall also include:
 - A. A listing and written samples of similar projects undertaken within the last five (5) years, by proposing firm and/or its subcontractors, showing contract amounts, description of work performed, client contact persons, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses;
 - B. Resumes of key professionals staff who will be assigned to this project;
 - C. Description of the workload of individuals assigned to this project during the period of this study. Any reassignment of designated key staff will not occur without mutual consultation and consent by MARC.
 - D. Three References including telephone and email contact information.
4. **CERTIFICATION REGARDING DEBARMENT:** Each proposer is required to certify by signing the "Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, and Other Ineligibility and Voluntary Exclusion" (Attachment C). "Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, and Other Ineligibility and Voluntary Exclusion" is a certification that the proposer is not on the U.S. Comptroller General's Consolidated Lists of Persons or Firms Currently Debarred for Violations of Various Contracts Incorporating Labor Standards Provisions.

Confidentiality of Information Contained in the Proposals Submitted in Response to this RFP. MARC is a public organization and complies with the Missouri Sunshine Law. All proposals and supporting documentation submitted to MARC in response to a RFP will remain confidential until a final contract has been executed. A Proposer shall give specific attention to the clear identification of those portions of its proposal that it considers confidential, proprietary commercial information or trade secrets, and provide justification why such materials, upon request, should not be disclosed by MARC under the Missouri Sunshine Law requirements. Proposers are advised that, upon request for this information from a third party, MARC is required to make an independent determination whether the information can be disclosed. Information which is claimed to be confidential is to be clearly labeled as "Proprietary". The Proposer's entire proposal response package shall not be considered proprietary.

Artificial intelligence

Any product that has any kind of content produced by generative AI on behalf of MARC must be disclosed. This includes (but is not limited to) responses to RFPs, any kind of reports (including progress reports), videos, documents and artwork/images.

Digital accessibility

MARC will adhere to the forthcoming web content accessibility guidelines (WCAG) 2.2 at level AA. Any work produced for MARC must meet accessibility standards, this includes (but is not limited to) captions, adequate color contrast, transcriptions and other considerations.

H. SELECTION PROCEDURE

MARC staff and federal/state agency representatives overseeing funding for this contract will review submissions and select the one that best meet the evaluation criteria set forth below. Selection will be made by **February 13, 2026** (contingent upon subsequent approval by MARC's Board of Directors). MARC reserves the right to negotiate a contract, including a scope of work, and contract price, with any proposers or other qualified party.

This Request for Proposal does not commit MARC to award a contract, to pay any cost incurred in preparation of a response to this Request, or to procure or contract for services or supplies. MARC reserves the right to accept or reject any and all responses received as a result of this Request, or cancel this Request in part or in its entirety if it is in the best interests of MARC to do so. Proposers shall not offer any gratuities, favors, or anything of monetary value to any officer, employee, agent, or director of MARC for the purpose of influencing favorable disposition toward either their proposal or any other proposal submitted as a result of the Request for Proposal.

MARC reserves the right to suggest to any or all proposers to the Request for Proposals that such proposers form into teams of consulting firms or organizations deemed to be advantageous to MARC in performing the Scope of Work. MARC will suggest such formation when such relationships appear to offer combinations of expertise or abilities not otherwise available. Proposers have the right to refuse to enter into any suggested relationships.

All Proposals submitted hereunder become the exclusive property of MARC.

I. PROPOSAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

The proposals submitted by each Contractor, Firm, or Contractor Team, will be evaluated according to the following factors, in order of priority:

- A) Specialized experience and technical competence of the contractor and assigned staff relative to the scope of work and task requirements outlined in this RFP (35%)
 - 1) Experience of the project manager
 - 2) Experience of the prime contractor(s) and subcontractor(s)
 - 3) Amount of dedicated time of key staff allocated to the project
 - 4) Experience of other assigned individuals
 - 5) Familiarity with local air patterns and weather conditions on ozone concentrations
 - 6) Established criteria for acceptable accuracy rates by contractor
- B) Project cost, schedule of persons – hour commitment (30%)
 - 1) Total project cost
 - 2) Project schedule and timeliness of products
 - 3) Total person – hour commitment
 - 4) Total hours committed for the project manager

(Revised 01/13/2026)

- C) Understanding the nature of the project (25%)
 - 1) Understanding the proposed scope of work
 - 2) General organization and clarity of the proposal
 - 3) General understanding of the regional significance of the project
 - 4) Ability to promote and convey new approaches to information dissemination
 - 5) Understanding Federal, State, and local air quality regulations and the implications ozone forecasting has on public and private business operations
- D) References reflecting previous work experience of the project team and satisfactory accomplishment of contractor responsibilities (10%)
 - 1) Quality of final product
 - 2) Ability to meet work schedules
 - 3) Responsiveness to client input

J. PRESENTATIONS

The project selection team *may* require oral presentations by those firms identified on the short list of proposers. Presentations will be held at MARC or a site designated by MARC. On-site meetings are preferable, but other options will be considered for out-of-region applicants or if weather conditions warrant.

K. CONTRACT AWARD

MARC will notify the selected candidate by e-mail. Following notification, MARC will negotiate a standard professional service agreement with the selected candidate. The selected candidate's proposal will be incorporated by reference in the contract. Additionally, MARC will notify the candidates who are not selected.

L. PROTEST PROCEDURES

In the course of this solicitation for proposals and the selection process, a proposer (bidder or offer or whose direct economic interest would be affected by the award of the contract) may file a protest when in the proposer's opinion, actions were taken by MARC staff and /or the selection committee which could unfairly affect the outcome of the selection procedure. All protests should be in writing and directed to Mr. Ron Achelpohl, Director of Transportation and Environment, Mid – America Regional Council, 600 Broadway, Suite 200, Kansas City, MO 64105. Protest should be made immediately upon occurrence of the incident in question but no later than three (3) days after the proposer receives notification of the outcome of the selection procedure. The protest should clearly state the grounds for such a protest.

Upon receipt of the protest, MARC's Director of Transportation and Environment will review the actual procedures followed during the selection process and the documentation available. If it is determined the action(s) unfairly changed the outcome of the process, notifications with the selected proposer will cease until the matter is resolved. If the Director of Transportation and Environment determines that the selection process followed appropriate procedures, MARC staff will notify the party filing the protest in writing of such finding.

M. PROCUREMENT SCHEDULE

Activities	Schedule
RFP issued	January 13, 2026
Proposals Due	January 28, 2026 – 5pm
Selection pending MARC Board Approval	February 6, 2026
MARC Board Approval	February 24, 2026
Contract Execution/ Notice to proceed	March 1, 2026
Project Completion	December 31, 2028

N. PROJECT BUDGET

The level of funding for this project will be based on the scope of work with strong preference given for lowest and best qualified bid. MARC is using state and federal money to fund this project. The final level of contractor funding and contract price will be negotiated between MARC and the contractor.

- Estimated project range: **To be determined by proposals**
- Period of Performance – **March 2026 to December 2028**

ATTACHMENT A

1. A copy of MARC's COST/PRICE SUMMARY SHEET has been attached for your convenience Attachment B.
2. Complete the CERTIFICATION REGARDING DEBARMENT, SUSPENSION, INELIGIBILITY, AND VOLUNTARY EXCLUSION Attachment C.

ATTACHMENT B
Cost/Price Summary Sheet

[illegible]

Cost/Price Summary Sheet (Continued)

<u>D. Total Material Overhead Cost</u>			
5. Other Direct Cost (I.e. computer support, freight, travel, perdiem, telephone, Contractors)			
<u>E. Total Other Direct Cost</u>			
6. General and Administration (G&A) (specify)			
<u>F. Total G&A</u>			
7 Subcontractors (denote DBE(s) and percentage of Contract work and price)			
Total Subcontractors			
G. Profit/Net Fee (A + B + C + E + F)/Contract Price			

ATTACHMENT C

**Certification Regarding Debarment,
Suspension, Ineligibility, and Voluntary Exclusion**

This Certification is required by the regulation implementing Executive Order 12549, Debarment and Suspension, 29 CFR Part 98 Section 98.510, Participants' responsibilities. The Regulations are published as Part II of the June 1985, Federal Register (pages 33, 036-33, 043)

Read instructions for Certification below prior to completing this certification.

1. The prospective proposer certifies, by submission of this proposal that neither it nor its principals are presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participating in this transaction by any Federal department or agency.
2. Where the prospective proposer is unable to certify to any of the statements in this certification, such prospective proposer shall attach an explanation to this proposal.

Date

Signed – Authorized Representative

Title of Authorized Representative

.....
Instructions for Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility, and Voluntary Exclusion:

1. By signing and submitting this agreement, the proposer is providing the certification as set below.
2. The certification in this clause is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was entered into. If it is later determined that the proposer knowingly rendered an erroneous certification, in addition to other remedies available to the Federal Government, the department, or agency with which this transaction originated may pursue available remedies, including suspension and/or debarment.