



Request for Qualifications RFQ 25-001 Legal Services

**Township High School District 113
Highland Park, IL**

February 12, 2025

Introduction

Township High School District 113 (the District) is soliciting qualifications from legal firms located, licensed, and authorized to do business in the State of Illinois. Although the RFQ is for a full range of legal services, the District reserves the right to retain individual firms for discreet areas of legal service.

Background

Township High School District 113 serves a community of approximately 60,000 residents and educates approximately 3,100 students who reside in Bannockburn, Deerfield, Ft. Sheridan, Highland Park, Highwood, and Riverwoods, all in Lake County, Illinois. The District's two nationally ranked high schools, Deerfield High School and Highland Park High School, focus on cultivating passion, unlocking potential and inspiring excellence among its students and staff.

Mission

Township High School District 113 has an unwavering commitment to providing all students opportunities to realize their unique potential through a rigorous and engaging curriculum, meaningful relationships, varied experiences, a positive school culture, and the cultivation of individual passion and resilience.

The District aims to provide each student with the opportunities and support needed to reach their unique potential.

The District property operates out of four primary physical spaces, with Deerfield High School at 1959 Waukegan Road, Deerfield, Illinois, 60015; Highland Park High School at 433 Vine Street, Highland Park, Illinois, 60035; The Administration Building at 1040 Park Avenue West, Highland Park, Illinois 60035; and runs its own transportation through the Transportation Building at 1080 Park Ave west, Highland Park, Illinois 60035. District 113 is a member of the TrueNorth Education Cooperative 804, and has young adults ages 18-22 participating in a program run by TrueNorth that operates out of a space known as Elm Place, 583 Elm Place, Unit 109, Illinois, 60035. The District currently employs approximately 645 employees.

The District is governed by a Board of Education consisting of seven members. Elections for Board members are held on the first Tuesday in April every two years in odd-numbered years with members elected for staggered four-year terms. *Policy 2-20 Powers and Duties of the School Board; Indemnification* governs the Board's responsibilities. The Board's only employee is the Superintendent, who is responsible for the administration and management of the District. The District seeks qualifications for legal services who will act as counsel on legal matters to the Board of Education, Superintendent, and Staff on an as-needed basis.

The District also runs the following programs: an extended curriculum and extracurricular program; its own transportation service, fleet and drivers, bids and hires transportation for regular and special education students, bids and hires food service; hires in-house custodial staff to perform a number of custodial functions. Special education services are delivered in-house by District employees or are contracted with special education providers or provided through TrueNorth Education Cooperative 804. District 113 also administers an Adult Education Program

that serves Lake County. Employees of the District are either contracted administrative, non-union, or part of the collective bargaining agreement. Union employees consist of teachers, librarians, deans of students, school nurses, school social workers, counselors, psychologists (including building or district level outplacement coordinators), speech pathologists, and building level directors/coordinators, known as the District 113 Education Association (DEA). The DEA unionized in 2023 and the District 113 Board of Education entered into its first collective bargaining agreement with the DEA in 2023 and that agreement expires June 30, 2026.

The District's budget for expenditures for fiscal year 2025 is \$117.0 million. A copy of the budget and information on the District can be found on our website <https://www.dist113.org/>.

Schedule

Event	Deadline
Request for Qualifications Released	February 12, 2025
Deadline for Questions	February 28, 2025
Responses from District to Questions	March 7, 2025
Qualifications Due	March 18, 2025
Presentations/Interviews (If necessary)	March 31, 2025
Board of Education Review	April 8, 2025
Board of Education Approval	April 22, 2025

Scope of Work

The following describes the scope and range of legal work typical for District operations. By way of this request for qualifications, we are flexible about how this work is configured. The District retains the option to utilize multiple firms to address its complete requirements.

The legal firms will be required to represent the District as legal counsel in all aspects of law and specifically school law. The District is seeking a firm with typical duties, including the following:

- Provide general legal advice to the Board of Education and the District Administration.
- Provide knowledge and experience in the legal areas for the District e.g. bidding, civil rights, collective bargaining, education reform, employment law, Open Meetings Act, Freedom of Information, other records law, and student rights.
- Assign an attorney or a group of attorneys who can handle the daily matters of the school district as necessary based on volume and specialization.
- Advise the Board of Education and the District Administration on the best course of action to minimize legal risk/liability to the District.
- Represent the Board of Education in all litigation matters.
- Be knowledgeable about issues facing the Board of Education and be prepared to offer legal

opinions to make informed decisions.

- As requested by the Board or Administration, prepare, review, and/or consult for contracts including employment, vendor, and collective bargaining agreements.
- The District reserves the right to engage specialized litigation counsel.
- As requested by the Board or Administration, prepare, review, and/or consult on district policies and administrative procedures.
- Advise the Board and administration on all legal matters pertaining to business services (i.e. tax objections, TIFs, bond sales).
- As requested, represent the district during collective bargaining negotiations both at the table and on a consulting basis, including mediation and arbitration.
- As requested, attend meetings and/or workshops of the Board of Education.
- When requested by the Board or District Administration, review action(s) to be considered by the Board of Education in its upcoming meetings for possible legal implications or complications.
- Be able to advise and represent the District on issues not normally considered to be within the scope of daily business conducted by the school district. (i.e. Sales of Bonds, Purchase of land, Referendum Issues, Tort Liability, Construction Law, Etc.)
- Advise the Board of Education and District Administration regarding other District legal issues not listed herein that may arise from time to time.
- The District reserves the right to retain its current legal counsel for any ongoing litigation matters at the time of transition to a new firm. Any litigation that is active at the time of engagement with a new legal services provider must continue to be handled by the existing attorneys unless otherwise determined by the District. The selected firm must coordinate with current counsel to ensure a smooth transition of non-litigation matters and, if necessary, assist in providing any necessary support or information.
- The District will evaluate any potential transfer of litigation on a case-by-case basis and will make decisions based on the best interests of the District. Any firm submitting a proposal acknowledges this condition and agrees to cooperate in facilitating continuity of legal representation for ongoing litigation.

Qualifications

The District is seeking responses from attorney firms who specialize in Illinois school law and whose client list is primarily Illinois Public School Districts. All attorneys assigned to the District shall be a member in good standing with the Bar Association of the State of Illinois. The District reserves the right to give preference to legal firms that are included in the Collective Liability Insurance Cooperative (CLIC) approved counsel list.

The services contemplated are professional in nature and shall be governed by professional ethics in its relationship with the District. In addition to the items listed under Scope of Work, the legal firm must also meet the following qualifications:

- Must be in good standing of the Bar Association of the State of Illinois
- Must be in good standing of the United States District Court, Northern District of Illinois, and the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals.
- Must have at least five years of experience that meets the District's needs, including litigation experience in State and Federal Courts.
- Must have at least five years of experience in all aspects of the following Illinois law:

educational law, contract, and employment.

- Must have in-house attorneys who can handle specialized areas of school law such as special education, bond sales, TIFs, human resources, public procurement, etc.
- Must provide as a part of their service, relevant and appropriate professional development opportunities for School Board Members and school administrators.
- Must have experience/expertise in working with school districts regarding the discipline, remediation, and/or removal of staff.
- Ability to provide prompt follow-up responses to requests for information and advice.
- Must disclose any existing or potential conflicts of interest representing the District and any other school district, municipality, or any other of the firm's clients along with how the conflict would be mitigated.
- Selected vendor(s) must be willing to include in the contract a
 - **Confidentiality clause** for the legal services regarding sensitive District information, student records, and personnel matters.
 - **Indemnification clause** to indemnify the District from any legal actions arising from the firm's negligence or misconduct.

Response Format

Submit your response using the following format:

1. **Title Page:** Name of the law firm, all office locations and telephone numbers, name of the contact person, and contact information (include email address)
2. **Table of Contents**
3. **Introduction:** Introduce your firm to the District, and explain who you are, what makes your firm unique, and why you are interested in working with the District
4. **Qualifications, History:** Describe your firm's qualifications, as outlined above. Include attorney names and area of specialization of the partners and the legal structure of the firm as well as other information that you deem relevant.
5. **Special Education:** Please include your firm's experience in Special Education law and whether this is done in-house or subcontracted.
6. **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion:** Please outline your commitment to diversity in hiring and legal representation.
7. Discuss your knowledge and experience in legal areas such as bidding, civil rights, and collective bargaining.
8. **Conflict of Interest:** Please disclose any existing or potential conflicts of interest and how they would be mitigated.
9. **Resumes:** Include the resume of the Lead Attorney and all attorneys who specialize in different aspects of school law that the District might use in the future.
10. **Schedule of the Firm's Fees:**
include the following:
 - The hourly fee and minimum time increment for billing purposes for all partners, associates, paralegals, and administrative staff.
 - Describe how telephone calls are billed.
 - Explain the nature and rate for reimbursable expenses.
 - A description of any alternative fee services, such as flat fees and blended fees.
 - A sample of a monthly service bill.

- A description of a retainer fee, if any, and the cost option.
- Outline any escalation costs over time or any caps on fees.

11. References: Provide a list of at least three Illinois Public School Districts that your firm services in the counties of Chicago. Include the contact information of the Superintendent. Provide a separate listing of Illinois school districts that are new clients in the last (5) years, as well as a list of any former clients who you have discontinued providing services to in the last (5) years. Please include information on any conflicts, disputes, or lawsuits the firm has been involved in with past or current school district clients

12. Management and Coordination: Describe your vision for effective management and coordination of the Board Attorney by the Board President and Superintendent. Explain how this vision is informed by the experience of your firm. Detail specific conditions and routines that need to be in place for the management and coordination of legal work to be effective, at both your firm and the school district.

13. Response Submission: Respondents must submit one (1) complete hard copy marked "ORIGINAL", plus an electronic copy (on usb flash drive or other portable media) with the proposer's response in any combination of Word Document, Excel Spreadsheet, or Adobe PDF to:

**Township High School District 113
Attn: Pete Nedza
1040 Park Ave West
Highland Park, Illinois 60035**

Responses must be submitted no later than 4:00 PM CST.. on March 18, 2024.

Selection Process

District Administration and the Board of Education will evaluate and select those firm(s) deemed to be the most highly qualified to perform the required services. The District will evaluate all responsive and responsible proposals and use a rating instrument to score the qualifications. The District may afford firms the opportunity to clarify their qualifications for the purpose of assuring a full understanding of their responsiveness to the RFQ.

FORM A SUBMITTAL LABEL

Due March 18, 2025

Company Name:
Address:
City, State, Zip:
Contact Name:
E-Mail:
Phone Number:

25-001 RFQ Legal Services
March 18, 2025, by 4:00 PM CST
Late submissions will not be considered

Township High School District 113
Attn: Pete Nedza
1040 Park Ave West
Highland Park, Illinois 60035

**PLEASE CUT OUT AND AFFIX THIS LABEL TO THE OUTERMOST ENVELOPE OF YOUR
SEALED ENVELOPE TO HELP ENSURE PROPER DELIVERY**