Iowa State Association of Counties
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October 16, 2026

The Iowa State Association of Counties (ISAC) invites proposals from qualified lobbyists and lobbying firms to supplement ISAC's advocacy efforts during the 2027 Iowa legislative session.

Who We Are

ISAC is a statewide organization dedicated to promoting effective and responsible county government for the people of Iowa. ISAC provides advocacy, education, and support services to Iowa's 99 counties and the officials who serve them. ISAC is guided by the ISAC Board of Directors, which is made up of 16 affiliate organizations representing elected county roles and county departments. Please visit https://www.iowacounties.org/ for more information about our work.

Scope of Services

Under the direction of the Executive Director, Director of Government Relations, and Senior Policy Advisor (hereinafter referred to as "ISAC Government Relations Team"), ISAC seeks to retain a qualified lobbyist or lobbying firm to supplement and enhance the work of its Government Relations Team. The selected contractor will help expand ISAC's presence at the Iowa Capitol, strengthen relationships with policymakers, and advance county government priorities before the Iowa Legislature, the Office of the Governor, and state agencies. ISAC's Board of Directors, affiliates, and members will continue to help establish the organization's legislative priorities, and the contractor's work will complement, not replace, the advocacy work performed by ISAC staff.

Conflict of Interest

The contractor shall promptly notify ISAC in writing, including by email, of any actual or potential conflict between ISAC's interests and those of the contractor's clients and shall disclose any known conflicts in its proposal. ISAC shall likewise promptly notify the contractor of any conflict it identifies. The parties shall attempt to resolve the conflict on mutually acceptable terms. If a conflict cannot be resolved to ISAC's satisfaction, ISAC may obtain the affected services from another contractor and reduce the contractor's fees accordingly.

Services to be Performed

The lobbying contract is expected to run from contract execution through the end of the calendar year, or a date determined between the contractor and ISAC, and may be renewed for subsequent years.

Direction for the execution of the contract will be communicated via the ISAC Government Relations Team. The contractor will communicate with the ISAC Government Relations Team, and all communication with ISAC members will be facilitated through ISAC staff.

Services will include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Legislative Advocacy
    a. Advocate on behalf of ISAC and Iowa county governments before the Iowa Legislature, Executive Branch, and state agencies.
    b. Communicate ISAC policy positions to legislators and other policymakers.
    c. Assist with direct lobbying efforts related to ISAC legislative priorities.
2. Communication
    a. Provide regular updates regarding legislative developments, political dynamics, and emerging issues.
    b. Offer strategic advice regarding advocacy opportunities and challenges.
    c. Identify and communicate relationship-building opportunities with policymakers and stakeholders.
3. Relationship Development
    a. Utilize existing relationships to facilitate communication between ISAC and state elected or appointed officials.
    b. Assist in expanding ISAC's network among legislators, executive branch officials, and policy stakeholders.
4. Coordination Requirements
    a. The selected contractor shall coordinate closely with the ISAC Executive Director, Director of Government Relations, and Senior Policy Advisor. ISAC's Government Relations Team will remain responsible for legislative priorities, member engagement and communication policy development, and overall advocacy strategy.

NOTE: ISAC will continue to handle lobby declarations on behalf of the ISAC Government Relations Team.

Your Response to This Request for Proposal (RFP)

If you are interested in providing lobbying services to ISAC, please address each of the following items and email your proposal to Emily Schwickerath at eschwickerath@iowacounties.org by EOD October 28, 2026:

- Identify each individual who would provide services under the contract and describe that person's relevant background and experience.
- Identify your current clients for whom you provide legislative lobbying services.
- Describe your processes and procedures for managing lobbying engagements, including coordination, communication, and client reporting.
- Describe how you keep clients informed about pending legislation.
- Describe how you handle pending legislation when a conflict arises between clients you represent.

- Describe your relationships with leadership, members, and staff of the Iowa General Assembly and legislative branch.
- Describe your relationships with current committee members for Local Government, State Government, and Ways and Means Committees and staff.
- Describe your relationships with both candidates vying for the Governor's Office, executive-branch agencies, and other relevant state officials and staff.
- Describe your proposed fee structure, including any retainer, hourly rates, reimbursable expenses, and other anticipated charges.
- Explain why ISAC should select your firm.

Rules Governing Proposals

1. **Confidentiality**

The content of all proposals will be kept confidential throughout the selection process and afterward, to the extent allowed by law.

2. **Disposition of Proposals**

All materials submitted in response to the RFP shall become the property of ISAC.

3. **Modification of Proposals**

Respondents may not modify their proposals after the submission deadline unless requested by ISAC. ISAC reserves the right to request clarification or additional information at any time.

4. **Acceptance or Rejection of Proposals**

ISAC reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, waive minor irregularities in a proposal or the RFP process, and select the proposal that meets or exceeds the requirements and is determined to be in ISAC's best interests.

5. **Proposal Evaluation**

ISAC will evaluate all proposals based on the needs of the organization, and with the engagement of support of a committee of individuals from the ISAC Board of Directors and may invite selected respondents to participate in an oral interview.

6. **Oral Interviews**

ISAC expects to conduct oral interviews to seek clarification, obtain additional information, and better understand the qualifications and proposals of selected respondents. Interviews will be conducted by the ISAC Government Relations Team, additional staff members as needed, and a committee of individuals from the ISAC Board of Directors, to take place between November 5 and 10, 2026 at the ISAC Office.

7. **Final Contractor Selection**

ISAC expects to select the successful respondent by November 11, 2026. A draft contract will be provided for consideration to the successful respondent, anticipating final contract negotiations will be concluded by November 25, 2026, following a meeting of the ISAC Board of Directors.

The timeline outlined below is as follows:

- Wednesday, October 28, 2026: Proposals due by EOD
- Friday, October 30, 2026: Final respondents contacted for oral interviews
- November 5-10, 2026: Oral interviews at the ISAC Office
- November 11, 2026: Final selection communicated to the successful respondent, draft contract provided, and all submitting contractors contacted
- November 18, 2026: Selected contractor invited to the ISAC Board of Directors dinner during the 2-day Board of Directors meeting
- November 25, 2026: Deadline for contract signature
- November 30, 2026: Contract begins

Questions regarding this RFP should be directed to Emily Schwickerath at eschwickerath@iowacounties.org.

Sincerely,

Emily Schwickerath
Director of Government Relations