

**Request for Proposal
For Auditing and Tax Services
New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival and Foundation, Inc.
March 12, 2024**

I. Introduction

New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival and Foundation (“Foundation”) is seeking proposals for the services of an independent certified public accounting firm to perform all tasks necessary to issue the annual audit report and letter of recommendations to management along with required tax filings for a minimum three-year period beginning with the fiscal year ending August 31, 2024. Notification of interest is requested by March 15, 2024. Responses are due by May 1, 2024. Interested firms should email notification of interest and complete proposals to Sarita M. Carriere (scarriere@jazzandheritage.org), Director of Finance & Human Resources, and Donald K. Marshall (dmarshall@jazzandheritage.org), Executive Director, New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival and Foundation, Inc.

The Foundation reserves the right to request additional information or clarifications to assist in its evaluation process or to allow corrections of errors or omissions. At the discretion of the Foundation, firms may be requested to provide additional testimony as part of the evaluation process.

The Foundation reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to reject any and all proposals submitted and to waive any irregularity or informality in any response. The Foundation reserves the right to retain all proposals submitted and to use any concepts presented in a proposal regardless of that proposal’s selection.

The Foundation shall not be liable for any losses and/or expenses incurred by respondents throughout this process. The Foundation cannot return any proposals or promotional materials submitted in response to this solicitation.

Submission of a proposal indicates acceptance by the respondent of the conditions contained in this request for proposals, unless clearly and specifically noted in the proposal submitted and confirmed in the contract between the Foundation and the selected contractor.

It is anticipated that the selection of a firm will be completed by June 14, 2024. Following the notification of selection, it is expected that the Audit Committee of the Foundation’s Board will present a recommendation for Board approval. A contract between the Foundation and the selected firm will be executed with an anticipated start date of August 5, 2024.

Schedule:

March 15, 2024	Request for proposals issued
March 29, 2024	Notification of interest due
May 1, 2024	Written proposals due
June 1, 2024	Finalist presentations (if required)
June 14, 2024	Final selection notification
August 5, 2024	Commencement of contract

II. Description of New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival and Foundation

A) Background Information

The New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival and Foundation, Inc. was founded in April 1970. Mission: *The New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival and Foundation, Inc. promotes, preserves, perpetuates and encourages the music, culture and heritage of communities in Louisiana through festivals, programs and other cultural, educational, civic and economic activities.*

The New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival and Foundation, Inc. (“Foundation”) is the nonprofit organization that owns the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival presented by Shell, (Jazz Fest) proceeds from which support the foundation’s year-round community development activities in the areas of education, economic development and cultural programming. Programs and assets of the foundation also include: radio station WWOZ 90.7-FM; the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Foundation Archive; the Don “Moose” Jamison Heritage School of Music; the Tom Dent Congo Square Lecture Series; and the Community Partnership Grants program, and several real properties. The Foundation produces community festivals such as the Crescent City Blues & BBQ Festival, the Tremé Creole Gumbo, and the Congo Square Rhythms Festival. The Foundation also produces several concert series throughout the year focusing on Louisiana musicians.

The Foundation reaches a general audience of all ages, ethnicities and social backgrounds. Jazz Fest, a seven- or eight-day festival, typically admits 60,000 people per day and has an estimated economic impact on New Orleans and the region of more than \$350 million. Jazz Fest typically hires 7000 performers, and all food vendors are Louisiana small businesses presenting unique and high-quality food for audience members. Jazz Fest has provided the template for other festivals such as Lollapalooza, Coachella, Austin City Limits, and Bonnaroo. The Foundation has, since 2006, after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, expanded its presence in New Orleans through its themed free-of-charge festivals outside of Jazz Fest to facilitate economic and community growth and revitalization as well as celebrate specific aspects of Louisiana and regional culture. The Crescent City Blues & BBQ Festival focuses on blues and rhythm & blues music. The Tremé Creole Gumbo & Congo Square Rhythms Festival highlights a Latin, Caribbean, and Afro-centric theme along with the impressive cultural contributions and history of the Tremé neighborhood.

Through the addition of its themed festivals throughout the year, the Foundation has been able to create opportunities for employment not just for musicians, but also for vendors of crafts and art as well as those who help to make the food of New Orleans so famous. The Foundation’s themed festivals, including the Crescent City Blues & BBQ

Festival, help create a way for a large segment of the local population, including visitors to New Orleans, to experience what makes New Orleans and the broader Louisiana community so unique and special. The events and programs produced by the Foundation highlight that many American traditions have been born in New Orleans and region and should be promoted, preserved, and perpetuated.

The Foundation has a staff of 15 full-time and 25 part-time individuals. The Executive Director reports to a 25-member Board of Directors and 5-member Advisory Council. The Foundation's Form 990 for the fiscal year ended August 31, 2022, is attached as part of this solicitation.

The Board's Audit Committee is responsible for decisions relating to the audit and is comprised of Board Members who volunteer their time to work with the Foundation and executive level staff.

B) New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival and Foundation, Inc. Structure and Accounting System

The Foundation's net assets are reported as Without Donor Restrictions and Donor Restrictions. The Foundation operates with QuickBooks Pro 2023 software.

The Foundation's annual budget is separated by department and program for budget planning purposes. The budget is reviewed by respective departments, the Board's Finance Committee and Executive Committee and is recommended for approval by the Board of Directors. The budget is prepared in sufficient detail to enable its use by management in monitoring operations.

C) Name and Telephone Number of Contact Person/Location of Offices

The principal contact for New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival and Foundation, Inc. will be Sarita M. Carriere, Director of Finance & Human Resources, or a designated representative, who will coordinate the assistance to be provided by the Foundation to the contractor. New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival and Foundation's phone number is (504) 558-6100, fax (504) 558-6112. Email to scarriere@jazzandheritage.org. Office location: 1205 N. Rampart St, New Orleans, LA 70116.

III. Scope of Services Required

The Foundation is seeking an independent certified public accounting firm for a minimum of three years to prepare its audited financial report and submit required federal and state tax documents annually as follows:

Audit:

1. Prepare audit report.
2. Examine and express an opinion on the statements of financial position, financial activities, and cash flow as of August 31.
3. Prepare management letter comments.
4. Present the audit report to the Audit Committee for approval by January 15 or thereabouts. The reports are to be made available five (5) days prior to the meeting
5. Provide five (5) copies of audit report and management letter along with electronic copy.
6. File completed audit report with the State of Louisiana no later than February 28th.

Tax:

1. Prepare Form 990 no later than July 15th, with extension.
2. Submit State filings as required by Louisiana.

Auditing Standards to be Followed:

Audit shall be performed in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards as set forth by the American Institute of Certified Public Accounts. In addition to the report(s) to management which applicable audit standards may require, the CPA shall be required to make an immediate written report of all illegal acts or indication of illegal acts which may result in findings for recovery.

IV. Relationship with Prior CPA Service Provider

Audit and tax services have been provided by Postlethwaite & Netterville/Eisner Amper for the past ten (10) years. Foundation management will give permission to contact the prior auditors, if desired, to prepare respondent proposals. It should be noted that Postlethwaite & Netterville/Eisner Amper has also been invited to submit a proposal in response to this solicitation.

V. Assistance to be provided to the CPA

- A. The Foundation support staff and responsible management personnel will be available during the audit to assist the contractor by providing information, documentation, and explanations. If requested, the Foundation will assist in preparation of confirmations.
- B. The accounting staff of the Foundation will prepare the appropriate statements and schedules for the contractor as requested.
- C. A work area, telephone, photocopying, and facsimile machine will be available for the contractor with reasonable workspace, desks, and chairs.
- D. Report preparation, editing and printing shall be the responsibility of the contractor.

VI. Other:

- A. Rates for Additional Professional Services - Should it become necessary for the contractor to render additional auditing or accounting services to either supplement the services requested in this Request for Proposals or due to a material change in the scope of work required in the Request for Proposals, a separate quote shall be obtained from the contractor for such additional work.
- B. Manner of Payment - Contractor will be paid the required final fee when the audit is completed and paid the required fee when the Form 990 is completed.
- C. Conflict of Interest - No officer, trustee or employee of New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival and Foundation, Inc. shall participate in any decision relating to the contract that affects their personal interest nor have any personal or pecuniary interest, direct or indirect, in this contract, any subcontract or assignment thereof, or in the proceeds thereof.

VII. Proposal Evaluation

1. The respondent's proposal consists of answers to each question included in Appendix A. Respondents must answer each question thoroughly to be deemed responsive to the RFP.
2. The Foundation will evaluate proposals on a qualitative basis. This includes review of the responses to questions in Appendix A including fee structure, review of the respondent's peer review report and related materials, interviews with senior engagement personnel to be assigned to the audit, results of discussions with other clients, and the respondent's completeness and timeliness in its responses to the questions asked in Appendix A and any additional questions asked.
3. As part of the evaluation process and at the discretion of the Foundation, respondents may be requested to provide additional oral or written testimony to support their responses.
4. Notification of the selected respondent shall be made by email or delivery at the address specified in the proposal.

APPENDIX A - PROPOSAL QUESTIONS

General Firm Philosophy and Value-Added Proposition:

1. Why is your firm the right fit for the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Foundation?
2. As it pertains to the needs of the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Foundation, what do you believe differentiates your firm?
3. What is your experience and expertise with community foundations?

The Firm:

1. Describe your firm's history, legal structure, and current ownership.
2. Detail your firm's experience in providing auditing and tax services to companies in the not-for-profit sector.
3. Provide experience and background of proposed team assigned to the engagement.
4. Identify the average number of clients per professional assigned to the engagement.
5. Discuss commitments you will make to this engagement's staff continuity. Include your overall staff turnover experience in the last three years.
6. Describe services other than audit and tax preparation that your firm offers.
7. Briefly outline your firm's efforts to attract and retain diverse talent and how does your firm ensure that underrepresented groups have equal opportunities for growth and advancement.

Client Base:

1. Provide a list of nonprofit clients and years with firm by asset range as follows: less than \$50 million, \$51 to \$100 million, \$101 to \$500 million, greater than \$500 million.
2. Provide the number of new clients added over the last five years and the number of client departures over the last five years.
3. Identify the three largest clients your firm (or office) has lost in the last three years and the reasons. Also discuss, in instances where loss of the client was due to an unresolved auditing or accounting matter, the process of attempting to resolve the issue.

Audit Approach:

1. Describe how your firm will approach the audit of the Foundation and the areas that will receive primary emphasis.

2. Discuss the firm's independence with respect to New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival and Foundation, Inc.
3. Identify the communication process used by the firm to discuss issues with management and audit committee of the board.

Compliance:

1. Has your firm or its principals ever been party to any investigation by any regulatory agency other than routine examinations?
2. Has your firm or its principals ever been sued by any clients in the last ten (10) years, and if yes, describe the circumstances and resolution.
3. Has your firm or its principals been involved in arbitration over client matters?

Research and Industry Trends:

1. Provide a description of client education services. Include recent reports or "white papers" distributed to clients.
2. Is there a schedule of periodic reports conducted by the firm?
3. How do you inform your clients of nonprofit tax issues?

Technology:

1. Discuss the firm's use of technology in the audit.

Fee Structure:

1. Set forth the fee proposal for the 2024 audit and tax preparation with whatever guarantees can be given regarding increases over future years.
2. Furnish standard billing rates for classes of professional personnel for each of the last three years.
3. Describe the firm's out-of-pocket expense policy.

References:

1. Provide five client references, including a former client who terminated their relationship, if applicable.
2. Include a standard letter of engagement and any other relevant contract documents or forms pertaining to nonprofit clients.
3. Include a copy of your firm's most recent peer review report, the related letter of comments, and the firm's response to the letter of comments.