



**Proposal to Provide
Professional Administrative Services
for the City of Pascagoula's
Community Development Block Grant
Entitlement Program**

2023 Annual Action Plan

Submitted By
Grace Aaron Development Consultant
135 Fayard Street
Biloxi, MS 39530
(228) 861-2994
graceinbiloxi@gmail.com

March 29, 2023

Grace Aaron Development Consultant
135 Fayard Street
Biloxi, MS 39530
(228) 861-2994
graceinbiloxi@gmail.com

Professional Administrative Services Proposal

Section 1. Introduction

I understand that the City of Pascagoula is requesting proposals for professional administrative services to assist in preparing and submitting a HUD compliant 2023 Annual Action Plan for its CDBG Entitlement Program and to assist in preparing federally compliant Environmental Review Records and Requests for Release of Funds, as may be requested by the City. I understand that the proposed scope of work also includes an option to extend the contract term for up to twelve-months should the City request additional professional administrative services to assist in amending its CDBG Annual Action Plan.

I have worked since 1999 as a self-employed consultant developing grant applications and administering grant programs funded by a wide variety of state and federal agencies and private foundations. Since 2012, I have specialized in working with Mississippi's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Entitlement Program cities, funded through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). My experience with the CDBG Entitlement Program includes preparing One-Year Annual Action Plans, Five-Year Consolidated Plans, Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Reports (CAPERs) and other HUD-required documents. I have more than eight years of direct experience working with the HUD Econ Planning Suite and Integrated Disbursement and Information System (IDIS).

I have successfully accomplished my work as a consultant for the past 24 years without subcontracting services or hiring staff beyond part-time clerical support. If selected, I will be solely responsible for preparing the City of Pascagoula's 2023 Annual Action Plan through submittal to HUD via IDIS. If the City of Pascagoula exercises its option to extend the Agreement, I will be available to provide any additional administrative services requested by the City.

Section 2. Experience

In terms of CDBG Entitlement Program direct experience, I have worked with the City of Pascagoula for the last seven years assisting in preparing and submitting its Program Year 2020 – 2024 CDBG Consolidated Plan and substantially amended its 2015-2019 Consolidated Plan. I also assisted in preparing and submitting each of the City of Pascagoula’s Annual Action Plans for Program Years 2016 through 2022.

In addition to working for the City of Pascagoula, I have assisted the City of Biloxi in preparing its CDBG Annual Action Plans every year since 2013. I also assisted in developing Biloxi’s Five-Year Consolidated Plans for the 2015-2019 and 2020-2024 periods. I prepared the City of Biloxi 2014-2019 Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice and assisted in preparing the 2020-2024 Joint Analysis of Impediments for the City of Biloxi and Biloxi Housing Authority, a component of the Mississippi statewide plan, in compliance with HUD regulations and policies.

My experience also includes preparing and submitting the City of Moss Point’s 2022-2026 CDBG Consolidated Plan, Program Year 2020 and 2021 CDBG Annual Action Plans, and preparing a substantial amended to the City’s 2019 Action Plan.

Most recently, I am assisting the City of Hattiesburg in preparing its Five-Year Consolidated Plan for the 2023-2027 period, which I anticipate will be completed and submitted to HUD by April 25, 2023, as they are on a different program year cycle than the City of Pascagoula.

I am familiar with the regulations and policies governing the CDBG Entitlement Program and have worked with HUD’s Econ Planning Suite and Integrated Disbursement and Information System (IDIS) to prepare and submit CDBG plans and reports since 2014, when most entitlement cities converted to use of the federal software.

I have direct experience working with the HUD Environmental Review Online System (HEROS), should the City of Pascagoula request my assistance in preparing Environmental Review Records and Requests for Release of Funds required for projects and activities funded through the CDBG Entitlement Program.

I have experience working with City officials and staff during the process of developing federally-required plans that require and incorporate citizen input and I am proficient in organizing and conducting public hearings and other citizen participation meetings. I understand that HUD’s deadline for CDBG Annual Action Plan submittal is firm.

Three Public Agency References

Michael Leonard, Chief Administrative Officer

City of Biloxi

140 Lameuse Street

Biloxi, MS 39530 Telephone: (228) 435-6254 Email: mleonard@biloxi.ms.us

Billy E. Knight, Sr., Mayor

City of Moss Point

4320 McInnis Avenue

Moss Point, MS 39563 Telephone: (228) 475-0300 Email: billy.knight@cityofmosspoint.org

Helen Werby, Executive Director

Biloxi Housing Authority

Benachi Avenue

Biloxi, MS 39530 Telephone: (228) 374-7771 Email: hwerby@biloxihousing.org

3. Qualifications

My combined CDBG Entitlement Program experience and academic qualifications give me a unique understanding of the technical and organizational skills necessary to assist in preparing and submitting the City of Pascagoula's 2023 Annual Action Plan in full compliance with CDBG regulations and policies.

My academic qualifications, which include a Master of Public Policy and Administration Degree from Mississippi State University and a Bachelor of Arts Degree as a Magna Cum Laude graduate of Mississippi University for Women, enhance my direct experience preparing HUD-required plans and reports as well as assisting with the administrative requirements of HUD's CDBG Entitlement Program.

My qualifications for providing professional administrative services to assist with preparing and submitting Pascagoula's 2023 Annual Action Plan include preparing the same HUD-required document for four CDBG Entitlement Cities: Pascagoula and Biloxi for the past seven to ten years, respectively, for Moss Point for the last four years and for Hattiesburg in 2023. Each of the documents I developed, or assisted in developing, has been approved by HUD.

My qualifications also include a working knowledge of HUD software systems, including the Econ Planning Suite, Integrated Disbursement and Information System (IDIS) and HUD Environmental Review Online System (HEROS).

In addition to having extensive knowledge about and technical expertise in preparing HUD documents and reports, my qualifications include the ability to successfully administer various

components of the CDBG Entitlement Program. I am well qualified to organize and conduct HUD-compliant public hearings, stakeholder consultations and agency interviews; coordinate outreach activities and document public input; design and conduct community needs surveys; compile and assess information from numerous sources; present said information in various software formats; meet deadlines; prepare documents for public review and City adoption; assist elected officials and staff in developing CDBG-eligible projects; and serve as a liaison between local units of government and federal, state and private agencies.

My qualifications also include the ability to make and maintain good working relationships with state, regional and local public employees, elected officials and representatives of community organizations, which allows me to successfully access the information HUD-requires be analyzed and incorporated into its planning documents.

My ability to work with a broad range of public and private agencies enhances my success developing funded grant applications for Mississippi cities and nonprofit agencies from various funding programs that, in addition to the CDBG Entitlement Program, include:

- Mississippi-Alabama SeaGrant Consortium - Sustainable Communities Grants
- Mississippi Department of Archives and History - Community Heritage Preservation, Mississippi Landmark and Certified Local Government Programs
- Mississippi Development Authority - Gulf Coast Restoration Fund and Economic Development Highway Programs
- Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality – Section 319 and Solid Waste Assistance Programs
- Mississippi Department of Marine Resources - Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act of 2006/GOMESA and Mississippi Public Trust Tidelands Grant Programs
- Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks - Recreational Trails Program
- Mississippi Department of Transportation - Transportation Enhancement Program
- Mississippi Forestry Commission - Urban and Community Forestry Assistance Grant
- Mississippi Tennis Association - Community Facilities Grant Program
- National Endowment for the Arts
- National Endowment for the Humanities - Preserve America Program
- RESTORE Act
- Southern Rail Commission/Federal Railroad Administration
- US Department of Housing and Urban Development - Emergency Shelter, Small Cities and Entitlement Community Development Block Grant Programs
- US Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service - Coastal Impact Assistance Program (CIAP) and Save America’s Treasures Program

- US EPA - Brownfields Assessment and Cleanup Grants, Wetlands Program Development and Five Star Restoration Grant Programs
- U.S. Department of Transportation - National Infrastructure Investments “TIGER Discretionary Grants” Program

Section 4. Capacity for Performance

I have the capacity to perform the work requested by the City of Pascagoula in its current Request for Proposals for Professional Administrative Services and I will be responsible for providing all administrative services to assist in preparing and submitting the City’s 2023 Annual Action Plan to HUD via IDIS and to prepare Environmental Review Records and Release of Funds forms in HEROS, as may be requested.

I have 24 years’ experience successfully managing my time to ensure delivery of quality work products to meet contractual commitments for each of my clients in a timely manner. Unless the City of Pascagoula desires to take a different approach to developing its CDBG planning documents than that which is required for compliance with HUD requirements, I do not anticipate the need for additional staff or subcontractors. Should that need arise, however, I will request approval from the City before subcontracting any professional administrative services and will fully comply with HUD’s Section 3 hiring requirements. I am a woman-owned business.

If selected to perform the services requested in the RFP and the City exercises its option to extend the term and scope of the Agreement, I will be available to assist in providing additional CDBG administrative services to the City of Pascagoula as mutually agreed upon in writing and at the same hourly rate.

I am available to begin work on this project immediately.

5. Summary of Cost for Requested Professional Administrative Services

To provide the professional administrative services requested under this RFP, I will complete preparation of Pascagoula’s 2023 Annual Action Plan for a total amount not to exceed \$8,100, based on my rate of \$90/hour for an estimated 90 hours.

The time estimate includes reviewing HUD notices, regulations and instructions; searching existing data sources; researching, formatting and maintaining other necessary data (interviews, surveys, meetings, hearings); completing and analyzing information; preparing

narratives, data charts and attachments; coordinating citizen outreach and participation efforts; and providing public review draft(s) and final document(s) in Word and IDIS formats.

My hourly rate includes all indirect costs and travel expenses except copying and printing expenses, which will be billed to the City at cost, based on receipts, if access is not provided to City copy machines and related supplies.

Please note: Services to assist in preparing Environmental Review Records and Request for Release of Funds documents, should they be requested by the City, are not included in the \$8,100 fixed, “not to exceed” fee above.

To identify the estimated number of hours required to assist in preparing Environmental Review Records (ERR) and Requests for Release of Funds (RROF), information about the number and scope of projects and activities that will be the subject of each federal ERR will be discussed and an estimate of time required to complete each review and related RROF will be mutually agreed upon; the estimated time for each shall be combined to identify the fixed, “not to exceed” rate, based on the same hourly rate of \$90, plus the actual cost of any required mapping, soil testing, publication and other costs. The agreed upon terms and fee shall be put into writing and attached to the original Agreement.

EXTENSION

If the City exercises its option to extend the term and scope of the Agreement, the estimated time required to provide additional CDBG administrative services shall be discussed and mutually agreed upon and a fixed, “not to exceed” fee shall be identified in writing, also based on my standard hourly rate at the time of execution of the original Agreement. The agreed upon Extension terms and fee shall be put into writing and attached to the original Agreement.

Grace Aaron
135 Fayard Street
Biloxi, MS 39530
228-861-2994
graceinbiloxi@gmail.com

Education

Bachelor of Arts, Mississippi University for Women, 1983
Magna Cum Laude, double major in English and journalism with
minor in political science
Master of Public Policy and Administration, Mississippi State University, 1984
Public Service Fellowship
Ph.D. in Urban Studies coursework completed, University of New Orleans, 1993

Experience

Grace Aaron Development Consultant: self-employed since 1999

Currently, work primarily focuses on developing Community Development Block Grant Entitlement Program Annual Action Plans, Five-Year Consolidated Plans and related federal reports and plans required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Experience includes developing federal, state and private agency grant applications and administering programs funded by the agencies listed below. Other professional services include preparing planning documents; annual performance reports; standard operating procedures and related forms and policies to guide implementation of grant activities and to support compliance with federal/state/local regulations; developing Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice;; and environmental review records.

Current clients include the cities of Biloxi, Hattiesburg, Moss Point and Pascagoula.

Institute for Museum and Library Services - Museums for America Program
Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium - Sustainable Communities Program
Mississippi Arts Commission
Mississippi Department of Archives and History - Community Heritage Preservation,
Mississippi Landmark and Certified Local Government Programs
Mississippi Development Authority - Gulf Coast Restoration Fund and Economic
Development Highway Programs
Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality - Section 319 and Solid Waste
Management Programs
Mississippi Department of Marine Resources - Mississippi Tidelands Trust Fund
and Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act/GOMESA Grant Programs
Mississippi Department of Transportation - Transportation Enhancement Program
Mississippi Forestry Commission - Urban and Community Forestry Assistance Program
Mississippi Humanities Council
Mississippi Tennis Association - Community Facilities Program
National Endowment for the Arts
National Endowment for the Humanities - Preserve America Program

Experience, continued

National Fish and Wildlife Foundation - 5 Star Restoration Challenge Grant Program
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration - Coastal Storms Program
RESTORE Act
Southern Rail Commission/Federal Railroad Administration Grant
U.S. Department of Commerce - Economic Development Administration Grant Programs
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development - CDBG Entitlement and Small Cities Programs
U.S. Department of the Interior - Coastal Impact Assistance Program (CIAP) and National Park Service Save America's Treasures Program
U.S. Department of Justice - Community-Oriented Policing Program
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency - Brownfields Assessment and Clean Up, Wetlands Program Development and Five Star Restoration Grant Programs
U.S. Department of Transportation - National Infrastructure Investments "TIGER Discretionary Grants" Program

Positions Held Prior to 1999:

Executive Director Southern Cultural Heritage Foundation, Vicksburg, MS (1994-1996)
Executive Director MUW Foundation, Columbus, MS (1993-1994)
Deputy Director Southern Mississippi Planning & Development District, Gulfport, MS (1991-1993)
Community Development Department Director, City of Biloxi, MS (1989-1991)
Economic Development Manager, City of Biloxi, MS (1987-1989)
Clerk of City Council, City of Biloxi, MS (1985-1987)
Special Projects Analyst, Governor's Office of Federal-State Programs (reorganized into Mississippi Development Authority), Jackson, MS (1984-1985)

Community Activities

Biloxi Bay Area Chamber, member & former vice president of culture/heritage committee
Crosby Arboretum, member
Mississippi Gulf Coast Master Naturalist
Pascagoula River Audubon Center, member
National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution, member
Dogwood Garden Club
Rue-Vieux, LLC: supporting preservation-based redevelopment of downtown Biloxi Main Street Biloxi
Mississippi Gulf Coast National Heritage Area, former Harrison County Commissioner
Gallery 782 Co-Art, former board president and member
Outstanding Preservation Volunteer, City of Biloxi, 2012
Arts & History Volunteer of the Year, City of Biloxi, 2010
Mississippi Main Street Association Board President, 1995
Leadership Gulf Coast, Class of 1991-92

References

Available upon request