



## **Request for Proposals—January 20, 2023**

### **Congressional Constituent Service Inquiries**

The Administrative Conference of the United States (ACUS) is accepting proposals from individuals or groups interested in serving as a consultant(s) to produce a report on agency procedures for responding to congressional constituent service inquiries.

#### **Project Description and Consultant Responsibilities**

The provision of constituent services has long been a cornerstone representational activity for members of Congress. Constituent services are also an important part of Congress's oversight of federally administered programs. Today, every member of Congress employs staff dedicated to assisting the thousands of people each year who seek help from their elected representatives to access federal programs or navigate adjudicative and other similar administrative processes.

There is, however, significant variation among agency practices for receiving, processing, and responding to congressional constituent service inquiries. At some agencies, for example, a centralized congressional liaison office has sole responsibility for managing congressional constituent service inquiries, while others employ more decentralized processes that empower individual component offices to receive, track and reply to such inquiries. While some agencies have adopted publicly available procedures for managing constituent service inquiries, others have either not adopted such procedures or have not made them available to the public. Even where such internal procedures have been adopted, their scope and content often differ significantly.

Given the critical role of constituent services in agency-congressional relations and congressional oversight of federal agencies, ACUS is undertaking a project to study and recommend best practices to promote quality, efficiency, and timeliness in agency practices for responding to congressional constituent service inquiries.

Among other topics, the project will address:

- Legal requirements governing agency responses to congressional constituent service inquiries;
- The extent to which agencies have developed procedures for receiving, processing, and responding to congressional constituent service inquiries;
- The scope, content, and internal dissemination of agency procedures; and
- The public availability of such procedures.

The focus of this project is not congressional offices' internal processes for managing constituent service inquiries or the legal or ethical propriety of contacting agencies on constituents' behalf in particular situations. Additionally, the project will not address congressional involvement in agency rulemaking.

The draft report will be completed by August 15, 2023, and the consultant(s) will thereafter be expected to work with Conference staff and committees as the Conference develops recommendations from the report in time for the Conference's December 2023 plenary session.

The Conference may select a single consultant or assemble a team of consultants depending on the proposals it receives. Consultants will receive between \$8,000 and \$25,000, plus a budget for related expenses, depending on the number of consultants and allocation of responsibilities. The total value of consulting fees for this project will not exceed \$25,000, to be apportioned in accordance with the number of consultants and division of responsibilities.

### **Submitting a Proposal and Evaluation Criteria**

If you are interested in serving as a consultant for the report, send an email to Conrad Dryland (cdryland@acus.gov) with the phrase "ACUS Project Proposal" in the subject line. Attach your curriculum vitae to the email, along with a short (ideally no more than one page) statement identifying what you see as the primary issues that the report should address. **All responsible sources must submit a proposal by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time on February 10, 2023, in order to be guaranteed consideration by the agency.**

Proposals will be evaluated based on quality, clarity, and the proposer's qualifications. The Conference has a strong preference for consultants who have previously authored scholarly work addressing congressional-agency relations or agency procedures for receiving, processing, and responding to congressional constituent service inquiries.