

Application to Prequalify Grant Administrators

TxCDBG Cycle Type:

2020

Firm Name: Blais & Associates, Inc.	DUNS Number: 060806773	Federal EIN: 45-3083595
Prequalification Contact First, Last Name and Title: Neil Blais, President/CEO	Phone Number: +1 (469) 579-5905	Prequalification Contact E-mail Address: nblais@blaisassoc.com
Firm Web Address www.blaisassoc.com	Firm Mailing Address 4107 Moonlight Drive, Little Elm, TX, 75088	Name of Firm's President/Managing Officer: Neil C. Blais

Application for Prequalification to Provide Administrative Services

IMPORTANT: The term "respondent" refers to the individual or firm responding to this RFQ. Responses to the items in Part 1 will be posted on TDA's website with the Approved Vendor List for Grant Administrative Services. Responses to the items in Part 2 will be disclosed to participating local governments during the project-based solicitation. The applicant must verify their eligibility through the System for Award Management (SAM) and demonstrate they are not listed on the government-wide exclusion list. Attach printout(s) of verification page with date. **With the exception of SAM verification, TDA will not accept or publish any attachments to the application. A response is required for all questions.**

Part 1

1. Provide a brief history or background of the respondent including number of years in the business of providing grant writing and/or grant administration services.

Blais & Associates, Inc. (B&A) is a full-service grant management firm focused on local government agencies. B&A was launched in California in 2000 and incorporated as a California S Corporation in May 2005. As part of planned expansion, B&A moved the corporate headquarters to Little Elm, TX in 2011. B&A is now incorporated as an S Corporation in the State of Texas and registered and in good standing with the California Secretary of State. March 2020 will mark B&A's 20th anniversary providing grant research, writing, and management services. B&A is fiscally healthy and does not have any conditions (e.g. bankruptcy, pending litigation, or planned office closures) that could impede our ability to service municipalities in the State of Texas. Since inception, B&A has submitted over 1,200 different types of grant applications and funding vehicles, including formula grants and competitive programs. These applications represent requests for over \$1.9 billion on behalf of our clients. Since 2014, B&A staff developed over 800 grant applications requesting nearly \$642 million in funding across a broad range of agencies and grant programs. B&A has submitted transportation, water, wastewater, storm water, capital improvement, recreation, parks, cultural, education, historic preservation, public safety, economic development, planning, environmental protection, library, museum, and homeland security grants, among others. In addition to grant writing, B&A also provides grant management services (post-award), including reporting, compliance, and closeout. This effort includes working with clients to review the grant agreement, develop a Project Schedule and Compliance Checklist, prepare reimbursement or drawdown requests, and assist with project reporting and project closeout. B&A provides all clients with an electronic audit binder (paper available upon request) that contains all information needed for the single audit process, internal audits, or external, 3rd party audits.

2. Describe the respondent's experience with the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program and in particular the state CDBG program.

B&A has experience with State-managed CDBG programs. In Texas, we worked with the Town of Little Elm to prepare and submit a \$275,000 CDBG application for roadway infrastructure in an impoverished community called Hilltown. The application was not selected for funding but this experience enabled the Town staff to understand the need for an income survey and additional public outreach. B&A advised the Town staff throughout the process and submitted the proposal on their behalf. In California, B&A's experience includes: 1) developing and submitting a \$1 million CDBG application to construct a sports park for low-income residents located in Farmersville, CA; 2) \$70,000 CDBG Planning and Technical Assistance application prepared and submitted to acquire vacant parcels that would be used for park activities (\$67,740 awarded); and 3) \$62,740 CDBG Planning and Technical Assistance application was prepared and funded to study water and sewer service for a small impoverished community called Cameron Creek Colony.

3. Describe the respondent's experience with the following:

- a. Community wide infrastructure projects

1) For the California Rural Water Association (CRWA), B&A staff assisted with post-award grant management and program development for a Household/Small Water System project. Funds are being administered for individual/household drinking water upgrades to resolve individual household drinking water bacterial violations. B&A staff developed the intake form to obtain

information from interested individuals or households, a draft grant agreement to be used between the CRWA and individuals/households, internal procedures the CRWA would adhere to during the grant's performance period, and an application for individuals or households to complete in order to apply for said grant for their individual or household water system.

2) For the City of Anaheim, B&A developed three Highway Safety Improvement Program applications for community-wide infrastructure projects. The projects for which the applications were developed are listed below:

- Replace 672 existing pedestrian crossing heads with 672 pedestrian countdown timer heads (awarded \$250,000);
- Replace 10 antiquated guardrails with upgraded and enhanced guardrails to absorb collision impacts and slow vehicles down (awarded \$381,000); and
- Install new mast arms with left turn phasing, emergency vehicle preemption, intersection lighting and a new median at the intersection of Glenoaks Avenue and Euclid Street (awarded \$1,118,610).

b. Direct beneficiary projects, such as housing rehabilitation or on-site sewer facility replacement

1) For Denton County Transportation Authority (Texas), B&A developed a Brownfields Assessment grant for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The application requested funding to conduct subsurface testing in and around the Lewisville Rail Maintenance Facility to assess whether any hazardous substances and/or petroleum products are present within and outside of the facility. The application requested \$178,200 for the testing. This application was awarded funding.

c. Job creation programs, including Texas Capital Fund - Infrastructure/Real Estate

Not applicable

d. Projects involving multiple funding sources

1) The City of Anaheim worked with B&A staff to obtain multiple funding sources for a road widening project called Brookhurst South. This was a complicated project that involved installing bioswales, curb and gutter, driveways, and traditional road rehabilitation. B&A developed and won the following multiple grant awards for this single project: 1) \$1.344 million from the California State Water Resources Control Board Proposition 84 Storm Water Grant Program; 2) \$1.085 million from the Orange County Transportation Authority M2 Environmental Cleanup Program, Tier 2, and 3) \$900,000 from the Federal Highway Administration's Highway Safety Improvement Program.

2) Anaheim Transportation Network (ATN) worked with B&A staff to obtain funds from multiple sources to diversify transit ridership, making public transit more appealing to families, workers, and tourists alike. This multi-million project is currently underway reducing the region's reliance on private vehicles, providing an electrified service to meet the increased transit demand, and ensuring long-term environmental benefits to the local area and State of California. B&A developed and won multiple funding awards for this project: 1) \$223,000 from Mobile Source Air Pollution Reduction Committee (MSRC); 2) \$6.19 million from the Hybrid Incentive Vehicle Program (HVIP); 3) \$7.35 million from the Anaheim Transportation Improvement District (ATID); 4) \$759,000 from Carl Moyer; 5) \$2 million from the Federal Transportation Administration's (FTA) LoNo program; 6) \$500,000 from the City of Norwalk's BBF 5339 program; and 7) \$22.8 million from the California State Transportation Agency Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program. Funds for this project, including ATN's local match, is expanding their micro-transit vehicle fleet and service, expanding their ZEV bus fleet and service, and funding construction of two facilities (Administration and O&M) to provide administration and operating/maintenance services to their electric fleet of vehicles.

4. Describe the range of services that the respondent offers in-house and the services typically offered through subcontractors.

B&A provides all grant research, writing, and post-award management/administration using all in-house staff.

5. Identify the geographic areas in which the respondent offers services.

<input type="checkbox"/> AACOG	<input type="checkbox"/> ATCOG	<input type="checkbox"/> BVCOG	<input type="checkbox"/> CAPCOG	<input type="checkbox"/> CBCOG
<input type="checkbox"/> CTCOG	<input type="checkbox"/> CVCOG	<input type="checkbox"/> DETCOG	<input type="checkbox"/> ETCOG	<input type="checkbox"/> GCRPC
<input type="checkbox"/> HGAC	<input type="checkbox"/> HOTCOG	<input type="checkbox"/> LRGVDC	<input type="checkbox"/> MRGDC	<input type="checkbox"/> NCTCOG
<input type="checkbox"/> NORTEX	<input type="checkbox"/> PBRPC	<input type="checkbox"/> PRPC	<input type="checkbox"/> RGCOG	<input type="checkbox"/> SETRPC
<input type="checkbox"/> SPAG	<input type="checkbox"/> STDC	<input type="checkbox"/> TEXOMA	<input type="checkbox"/> WTCOG	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Statewide

6. Describe the respondent's ability to devote the needed time to a project based on current workload.

B&A currently employs 21 associates and has over 51 contracts with cities, counties, water districts, and council of government agencies. All B&A directors and associates are a cohesive team and serve on the B&A bench. Our bench, and ability for any associate to develop any grant, is a unique feature of our firm. At any time, B&A can bring significant resources should multiple cities pursue multiple applications.

7. Is the respondent a TxCDBG certified administrator?

☐ Yes, certified 2019

If "No", provide most recent year of certification:

☒ No, will become certified if selected

November 2017

8. Using the table below, provide detailed information on up to five performance contracting projects the respondent completed (if possible, include contracts with multiple different entities served by the respondent). Only include projects that have at least one year of documented performance data or are currently under contract with the respondent, and that can be used as references.

Project Data and References		Add Project
Remove Project	Project Name	Whitley Road Safe Routes to Schools
Facility Type and Use		Trail, Safe Routes to School, public use
Project Location (Jurisdiction)		City of Keller, Tarrant County, Texas
Project Size		- Direct benefits to 619 students - 4,200 linear feet concrete shared-use pathway
Role & Responsibilities		Post-award grant management including compliance, reporting, reimbursements
Project Cost		\$1,114,217.41
Financing/Funding Source		U.S. Department of Transportation, FHWA, Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside Funds
Method of Documenting Beneficiaries		Not applicable
Project Schedule		Env. Review: 5/10/18 - 1/7/19 Construction: 9/5/19 - 5/2/20 Project is currently on schedule.
Monitoring and Verification Methods		Visual monitoring via site tours, review of inspection reports from contractors, and invoicing from contractors.
Project Personnel		Ursula Drake List all personnel associated with this project and their roles and responsibilities (only list those who may be assigned to a project). Develop Project Schedule and Compliance Checklist to serve as project management and grant compliance tool; conduct monthly project/grant management conference call; develop and submit monthly request for reimbursements; review compliance requirements in grant agreement and ensure compliance; liaison with funding agency for project amendments, scope changes, schedule changes, or issues arising during performance period.
Contact Information		Cody Maberry, Director of Community Services, (817) 743-4002, cmaberry@cityofkeller.com Gary Davis, Parks Maintenance and Development Manager, (817) 743-4057, gdavis@cityofkeller.com
Remove Project	Project Name	Little Elm McCord Park II
Facility Type and Use		Acquisition of 21.902 acres to renovate and further develop 38 acre McCord Park to include boardwalk, pavilion with picnic tables, sheltered picnic tables, dog park, benches,

	interpretive signs, landscaping, and irrigation, including construction of a new 0.7+/- recreational trail and bridge.
Project Location (Jurisdiction)	Town of Little Elm, Texas
Project Size -Number of Houses/Buildings -Total Linear Feet/Square Footage	- 38 acres - Approximately 3,960 linear feet (trail and bridge)
Role & Responsibilities	Post-award grant management including compliance, reporting, reimbursements
Project Cost	\$1,700,000
Financing/Funding Source	Texas Parks and Wildlife (federal and state)
Method of Documenting Beneficiaries	Not applicable
Project Schedule -Environmental Review Start and End Dates -Construction Start and End Dates -Describe if project was completed on schedule or delayed	Env. Review: June 2017 - August 2018 Construction: November 2018 - December 2019 Project was completed on schedule.
Monitoring and Verification Methods	Visual monitoring via site tours, review of inspection reports from contractors, and invoicing from contractors.
Project Personnel List all personnel associated with this project and their roles and responsibilities (only list those who may be assigned to a project).	Ursula Drake Develop Project Schedule and Compliance Checklist to serve as project management and grant compliance tool; conduct monthly project/grant management conference call; develop and submit monthly request for reimbursements; review compliance requirements in grant agreement and ensure compliance; liaison with funding agency for project amendments, scope changes, schedule changes, or issues arising during performance period.
Contact Information Current phone and e-mail address of local government representatives you worked with.	Wesley Brandon, P.E., CFM, Town Engineer, Project Manager, (214) 975-0489, wbrandon@littleelm.org
<div>Remove Project</div> Project Name	Celina Road Ground Water Storage Tank
Facility Type and Use	6 million gallon ground water storage tank
Project Location (Jurisdiction)	City of Celina, Texas, Collin and Denton Counties, Texas
Project Size -Number of Houses/Buildings -Total Linear Feet/Square Footage	- 6 million gallons - Service area population = 18,680
Role & Responsibilities	Post-award grant management including negotiation of grant agreement with funding agency, compliance, reporting, reimbursements
Project Cost	\$7,253,000
Financing/Funding Source	U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation, WaterSMART: Drought Resiliency Project Grant
Method of Documenting Beneficiaries	"Pre-post" design to quantify benefits, using CY2018 as baseline and earlier years as baseline when the use of 2018 data is not feasible.
Project Schedule -Environmental Review Start and End Dates	- Env. Review: October 2019 - May 2020 - Construction: December 2020 - June 2022 - Project is currently on schedule.

-Construction Start and End Dates -Describe if project was completed on schedule or delayed	
Monitoring and Verification Methods	Visual monitoring via site tours, review of inspection reports from contractors, and invoicing from contractors.
Project Personnel List all personnel associated with this project and their roles and responsibilities (only list those who may be assigned to a project).	Ursula Drake Develop Project Schedule and Compliance Checklist to serve as project management and grant compliance tool; conduct monthly project/grant management conference call; develop and submit monthly request for reimbursements; review compliance requirements in grant agreement and ensure compliance; liaison with funding agency for project amendments, scope changes, schedule changes, or issues arising during performance period.
Contact Information Current phone and e-mail address of local government representatives you worked with.	Kimberly Brawner, P.E., PTOE, CFM, Director of Engineering, (972) 382-7659, kbrawner@celina-tx.gov Catherine Oduro, P.E., CFM, Project Manager (469) 813-4095, coduro@celina-tx.gov

9. Describe the experience, competence and training of personnel with respect to grant writing and administration, and related work. Use the following table to present background on **key** personnel who will potentially be assigned responsibility for a core project task.

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Key Personnel Profile(s)		Add Personnel
Remove Personnel	Full Name	Ursula Drake
Potential Role	Post-Award Grant Management	
Base Location	Wichita, Kansas	
Current Employment Current job title Job responsibilities Number of years with respondent	Blais & Associates, Inc. Director of Grant Management Services Ensure grant compliance, develop reports, process reimbursement requests, liaison with funding agencies, develop audit packages, process budget amendments, scope of work changes, schedule changes, conduct weekly or monthly calls to ensure projects are staying on budget and schedule and complying with all grant requirements 3.25 years	
Overall Total Years or relevant experience Other relevant experience or accomplishments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 16+ years in the grant management industry (post-award) - B.A. in Business Management from Baker College, where she graduated Summa Cum Laude - TxDOT Local Government Project Procedures Qualification #61531 - Member of GPA, NGMA and AGWA - Currently studying for the Grants Management Certification through the National Grants Management Association. 	
NOTE: More detailed information, that expands upon staff experience, training background and other relevant information, may be provided at the request of interested communities who are in the process of soliciting proposals for administrative services.		
Remove Personnel	Full Name	Liz Range-Pendell
Potential Role	Grant Writer/Co-Manager (post-award)	
Base Location	Austin, Texas	
Current Employment Current job title Job responsibilities Number of years with respondent	Blais & Associates, Inc. Senior Associate Develop grant applications, liaison with funding agencies, manage portfolio of clients 7 years	

Overall Total Years or relevant experience Other relevant experience or accomplishments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 7 years in grant research and writing - B.A. in Public Policy, Center for Mexican-American Studies, University of Texas - Volunteer & Training Manager, National Dating Abuse Hotline - Member of GPA, NGMA and AGWA
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NOTE: More detailed information, that expands upon staff experience, training background and other relevant information, may be provided at the request of interested communities who are in the process of soliciting proposals for administrative services.

Remove Personnel	Full Name	Susan Worley
Potential Role	Grant Writer/Co-Manager (post-award)	
Base Location	Austin, TX	

Current Employment Current job title Job responsibilities Number of years with respondent	Blais & Associates, Inc. Associate Develop grant applications, liaison with funding agencies, manage portfolio of clients 3 years
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Overall Total Years or relevant experience Other relevant experience or accomplishments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 3 years in grant research and writing - M.L.A. in English Literature and Writing, St. Edward's University - B.A. in Radio-Television, Film University of Texas at Austin - Member of GPA, NGMA and AGWA
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NOTE: More detailed information, that expands upon staff experience, training background and other relevant information, may be provided at the request of interested communities who are in the process of soliciting proposals for administrative services.

Remove Personnel	Full Name	Destin Blais
Potential Role	Advisor and Reviewer	
Base Location	Little Elm Texas	

Current Employment Current job title Job responsibilities Number of years with respondent	Blais & Associates, Inc. Founder, Principal Provide strategic direction to ensure quality assurance and client satisfaction. Review work products for adherence to company standards and grant compliance. 20 years
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Overall Total Years or relevant experience Other relevant experience or accomplishments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 24+ years in grant research, writing and management - B.S. in Accountancy, University of Missouri, Columbia
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NOTE: More detailed information, that expands upon staff experience, training background and other relevant information, may be provided at the request of interested communities who are in the process of soliciting proposals for administrative services.

Remove Personnel	Full Name	Neil Blais
Potential Role	Contracts management, Accounts Payable, Accounts Receivable, and Insurance.	
Base Location	Little Elm, Texas	

Current Employment Current job title Job responsibilities Number of years with respondent	Blais & Associates, Inc. President & CEO, Principal Overall back-office management for any projects including review and execution of contracts, insurance, AP and AR. 13 years
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Overall Total Years or relevant experience Other relevant experience or accomplishments	36 years of engineering management and consulting management B.S. in Aerospace Engineering, California State Polytechnic University, Pomona.
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NOTE: More detailed information, that expands upon staff experience, training background and other relevant information, may be provided at the request of interested communities who are in the process of soliciting proposals for administrative services.

10. Provide a statement on the availability and commitment of the firm and personnel to undertake the project.

B&A currently employs 21 associates and has approximately 51 contracts with cities, counties, water districts, and council of government agencies. All B&A directors and associates are a cohesive team and serve on the B&A bench. Our bench, and ability for any associate to develop any grant, is a unique feature of our firm. At any time, B&A can bring significant resources should multiple cities pursue multiple applications. Our associates are all trained using written protocol and standard operating procedures and the each associates follows a proven standardized process outlined in a Process and Procedures Manual.

11. Is the respondent certified or self-identified as a small business, minority- or woman- owned business enterprise, or Section 3 business?

Small Business		Woman Owned		Minority Owned		Section 3	
<input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="radio"/> No

12. State the respondent's policy regarding affirmative action.

It is the policy of Blais & Associates, Inc. (B&A) to provide equal employment opportunities without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, marital status, veteran status, sexual orientation, genetic information or any other protected characteristic under applicable law. This policy relates to all phases of employment, including, but not limited to, recruiting, employment, placement, promotion, transfer, demotion, reduction of workforce and termination, rates of pay or other forms of compensation, selection for training, the use of all facilities, and participation in all company-sponsored employee activities. Provisions in applicable laws providing for bona fide occupational qualifications, business necessity or age limitations will be adhered to by the company where appropriate.

As part of the company's equal employment opportunity policy, B&A will also take affirmative action as called for by applicable laws and Executive Orders to ensure that minority group individuals, females, disabled veterans, recently separated veterans, other protected veterans, Armed Forces service medal veterans, and qualified disabled persons are introduced into our workforce and considered for promotional opportunities.

Employees and applicants shall not be subjected to harassment, intimidation or any type of retaliation because they have (1) filed a complaint; (2) assisted or participated in an investigation, compliance review, hearing or any other activity related to the administration of any federal, state or local law requiring equal employment opportunity; (3) opposed any act or practice made unlawful by any federal, state or local law requiring equal opportunity; or (4) exercised any other legal right protected by federal, state or local law requiring equal opportunity.

The above-mentioned policies shall be periodically brought to the attention of supervisors and shall be appropriately administered. It is the responsibility of each supervisor of the company to ensure affirmative implementation of these policies to avoid any discrimination in employment. All employees are expected to recognize these policies and cooperate with their implementation. Violation of these policies is a disciplinary offense.

The Affirmative Action Officer has been assigned to direct the establishment and monitor the implementation of personnel procedures to guide our affirmative action program throughout B&A. A notice explaining the company's policy will remain posted.

13. Provide any additional information that the respondent feels is essential to the respondent's statement of qualifications.

Blais & Associates staff are experienced professionals in all grant compliance requirements including: Davis Bacon; Debarred or Suspended verification via the System for Award Management (SAM); compliance with the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act Requirements; utilization of Force Accounts (city labor); State of Texas procurement rules and regulations; Texas Prevailing Wage; construction contracting, Civil Rights Assurances, Drug-Free Workplace, Lobbying, and many other federal and state rules and regulations.

B&A also has a proprietary software program (called "BGAPS") that provides both project management and grant management in one single software as a service (SAAS) system. This software (launching in February 2018) will be viewable by all clients who have grants managed by B&A and will aid in grant compliance and project management by any client who contracts with B&A for CDBG grant management. A demo of this software can be provided to State staff if desired.