

Request for Proposals (RFP)

Legal Services for Small Businesses

Issued by:	Baltimore Development Corporation (BDC)
Issue Date:	June 8, 2026
Proposal Deadline:	June 26, 2026 (5:00 PM ET)
Submission Contact:	Roy Broderick, Jr., SVP & Chief Business Development Officer — rbroderickjr@baltimoredevelopment.com

Overview

Baltimore Development Corporation (BDC) is seeking proposals from qualified attorneys or law firms to provide legal services to small businesses in Baltimore City. The purpose of this RFP is to establish a pool of legal service providers who can deliver high-quality, accessible, and cost-effective legal support to small business clients.

BDC supports small businesses through programs such as loan programs, grants, technical assistance, etc. Many participating businesses require legal guidance to start, grow, and sustain operations while remaining compliant with applicable laws and regulations.

This RFP aims to identify legal professionals with experience serving small businesses and entrepreneurs, particularly those in Baltimore City.

As a nonprofit economic development organization, wholly owned by the City of Baltimore, BDC operates in the public interest, and all engagements are subject to public accountability standards. Selected firm must adhere to all applicable public sector requirements.

Objectives

- Establish a pool of qualified attorneys and law firms to provide high-quality, accessible, and cost-effective legal services to small businesses and entrepreneurs in Baltimore City.
- Support Baltimore Development Corporation (BDC) small business programs by providing legal guidance related to business formation, contracts, compliance, employment matters, leasing, and other operational needs that help businesses start, grow, and sustain operations.
- Increase access to experienced legal support for underserved, minority-owned, women-owned, and neighborhood-based small businesses throughout Baltimore City.
- Ensure selected firms demonstrate professionalism, responsiveness, and compliance with all applicable public sector standards, reporting requirements, and ethical obligations associated with working with a city-owned nonprofit organization.

Scope of Work

The selected attorney(s) or firm(s) will provide legal services that may include, but are not limited to:

A. Business Formation & Structuring

- Entity selection and formation (LLC, corporation, partnership, etc.)
- Drafting and filing formation documents
- Operating agreements, bylaws, and shareholder agreements

B. Contracts & Transactions

- Drafting, reviewing, and negotiating contracts
- Vendor, client, and partnership agreements
- Lease agreements and commercial transactions

C. Regulatory Compliance

- Advising on federal, state, and local compliance requirements
- Licensing and permitting guidance
- Employment law compliance and policies

D. Employment & HR Legal Support

- Drafting employee handbooks and policies
- Advising on hiring, termination, and labor law issues
- Independent contractor vs. employee classification

E. Intellectual Property (IP)

- Trademark and copyright guidance
- IP protection strategies
- Assistance with filings and registrations

F. Dispute Resolution

- Pre-litigation counseling
- Mediation and negotiation support
- Referral or representation for litigation, as appropriate

G. Technical Assistance & Client Support

- One-on-one legal consultations with small business clients
- Legal education and guidance tailored to business needs
- Support for loan closings and review of legal documentation

H. Training Services

- Develop customized training curricula based on client or program needs
- Design training materials (presentations, workbooks, templates, guides)
- Deliver live workshops (in-person or virtual)
- Facilitate group training and interactive learning sessions

Proposal Format

Your proposal should be submitted as one (1) PDF and include the following components in order:

- Cover Page – Agency name, address, website, and point of contact (name, title, phone, email)
- Table of Contents
- Agency Overview & Team Bios
- Relevant Case Studies (2–3)
- Strategic & Creative Approach
- Measurement & Reporting Framework
- Proposed Staffing & Year-One Plan
- Budget (Retainer & Add-ons)
- References

Proposal Length: Maximum 20 pages, excluding cover page and appendices.

Deliverables & Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

A. Deliverables

Selected firms will be expected to provide:

- Completed legal documents (e.g., formation filings, contracts, agreements)
- Written legal opinions or guidance, as needed
- Documentation of client consultations and services provided
- Compliance checklists and guidance materials
- Periodic reports on services delivered and client outcomes

B. Key Performance Indicators

- Number of small businesses served and consultations completed
- Number of workshops or training delivered
- Timely submission of required reports and invoices
- Compliance with BDC public accountability and program requirements
- Effective coordination and communication with BDC staff and partners

Minimum Qualifications

Respondents must demonstrate:

- Active license to practice law in Maryland
- Experience working with small businesses and entrepreneurs
- Knowledge of relevant business, tax, and employment laws
- Strong communication and client service skills
- Ability to provide services in a timely and cost-effective manner

Proposal Requirements

Proposals must include:

- Cover letter
- Firm or attorney profile
- Copy of license and/or degree
- Description of relevant experience and areas of expertise
- Proposed approach to serving small business clients
- Fee structure (hourly rates, flat fees, or service packages)
- Resumes of key personnel
- At least three professional references
- Disclosure of any current or prior financial relationships with BDC staff, leadership, or City of Baltimore officials that may create an actual or perceived conflict of interest

Key Dates

Milestone	Date
RFP Released	Monday, June 8, 2026
Questions Due	Monday, June 12, 2026
Answers Posted/Emailed	Friday, June 16, 2026
Proposals Due	Friday, June 26, 2026
Finalist Interviews	Week of June 29, 2026
Negotiations by the Finance Team	Week of June 29, 2026
Notice of Award	Week of July 7, 2026
Target Start Date	July 2026

BDC reserves the right to adjust dates as needed.

Evaluation & Scoring

Category	Weight
Approach & Strategy Fit	30%
Relevant Experience & Case Studies	25%
Team & Capacity	15%
Measurement & Optimization Rigor	15%
Budget Value & Clarity	10%
Baltimore/Maryland Ecosystem Insight	5%

Shortlisted vendors may be asked to complete a light assignment or present creative/strategic samples.

Submission Instructions

Submit electronically to:

Roy Broderick, Jr. - SVP & Chief Business Development Officer

Email: rbroderickjr@baltimoredevelopment.com

Subject Line: RFP – Legal Services for Small Businesses (Agency Name)

Proposals must be received by June 26, 2026, at 5:00 PM ET. Late submissions may not be considered.

Questions

All questions should be submitted via email to rbroderickjr@baltimoredevelopment.com by June 26, 2026 (5:00 PM ET). Responses will be shared with all inquiring parties by July 10, 2026. No direct contact with BDC staff is permitted during evaluation.

Administrative, Legal & Compliance

- **Contract Term:** The anticipated contract term is one-year, July 2026 – July 2027, with the option to renew based on performance and funding availability.
- **Public Records/FOIA (MPIA):** Although BDC is a 501(c)(3), proposals and communications may be subject to disclosure under the Maryland Public Information Act. Mark truly

confidential/proprietary sections as “CONFIDENTIAL” with a brief rationale; BDC will evaluate such designations consistent with applicable law and cannot guarantee nondisclosure.

- **Work for Hire & IP:** Unless otherwise agreed, all final deliverables paid for by BDC will be deemed work-for-hire with BDC owning all rights, title, and interest. Vendor retains rights to pre-existing tools/templates.
- **Data Security & Privacy:** Vendor must follow reasonable data-security practices and comply with platform policies and applicable laws.
- **Non-Discrimination & EEO:** Vendor must comply with all applicable federal, state, and local EEO and non-discrimination requirements.
- **Insurance:** Respondents must maintain professional liability (malpractice) insurance of at least \$1,000,000 per occurrence and provide a certificate of insurance upon award.
- **Conflicts of Interest:** Disclose any relationships that may create an actual or perceived conflict, including any prior representation of parties adverse to BDC or the City, consistent with Maryland Rules of Professional Conduct.
- **Legal-Specific:** The selected attorney(s) and law firm(s) shall maintain the confidentiality of all information obtained in connection with services provided under this RFP and any resulting agreement, in accordance with the Maryland Attorneys’ Rules of Professional Conduct and all other applicable federal, state, and local laws governing attorney-client confidentiality and privilege.

For purposes of legal representation provided through Baltimore Development Corporation (BDC) programs, the attorney-client relationship shall exist solely between the attorney or law firm and the small business client receiving legal services, unless otherwise expressly stated in writing. BDC shall not be considered the client of record for matters involving direct legal representation, legal advice, or confidential legal communications provided to participating businesses.

Attorneys and firms must clearly communicate, in writing, the scope of representation, identity of the client, and any limitations of representation prior to commencing services. Engagement letters or similar documentation shall specify:

- The client of record
- The nature and scope of legal services to be provided
- Any conflicts of interest or potential limitations on representation
- The handling of confidential or privileged information

To the extent BDC requires reporting related to program administration, attorneys and firms may provide general service data, activity summaries, and non-privileged information only. No attorney-client, privileged communications or confidential legal information may be disclosed to BDC without the informed written consent of the client or as otherwise required by law.

Attorneys and firms shall maintain appropriate safeguards to protect confidential information and ensure compliance with all applicable ethical and professional obligations regarding data privacy, document retention, and secure communications.

- **Right to Reject/Negotiate:** BDC may accept or reject any proposal, request clarifications, and negotiate scope and pricing. This RFP does not commit the organization to award a contract.

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

BDC encourages participation from Baltimore-based firms, MBE/WBE/LGBTQ+/SBE vendors, and teams that reflect the diversity of the communities we serve. Please note any certifications and proposed local hiring/partnerships.

Terms and Conditions

- Baltimore Development Corporation reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals.
- This RFP does not commit the organization to award a contract.
- All costs associated with proposal preparation are the responsibility of the respondent.
- Selected firms will be required to enter into a formal agreement and comply with all applicable laws and regulations.
- The Contractor agrees to comply with all applicable federal, State of Maryland, and local laws, regulations, and ordinances prohibiting discrimination and promoting equal employment opportunity, and applicable provisions of the Maryland Code and Baltimore City Code. The Contractor shall not discriminate against any employee, applicant for employment, subcontractor, vendor, or program participant on the basis of race, color, religion, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital status, age, national origin, ancestry, disability, genetic information, veteran status, or any other classification protected by federal, state, or local law.
- All legal documents, templates, and written work products produced under this agreement and paid for by BDC are work-for-hire owned by BDC, subject to applicable professional responsibility rules.
- This RFP is issued pursuant to BDC procurement policies and applicable City of Baltimore regulations.