
City of Traverse City

Office of the City Manager

GOVERNMENTAL CENTER
400 Boardman Avenue
Traverse City, MI 49684
(231) 922-4440
(231) 922-4476 fax
tcmanage@traversecitymi.gov



February 25, 2026

Bidder:

The City of Traverse City will receive sealed bids in the Office of the City Manager, Second Floor, Governmental Center, 400 Boardman Avenue, Traverse City, Michigan, 49684, until **Wednesday, March 25, 2026, at 2:00 p.m.** for the following:

**LEGAL SERVICES FOR MICHIGAN TAX TRIBUNAL
AND/OR LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT MATTERS**

If the specifications are obtained from the City's website link at: [City of Traverse City Bid Tab](#), it is the sole responsibility of the Bidder to check the website for updates and addenda prior to the bid being submitted. Bidder may also sign up to receive notifications when bids are posted by sending an e-mail requesting same to ksheridan@traversecitymi.gov

The City of Traverse City reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids, waive irregularities, and to accept the bids either on an entire or individual basis that is in the best interest of the City. The City accepts no responsibility for any expense incurred by the Bidder in the preparation and presentation of a bid. Such expenses shall be borne exclusively by the Bidder. Only the successful Bidder will be notified. *You may submit a proposal for Michigan Tax Tribunal matters, Labor and Employment matters, or both.*

Please indicate on the outside of the sealed envelope that the bid is for **"Legal Services Request."** Please submit **TWO (2) SEALED COPIES** of the bid to the City Manager's Office prior to the above-indicated time and date or the bid will not be accepted. Alternatively, emailed bids **will be** accepted. Please indicate in the subject line of your email that you are submitting a "Sealed Bid" together with the project description, **"Legal Services Request,"** and submit your emailed bid to tcmanage@traversecitymi.gov **before Wednesday, March 25, 2026, at 2:00 p.m.**

Please note that if you have previously submitted an informal quote, you will still need to submit a sealed bid prior to the date and time specified above in order to be considered. Please ensure that all requirements listed in the specifications are met. If you have any questions, please contact Lauren Tribble-Laucht, City Attorney, at (231) 922-4404 before the bid is submitted.

PLEASE SUBMIT BID TO: Kim Sheridan, Purchasing Agent
400 Boardman Avenue, 2nd floor
Traverse City, MI 49684
tcmanage@traversecitymi.gov

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
LEGAL SERVICES
CITY OF TRAVERSE CITY, MICHIGAN**

OVERVIEW

The City of Traverse City is requesting proposals from qualified legal counsel to provide legal services for the City of Traverse City in tax appeals before the “Entire Tribunal” division of the Michigan Tax Tribunal and/or legal services for Labor and Employment matters. Outside legal counsel is approved and appointed by the City Commission upon recommendation of the City Attorney. Tax appeals in the small claims division are not included and will continue to be handled by the City Assessor. The selected legal counsel will not initiate any matter on behalf of the City except as authorized and requested by the City Commission, City Attorney or City Manager and will proceed on only those matters referred to counsel in the manner agreed based on the counsel’s advice and the City’s direction.

INTENT

The City is seeking to engage the services of a qualified licensed attorney to represent the City’s interests in Michigan Entire Tax Tribunal tax appeals and/or Labor and Employment matters. The City intends to enter into a one-year contract which is anticipated to begin in the next fiscal year, potentially sooner depending on the proposal. The City intends to receive bids from qualified licensed attorney(s) or law firms.

COMMUNITY BACKGROUND

The City of Traverse City has approximately 1,115 commercial ad valorem parcels in Grand Traverse County and 24 commercial ad valorem parcels in Leelanau County. From 2020-2025 the City has had an average of 10-12 Entire Tribunal tax appeals per year in the Entire Tribunal Division.

The City of Traverse City, Michigan is a full service city located in the heart of Grand Traverse County and serves as the hub of a five-county region of 154,452 residents. Traverse City was incorporated in 1891 as a village and in 1895 as a City. It encompasses 8.09 square miles (including airport, Boardman Lake, etc.) and has a residential population of 15,678 (2020 census). Additional information can be found on the City’s website: www.traverscitymi.gov

The City of Traverse City provides a high level of quality services to its citizens, along with public facilities and infrastructure. The City has an outstanding downtown and a strong small business community. Approximately 50% of the property, by land mass, is tax exempt including the airport, schools, community college, and an extensive medical health care system.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

The attorney assigned to work on City Michigan Entire Tax Tribunal tax appeal matters shall, at a minimum, possess the following: 1. A juris doctorate degree from an American Bar Association accredited college or university. 2. A valid license to practice law in the State of Michigan. 3. A

minimum of five (5) years' experience in practice before the Michigan Tax Tribunal including trial practice. 4. Be in good standing with the Michigan Bar Association.

The attorney assigned to work on City Labor and Employment matters shall, at a minimum, possess the following: 1. A juris doctorate degree from an American Bar Association accredited college or university. 2. A valid license to practice law in the State of Michigan. 3. A minimum of five (5) years employment experience including collective bargaining negotiations; Act 312 Arbitration experience as first chair; and disciplinary and grievance proceedings. 4. Be in good standing with the Michigan Bar Association.

SCOPE OF SERVICES FOR TAX TRIBUNAL MATTERS

The scope of work to be performed under this contract includes the following:

- Represent the City in matters before the Michigan Tax Tribunal "Entire Tribunal" division.
- Draft and file pleadings, motions, and related documents.
- Arrange for and review appraisals, valuation disclosures and other evidence as necessary.
- Prepare, file and receive discovery requests, briefs and other necessary filings.
- Handle matters through resolution or trial phase and appeals as requested.
- Any other related matter assigned by the City Attorney.
- Coordinate with and report to the City Attorney on all matters being handled on the City's behalf.

Further, the City will consider the selected Attorney to be the sole point of contact with regard to contractual matters, including payment of any and all charges resulting from the contract.

SCOPE OF SERVICES FOR LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT MATTERS

The scope of work to be performed under this contract includes but is not limited to the following:

Labor Relations and Collective Bargaining

- Serve as chief spokesperson or advisor in collective bargaining negotiations with labor unions, as requested by the City.
- Provide strategic advice and preparation for negotiations, including costing proposals and drafting bargaining strategies.
- Draft, review, and revise collective bargaining agreements, memoranda of understanding, side letters, and settlement agreements.
- Advise on contract interpretation, administration, and compliance.

Employment Law Advice and Compliance

- Provide legal advice regarding federal, state, and local employment laws, including but not limited to:
 - Public Employment Relations Act (PERA)
 - Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA)
 - Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)

- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act
- Advise on employee discipline, discharge, layoffs, recalls, and reductions in force.
- Assist with reasonable accommodation and interactive process matters.
- Review and advise on personnel policies, employee handbooks, and administrative rules.

Grievances, Arbitrations, and Administrative Proceedings

- Represent the City in grievance proceedings, mediation, arbitration, and fact-finding.
- Prepare briefs, motions, and legal memoranda related to labor disputes.
- Represent the City before administrative agencies, including the Michigan Employment Relations Commission (MERC), Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity (LEO), and other applicable bodies.

Workplace Investigations

- Conduct or support impartial workplace investigations involving employee misconduct, policy violations, harassment, discrimination, retaliation, or other employment-related complaints.

Litigation and Claims Management

- Represent the City in labor and employment-related litigation in state and federal courts, as assigned.

Advisory, Training, and Preventive Services

- Provide ongoing advice to City management and Human Resources on best practices and risk mitigation.
- Conduct training sessions for City leadership, supervisors, and HR staff on labor relations, employment law updates, and management practices as requested.
- Provide updates on changes in labor and employment law affecting public employers.

Availability and Responsiveness

- Maintain reasonable availability to respond to City inquiries in a timely manner.
- Attend meetings, negotiation sessions, hearings, and City-related proceedings as required.

Coordination and Reporting

The labor attorney shall coordinate closely with the City Manager, Human Resources Director, and City Attorney, and shall provide periodic updates on active matters as requested.

Exclusions

This scope does not guarantee a minimum amount of work. The City reserves the right to assign work on an as-needed basis and to retain other legal counsel for specialized matters.

PAYMENT

City will consider all pricing structures submitted, including monthly retainer.

PROPOSAL FORMAT

Proposals should include at a minimum the following information:

1. Proposed pricing structure (monthly retainer rate, the cost per hour of service and listing of all other expenses to be charged outside of the retainer fee).
2. Name, address, telephone number (main and fax) and email address of the firm and location of firm offices (if more than one).
3. Name, email and telephone number of primary attorney.
4. Martindale Hubbell rating of the firm/attorney(s) and any other relevant ratings.
5. Number of years the attorney/firm has been in practice.
6. Brief history of the attorney/firm and practice areas.
7. Experience of the attorney/firm in representing municipalities including municipalities currently represented and municipalities represented in the past.
8. Firm composition.
 - a. names of attorneys
 - b. number of support staff
9. Resumes. Attach a current resume for each attorney proposed to work on the City's behalf.
10. A copy of the declaration page for malpractice insurance.
11. Discipline. Indicate for each attorney if there has ever been any disciplinary case against the attorney that resulted in a finding of misconduct.
12. Indicate whether the legal license to practice law of any attorney has ever been suspended. Provide details of dates and causes.
13. Name, address and telephone number of three references.

EVALUATION OF PROPOSALS

All proposals received shall be subject to evaluation by the City. Price alone shall not be the basis for the award of this work, but shall be only one of the components considered. Attorneys who present acceptable proposals and who are shown to be qualified, responsible and capable of performing the work may be requested to interview with the City prior to any award of this work. The following facts, along with other items, will be considered:

1. Expertise and experience as related to the required work.
2. Qualifications and availability of the firm/attorney.
3. Conflicts of professional interests.

BIDDER - PLEASE COMPLETE AND RETURN

BID SUMMARY

TITLE: Legal Services for Michigan Tax Tribunal and/or Labor and Employment Matters

DUE DATE: Wednesday, March 25, 2026, at 2:00PM

Having carefully examined the attached specifications and any other applicable information, the undersigned proposes to furnish all items necessary for and reasonably incidental to the proper completion of this bid. Bidder submits this bid and agrees to meet or exceed all requirements and specifications unless otherwise indicated in writing and attached hereto.

Bidder certifies that as of the date of this bid the Company or he/she is not in arrears to the City of Traverse City for debt or contract and is in no way a defaulter as provided in Section 152, Chapter XVI of the Charter of the City of Traverse City.

Bidder understands and agrees, if selected as the successful Bidder, to accept a contract and to provide proof of the required insurance.

Bidder submits this bid and agrees to meet or exceed all the City of Traverse City's requirements and specifications unless otherwise indicated in writing and attached hereto. Bidder shall comply with all applicable federal, state, local and building codes, laws, rules and regulations and obtain any required permits for this work.

The Bidder certifies that it is in compliance with the City's Nondiscrimination Policy as set forth in Administrative Order No. 47 and Chapter 605 of the City's Codified Ordinances.

The Bidder certifies that none of the following circumstances have occurred with respect to the Bidder, an officer of the Bidder, or an owner of a 25% or more share in the Bidder's business, within 3 years prior to the bid:

- (a) conviction of a criminal offense incident to the application for or performance of a contract;
- (b) conviction of embezzlement, theft, forgery, bribery, falsification or destruction of records, receiving stolen property, or any other offense which currently, seriously and directly reflects on the Bidder's business integrity;
- (c) conviction under state or federal antitrust statutes;
- (d) attempting to influence a public employee to breach ethical conduct standards; or
- (e) conviction of a criminal offense or other violation of other state, local, or federal law, as determined by a court of competent jurisdiction or an administrative proceeding, which in the opinion of the City indicates that the bidder is unable to perform responsibility or which reflects

a lack of integrity that could negatively impact or reflect upon the City of Traverse City, including but not limited to, any of the following offenses or violations of:

- i. The General Property Tax Act
- ii. The Michigan State Tax Commission Rules
- iii. The Michigan Tax Tribunal Act
- iv. The Michigan Tax Tribunal Rules
- v. The Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs Michigan Administrative Hearing System Administrative Hearing Rules
- vi. Michigan Rules of Professional Conduct and Code of Ethics
- viii. A violation of federal, local, or state civil rights, equal rights, or non-discrimination laws, rules, or regulations.

(f) the loss of a license or the right to do business or practice a profession, the loss or suspension of which indicates dishonesty, a lack of integrity, or a failure or refusal to perform in accordance with the ethical standards of the business or profession in question.

Bidder understands that the City reserves the right to accept any or all bids in whole or part and to waive irregularities in any bid in the best interest of the City. The bid will be evaluated and awarded on the basis of the best value to the City. The criteria used by the City may include, but will not be limited to: experience, price, availability, and other pertinent factors and overall capability to meet the needs of the City. The City is sales tax exempt – Government.

Bidder agrees that the bid may not be withdrawn for a period of sixty (60) days from the actual date of the opening of the bid.

Submitted by:

Signature

Individual or Firm Name

Name and Title (Print)

Address

Phone Fax

City, State, Zip

EMAIL ADDRESS:

Sole proprietorship/partnership/corporation

If corporation, state of corporation