



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Fractional General Counsel Services

Issued by:

SAFE Alliance

P.O. Box 1930 | Austin, Texas 78767 | safeaustin.org

RFP Title	Fractional General Counsel Services
Issue Date	May 11, 2026
Proposals Due By	June 11, 2026
Submission Method	Electronic submission to aburleson@safeaustin.org
Point of Contact	Anna Belle Burleson, Executive Assistant to the CEO
Contract Term	Month-to-month on as-needed basis

INTRODUCTION AND ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW

SAFE Alliance (SAFE) is one of Texas's largest nonprofit organizations dedicated to ending domestic violence and sexual assault. Headquartered in Austin, Texas, SAFE provides a comprehensive range of services to survivors of family violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking, including emergency shelter, transitional and permanent supportive housing, counseling, legal advocacy, children's services, and community education.

Formed through the merger of Austin Children's Shelter and SafePlace, SAFE operates on a meaningful scale, reaching thousands of individuals each year through direct services and partnerships across schools, hospitals, courts, and public systems. The mission is to interrupt the cycle of abuse by cultivating safety, healing, and just outcomes.

SAFE employs hundreds of staff across multiple campuses and community locations and manages significant real property assets, complex affordable housing finance structures, government grant portfolios, and ongoing relationships with law enforcement, courts, and government agencies.

This RFP is issued to identify a qualified attorney or law firm to serve as SAFE's Fractional General Counsel, providing strategic legal oversight, day-to-day legal guidance, and coordination of outside and pro bono counsel on a part-time, flexible basis.

PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF SERVICES

A. Purpose

SAFE Alliance seeks proposals from qualified attorneys or law firms to provide Fractional General Counsel services. The selected respondent will serve as SAFE's primary legal advisor on a part-time engagement basis, providing strategic legal leadership commensurate with the organization's size, mission, and risk profile.

The primary objectives of this engagement are to:

- Maintain a coordinated legal risk management infrastructure for SAFE;
- Serve as the organization's primary point of contact for legal matters;
- Conduct a comprehensive assessment of SAFE's open legal matters and areas of possible legal risk;
- Build and manage a network of paid and pro bono legal partners organized by specialized practice area;
- Provide legal guidance to SAFE's senior leadership; and
- Support governance oversight by reporting to the Board's Risk and Liability Committee.

B. Scope of Services

The Fractional General Counsel shall provide the following services:

1. Initial Legal Needs Assessment

Within sixty (60) days of engagement, the Fractional General Counsel shall conduct a comprehensive assessment of SAFE's legal needs, open matters, and areas of unaddressed legal risk. The assessment shall result in a written report delivered to senior leadership and the Board Risk and Liability Committee, including at minimum:

- Identification and prioritization of all known or suspected open legal matters;
- A risk assessment across SAFE's primary legal practice areas;
- Recommendations for legal risk mitigation; and
- An initial framework for a centralized legal matter dashboard.

2. Legal Matter Management and Dashboard

The Fractional General Counsel shall establish and maintain a centralized dashboard tracking all active legal matters, including matter description and status, assigned counsel or internal owner, risk level, and key deadlines. The dashboard shall be updated on a regular basis and shall serve as the primary tool for reporting to SAFE's leadership and the Board Risk and Liability Committee.

3. Coordination of Legal Matters

The Fractional General Counsel shall serve as SAFE's legal air traffic controller, responsible for:

- Triaging incoming legal issues and routing matters to appropriate counsel;
- Monitoring progress, deadlines, and outcomes across all active matters;
- Advising SAFE leadership on legal risk and recommended courses of action; and
- Ensuring continuity and accountability across all legal engagements.

4. Pro Bono Partner Network Development

A central function of this engagement is the development and management of a structured Pro Bono Partner Network. The Fractional General Counsel shall:

- Identify and cultivate relationships with Austin-area law firms and attorneys willing to provide pro bono services to SAFE;
- Maintain a roster of pro bono counsel organized by practice area;
- Refer discrete legal matters to pro bono partners as appropriate; and
- Develop and implement a recognition program to sustain and grow pro bono relationships over time.

Pro bono partners will not serve as retained counsel and will accept matters on a case-by-case basis subject to their standard intake procedures.

5. Day-to-Day Legal Counsel

The Fractional General Counsel shall serve as a primary day-to-day legal resource for SAFE's Executive Director and senior leadership, including:

- Contract review, drafting, and negotiation;
- Policy interpretation and development;

- Employment law counseling and pre-claim guidance;
- Regulatory compliance questions;
- Responses to subpoenas and law enforcement inquiries; and
- General risk management counsel across SAFE's operational needs.

6. Board Risk and Liability Committee Reporting

The Fractional General Counsel shall provide regular written reports on the status of legal matters, active risks, and emerging issues to senior leadership. The Fractional General Counsel shall escalate material legal developments in a timely manner.

7. Practice Areas

SAFE's legal needs span a broad range of practice areas. Respondents are not expected to have proficiency in all areas, but respondents should explain their familiarity, or the capacity to coordinate with counsel, with the following areas of law:

- Employment;
- Contract and vendor management;
- Tort and general liability;
- Immigration;
- Privacy, confidentiality, and intellectual property;
- Real estate;
- Affordable housing finance, regulatory and grant compliance; and
- Corporate governance.

ENGAGEMENT STRUCTURE AND TIME COMMITMENT

SAFE anticipates engaging the Fractional General Counsel on a flexible, part-time basis. The anticipated time commitment is between four (4) and fifteen (15) hours per week, with the understanding that demand will fluctuate based on organizational needs, active matters, and strategic priorities.

The engagement may be structured as an independent contractor arrangement or, if proposed by the respondent, as an engagement through a law firm. Respondents should clearly describe their proposed engagement model in their proposal.

The Fractional General Counsel will report directly to and work in close partnership with SAFE's Chief Executive Officer, who will serve as the primary organizational point of contact for prioritizing legal work in alignment with operational and strategic needs.

This is not a full-time employment position. SAFE is not seeking to hire a salaried General Counsel at this time.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

To be eligible for consideration, respondents must meet the following minimum qualifications:

- Active licensure to practice law in the State of Texas in good standing with the State Bar of Texas;
- Minimum of ten (10) years of legal experience, including demonstrable experience handling matters of comparable scope and complexity to those described in Section IIB, whether through in-house, law firm, or government practice;
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- Experience managing or coordinating outside counsel relationships across multiple practice areas;
- Familiarity with the legal issues facing organizations serving vulnerable populations, including employment law, government grants, and privacy and confidentiality compliance; and
- No current conflicts of interest with SAFE Alliance or its related or affiliated entities.
- Cultural competency and trauma-informed approach when working with staff who serve survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, sex trafficking, and child abuse

PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS

In addition to the minimum qualifications above, SAFE gives preference to respondents who demonstrate the following:

- Prior experience as General Counsel, Deputy General Counsel, or Fractional General Counsel;
- Experience advising nonprofit organizations, preferably in Texas;
- Experience with affordable housing finance, tax credit transactions, or real estate matters in Texas;
- Familiarity with VAWA, HIPAA, and other confidentiality regimes applicable to organizations serving domestic violence and sexual assault survivors;
- Experience with federal and state grant compliance and grant dispute resolution;
- Established relationships with Austin-area law firms and attorneys capable of providing pro bono services; and
- Experience building and managing pro bono legal networks or similar legal partnerships.

PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

Respondents must submit a complete proposal that addresses each of the following components. Proposals that do not address all required components may be deemed non-responsive.

A. Cover Letter

A signed cover letter (no more than two pages) expressing the respondent's interest in the engagement, confirming eligibility and availability, and summarizing the respondent's qualifications.

B. Organizational or Biographical Information

If responding as an individual attorney: a professional biography and current curriculum vitae. If responding through a law firm: a brief firm overview, identification of the attorney(s) who would serve as Fractional General Counsel, and biographies and curricula vitae for all proposed personnel.

C. Relevant Experience

A narrative (no more than three pages) describing the respondent's relevant experience.

Respondents may submit up to three (3) professional references from prior clients or employers with direct knowledge of the respondent's capacity for general counsel work. References should include the name, organization, title, telephone number, and email address of each contact. SAFE reserves the right to contact references during the evaluation process.

D. Proposed Fee Structure

A detailed description of the respondent's proposed fee structure, which may include one or more of the following arrangements:

- A monthly or annual retainer for a defined scope of services or number of hours;
- An hourly rate or blended rate for time-and-materials billing;
- A hybrid model combining a retainer with hourly billing for matters exceeding a defined threshold; or
- Such other structure as the respondent proposes with appropriate justification.

Respondents should clearly describe what services are included within any proposed retainer and what services, if any, would be billed separately. SAFE is committed to cost-effective legal services and encourages respondents to propose structures that reflect the part-time and flexible nature of this engagement. Respondents should also disclose any anticipated expenses that would be billed to SAFE separately from professional fees.

E. Conflict of Interest Disclosure

A written representation confirming that the respondent has reviewed SAFE Alliance's publicly available information and is not aware of any current conflicts of interest that would prevent the respondent from serving as SAFE's Fractional General Counsel. If any potential conflicts are identified, the respondent must describe them and explain how they would be addressed.

F. Insurance

Confirmation that the respondent carries professional liability (errors and omissions) insurance in an amount consistent with the scope of services proposed, and willingness to provide a certificate of insurance upon request.

SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

All proposals must be submitted electronically to the email address listed on the front page of this RFP by the deadline listed.

Proposals must be submitted in PDF or Microsoft Word format. The subject line of the email should read: "RFP Response – Fractional General Counsel – [Respondent Name]." Respondents are encouraged to consolidate all required components into a single document or PDF.

SAFE reserves the right to request additional information, conduct interviews, negotiate with one or more respondents, or reject any or all proposals in its sole discretion. Submission of a proposal does not guarantee selection or the award of a contract.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

By submitting a proposal, respondents acknowledge and agree to the following:

A. No Obligation to Award

This RFP does not commit SAFE Alliance to award a contract, pay any costs incurred in the preparation of proposals, or proceed with the engagement described herein. SAFE reserves the right to cancel this RFP or to reject any or all proposals for any reason, with or without cause, at any time prior to execution of a contract.

B. Independent Contractor

The selected respondent will serve as an independent contractor, not as an employee of SAFE Alliance. The resulting engagement agreement will include provisions addressing the independent contractor relationship, confidentiality, intellectual property, insurance, and termination, among other matters.

C. Ethics and Conflict of Interest

Respondents are expected to comply with applicable rules of professional conduct, including the Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct. Any respondent who becomes aware of an actual or potential conflict of interest after submission of a proposal must promptly disclose such conflict to SAFE's designated point of contact.

D. Non-Discrimination

SAFE Alliance is an equal opportunity organization and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by applicable law. SAFE encourages proposals from qualified attorneys and firms of all backgrounds.

E. Governing Law

This RFP and any resulting engagement agreement shall be governed by the laws of the State of Texas. Any disputes arising from this RFP or any resulting agreement shall be resolved in the courts of Travis County, Texas.