



**Request for Proposal
Retirement Plan Audit**
RFP Number A3-001-18

RETURN PROPOSALS NO LATER THAN:

Closing Date: Friday, July 27, 2018
Closing Time: 5:00pm EST

QUESTIONS DUE BY:

Friday, June 1, 2018, at 5:00pm EST

MAIL OR HAND DELIVER BIDS TO:

A3 Communications, Inc.
Attn: Dave Lewis, CFO
1038 Kinley Road
Irmo, SC 29063

A3 Communications, Inc., assumes no responsibility for improperly marked or misdirected responses and/or correspondence related to this document.

Offeror Must Sign and Return the Following Information

NAME OF COMPANY		MAILING ADDRESS		
(AREA CODE) PHONE NUMBER	CITY	STATE	ZIP CODE	
FACSIMILE NUMBER	FEDERAL ID			

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

I/WE, THE UNDERSIGNED, UNDER PENALTIES OF PERJURY CERTIFY:

1. Submission of a response to this RFP does not violate any federal or state anti-trust laws.
2. Compliance with the code of laws of South Carolina regarding the ethics, government compliance with S.C. tax withholding amendments section 12-9-310(a) 2(3).
3. To furnish item(s) and or service(s) identified herein, at the price(s) quoted, pursuant to all terms, conditions, provisions and specifications contained in this document or any subsequent written amendments, which clearly reference this RFP number.

AUTHORIZED SIGNATURE	PRINT NAME AND TITLE
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Proposal must be signed by an authorized agent to be valid.

INTRODUCTION

1. Objective

A3 Communications is accepting proposals from CPA firms for a limited scope audit related to its employee 401k retirement plan.

2. A3's Rights and Options

A3 Communications reserves the following rights which may exercised at A3's own discretion:

- a. To supplement, amend, substitute, or otherwise modify this RFP, including the schedule, or to cancel this RFP, at any time;
- b. To take any action affecting this RFP, this RFP process, or the services or facilities subject to this RFP that would be in the best interests of A3;
- c. To require one or more Service Providers to supplement, clarify or provide additional information to assist in A3 Communications' evaluation of the submitted Proposals;
- d. To conduct investigations with respect to the qualifications, experience, capabilities, and financial standing of each Service Provider;
- e. To waive any defect or irregularity in any Proposal received;
- f. To reject any or all Proposals;
- g. To share the Proposals with A3 employees and contractors in addition to the Evaluation Committee as deemed necessary by A3;
- h. To award all, none, or any part of the Services and enter into Contracts with one or more of the responding Companies deemed by A3 to be in the best interest of A3, which may be done with or without re-solicitation;
- i. To discuss and negotiate with any Company(-ies) their Proposal terms and conditions, including but not limited to financial terms;
- j. To terminate discussions and negotiations with any Company at any time and for any reason; and
- k. To enter into any Contract deemed by A3 to be in the best interest of the A3, with one or more of the Service Providers responding.

3. Terms and Conditions

- a. Provider must have a Certified Public Accounting ("CPA") business location or physical presence in the metro Columbia, SC, or surrounding area (within a 100 mile radius);
- b. CPA firm will meet all reasonable deadlines for completion of annual audit within the agreed upon time frame;
- c. If, through any cause, the CPA firm shall fail to fulfill the obligations agreed to in a timely and proper manner, A3 Communications shall have the right to terminate its contract by specifying the date of termination in a written notice to the Provider at least thirty (30) days before the termination date. In this event, the Provider shall be entitled to just and equitable compensation for any satisfactory work completed;
- d. The CPA Firm shall not assign any interest in the contract and shall not transfer any interest in the same without prior written consent of A3 Communications, Inc.
- e. Insurance Requirements: The selected CPA Firm shall carry and keep in force a comprehensive general liability, employer liability insurance, errors and omissions as required to do business in the State of South Carolina. The awarded CPA firm must furnish a Certificate of Insurance prior to commencement of services.
- f. Workers' Compensation and Employer's Liability Insurance: The CPA firm shall maintain workers' compensation and employer's liability insurance in the amounts and form required by the laws of the State of South Carolina. The CPA firm shall furnish a certification of said insurance to A3 Communications certifying that A3 will be given thirty (30) days written notice of non-renewal, cancellation or other material change.

PROCUREMENT PROCESS

The following chart shows the schedule of events for this Request for Proposal. The key deadlines for this process follow:

DATE	EVENT
05/02/2018	Issuance of Proposal
06/01/2018 at 5:00pm	Questions Deadline <i>Please send all questions via email to dlewis@a3communications.com with the subject line: RFP A3-001-18.</i>
06/15/2017	Amendment Released <i>A proposal amendment will be sent out to all respective bidders, following the submission of written questions.</i>
07/27/2018 at 5:00pm	Proposal Deadline <i>Proposals are due at 5:00pm to A3 Communications, Inc., 1038 Kinley Road, Irmo, SC, 29063.</i>
08/06/2018	Proposal Evaluation <i>The evaluation committee will assess each responsive proposal.</i>
09/03/2018	Project Award

Please note that the contract may be renewed for a one-year period for two terms.

SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

Proposals must be in the format specified in this RFP. Please provide (1) original submission signed in ink by a company official authorized to make a legal and binding offer, in addition to (4) copies to the address listed below by Friday, July 27, 2018, at 5:00pm.

A3 Communications, Inc.
Attn: Dave Lewis, CFO
1038 Kinley Road
Irmo, SC 29063

Proposals must be submitted in a sealed envelope or box with the following information clearly notated on the outside:

RFP Number A3-001-18
Retirement Plan Consulting and Auditing Services
Name of Proposer
Address of Proposer
Due Date and Time

When received, all Proposals and supporting materials, as well as correspondence relating to this RFP, shall become the property of A3 Communications. Proposals sent by fax or e-mail will not be accepted.

No responsibility will be attached to A3 Communications for prematurely opening Proposals not properly addressed or identified. Each Proposer is solely responsible for the timely delivery of their Proposals. Proposers accept all risks of late delivery regardless of fault. Any Proposals received after the date and time specified, regardless of the mode of delivery, shall not be considered.

ABOUT A3 COMMUNICATIONS, INC.

It started with a passion for electronics. In 1990, F. Joseph Thomas, a graduate of the University of South Carolina's Master electrical engineering program, and our Founder and Chairman, initially established A3 Communications, Inc., as a local software developer.

Enjoying quick success, he expanded the firm into data networking and security, with an eye towards the inevitable consolidation of voice and data. With Joe's foresight and early adoption of VoIP, he developed a simple, but proven, winning formula: listen to actual technology users to identify their needs, then develop solutions that fill them now and scale for the future.

Establishing itself as a systems integrator, A3 grew to provide business phone systems, structured cabling, physical security, and electrical services, but never strayed from its original mission to equip all customers with easily managed, competitively priced solutions.

Today, under President and CEO Brian Thomas' leadership, we serve more than 2,500 clients from our Columbia, SC, headquarters and six additional locations in Atlanta, GA, Greenville, SC, Charleston, SC, Charlotte, NC, Raleigh, NC and Chattanooga, TN. Through selecting products and partnerships on quality, reliability and technological capability, we are dedicated to serving as a "one source, one stop" solution.

Our organization employs approximately (137) employees in seven (7) locations across the United States. We are an "S Corporation" with a 12/31/18 year-end and a requirement to file an audited financial statement with the bank by 3/31 of each year.

PROJECT SCOPE

A3 Communications terminated its Simple IRA retirement plan 12/31/17, and started the new 401k retirement plan 1/1/18. Our current employee count of (137) requires us to solicit bids for an annual audit of the plan. The retirement plan committee assumes the fiduciary responsibility of selecting the firm based on the bid responses, in order to be compliant with all ERISA and DOL regulations. A3 Communications is soliciting proposals for a limited scope audit related to its employee retirement plans. CPA firms submitting proposals must provide audit services related to:

- Plan Design
- Plan Installation
- Plan Consolidation
- Plan Termination
- IRS Qualification and Tax Filings and All Other Compliance-Related Work
- Plan Amendments
- Participant Eligibility Determinations
- Employer Contribution Calculations
- Excess Contribution Calculations
- Forfeiture Calculations
- Employee Loan Servicing
- Distribution Reporting (Hardship, Separation From Service 70 ½ Minimum)
- Retirement Distribution Processing and Related Tax Disclosure Preparation
- Vesting Determinations
- Testing (including but not limited to Coverage Test, ADP/ACP Test, Top Heavy Test, IRC Section 415 Test)
- Summary Plan Description Development
- Actuarial Valuations and Certifications
- SFAS Nos. 87 and 158 Reporting
- Trust Accounting and Reconciliation
- Plan Specification Reporting
- Employee Census Reporting
- Summary Annual Report and all other PBGC and DOL Reporting (including but not limited to Form 5500 and all attachments),
- Plan Account Balance Statements
- Participant Account and Benefit Statements
- Participant Education
- Other Communication, Recordkeeping, Administration, or Investment Management Services.

CPA FIRM REQUIREMENTS

We seek a vendor who will become thoroughly knowledgeable of our organization and our employees' retirement needs, and one who is:

- I. *Proactive* – offering specific solutions to help us maximize A3's retirement benefits to employees;

- II. *Creative* – presenting new ideas regarding possible plan design and administrative improvements;
- III. *Responsive* – responding to administrative and participant requests in a timely fashion; and
- IV. *Professional* – exhibiting at all times an ethical, meticulous, and highly-detail oriented manner.

CURRENT PLAN PROVISIONS AND STATISTICS

The relevant current plan provisions and statistics of our plan are summarized as follows:

PLAN DETAILS	
Plan	401(K)
3 Digit DOL Plan #	001
Established	1/1/18
Last Amendment Effective Date	1/1/18
Plan Year	1/1/18-12/31/18
Plan Document Sponsor/Type	A3 Communications
Trustee	Brian Thomas/Dave Lewis
Custodian	John Hancock
Plan Administrator	Dave Lewis
Investment Advisor	FinTrust Investment Advisors
Third Party Administrator	RSI
Estimated Plan Assets at 4/1/18	\$650,000
Estimated Plan Assets at 12/31/18	\$1,250,000
2018 Budgeted Employer Contribution	\$200,000
Estimated 2018 Employee Deferral	\$470,000
Participants at 4/1/18	115
Eligibility	1 st day of the quarter, after 60 days of service
Entry Date	1/1/18
Plan	Qualified Automatic Contribution Arrangement
Eligible Contributions	All Gross Wages
Loans	Hardship Allowable
Investment Change Allowed	Yes - Daily
Vesting	One (1) Year
Profit Sharing Plan Vesting	Three (3) Years

Requests for additional information, visits to our site, review of prior financial statements and appointments with management should be coordinated through Dave Lewis, Chief Financial Officer, at dlewis@a3communications with the subject line "RFP A3-001-18."

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AUDIT PROPOSAL CONTENT AND FORMAT

A3 Communications desires all audit proposals to be concise and identical in format to facilitate comparison. While the format may represent departure from the Provider's preference, A3 requires strict adherence to the format. Failure to do so may result in A3, at its sole discretion, deeming the Proposal non-responsive. The Proposal will be in the format described below:

A. FIRM BACKGROUND

Include years in business as Certified Public Accounting firm; size and structure; prior experience auditing 401k entities of similar size and with sources of revenue similar to that of A3; and any other information which you consider relevant to A3's better understanding of your firm.

B. SUGGESTED AUDIT APPROACH SUMMARY

Include testing/methods used; how you will consult with our staff during and after the audit engagement; your firm's policy and procedures for notifying an organization's officials of suspected illegal acts and malfeasance; a preliminary listing of schedules requested from clients by your firm; and audit review procedures conducted by your staff (field, manager, partner).

C. AUDIT TEAM COMPOSITION

Include the proposed audit team; number of years with the firm; level of responsibility within the firm; CPA status; approximate percentage of time spent on the audit by each member of the proposed audit team; and types of clients served.

D. SUPERVISION

Include the professional experience in non-profit audits of each senior and higher level person anticipated to be assigned to the audit; and the anticipated percentages of time each senior and higher level personnel will be on site or otherwise overseeing execution of audit procedures.

E. QUALITY CONTROL AND PEER REVIEW

Include participation in AICPA-sponsored or comparable quality control programs and whether the firm is or has been the subject of any DOL findings or referrals, or any AICPA or State Society Ethics referrals. The firm shall detail the nature of any current litigation and provide its latest Peer Review Report, Letter of Comments and firm's response, if any.

F. REFERENCES AND EXPERIENCE

Include at least three (3) client references for which you have provided similar services on a contractual basis during the last two years, including name, address, contact, phone number, email and a short description; provide a narrative detailing prior experience auditing 401(k) retirement programs; and discuss whether your firm has experience auditing prototype plans administered by John Hancock.

G. EPB SCALE

Include the scale of Employee Benefit Plan (EPB) clients the Offeror's firm currently audits. For example, provide the number of plan audits similar in size to A3's 401(k) retirement plan.

H. PROPOSED AUDIT FEE

Include the number of hours at each staff level/hourly rate for each audit team member, along with the estimated number of hours for the audit; provide the annual audit fee for fiscal year ending 2018 to include labor, expenses, and any out of pocket costs (this price will be a guaranteed fixed cost for an additional two years, with no escalation for 2019 and 2020).

I. SUPPLEMENTARY NARRATIVE

To foster creativity, respondents are encouraged to provide a narrative describing any options, alternatives, or other opportunities not addressed in the RFP that, in the respondent's opinion, would strengthen A3's employee retirement programs.

EVALUATION OF AUDIT PROPOSALS

A3 Communications will evaluate audit proposals on a qualitative basis. This includes our review of the firm's peer review report and related materials, interviews with senior engagement personnel to be assigned to our organization, results of discussions with other clients, and the firm's completeness and timeliness in its response to us.

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