

UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA ANCHORAGE

**REQUEST FOR INFORMATION
RFI NO. I14-001**

**PROGRAM AND OPERATIONS MANAGEMENT
FOR UAA ALASKA AIRLINES CENTER SPORTS ARENA**

Submit To:	Submittal Due:
University of Alaska Anchorage	November 22, 2013 3:00 PM AKST
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The person designated above shall be the only contact for all inquiries regarding any aspect of this RFI and its requirements. All questions or comments should be in writing and may be submitted via fax or e-mail.

Responses to this RFI are voluntary. Proprietary, classified, confidential or sensitive information should not be included in your response. This RFI is for planning purposes only and is not a solicitation or an obligation on the part of the University of Alaska Anchorage.

Attachments: Provided electronically via the following link: [UAA RFI Attachments](#)

UAA Alaska Airlines Center Branding
Total Attendance Projections

Floor Plans:
Admin Office Level
Balcony Level
Locker Room Level
Main Level
VIP Level

Issue Date: November 1, 2013

Summary

The University of Alaska is seeking information related to the management and operation of its sports arena known as The Alaska Airlines Center. The new 5000 seat sports arena is currently under construction and will be operational in the summer of 2014. Construction is currently on schedule and within budget. The Grand Opening is slated for September 8, 2014.

The purpose of this RFI is to identify potential firms, and to better understand the services offered, in the sports and entertainment facility management market. This information will be used by UAA to assist in determining if the University will outsource these services and if so, in preparing a Request for Proposal (RFP) for such services. If the University decides to outsource the management of the Alaska Airlines Center, it is anticipated that the RFP would be issued in the first quarter of 2014.

General Information

The University of Alaska is a public corporation established by the State Constitution as the single statewide public university system. It is governed by an eleven member Board of Regents, appointed by the Governor of the State of Alaska. The direct administration of the University is vested in the President of the University, who is appointed by the Board of Regents. It represents a statewide system of higher education which consists of three regional universities, including eleven lower division college centers, and various extensions and research sites.

The University of Alaska Anchorage, located in Anchorage Alaska, is the state's largest and most comprehensive university. UAA is dedicated to fulfilling its mission by serving the people of Alaska through instruction, research, and public service. UAA serves approximately 20,000 students (15,000 enrolled at the main campus), has 1,600 faculty and staff members and offers a wide variety of associate, undergraduate, graduate and doctorate programs. UAA's main campus is located midtown on Providence Drive. There are four community campuses: Matanuska-Susitna College, Kenai Peninsula College, Kodiak College and Prince William Sound Community College.

The UAA Seawolves are a member of the National Collegiate Athletic Association. UAA has Division I teams in gymnastics and hockey, as well as several other Division II teams. UAA sponsors the annual Great Alaska Shootout, an annual NCAA Division I basketball tournament featuring colleges and universities from across the United States along with the UAA team. Learn more about UAA Athletics at their web site: <http://www.goseawolves.com>.

Located in south-central Alaska, the Municipality of Anchorage is Alaska's largest city with a population of 292,000. It is the northernmost city in the United States with more than 50,000 residents and the largest community in North America north of the 60th parallel. Anchorage has more than 40 percent of Alaska's total population. It has been named All-America City four times, in 1956, 1965, 1984/1985 and 2002, by the National Civic League.

Anchorage is the home of two teams in the Alaska Baseball League. Anchorage currently has one professional sports team, the Alaska Aces of hockey's ECHL. There are four rugby clubs. Anchorage is the finish line for the Sadler's Ultra Challenge wheelchair race, and holds the ceremonial start of the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race. Anchorage is a premier cross-country skiing city, in terms of density of groomed trails within the urban core. There are 105 miles (169 km) of maintained ski trails in the city, some of which reach downtown. The same trail system also provides access to Chugach State Park, a 495,000 acre high alpine park. The Tour of Anchorage is an annual 50-kilometer ski race within the city and is the Host for the 2009 and 2010 US Senior National Cross Country Ski Championship. Anchorage is also home to Alaska's first WFTDA flat track women's roller derby league.

Anchorage is the start of the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race. The Iditarod is the longest sled dog race in the world. Anchorage is also home to the Fur Rendezvous Open World Championship Sled Dog Races, a three-day dog sled sprint race. The event is part of the annual Fur Rendezvous winter sports carnival.

Anchorage's largest economic sectors include transportation, military, municipal, state and federal government, tourism, corporate headquarters (including regional headquarters for multinational corporations) and resource extraction. Large portions of the local economy depend on Anchorage's geographical location and surrounding natural resources. Anchorage's economy traditionally has seen steady growth, though not quite as rapid as many places in the lower 48 states. Anchorage has not experienced as much pain as the lower 48 states during economic downturns.

The two large United States military bases, Elmendorf Air Force Base and Fort Richardson, and Kulis Air National Guard Base, have been combined into JBER. These combined bases employ 8,500 civilian and military personnel, who along with their families comprise approximately ten percent of the local population.

Approximately 6,800 state employees work in Anchorage; more than reside in the state capital, Juneau.

Natural resources, mainly petroleum, is Anchorage's most visible industry, with many high rises bearing the logos of large multinationals such as ConocoPhillips and BP. Most of the offices and administration for the field operations centered on the Alaska North Slope and around Cook Inlet are found in Anchorage. Many companies who provide oilfield support services are likewise headquartered outside of Anchorage but maintain a substantial presence in the city.

The Anchorage School District, with schools in Eagle River, Chugiak, Fort Richardson and Elmendorf Air Force Base, is the 87th largest district in the United States, and has nearly 50,000 students attending 98 schools. There are also private schools, both religious and non-denominational.

Kiplinger has named Anchorage as the most tax friendly city in the United States. It has no sales tax, but does charge a 12% bed tax and an 8% tax on car rentals.

Anchorage's city-wide public bus system also provides carpool organization services and paratransit service for point-to-point accessible transportation services to seniors and disabled persons.

There is one state highway in Anchorage. Southbound, it is called the Seward Highway, connecting Anchorage to the Kenai Peninsula. Northbound, it is called the Glenn Highway, connecting Anchorage to Fairbanks and Valdez. Portions of the highway, 10 miles heading south from midtown Anchorage, and 30 heading north, are built to freeway standards. The Glenn Highway handles commuter traffic to and from Eagle River, Chugiak, and the Matanuska-Susitna Valley cities of Palmer and Wasilla.

The Alaska Railroad offers year-round passenger and freight service between the southern terminus at Seward, the northern terminus at Fairbanks, and Whittier, a deep water and ice-free port.

Anchorage also is currently conducting a feasibility study on a commuter rail and light rail system. For the commuter rail system, Anchorage would use existing Alaska Railroad tracks to provide service to Whittier, Palmer, Seward, Wasilla, and Eagle River.

Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport, six miles South from downtown Anchorage, is the airline hub for the state, served by many national and international airlines, including Seattle-based Alaska Airlines as well as a many intrastate airlines and charter air services. The airport is the primary international air freight gateway in the nation, by weight. Approximately five percent of the value of all U.S. international air cargo moves through Anchorage. Next to Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport is Lake Hood Seaplane Base, the largest Seaplane Base in the world. Merrill Field, a general aviation airport on the edge of downtown, was the 87th busiest airport in the nation in 2010. There are also ten smaller private general aviation airports within the city limits.

Background

Institution: The University of Alaska Anchorage is a comprehensive, state funded educational institution serving a broad array of constituencies.

Alaska Airlines Center Facts: Located near the corner of Elmore Road and Providence Drive, the Arena will be, when complete, approximately 196,000 GSF. The building, sized for the next 50 years of growth in Southcentral Alaska, will house a 5,000-seat capacity, including 5 corporate suites, with performance gymnasium for basketball, volleyball, graduations, and University/community concerts/events; a practice and performance gym for the gymnastics program; multiple court auxiliary gym for recreation, intramurals, dances, and concerts; support space consisting of a fitness and training room, administration and coaches offices, laundry facilities, A/V production, and locker and team rooms for hockey, basketball, volleyball, gymnastics, skiing, track and cross country programs. The site will include approximately 600 surface parking spaces.

Strategic Plan Roots for the Arena: One of UAA's Strategic Plan priorities is to build and strengthen the UAA community to make the best of the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead. UAA is creating an institution distinguished as a diverse, engaged community of students, staff, faculty, alumni, schools, colleges, and campuses. Building strong wellness, exercise, recreation, intramural/intercollegiate athletics programs and facilities to serve students, faculty, staff, and communities is an important part of this plan. These programs and facilities contribute significantly to student life, recruitment, retention, and attainment goals of students and faculty. UAA has allocated a strong student activities budget (\$500,000 for the first year) to support shows and events in the main arena.

History: Until the arena is completed, the only space on the UAA main campus for athletic, recreation, intramural and physical education is the Wells Fargo Sports Complex (WFSC). WFSC opened in 1978 as a recreational facility for a community college with no college athletics, physical education or academic program. This facility consists of one basketball court, a pool, a practice hockey rink and a small weight training area from converted racquetball courts. Locker room space and administrative offices are very limited.

Today, UAA has approximately 14,000 commuter students, 1,000 on-campus student residents, and 300 HPER academic program students. The UAA Athletic Department has 13 Division I and Division II athletic teams, 168 men and women student-athletes, seven head coaches, with 38 athletic staff and administrators all sharing the WFSC space with thousands of community members. This small facility is used every available hour of every day. It can handle up to 2,000 users a week and would easily attract another 2,500-3,000 users a week if space was available.

The construction of the arena will significantly reduce the current pressure on the WFSC by moving all of the athletic teams (with the exception of the hockey team) to the new facility, and will increase the intramural and recreational opportunities for UAA students. This will allow the WFSC to be renovated and expanded to become a WCHA-quality, hockey practice site and the primary recreational, wellness and physical education facility for students, staff, and community members.

Additionally, this arena will give UAA the opportunity to get maximum engagement from and give back to the Anchorage community. A strongly engaged community will become a strongly supporting community. This signature building will act as a beacon to local community members and provide Anchorage and the Southcentral Alaska region with the mid-sized fixed-seat venue that is missing in the municipality. It will allow UAA—for the first time—to hold its graduation ceremonies on campus as well as other local school graduation events. These local school graduation ceremonies can provide a very positive and inviting introduction to all that UAA has to offer to high school graduates still considering their options. Likewise, large summer conferencing and athletic camp events will find a home in this facility. Additionally, it will give UAA the option to hold large community sporting events such as the Carrs/Safeway Great Alaska Shootout, student and community mid-sized concerts, lectures and activities too big for the current UAA facilities, but not sized for larger community venues.

One of the many ideas for maximizing the potential capacities of the performance arena include: reconfiguring the space by retracting the seats and have two full size basketball courts side by side separated by a dividing curtain allowing for two games to be played concurrently. This would be an attractive feature for high school tournaments and camps in all court sports.

Additional games and practices can be scheduled using the Auxiliary Gym. For an event requiring a more intimate atmosphere; sections could be curtained off of to make it appear smaller so that attendees sit closer, the space seems more closed in and the acoustics are appropriate for the event.

Current UAA Partners for Alaska Airlines Center:

- NANA Management Services: Food & Beverage
- Pepsi Beverages Company: Pouring Rights
- Spawn Agency: Marketing Consultant
- Neulion: Athletics Ticketing
- AECOM Technical Services and The Rooney Sports & Entertainment Group: Consulting Services

Requested Information

In issuing this Request for Information, UAA is interested in receiving information from firms that have experience providing various services related to the management and operation of venues similar to the Alaska Airlines Center. These services include, but are not necessarily limited to, the following:

- Overall arena management to include financial projections
- Risk management to include security and emergency management
- Concert and event management/scheduling
- Traffic management and parking control to include arrival and egress
- Crowd management
- Securing sponsorship and advertising partnerships
- Ticketing
- Audio/Visual production and Information Technology management
- Other services that would be considered beneficial to the university.

Response Guidelines

All submittals should follow the format listed below for ease of review. Due to short timeframe for evaluating these responses, excessively elaborate or lengthy submittals are discouraged.

Please prepare submittals in the follow manner:

Section 1: Cover letter that identifies the responding firm(s) interest, profile of the firm or team, including history and number of years in business and services offered.

Section 2: List of public-assembly facility clients (including an identification of university clients), one-page case studies (no more than five) describing services provided to university or municipal clients. Please include information such as client and facility name, length of the relationship, services provided (including pre-opening), general terms of the contractual relationship (such as term length, renewals, structure of compensation, capital investment, etc.), special achievements/ accomplishments.

Section 3: Provide a brief narrative discussing the management of a sports and entertainment facility on behalf of a public entity (methodologies, best practices) as well as a pro forma. Please include any unique issues or challenges related to geography, the Anchorage market, the construction schedule, or other matters that may be presented to a successful offeror and how they may be successfully addressed.