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## AUDIT QUALIFICATIONS, EXPERIENCE, AND INDEPENDENCE

### Firm Qualifications and Experience

CliftonLarsonAllen LLP (CLA) has a staff of more than 8,500 professionals nationwide, of which over 600 professionals, known as the government services team, have chosen state and local government as their primary industry to serve.

With one of the largest governmental audit and consulting practices in the country, our professionals within the government services team serve more than 2,100 governmental clients nationwide. Public sector clients represent approximately one-third of all firm-wide revenue, and each of the government services team members are thoroughly versed in the issues critical to complex governmental entities. Our professionals have deep, technical experience in serving governmental entities.

As a CPA firm experienced in serving state and local units of government, we are very aware of the financial and legal compliance requirements that government officials are faced with daily. This creates complexities and service issues within a unique operational and regulatory environment. Because of our experience, we have become adept at providing our clients with insights in this environment not typical of other CPA firms.

We have experience with a variety of governmental entities including, public benefit and investment plans, cities, counties, townships, boroughs, utilities, school districts, housing authorities, finance and operating authorities and other specific purpose entities. This experience has given CLA the insight and experience to serve these entities and all clients with exceptional technical knowledge and client services.

### Government Pension Client Base

The team working on this engagement includes members of CLA's public pension team. CLA's public pension team is comprised of a group of professionals within CLA's state and local government service team, ***specifically dedicated to serving the needs of governmental retirement plans***. These professionals currently audit and provide consulting services to some of the largest public benefit plans and investment offices nationwide. This team has audited over 25 GASB 68 schedules for many of the state and city retirement systems that we currently serve. We have also provided employer census data testing to many of these retirement systems, some of which have employer populations exceeding 4,000 employers.

### Industry Participation

CLA actively supports industry education as a thought leader and provides industry speakers at professional conferences. Our principals and professionals have presented at the Public Pension Financial Forum conference on topics specific to the scope of this proposal including a panel on the implementation of GASB 67/68 and lessons learned from employer census testing. Our firm focuses on supporting the educational needs of the industry through nationally sponsored trade events. Our team of governmental professionals is sought after, both as educators and as experienced speakers who are invited to speak and teach at major professional events by leading trade associations.

## **Peer Review**

The most recent peer review report we received expressed a rating of *pass*, which is the most positive report a firm can receive. We are proud of this accomplishment and its strong evidence of our commitment to technical excellence and quality service.

In addition to an external peer review, we have implemented an intensive internal quality control system to provide reasonable assurance that the firm and our personnel comply with professional standards and applicable legal and regulatory requirements.

## **Continuing Education Program**

In order to maintain and expand our assurance knowledge, we consistently provide continuing education for our professionals. Each member of our professional team, including principals, attends at least 40 hours of technical training annually.

Updated information on recent changes in technical standards and regulations, as well as the firm's professional policies and procedures, is distributed to our team members on a regular basis. Individuals are required to familiarize themselves with all current changes in standards and procedures.

## **Independence**

Our standards require that we be without bias with respect to the operations of the Minnesota Public Employee Retirement Association (PERA). CLA is independent of PERA, as defined by auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America and the U.S. General Accounting Offices' "*Governmental Auditing Standards*".

CLA has not been engaged by PERA or any of its agencies, component units, or oversight units for the past five years, that would impair our independence with respect to our audits of the allocation schedule. Because CLA is required to follow GAO independence standards mentioned in the previous paragraph, any prior relationships would not constitute any conflicts of interest relative to performing the audit.