

# REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS FOR PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERING SERVICES



## ENGINEERING SERVICES CONTRACT FOR SAMPSON COUNTY WATER INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

**RFQ Issued:**  
December 20, 2021

**Inquiries and Questions Deadline:**  
January 14, 2022

**Submittal Deadline:**  
January 21, 2022

**Submittal Location:**  
406 County Complex Road  
Suite 120  
Clinton, NC 28328  
[davec@sampsonnc.com](mailto:davec@sampsonnc.com)

**Questions Regarding the RFQ:**  
David Clack  
Finance Officer  
406 County Complex Road, Suite 120  
Clinton, NC 28328  
Telephone: (910) 592-7181  
Email: [davec@sampsonnc.com](mailto:davec@sampsonnc.com)

**REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS FOR PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERING  
SERVICES FOR ENGINEERING SERVICES CONTRACT FOR SAMPSON COUNTY  
WATER INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS**

**1.0 PURPOSE**

Sampson County is soliciting Statements of Qualifications (“SOQs”) from engineering firms to provide professional planning, design, surveying, permitting, and construction administration services for the design of water infrastructure projects located within Sampson County, North Carolina. The best qualified firm will be selected to provide planning, design, surveying, permitting, and construction administration services for a variety of water infrastructure projects. The firm will be selected using a qualifications-based selection process in which selection will be based on demonstrated competence and qualification without regard to fee other than unit price information. However, selection of a firm does not assure that the firm will enter into a contract with the County and/or be assigned a project.

**2.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The engineering firm will be required to provide planning, design, surveying, permitting, and construction administration services for water infrastructure projects intended to serve existing resident need for potable drinking water through the expansion of the county water system. Projects may include planning, design, surveying, permitting, and construction administration for as many as three overhead or ground level water tanks, as many as five booster pumps, as many as three wells, and up to 60 miles of water lines.

Sampson County reserves the right to award an engineering contract on all, a portion of, or none of the above-described projects. The County further reserves the right to remove any or all of the projects described in this RFQ and issue a new RFQ for any portion of the work. Even after the County enters into an engineering services contract, the assignment of particular projects shall be contingent on the availability of funds and/or receipt of grants, in Sampson County’s sole discretion.

**3.0 SCOPE OF SERVICES**

Engineering firms shall demonstrate the ability to provide timely turnkey design, construction documents, permitting, bidding, and construction administration services as required for each project. Work may include, but shall not be limited to, the following:

- Planning
- Surveying
- Geotechnical
- Civil Engineering
- Hydraulic Engineering/CLOMR/LOMR/No Rise Analysis
- Utility Design
- Structural Design Related to Water Infrastructure
- Public Outreach/Community Workshops

- Utility Coordination (NCDOT, Municipalities, and Adjoining Counties)
- Permitting
- Easement Acquisition
- Cost Estimating
- Bidding Assistance and Bid Documents
- Construction Administration and Observation
- Recruitment of Prospective Water Customers
- As-Built Documents

In addition, engineering firms shall demonstrate ability to secure donated property or easements necessary to construct projects. The engineering firm shall describe their approach and/or experience to securing necessary easements within a fixed time period leading to a decision by the County to proceed into the design phase.

#### **4.0 SELECTION PROCESS / SCHEDULE**

Pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. § 143-64.31 and 2 C.F.R. § 200.320(b)(2), Sampson County utilizes a qualifications-based selection process without consideration of fee proposals in the initial stage for selecting engineers. The selection process and schedule will be as follows:

**4.1 Advertisement** - An advertisement for the Request for Qualifications (RFQ) will be posted at the following locations:

- Published in the Sampson Independent.
- Posted on the Sampson County website.
- Posted on the North Carolina Department of Administration’s Historically Underutilized Business (“HUB”) website.

A copy of the RFQ and any Addenda may also be obtained by writing or sending an email to David Clack, Finance Officer, 406 County Complex Rd., Ste. 120, Clinton, NC 28328, [davec@sampsonnc.com](mailto:davec@sampsonnc.com).

#### **4.2 Notification of Interest, and Inquiries/Questions**

**4.2.1 Notification of Interest / Addenda** - Upon receipt of this RFQ, engineering firms interested in submitting qualifications must immediately notify Mr. Clack by mail or email in order to place the firm’s name on a Notification of Interest list for distribution of possible addenda to this RFQ. If a firm received notification of this RFQ via email, the firm must still notify the County of their interest in submitting. Please include the firm’s name and primary contact person and email address in the notification. Addenda will only be sent to those firms that have submitted a notification of interest.

**4.2.2 Inquiries/Questions and Deadline** - All inquiries/questions regarding this RFQ must be directed to Mr. Clack by mail or email and must reach his office by 12:00 Noon, on Friday, January 14, 2022 in order to be considered

for a response. Oral answers will not be authoritative. Any changes or additions to the RFQ information will be emailed to each engineering firm who has submitted a Notification of Interest.

**4.3 Qualifications Submittal** - SOQs must be received by Sampson County no later than 12:00 Noon, on Friday, January 21, 2022. Submittals received after this deadline will not be considered.

**4.3.1 Submittal Material** - Prospective firms shall submit one (1) paper copy and one (1) digital copy of their SOQ. Paper submittals must be printed on 8.5" x 11" recycled paper, printed front and back, bound with one staple in the top left corner. The paper submittals are to be mailed only. Mailed SOQs must be postmarked by January 21, 2022, and should be mailed to:

Sampson County  
Attn: David Clack  
406 County Complex Rd., Ste. 120  
Clinton, NC 28328

No flash drives, three-ring notebooks, spiral bindings, plastic covers, dividers, cover letters or any other materials will be accepted. One (1) paper copy shall be placed in a sealed envelope and labeled as "RFQ Engineering Services Contract for Sampson County Water Infrastructure Projects". For purposes of the maximum page counts listed below, a sheet printed on both sides will count as two pages. A digital copy shall be submitted to the email address [davec@sampsonnc.com](mailto:davec@sampsonnc.com) no later than 12:00 PM EST on January 21, 2022. It is recommended that SOQs be emailed well before the deadline. Firms that submit SOQs will receive an email with confirmation of receipt. Digital submittals shall be a single PDF document not larger than 10 MB.

**4.4 Selection** – In order to proceed to selection of an engineering firm, Sampson County must receive SOQs from an adequate number of qualified firms, in the County's sole discretion. The firm that is selected will become eligible to perform work on any of the projects described in this RFQ. Firms will be notified after selection is made. However, selection of a firm does not assure that the firm will be awarded a contract for all or any of the projects identified in this RFQ. Project assignments will be based upon the availability of funds, the level of existing resident need for water services, and other factors that Sampson County may deem relevant.

**4.5 Interviews** - Sampson County reserves the right to interview or not interview firms as it deems necessary.

**4.6 Board Approval** - The Sampson County Board of Commissioners will consider authorizing the County Manager to negotiate and execute a contract with the selected firm.

- 4.7 Contract** - Provided that a fair and reasonable fee can be negotiated, a contract will be executed with the selected firm. The contract will incorporate those terms and conditions set forth in this RFQ and such additional terms as Sampson County may require. Thereafter, projects will be assigned based upon the availability of funds, the level of existing resident need for water services, and other factors that Sampson County may deem relevant. In the event that a fair and reasonable agreement cannot be reached with the selected firm, the County will enter into contract negotiations with the next best qualified firm.

## **5.0 SELECTION CRITERIA**

The selection of the best qualified engineering firm will be based on the qualification information exhibited in both written and graphic information in the engineering firm's submittal, interviews (if conducted), past performance, and reference checks. Engineering firms will be evaluated on the following criteria:

- **Quality of Response to the RFQ:** (5%)  
The firm's SOQ is presented in a focused and professional manner, covers all the components requested in the RFQ, and demonstrates the firm's ability to successfully provide the engineering services identified in the RFQ.
- **Past Performance:** (20%)  
The project team's experience, knowledge, familiarity, and past performance with rural water systems similar or comparable to Sampson County's. The SOQ documentation should demonstrate experience of team members in the expansion of rural water systems to meet existing resident need, in particular. The firm shall submit projects only for work that can be attributed to key members of the project team being proposed. Office or firm experience in similar projects attributed to staff no longer with the firm or staff not being proposed as a key member of the team for this project will not be considered relevant.
- **Professional Expertise:** (10%)  
The experience and composition of the proposed project team to perform the type of work required.
- **Project Approach:** (10%)  
The firm has demonstrated that it understands the requirements of the projects identified in the RFQ. The firm's SOQ provides a logical and understandable sequence of activities and demonstrates the firm's ability to work with the County as a team to complete the identified projects.
- **Cost Control and Scheduling:** (5%)  
The team's approach to cost control and scheduling. The project team's previous experiences that include cost savings, technical changes that decreased cost without sacrificing quality, innovative cost saving solutions, and adherence to schedules.

- **Construction Administration:** (10%)  
The project team’s experience with administering construction projects, including drafting bidding documents where federal funding is utilized, supervising the bidding process, facilitating contract negotiations, reviewing submittals, inspecting work, processing change orders, and evaluating claims.
- **Public Involvement and Utility Coordination:** (10%)  
Project team understanding of typical project issues, methods for dealing with those issues, and communication with the public, working and coordinating with other utilities and government agencies. Emphasis should also be placed on the project team’s expertise in explaining, directing, and developing a campaign to attract rural residential users to sign up for planned improvements.
- **Permitting and Local Knowledge:** (10%)  
The project team’s experience in submitting for permits and approvals required for work in Sampson County.
- **Site and/or Easement Acquisition:** (10%)  
The team’s experience with and approach to site acquisition and easement acquisitions.
- **Federal and State Funding Knowledge:** (10%)  
The team is knowledgeable of federal and state funding sources and the ability to meet the requirements of the relevant funding source. This should include an understanding of available federal and state funding and the ability to develop applications for said funding.

North Carolina firms qualified to do the required work will be given a resident preference over non-resident firms in the same manner, on the same basis, and to the extent that a preference is granted in awarding contracts for these services by the other state to its resident firms over firms resident in North Carolina. A “resident firm” is a firm that has paid unemployment taxes or income taxes in North Carolina and whose principal place of business is located in North Carolina.

## **6.0 SUBMITTAL DOCUMENT REQUIREMENTS**

Firms must submit all materials electronically and in paper copy. Submittals may be color or black and white and should be on 8.5” x 11” recycled paper. Links or references to websites will not be allowed. A submittal must be received in its entirety. Scanned signatures shall be valid for this submittal. Prospective engineering firms shall submit one (1) digital copy and one (1) paper copy of their submittal and each submittal should follow the format, page limit, and order listed below. No cover sheets or cover letters should be included in the submittal.

Do not submit any conceptualls, sketches, or work product as part of the SOQ. Pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. § 143-64.31(f), no work product or design may be solicited, submitted, or considered as part of the qualifications-based selection process. However, examples of prior completed work

may be solicited, submitted, and considered in order to determine the demonstrated competence and qualification of the engineering firm. Discussion of concepts or approaches to the project, including impact on project schedules, is encouraged.

No costs or fees, other than unit price information, may be solicited, submitted, or considered.

The maximum total number of pages shall not exceed 25. The maximum number of pages allowed per submittal section are as follows:

- General Information - 2 pages
- Project Experience - 10 pages, inclusive of sub-consultant information
- Individual Qualifications/Experience - 5 pages
- Project Issues - 3 pages
- Project Management- 1 page
- Project Permitting - 1 page
- Property and Easement Acquisition Approach - 1 page
- Construction Administration Approach - 1 page
- Why your team should be selected - 1 page

The SOQ submittal should include the following:

- **General Information** - The following information and topics should be included:
  - o Name of lead contact person and their email address
  - o Brief description of the project team, what each team member will be responsible for on projects, and the location of the office that will be completing projects
  - o An organizational chart of the project team, listing key individuals involved, the role they will perform (principal-in-charge, project manager, etc.), the location of staff, and the firm's NC license number
  - o Information about the firm's approach to diversity and a list of MWSBE, Small Business Inclusion Program Certification, Office of Historically Underutilized Business Statewide Uniform Certification (HUB) or NCDOT DBE Certifications. If subconsultants will be utilized, the firm should indicate the affirmative steps it has taken or will take to ensure that minority businesses, women's business enterprises, and labor surplus area firms will be used when possible. (These steps should include, at a minimum, placing qualified small and minority businesses and women's business enterprises on solicitation lists, assuring that these businesses are solicited whenever they are potential sources, dividing total requirements, when economically feasible, to permit maximum participation by these businesses, establishing delivery schedules, where the requirement permits, which encourage participation by these businesses, and using the services and assistance, as appropriate, of organizations such as the Small Business Administration and the Minority Business Development Agency of the U.S. Department of Commerce.)

- **Similar Project Experience** - Include projects completed during the last five years that demonstrate experience with projects of similar character and scope, particularly projects that involve the expansion of rural water systems to meet existing resident need. Include for each project:
  - o Specific project name, location, and client
  - o Description of the work - current status, size, estimated or final project cost, project change order total amounts for completed projects, services rendered, and key design challenges and solutions
  - o List the key individuals, such as principal-in-charge, project manager, and personnel, who were responsible for the work and their office location at the time of the work
  - o Experience with construction administration
  - o Experience with permitting
  - o Experience with planning and feasibility studies
  - o Experience assisting local governments with obtaining and meeting the requirements of federal and state funding sources
  - o Name, telephone number, and email of individuals to contact for references
  - o Identity of all public agencies that reviewed the project
  - o Project goals and how those goals were achieved.
  
- **Individual Qualifications/Experience** - Provide a description of the qualifications and experience of the key individuals who will be actively involved in the work (including registration numbers of engineers). Include the office location in which each key individual is located. Clearly identify each key individual's experience with similar projects, the specific role that individual performed, and the firm they were employed by at the time of the project work.
  
- **Project Issues** - For two of the projects described in the Similar Project Experience section of the SOQ, list the three key challenges for each project and how those challenges were overcome or mitigated by your team.
  
- **Project Management** - Describe the firm's method of cost control, its method of keeping project design and construction on schedule, and its approach to ensuring accurate coordination with other utilities and agencies during all phases of project development, permitting, and construction.
  
- **Project Permitting** - Provide a timeline or flow chart illustrating the steps and processes that need to occur for receiving all local and state permits for each project type. The timeline or flow chart should also illustrate the lead firm's role during each step of permitting.
  
- **Property and Easement Acquisition Approach** - Provide description of approach and previous experience with obtaining property and/or easements necessary to make a project feasible. The County generally does not pay for utility easements, so include any relevant experience where donations were required.



- **Construction Administration Approach** - Address how the firm would approach the construction administration process, including bidding, bid award, contract preparation and negotiation, change orders, claim resolution, and oversight of the construction process.
- **Federal and State Funding Experience** – Provide a description of the project team’s prior experience assisting local governments in obtaining and meeting the requirements of federal and state funding sources relative to water infrastructure projects.
- **Why Your Team Should Be Selected** - Describe why your project team should be selected.

## 7.0 GENERAL PROVISIONS

- 7.1 Submittal Ownership / Costs** - Upon submission, all information becomes the property of Sampson County, which has the right to use any or all ideas presented in any submission in response to this RFQ, whether or not the submittal results in a contract with the submitting engineering firm. All costs for development of the written submittal and the oral presentation are entirely the obligation of the engineering firm and shall not be remunerated in any manner by Sampson County.
- 7.2 Non-Warranty of Request for Qualifications** - Due care and diligence has been used in preparing this RFQ. However, the County shall not be responsible for any error or omission in this RFQ, nor for the failure on the part of the engineering firm to ensure that it has all information necessary to complete its SOQ.
- 7.3 Request for Clarification** - Sampson County reserves the right to request clarification of information submitted and to request additional information of one or more engineering firms, either orally or in writing.
- 7.4 Acceptance / Rejection of Submittals** - Sampson County reserves the right to accept or reject any or all submittals in whole or in part, with or without cause, to waive technicalities, or to accept submittals or portions thereof which, in the County’s judgment, best serve the interest of the County. The County further reserves the right to allow alterations, modifications, or revisions to individual elements of the Scope of Services at any time.
- 7.5 Collusion** - The engineering firm, by submitting a Statement of Qualifications, declares that the submission is made without any previous understanding, agreement, or connections with any persons, engineering firm, or corporations making a competing submission on the same project, and that it is in all respects, fair and in good faith without any outside control, collusion, or fraud.
- 7.6 Consideration of Submittals** - Proposals will be considered from engineering firms normally engaged in providing and performing services as specified in this

RFQ. The firm must have adequate organization, facilities, equipment, and personnel to ensure prompt and efficient service to the County. The County reserves the right to inspect the facilities and organization or to take any other action necessary to determine ability to perform in accordance with specifications, terms, and conditions before recommending any award.

- 7.7 Insurance and Indemnity Requirements** - To the extent permitted by law, the engineering firm shall indemnify and save harmless Sampson County, its agents and employees and assigns from and against all loss, cost damages, expense and liability caused by sickness and disease to any person; or damage or destruction to property, real or personal; arising from the negligent acts, errors, or omissions of the engineering firm in the performance of professional services provided to the County.

The engineering firm further agrees to purchase and maintain during the life of any contracts entered into with the County the following insurance with an insurance company acceptable to Sampson County and authorized to do business in the State of North Carolina:

Automobile: Bodily injury and property damage liability covering all owned, non-owned, and hired automobiles for limits of not less than \$2,000,000 each person/ \$2,000,000 each occurrence.

Comprehensive General Liability: Bodily injury and property damage liability insurance as shall protect the engineering firm from claim of bodily injury or property damage which arises from operations of this contract. The amounts of such insurance shall not be less than \$1,000,000 bodily injury and property damage liability each occurrence/aggregate. This insurance shall include coverage for product/completed operations and contractual liability assumed under the indemnity provision of this contract. Sampson County shall be listed as an “Additional Insured” and shall be noted on the Insurance Certificate.

Professional Liability: In a limit of not less than \$2,000,000.

Workers' Compensation and Occupational Disease Insurance:

Coverage A - Worker's Compensation: Meeting the statutory requirements of the State of North Carolina.

Coverage B - Employer's Liability: \$500,000 each accident / \$500,000 disease - each employee / \$500,000 disease - policy limits.

Certificates of such insurance will be furnished to Sampson County and shall contain the provision that the County be given thirty days written notice of any intent to amend or terminate by either the engineering firm or the insuring company.

- 7.8 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Compliance** - Sampson County will comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) which prohibits

discrimination on the basis of a disability. Sampson County will make reasonable accommodations in all programs to enable participation by an individual with a disability who meets essential eligibility requirements. Sampson County programs will be available in the most integrated setting for each individual. If any accommodations are necessary for participation in any program or services, participants are encouraged to notify County staff.

- 7.9 Minority / Women / Small Business Enterprise** - It is the policy of Sampson County to provide minorities, women, and small business enterprises (collectively "M/W/SBE) equal opportunity for participating in all aspects of the County's contracting and procurement programs, including but not limited to employment, construction development projects, and materials/services, consistent with the laws of the State of North Carolina. The policy of Sampson County prohibits discrimination against any person or business in pursuit of these opportunities on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, disability, or veteran's status. It is further the policy of Sampson County to conduct its contracting and procurement programs so as to prevent such discrimination. Sampson County has a commitment to promote this type of participation in County projects, and to the creation of project teams that include and assign importance to social and cultural diversity. To the extent that subconsultants will be utilized, firms should take affirmative steps to assure that minority businesses, women's business enterprises, and labor surplus area firms are used when possible, as outlined in 2 C.F.R. § 200.321.
- 7.10 E-Verify Compliance** - The engineering firm shall comply with the requirements of Article 2 of Chapter 64 of the North Carolina General Statutes. Further, if the engineering firm utilizes a subconsultant, the firm shall require the subconsultant to comply with the requirements of Article 2 of Chapter 64 of the North Carolina General Statutes. By submitting a Statement of Qualifications, the engineering firm represents that its firm and its subconsultants are in compliance with the requirements of Chapter 64 of the North Carolina General Statutes. Upon request by Sampson County, the engineering firm shall submit an affidavit to this effect.
- 7.11 Notice of Federal Funding** - The projects described in this RFQ will be funded in whole or in part with federal funding. A selected firm shall be required to comply with all applicable federal laws, regulations, executive orders, and the terms and conditions of any funding award. By submitting an SOQ in response to this RFQ, an engineering firm acknowledges that funding is contingent upon compliance with all terms and conditions of any funding award.
- Engineering firms are further notified that any contracts resulting from this RFQ shall contain those contract clauses required by 2 C.F.R. Part 200, Appendix II, as well as any other terms and provisions that Sampson County may require.
- 7.12 Suspension and Debarment** - Engineering firms submitting SOQs in response to this RFQ will be required to certify that the firm, its principals (as defined in 2

C.F.R. § 180.995), nor its affiliates (as defined in 2 C.F.R. § 180.905) are excluded (as defined in 2 C.F.R. § 180.940) or disqualified (as defined in 2 C.F.R. § 180.935).

- 7.13 Clean Air Act and Federal Water Pollution Control Act** – A selected engineering firm shall be required to comply with all applicable standards, orders, or regulations issued pursuant to the Clean Air Act, as amended, 42 U.S.C. § 7401, *et seq.*, including, but not limited to, reporting violations as required by law and including all such standards, orders, and regulations into subcontracts.
- 7.14 Byrd Anti-Lobbying Requirement** – Firms submitting SOQs in response to this RFQ shall be required to certify that they will not and have not used federal appropriated funds to pay any person or organization for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a member of Congress, officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a member of Congress in connection with obtaining any federal contract, grant, or any other award covered by 31 U.S.C. § 1352. Each tier shall also disclose any lobbying with non-federal funds that takes place in connection with obtaining any federal award. Such disclosures will be forwarded from tier to tier up to the recipient who in turn will forward the certification(s) to the awarding agency.
- 7.15 Procurement of Recovered Materials** - Procurements must comply with Section 6002 of the Solid Waste Disposal Act, as amended by the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act. Where the purchase price of an item exceeds \$10,000.00 or the value of the quantity of the item procured during the prior fiscal year exceeds \$10,000.00 or where the item is designated in the guidelines of the Environmental Protection Agency at 40 C.F.R. Part 247, the Finance Department shall procure only such items that contain the highest percentage of recovered materials practicable, consistent with a satisfactory level of competition.
- 7.16 Domestic Preference** - To the greatest extent practicable and to the extent consistent with federal law, preference shall be given for the purchase, acquisition, or use of goods, products, or materials produced in the United States (including, but not limited to, iron, aluminum, steel, cement, and other manufactured products)
- 7.17 Huawei / ZTE Ban** - Engineering firms are hereby notified that federal funds shall not be used to procure or obtain, extend or renew a contract to procure or obtain, or enter into a contract to procure or obtain equipment, services, or systems that use telecommunications equipment produced by Huawei Technologies Company or ZTE Corporation (or any subsidiary or affiliate of such entities) as a substantial or essential part of any system, or as critical technology of any system.