



REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS
Architectural and Engineering Design Services
Merchants Commerce Center Community and Senior Center

I. Introduction

Gates County is seeking qualified architectural and engineering firms to provide professional design services only for a new Community and Senior Center located at the Merchants Commerce Center in Gates County, North Carolina. This solicitation is issued for a design/bid/build project delivery method in accordance with G.S. 143-128 and applicable North Carolina procurement laws.

The selected firm will be responsible for planning and design services through completion of construction documents. Construction services are expressly excluded from this RFQ and will be procured separately through a competitive bidding process.

II. Project Overview

The project consists of the design of an approximately 20,000 square foot Community and Senior Center that may include multipurpose rooms, offices, fitness areas, a gym, kitchen facilities, and outdoor spaces. The facility must comply with all applicable federal, state, and local codes, including ADA requirements, and incorporate sustainable and energy-efficient design principles where feasible.

Funding for this project is anticipated to include United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) funds, and the project will be subject to all applicable federal requirements associated with USDA-funded construction projects.

III. Scope of Design Services

The selected firm will provide professional architectural and engineering services, including but not limited to:

A. Planning and Design

- Site evaluation and coordination with the County
- Programming and conceptual design
- Preparation of schematic design, design development, and construction documents
- Architectural, structural, civil, mechanical, electrical, and plumbing design
- Coordination with applicable regulatory agencies
- Integration of sustainable and energy-efficient systems
- Full ADA and code compliance

B. Bidding Phase Services

- Assistance with preparation of bid packages
- Participation in pre-bid meetings
- Responding to bidder questions and issuing addenda as needed
- Assistance with bid evaluation and recommendation of award

IV. Build America, Buy America Act (BABAA) and USDA Compliance

This project is anticipated to be funded in whole or in part by USDA Rural Development and is subject to all applicable federal laws, regulations, and guidance, including but not limited to the Build America, Buy America Act (BABAA) contained in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (Pub. L. 117-58), as implemented by USDA.

The selected design firm shall, as part of its professional services:

- Prepare construction documents, technical specifications, and bid documents that incorporate all applicable USDA Rural Development requirements;
- Incorporate BABAA requirements into the plans and specifications, including provisions addressing domestic preference for iron, steel, manufactured products, and construction materials, as required by USDA Rural Development guidance in effect at the time of bidding;
- Include required certification language for contractors, subcontractors, and suppliers regarding BABAA compliance;
- Coordinate with Gates County and USDA Rural Development staff regarding BABAA applicability, documentation, reporting, and any approved waivers;
- Revise documents as necessary to reflect updated federal or USDA guidance prior to advertisement for construction bids.
- Final interpretation and enforcement of BABAA and USDA requirements shall be determined by Gates County in coordination with USDA Rural Development.
- Final determinations regarding BABAA applicability and enforcement will be made by Gates County in coordination with the applicable funding agency.

V. Contract Term

The initial design contract shall terminate upon completion and acceptance of construction documents, unless amended by the County to include bidding assistance and construction administration services.

VI. Firm Qualifications

Interested firms should demonstrate:

- Experience providing architectural and engineering design services for municipal or public facilities of similar size and complexity
- Successful completion of at least three comparable community or senior center projects
- Experience with federally funded projects and related compliance requirements
- Familiarity with North Carolina public-sector procurement and bidding processes
- Strong project management and coordination capabilities

VII. Submission Requirements

Firms shall submit the following:

- Cover letter summarizing qualifications and interest
- Firm profile, including office location and years in business
- Description of key personnel and their qualifications
- Relevant project experience
- References for at least three comparable projects
- Proof of applicable professional licensure
- Proof of insurance

VIII. Evaluation Criteria

Qualifications will be evaluated based on:

- Relevant experience and past performance (40%)
- Qualifications of key personnel (30%)
- Project approach and understanding (20%)
- References (10%)

IX. Submission Instructions

- **Deadline:** February 6, 2026
- **Format:** One (1) electronic copy in PDF format and five (10) hard copies.
- **Delivery Address:** PO Box 148 | Gatesville, NC 27938
- **Physical Address:** 115 Court Street | Gatesville, NC 27938
- **Email for Electronic Submission:** rdraper@gatescountync.gov
- **Email Subject Line:** Community/Senior Center Design Services

X. Questions

Questions regarding this RFQ can be submitted to:

Reneé Draper

Clerk to the Board | Assistant to the County Manager

rdraper@gatescountync.gov

252.357.2495

XI. Standard Terms and Conditions

Gates County reserves the right to reject any or all qualifications received; waive informalities or irregularities; cancel this RFQ; issue a subsequent solicitation; remedy technical errors in the RFQ process; negotiate with any, all, or none of the respondents; accept the written qualification as an offer; and accept one or more qualifications.

This RFQ does not commit Gates County to award a contract, enter into any agreement, or pay any costs incurred in the preparation or submission of qualifications.

In addition to standard County terms, the selected firm must comply with all applicable USDA Rural Development requirements, including equal opportunity provisions, federal labor standards if applicable, record retention, and audit access requirements. Equal Employment Opportunity, E-Verify compliance, conflict of interest provisions, insurance requirements, and Historically Underutilized Business (HUB) participation requirements will be included in the final contract.

Equal Employment Opportunity

Gates County maintains an Equal Employment Opportunity policy. Vendors may not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, or ancestry. By submitting a qualification, the firm certifies that it is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

E-Verify Compliance

The contractor must comply with Article 2 of Chapter 64 of the North Carolina General Statutes. If subcontractors are used, the contractor must require the same compliance. Submission of a qualification confirms that the firm and its subcontractors meet these requirements.

Insurance Requirements

The contractor must maintain required insurance coverage at its own expense. Specific coverage and limits will be defined in the final contract.

Conflict of Interest

Each respondent must affirm that no Gates County official or employee has a direct or indirect interest in this proposal for personal gain.

Historically Underutilized Business (HUB) Participation

Gates County encourages participation by businesses owned by minorities, women, disabled, or disadvantaged persons. Only businesses certified by the North Carolina HUB Office will count toward HUB participation. Respondents must make good faith efforts to provide these businesses an equal opportunity to participate in the work.

Printed Materials

Design Services is responsible for all costs associated with printed materials for the Board of County Commissioners and County administrative staff.

Construction administration/oversight services shall be provided only if authorized by amendment.

Construction Administration/Oversight to include:

- Full construction administration services through project completion
- Review of shop drawings and submittals
- Regular site visits to observe progress and general conformance
- Review and certification of pay applications
- Review of change orders
- Assistance with punch list, final inspections, and project closeout