

Department/Agency	NC DEQ – Division of Water Resources, Public Water Supply Section
DEQ Number	16-101173-000
Project Title	Emerging Contaminant in Small or Disadvantaged Communities (ECSDC) Engineering Services for Public Water Supply
Design Services	Designing, installing, and—when authorized by Task Order—constructing turnkey engineered solutions (e.g., treatment systems, new sources, or interconnections) to mitigate PFAS contamination and deliver compliance-ready facilities, including start-up, operator training, and handover.
Scope of Work	NC DEQ is requesting qualifications from engineering firms to support small and disadvantaged community water systems in addressing PFAS contamination under the EPA’s EC-SDC program. (See Attachment 1)
Contact	Rebecca Sadosky and Renee Parkman
Telephone	919-707-9096
Email	rebecca.sadosky@deq.nc.gov and renee.parkman@deq.nc.gov
Total Project Budget	Estimated to be \$48,000,000 for Three (3) years with an option to extend up to one (1) two-year period to complete ongoing projects.
Source of Funds	The source of the funds is the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) through the Emerging Contaminants in Small or Disadvantaged Communities (EC-SDC) Grant Program, authorized under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) — also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL).
Approved OC-25 #	N/A
Publish Date	March 17, 2026
Closing Date	April 01, 2026 @ 2:00 pm ET
Submit electronic Proposal (see Attachment 2) and SF-254:	rebecca.sadosky@deq.nc.gov and renee.parkman@deq.nc.gov Subject line must say: (ECSDC) Engineering Services Proposal for Public Water Supply Note: Email attachment limit is 25 MB.
Physical Location for Fed Ex/UPS Delivery (Delivery Address):	Must be submitted electronically
NC Licensing Statement	In order to offer architectural, engineering, or landscape architectural services in response to this solicitation, the proposing firm must be properly licensed to practice Architecture, Engineering, or Landscape Architecture in the State of North Carolina. If construction is included, the contractor must hold an appropriate North Carolina General Contractor license (Public Utilities/Specialty as applicable) and ensure all trade subcontractors are duly licensed. More information on the North Carolina state boards may be found at the following websites: NC Board of Architecture: (http://www.ncbarch.org)

	<p>NC Board of Examiners for Engineers & Surveyors: (http://www.ncbels.org) NC Board of Landscape Architects: (http://www.ncbola.org)</p>
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STATE BUILDING COMMISSION - SELECTING CRITERIA

In selecting designers, the selection committee should take into consideration qualification information including such factors as:

1. Specialized or appropriate expertise in the type of project.
2. Past performance on similar projects.
3. Adequate staff and proposed design or consultant team for the project.
4. Current workload and State projects awarded.
5. Proposed design approach for the project including design team and consultants.
6. Recent experience with project costs and schedules.
7. Construction administration capabilities.
8. Proximity to and familiarity with the area where the project is located.
9. Record of successfully completed projects without major legal or technical problems.
10. Other factors which may be appropriate for the project.

STATE BUILDING COMMISSION - SUBMITTAL CRITERIA

Proposing firms must submit ONE (1) copy of the Proposal and a copy of your current Standard Form 254 (SF 254) with the information package. The current SF 254 template is located at <http://ncadmin.nc.gov/businesses/construction/forms-documents> which is the State Building Commission approved form.

SCOPE OF WORK
Emerging Contaminants in Small or Disadvantaged Communities (ECSDC) Engineering Services for Public Water Supply

Each of the selected CONTRACTORS must provide, in a manner satisfactory to the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), and as authorized on a task order/not-to-exceed basis, professional engineering and program management services to support community water systems (CWSs) serving 10,000 or fewer and non-profit Non-Transient, Non-Community (NTNC) systems under the oversight of the Public Water Supply Section, Division of Water Resources (DWR) and in coordination with the Division of Water Infrastructure (DWI) for funding programs, as requested by DEQ. Services may include, but are not limited to the following: grant management for sub-recipients; project administration and coordination with DEQ; drinking water sampling and evaluation with certified laboratories; development of engineering alternatives; implementation of the selected alternative; preparation of engineering plans and specifications; permitting, procurement support, construction contracting and oversight, start-up, training, and periodic operational support.

- A. Preparing system-specific Engineering Work Plans and Task Order Proposals—detailing scope, technical approach, schedule, and staffing. Pricing and itemized cost estimates are not required at this stage and will be developed and approved at the time of Task Order issuance for each system. This is for planning, design, permitting, procurement support, construction administration, start-up/commissioning, operator training, and follow-up technical assistance for eligible public water systems (CWS \leq 10,000 and NTNC).
- B. Reviewing existing system records and prior submittals; coordinating with DEQ, community water system, and non-profit NTNC operators to schedule system walk-throughs and site visits; maintaining project files and access logistics; and documenting service locations and conditions necessary to support drinking water sampling, evaluation, and subsequent engineering tasks.
- C. Conducting drinking water system assessments and contaminant evaluations, including collection of source, and entry-point samples analyzed by a North Carolina–certified laboratory; review of source characteristics and well construction records; evaluation of existing treatment performance; basic hydraulic checks (pressure/flow) to inform design; and compilation/interpretation of results to guide selection and implementation of corrective actions for eligible small public water systems. Provide testing results and educational materials to DEQ. All sampling, analysis, data management, and reporting shall be performed in accordance with the EPA-approved **Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP)**, specifically the 2026 Water Monitoring for Per- & Poly-Fluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) QAPP.
- D. Ability to perform limited non-invasive subsurface and infrastructure diagnostics to inform siting and design and support construction projects.
- E. Developing system-specific Corrective Action Plans and Engineering Reports that evaluate feasible PFAS reduction alternatives for small public water systems including connection to another public water system, drilling new well(s) or drawing water from another surface water source, operational changes to existing sources, and adding treatment; selecting the preferred alternative based on regulatory compliance, lifecycle cost, constructability, and operations; and preparing full design deliverables in compliance with [15A NCAC 18C.0300](#)—Basis of Design, technical specifications, standard details, and final plans—along with opinions of probable cost, contract front-end documents, and bid-phase support for procurement and construction of the selected improvements.

- F. Coordinating and overseeing decommissioning of drinking water system assets—such as wells, treatment skids, storage tanks, piping, and appurtenances—that are taken out of service as part of the selected PFAS reduction strategy. This shall be done in compliance with applicable State and local requirements.
- G. Managing and overseeing specialty and engineering subcontractors, vendors, and CONTRACTOR personnel involved in the installation, startup, operation, and maintenance of drinking water system improvements; selecting firms based on qualifications, scope fit, and best value using competitive procurement consistent with State Law, DEQ program guidance and funding-source requirements; coordinating with the DEQ on subcontractor shortlists and awards; and maintaining complete procurement files (scopes, solicitations, evaluations, and agreements) to document compliance. Responsibilities include day-to-day direction of field activities, verification of deliverables, adherence to safety and quality standards, schedule and budget tracking, and prompt resolution of performance issues.
- H. Preparing and submitting all approvals and permits required to construct and operate the selected PFAS reduction strategy.
- I. Implementing approved corrective actions and design packages for eligible small public water systems—providing project management and construction administration; resident engineering/inspection; contractor selection and coordination; submittal review; quality assurance/quality control testing; change management; pay application verification; and progress documentation. Responsibilities include overseeing installation, start-up/commissioning, performance testing and optimization, instrumentation integration as applicable, preparation of Operations and Maintenance (O&M) manuals and Standard Operating Procedure(s) SOPs, operator training, and delivery of periodic status, schedule, and cost reports to DEQ.
- J. The CONTRACTOR shall comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and ordinances—including worker health and safety requirements—for all project activities.
- K. Preparing and submitting all required technical reports, datasets, meeting minutes, and other project documentation to DEQ per the approved schedule; providing concise project status summaries with each invoice package that describe work completed during the period, upcoming milestones, issues/risks and mitigation actions, schedule variances, and budget-to-date versus task order authorization; and maintaining a current action log and deliverable tracker to support timely reviews and payment processing.
- L. Preparing and submitting all project deliverables including As-Built plan drawings in the electronic formats specified by DEQ—typically bookmarked, searchable PDF for reports; native editable files for calculations and schedules; and CAD/GIS files for drawings/maps—with image submittals at a minimum of 300 DPI.
- M. As a mandatory, pass/fail requirement, potential contractors must demonstrate the ability to provide administrative support to DEQ to ensure compliance in the potential contractor's role as grant manager to ensure compliance with applicable federal grant requirements in 2 CFR Parts 200 and 1500, including Build America Buy America (BABA) provisions and financial audit requirements; firms that cannot demonstrate this capability will be deemed non-responsive and will not be further considered for contract award. Potential contractors must also describe their approach, tools/templates, and relevant experience supporting federally funded water infrastructure projects (including procurement documentation, required flowdown clauses, BABA documentation support, audit readiness, and records retention), and must participate in an interview/oral presentation and Q&A in which the proposed project manager and key staff walk through a scenario demonstrating how they will execute these compliance responsibilities in practice; interview performance will be a major factor in final ranking.

- N. Conduct testing for emerging contaminants post construction to demonstrate compliance with PFAS rules.
- O. Develop or update the Water System Management plan.
- P. If needed, assist the Owner of the Water System in hiring operators to operate and maintain the PFAS treatment system.

Contract Agreement Fee Schedule (Effective: July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2029)

Personnel Level	Hourly Rate
Principal	\$
Senior	\$
Project	\$
Staff	\$
Technicians	\$
Draftsperson/CAD	\$
Word Processor/Clerical	\$

If DEQ determines that a task order requires specialized effort beyond what is covered in the [current Reasonable Rate Document \(November 2024\)](#), DEQ may authorize specific elements on a time-and-materials (T&M) basis by written directive. Such authorization is reserved for exceptional circumstances only and does not convert routine work or overall reimbursement to “fee schedule + T&M.” The established RRD rates remain controlling unless a discrete T&M augmentation is expressly approved.

Bid Quotes

Submit a rate and fee schedule, standard markup policies, and task orders for defined scopes. This shall be consistent with the current Reasonable Rate Document (November 2024) that may be required for certain activities. At a minimum, the CONTRACTOR shall follow the procurement requirements outlined in this AGREEMENT when hiring subcontractors and, where applicable, comply with [Article 8 of Chapter 143 of the North Carolina General Statutes](#) governing formal sealed competitive bids for subcontracted work.

Subcontractor Fees

Where rates are established in the current Reasonable Rate Document (November 2024), subcontractor costs shall not exceed those published ceilings and will be reimbursed at the **lesser of** the actual invoiced amount or the applicable maximum rate. The CONTRACTOR will retain documentation of selection and invoices to support reimbursement.

Laboratory Fees

The CONTRACTOR may select any qualified analytical laboratory provided total project costs to DEQ are not increased (including shipping, courier, and rush charges). Laboratories shall hold appropriate certifications for the requested methods and matrices, and use approved analytical methods consistent with project and regulatory requirements. The CONTRACTOR is responsible for full data QA/QC and validation, maintaining chain-of-custody, and promptly correcting any laboratory nonconformances or errors at no additional cost to DEQ. Selection should consider method capability, detection limits, turnaround time, and data deliverable format required for program reporting.

Due Dates

The CONTRACTOR shall coordinate with the assigned Public Water Supply Section, DWR project manager to establish deliverable due dates within each task order schedule and maintain an up-to-date deliverable tracker. Any request for a schedule adjustment must be

submitted in writing with justification prior to the due date. With each invoice, the CONTRACTOR will provide a concise status summary noting work completed, upcoming milestones, issues/risks and mitigation, and budget-to-date versus task-order authorization to support timely review and payment. DEQ may consider schedule adherence when approving invoices and future task-order authorizations.

Meeting Requests

Periodic coordination meetings with DEQ and the Public Water Supply Section, DWR, will be required to support planning, design, permitting, construction, start-up, and grant administration for eligible small public water system projects. Meetings may be held in person (e.g., at DEQ offices in Raleigh or at project sites) or virtually. The CONTRACTOR will propose attendees appropriate to the agenda, prepare and circulate an agenda at least two (2) business days in advance, and provide concise minutes and an action-item log within three (3) business days after each meeting. Compensation for meeting time and associated travel will be in accordance with the approved task order scope, the Agreement fee schedule, and applicable state travel policies; no separate flat meeting fee will apply unless expressly authorized in writing by DEQ.

Proposal Contents

Potential contractors shall submit a Qualifications Proposal that demonstrates their ability to deliver turnkey engineering support from initial needs assessment through design, bidding support, construction administration, commissioning, operator training, to closeout for eligible small public water systems. Proposals must clearly describe the firm's work plan/approach, capacity to execute multiple task orders statewide, quality management practices, and relevant experience delivering similar drinking water projects, including work involving PFAS or emerging contaminants and support to small/disadvantaged systems.

Proposal must include:

- Cover letter identifying the prime firm, point of contact, and commitment to provide turnkey services through closeout.
 - Work plan/technical approach describing how the firm will execute task orders end-to-end (assessment -- alternatives -- design/permitting -- bid support -- construction admin -- commissioning/closeout).
 - Project delivery plan: task-order workflow, decision points, communication, and document control/reporting methods.
 - Staffing plan and organizational chart (prime + subs), roles/responsibilities, availability/current workload, and a surge plan.
 - Provide 3–5 comparable projects demonstrating applicable capabilities (scope, role, outcomes, and schedule). Relevant experience may include drinking water compliance, treatment or infrastructure projects, PFAS/emerging contaminants, and/or projects supporting small, rural, or resource-constrained systems, as applicable.
 - QA/QC approach for engineering deliverables and construction-phase oversight (review processes, field documentation, testing/verification coordination).
 - Bid-phase and construction administration approach (pre-bid/Q&A/addenda support, bid tabulation and recommendation, submittals/RFIs/change management, pay app review, progress documentation).
 - Commissioning/start-up, performance testing/optimization, O&M manual/SOP development, and operator training approach.
 - References for comparable projects and key personnel resumes).
- Any required forms/certifications (i.e., licensure confirmation, disclosures, required attestations) as specified in the Task Order.

Additional Selection Criteria

After verifying minimum qualifications and required submittals, DEQ will use the criteria below to differentiate among responsive firms and determine which firms are shortlisted for interviews and final ranking. Emphasis will be placed on demonstrated ability to execute turnkey delivery across multiple systems, manage bid-phase and construction administration responsibilities through closeout, and provide reliable quality management, communication, and schedule control in real-world conditions.

- Written proposal score will be used to shortlist the highest-ranked firms for interviews; only shortlisted firms will be eligible for final selection.
- Demonstrated capability to run the contractor bid phase on DEQ's behalf: pre-bid support, managing questions and issuing addenda, bid tabulation, responsiveness review support, and written recommendation of award (DEQ retains award authority).

- Demonstrated construction administration through closeout: submittals/shop drawings, RFIs, change management, site observation/inspection support, pay application review/verification support, progress documentation, commissioning/start-up oversight, performance verification, record documents, and warranty closeout support.
- Interview requirement: shortlisted firms must participate in an oral presentation and Q&A; interviews will be scored and will be a major factor in final ranking.
- Interview evaluation focus: ability of the proposed project manager and key leads to clearly explain and defend the work plan; demonstrate readiness to start; respond to scenario-based questions; and show how they will manage schedule, quality, scope changes, and field implementation challenges.