

**REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS FOR
ENGINEERING AND
GRANT ADMINISTRATION SERVICES
FOR
TOWN FACILITIES DAMAGED
BY THE 2024 STORM EVENT HELENE**

Date Released: January 23, 2025

Town of Spruce Pine
11050 South 226 Hwy
Spruce Pine, NC 28777

Proposals are due prior to 4:00 pm EST on February 6, 2025.

INTRODUCTION

The Town of Spruce Pine's Public Works Department, Engineering Division, is requesting proposals (RFQ) from qualified firms to provide engineering design and grant administrative services for various Town facilities at various locations badly damaged in the 2024 storm event.

The funding for these projects may consist of local funds, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) grants, other federal grants and State funds, etc.

The consultant is highly encouraged to take all socioeconomic affirmative steps if subcontracts are used.

The proposals submitted in response to this RFQ will be used as a basis for selecting the Consultant for this project. The Consultant's proposal will be evaluated and ranked according to the criteria provided in the PROPOSAL EVALUATION section of this RFQ.

Required services may include, but are not limited to, engineering studies, permitting, surveying, LiDAR, environmental site assessments, environmental reviews, bank and slope stabilization, outfall repair, road repair, culvert repair, installation of stormwater dissipation structures, water and sewer utility repairs, permanent work mitigation proposals, geotechnical assessments, hydrological assessments, planning, cost verification, budget validation, guidance in all elements of federal grants under FEMA PA, HMGP and the Uniform Guidance.

All damaged facilities should be considered for mitigation activities that will prevent future storms of a similar type from creating the catastrophic impacts as occurred in September 2024.

Addenda to this RFQ, if issued, will be posted on the Town's web site for all prospective firms to review and include relevant information within their proposal. This Town web site is located at:

<http://sprucepine-nc.gov>

It shall be the Consultant's responsibility to check the Town of Spruce Pine website to obtain any addenda that may be issued.

Proposers should submit three (3) hard copies and one (1) electronic copy in PDF format on a USB flash drive containing the Consultant's proposal. The hard copies and USB flash drive shall be mailed or hand delivered to the Town Manager, Town of Spruce Pine prior to 4 p.m. EST on February 6, 2025

Proposals shall be submitted in a sealed package clearly marked "RFQ - ENGINEERING DESIGN AND GRANT ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES" and be addressed as follows:

Town Hall
Town of Spruce Pine
11050 South 226 Hwy
Spruce Pine, NC 28777
Attn: Town Manager

Proposals received after the time and date specified will be considered nonresponsive and will be returned to the Consultant. Please note the Town will not be able to sign for package delivery. The

digital copy shall be provided on a thumb drive and may be included in the mailing or may be dropped off at Town Hall. Mailed proposals should be tracked and tracking information should be kept by the proposing firms.

RFQ Questions and Addenda:

Please submit questions regarding this RFQ via email manager@sprucepine-nc.gov

This RFQ does not commit the Town of Spruce Pine to award a contract, to pay any costs incurred in the preparation of a proposal for this request, or to procure or contract for services. The Town of Spruce Pine reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals received as a result of this request, to negotiate with any qualified Consultant, or to modify or cancel in part or in its entirety the RFQ if it is in the best interests of the Town of Spruce Pine to do so. Furthermore, a contract award will be based upon qualifications and not on price.

The prospective Consultant is advised that should this RFQ result in recommendation for award of a contract, the contract will not be in force until it is approved by the Town Council and fully executed by the Town of Spruce Pine. Note that unsigned proposals or proposals signed by an individual not authorized to bind the prospective Consultant or Consultants will be considered nonresponsive and will be rejected.

The Town reserves the right to request additional information and/or clarification from any or all respondents to this RFQ in the form of an interview with the Consultant Authorized Representative, which may be held virtually as necessary.

In turn, all questions submitted to the Town Manager via email only will be answered and posted for all to find on the Town's web site, noted above. The Town does not anticipate emailing out the addenda or addendum to proposing firms, so the Town's Web site must be checked on the date noted below in **III**.

The anticipated selection schedule is as follows:

- I. Advertise: January 23, 2025
- II. Last date of questions to be submitted: January 30, 2025
- III. Addendum posted, if applicable: February 3, 2025
- IV. RFQ proposals due: February 6, 2025
- V. Proposal committee rankings: February 28, 2025
- VI. Council approval: March 10, 2025
- VII. Cost negotiation with first ranked consultant: March 17, 2025
- VIII. Contract award: March 28, 2025
- IX. Notice to proceed: Early April, 2025

Any questions related to this RFQ shall be submitted via email only to the attention of Richard Canipe, Town Manager, via email at manager@sprucepine-nc.gov and Questions shall be submitted no later than 4:00 pm EST, on January 30, 2025. No oral question or inquiry about this RFQ shall be accepted at any time

REQUIRED ATTACHMENTS

Note: Attachments do not count as a part of the page limit restriction.

Provide a copy of the current North Carolina Business License and Information for Professional Licensure with the appropriate Board(s) for your firm's staff included within this RFQ as potential Firm staff.

Provide your insurance certification ensuring your ability to provide the requisite levels of coverage.

Provide your Tax Form (W-9)

ANTICIPATED TERM OF CONTRACT

Based on final rankings resulting from the above-described process, the Selection Committee will make a recommendation to the Town for the award of a contract or contracts.

A three-year contract will be awarded, with an option to renew annually for an additional three (3) years, for a total of five (5) years (one 3-year contract plus three one-year renewals).

PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

1. SCOPE OF WORK OVERVIEW

Purpose of this RFQ:

The Town of Spruce Pine has identified a need for support related to disaster recovery and mitigation engineering design for projects as well as grant administrative services. The Town is interested in contracting with a Consultant(s) that will be able to deliver both FEMA and HUD-funded projects and coordinate specified tasks related to advancing the project to the construction phase through close out of each project while ensuring the Town has captured all eligible funds according to FEMA and HUD regulations and policies.

If funding is not what the Town requires, the Consultant(s) will be expected to support the Town with applications for subsequent funds provided by FEMA HMGP and other sources for all damages with an emphasis on future resilience and innovative mitigation activities.

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If projects and funding obligations or awards do not meet the needs of the Town, the Consultant(s) will be expected to support alternative outcomes including assisting the Town with applications for subsequent funds provided by FEMA HMGP and other sources.

An emphasis on future resilience and innovative mitigation activities shall remain a priority throughout the term of the contract resulting from this RFQ.

The work shall comply with the requirements of all of the following without limitation, and shall apply to this RFQ and any subsequent contract as though incorporated herein by reference:

1. State statutes and regulations
2. Federal laws and regulations
3. Local laws and policies
4. Rules and regulations of other authorities with jurisdiction over federal funds, including crosscutting regulations, such as environmental and historic preservation and conservation of wetlands, greenspace and cultural or natural areas.

Overview of Services to be Provided:

The Consultant selected shall provide all services to complete engineering design including surveying, permitting, easements, oversight and clearance (as necessary) for all potential projects. Multidisciplinary firms are encouraged to provide proposals in response to this RFQ, as are firms that will require subcontractors so historically underutilized businesses will have opportunities to work with the Town.

The Town anticipates that the Consultant(s) selected shall be required to complete the following tasks:

- Project Management – The Town staff will serve as the contract manager and consultant will act as liaison between the Town and other state/federal regulatory agencies. The consultant shall be responsible for project management activities throughout the life of the contract and the scope of activities includes but is not limited to, coordinating and being responsible for scheduling meetings, managing the project schedule, preparing, and distributing minutes, field reviews, tracking action items for the Town of Spruce Pine and consultant sub-contractors, and preparing all submissions for the Town of Spruce Pine to submit to authorities having jurisdiction.
- Surveys, Geodetic, and Mapping: The Consultant shall be responsible for data collection, mapping from available up to date aerial images necessary for engineering, design, cost estimates, and the level of environmental clearance.
- Engineering Studies: Develop targeted design concepts and mitigation measures needed for site specific storm damage.
- Environmental Studies and Documentation: Prime consultant and/or it's environmental consultants shall prepare environmental documents and technical reports for SHPO/NEPA including US Army Corps, Fish and Wildlife, EPA, DEQ, and other state and federal stakeholders.
- Permitting: Prepare permit applications and coordinate with regulatory agencies to secure permits are obtained in the most expedited manner possible.
- Design: Design the improvements and prepare the plans, specifications, reports, surveys, and estimates in accordance with applicable standards including FEMA design guidelines to achieve project and mitigation objectives.

- **Costs & Budget:** Consultant shall examine and present project alternatives, as necessary, to outline and complete project goals within budget.
- **Federal and State Funding Compliance:** FEMA projects and other federal disaster recovery and mitigation funds have complex requirements involving Federal and/or State funding. Consultant shall comply with all Federal and State Requirements, shall conform with all programmatic standards and shall perform all damage, project and cost review including applications for hazard mitigation funding that may be offered by federal and state agencies.
- **Documentation & Reimbursement:** All projects shall be thoroughly tracked, reviewed and kept in compliance with all FEMA, HUD and other applicable federal laws and regulations. Policies shall be followed in concurrence with the disaster.
- **Financial Reimbursement:** Financial reimbursement verification, funding requests, reporting, single audits, requests for information and all other recovery and mitigation financial activities shall be managed by the selected firm or firms in conjunction with the Town, whose Manager and their designee shall serve specifically and solely as the funding authority to whom the Consultant(s) is responsible.

Anticipated Deliverables (not an exhaustive listing):

Specific deliverables will be developed relevant to each task and phase throughout each program made available under the terms of the contract resulting from this RFQ. The following are examples of the types of deliverables the Town expects to request for all phases of any funding programs:

- Engineering Study outlining design concepts based upon review of damages;
- Meetings held to advise the Town on recovery actions, next steps and issues;
- Resolution of scope, cost and technical issues with federal or state funders;
- Upload documentation and provide RFI responses in FEMA Grants Portal;
- Devise final plans for approval as well as project specifications and estimates, ready for advertisement and bid review/selection using proper procurement;
- Draft and support Town in procurement of construction firms as well as procurement of necessary equipment, supplies and other items in a manner that is compliant with state and federal regulations;
- Provide complete sets of original drawings and specs for reproduction;
- Provide electronic files of preliminary and final design plans along with project specifications in native file formats with drawings for Town and Council review as needed;
- Archive drawings and reports related to existing Town's facilities to assist with FEMA PA project development if required;
- Training Town staff in disaster recovery methods and activities;
- Aerial photography & LIDAR; drone imagery; utility damage scoping;
- Construction manuals, design manuals, technical reports;
- Answering both technical and non-technical questions the Town may have throughout the process;
- Attending meetings with FEMA or other federal and state stakeholders in relation to damage assessments and project development and review of scopes

- of work and costs for accuracy;
- Decisions and justification of FEMA mitigation funds (404 and 406), guidance and best practices for FEMA alternative or improved project options, and other potential funding strategies that may serve in the best interest of the Town for this disaster event;
- Submitting requests for reimbursement on behalf of the Town;
- Reporting to federal and state funders on behalf of the Town;
- Providing projects to the Town for alternative funding consideration with rationale, justification and amount required to complete projects;
- Surveying soil conditions, conducting hydrological studies, assessing assets, and providing cost benefit analyses with alternative solutions to damaged infrastructure and facilities;
- Lead or attend community celebratory meetings and support Town with citizen concerns; provide updated, lay reports and community outreach via social media and printed media;
- Advising Town on funding considered out of scope for known federal and state funders to complete projects;
- Write funding applications for disaster recovery and mitigation grants and loans to support fullest possible mitigation activities.

2. PROPOSAL PARAMETERS AND MAXIMUM POINTS POTENTIAL FOR NARRATIVES

General:

These guidelines are provided for standardizing the preparation and submission of Proposal/Proposals by all Consultants. The intent of these guidelines is to assist Consultants in preparation of their proposals, to simplify the review process, and to help assure consistency in format and content.

The Proposal shall be limited to twenty-five (25) one-sided, single spaced pages (8-1/2 inches X 11 inches), inclusive of resumes, graphics, forms, pictures, photographs, dividers, table of contents, back cover, cover letter, etc. Front protective cover shall not count toward the 35 page limit. Type size and margins for text pages should be in accordance with accepted standard formats as would be considered acceptably legible.

Proposals shall contain the following information in the order listed:

Introductory Letter: 0 Points

- i. The introductory (or transmittal) letter shall be addressed to:

Richard Canipe
Town Manager
Town of Spruce Pine
11050 South 226 Hwy
Spruce Pine, NC 28777

- ii. The letter shall be on Consultant Firm's letterhead and include the Lead Consultant's contact name, mailing address, telephone number, facsimile number, and email address. The letter will address the Consultant's understanding of the services being requested and any other pertinent information the

Consultant believes should be included.

- iii. The letter shall be signed by the individual authorized to bind the Consultant to the proposal.

2. Executive Summary: 5 Points

Include no more than a two-page overview of the RFQ's purpose and define its most important elements.

3. Consultant Information, Qualifications & Experience: 20 Points

- i. The Town of Spruce Pine will only consider submittals from Consultants that demonstrate they have successfully completed comparable projects using disaster recovery and mitigation funds; priority consideration will be placed on FEMA and HUD DR and HMGP funds post-disaster event over competitive grant funds.
 - a. In other words, the more experience demonstrated in the proposal focusing on FEMA Public Assistance, HMGP and HUD CDBG-DR funds the higher the score under this criterion opposed to other funds that are competitive and available each year.
- ii. The projects must illustrate the quality, type, and past performance of the project team. Submittals shall include a detailed description of a minimum of three (3) projects within the past five (5) years which include the following information:
 - 1) Federal agency or State Agency (whichever is primary funder)
 - 2) Total award amount
 - 3) Funding source (i.e., FEMA PA, HMGP, USDA Rural, FEMA BRIC, EDA Infrastructure Expansion, NC Commerce Utilities, GoldenLEAF economic development, etc.)
 - 4) Date Project Started (kicked off for engineering services)
 - 5) Date Project Completed (project closed out; grant closed out)
 - 6) Brief Project Descriptions (purpose, outcomes, issues overcome)
 - 7) Mitigation Activities for any Project
 - 8) Consultant Project Manager and contact information

4. Organization and Technical Approach: 25 Points

- i. Describe the roles of your proposed team for this RFQ's intended project. Indicate the number of project staff, facilities and equipment available and the team's experience as it relates to this project. If subcontractors are to be included, denote those firms in this section.
- ii. Describe your project technical approach for disaster recovery and mitigation activities. Provide a detailed description of how the team will coordinate on project development resulting from damages, how scopes of work involving multiple groups within your Firm's organizational structure, how they will interact, and how they will be managed considering the funders potentially involved.
- iii. Describe the roles of the primary, key individuals on the team. Provide resumes and references for all primary, key team members. Resumes shall show relevant experience, as well as the length of employment with the proposing Consultant. Key members, especially the Project Manager, shall have significant demonstrated experience with this type of project, and should be committed to stay with the project for the duration of the project.
- iv. Describe the project team's experience working in the industry and under disaster recovery conditions

with federal and state funders. The industry may be defined as engineering and grant administration practices, design, policy review, procurement, understanding relevant code and the implementation of codes into project scopes as applicable. Also define experience with construction project management, grant monitoring, any software used to ensure compliance and project closeout procedures that will all ultimately be drawn upon to accomplish each project.

- v. Describe the manner in which the Consultant establishes and maintains continued communication with clients' staff and all federal or state stakeholders.
- vi. If applicable, indicate how Consultant firm has utilized to a strong understanding of local laws, ordinances, regulations, policies, requirements and permitting to complete projects successfully, on time and within budgets set by federal and state funders.

Note: The Town's evaluation of the proposal will consider the Consultant's denoted staff and key members along with any subconsultants as one single multidisciplinary team. Once proposed, no changes in the team composition will be allowed.

5. Scope of Services: 25 Points

- i. Describe your firm's experience preparing documents to FEMA such as memorandum, design report, etc. for project involving storm damage and repair.
- ii. Discuss your experience in working on projects under programs such as Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), NC DOT, HUD CDBG-DR; NC Soil and Water; USACE; NC Commerce; GoldenLEAF; and other likely funders post-disaster.
- iii. Describe your experience with NC Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).
- iv. What are some of the challenges you have successfully overcome in the elevation of, replacement of or retrofits to storm-damaged public utilities?
- v. Describe your methodology and tools utilized in preparation of dams that pose a potential threat to a community.
- vi. Describe your cost control and budgeting methodology for projects with funding constraints.
- vii. Describe your design experience in the stabilization of slopes on a river and include discussion of common issues pertaining to mountain regions.

6. Working Relationship with Local Governments: 15 Points

- i. Explain your entire team approach to working in the public sector, activities key staff have held, and the level of comfort and other attributes that the Proposer's team will bring to a small, rural local government.
- ii. Provide two examples of the Proposer's staff team members interacting with local government staff directly after a disaster event. Define in these two examples how the local government responded to your expertise and ability to provide in-depth support.
- iii. Describe two examples of the knowledge, experience, attributes or skillsets that the Proposer's staff member or members brings local governments in relation to:

- a. their direct experience managing financial tasks using disaster recovery or mitigation funds.
- b. their direct experience working with FEMA and state staff when a complex issue arose but Proposer's staff averted roadblocks so the local government could continue moving forward with a positive outcome.

7. References: 10 Points

- i. Provide three local government references including name, title, email, office phone contact information. Also provide a circumstance that we may choose to ask the reference in relation to your working with them in a similar capacity as defined in this RFQ.

3. EVALUATION OF PROPOSALS: TWO SCORING METRICS

Evaluation Process:

All proposals will be evaluated by a Town of Spruce Pine Selection Committee. The Committee may be composed of Town of Spruce Pine staff or other local persons that have expertise or experience in the services described herein. The Committee will review the submittals and will rank the proposers based upon two sets of criteria, identified in the next section.

The evaluation of the proposals shall be within the sole judgment and discretion of the Committee.

Proposers shall neither contact nor lobby evaluators during the evaluation process. Attempts by a Proposer to contact members of the Committee may jeopardize the integrity of the evaluation and selection process and risk disqualification as a Proposing Firm.

The Committee will evaluate each proposal meeting the qualification requirements set forth in this RFQ. Proposers should bear in mind that any proposal that is unrealistic in terms of the technical or schedule commitments may be deemed reflective of an inherent lack of technical competence or indicative of a failure to comprehend the complexity and risk of the Town's requirements as set forth in this RFQ.

The selection process may include oral interviews, if necessary, at the sole discretion of the selection committee.

Evaluation Criteria and Decision-Making:

1. First, each proposal will be evaluated according to each of the Evaluation Criteria and then scored on a points scale rating. *See Table 1 following.* The scores for all the Evaluation Criteria will be tallied by each of the three members selected to serve on the committee for this RFQ.
2. The proposal or proposals with a higher-scored total will be deemed of higher quality than a proposal with a lesser-scored total. Any number starting with zero ("0") through the maximum number allocated for each criteria in the Evaluation Criteria table will be noted by each of the three committee members. For example, Evaluation Criteria #2 in Table 1 could score between 0 and 20.
3. These Evaluation Criteria scores will be tallied by each member and their final scores will be noted on each sheet; final scores will then be checked and recorded by the Committee lead for the record. The lowest total possible score is 0 and the highest possible score is 100.

4. The Weighted Scale Criteria are based upon certain elements of the written content provided in each proposal. This scoring metric is weighted on a scale of 1 – 5 with “1” being the lowest possible score and “5” being the highest possible score for each of the four criteria defined in Table 2.
5. Each member of the committee will provide one number for each of the four weighted scale criteria, which will then be totaled to determine the sum of the three total weighted scales. The lowest possible score for this metric is 4, and the highest possible score is 20.
6. Both criteria will be calculated to total each proposing firm’s submission. The maximum score possible between the two criterion total 120 points.
7. The two criteria will be calculated to get the final total score for each Proposer’s submission. This final score will be used to rank each firm 1,2,3, and so forth.
8. The final ranking will be tabulated in a report by the Committee lead and will be reviewed by the Town Council. The Council will review the Committee’s final ranking and will proceed with the approval process at the next council meeting, which will be open to the public.

The Evaluation Criteria Summary and respective Scaled Weighted Criteria are as follows:

Table 1

No.	Evaluation Criteria	Weight
1	Executive Summary	5
2	Qualifications & Experience	20
3	Organization & Technical Approach	25
4	Scope of Services	25
5	Local Presence & Investment	15
6	References	10
Total Possible Score		100

Table 2

No.	Weighted Scale Criteria	Weight
1	Completeness of Response & Clarity	1 - 5
2	Thoroughness	1 - 5
3	Relevancy to RFQ Purpose	1 - 5
4	Expression of Expertise & Interest	1 - 5
Maximum Possible Score		20

Definitions of Weighted Scale Scoring

Completeness of Response & Clarity:

- Responses to this RFQ must be complete and clearly explained with strong, concise examples where applicable. Responses that do not include the proposal content requirements identified within this RFQ and subsequent addenda and do not address each of the items listed below will be considered incomplete.
 - Proposers will be scored in a weighted scale between 1 and 5 points.

Thoroughness:

- Responses must address each item listed in this RFQ in a thorough manner, or in a manner that can be understood by any person who may evaluate the proposal whether they have the technical skill or not. Thorough answers may be brief, but should be thoughtful in content so as to establish a thorough understanding of the item being addressed.
 - Proposers will be scored in a weighted scale between 1 and 5 points.

Relevancy to RFQ Purpose:

- Proposers will effectively address the determination of relevancy provided the answers and statements made in the proposal provide enough context to establish a strong connection to federal and state disaster recovery engineering, grant administration and related activities.
 - Proposers will be scored in a weighted scale between 1 and 5 points.

Expression of Expertise & Interest:

- Proposers will effectively address the determination of relevancy provided the answers and statements made in the proposal provide enough context to establish a strong connection to federal and state disaster recovery engineering, grant administration and related activities.
 - Proposers will be scored in a weighted scale between 1 and 5 points.