



**REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS
PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERING SERVICES for
CLEVELAND COUNTY WATER
CLEVELAND COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA**

**Cleveland County Water
Cleveland County Water and Shelby Interconnections Project
Request for Qualifications for Engineering Services**

Issued: September 21, 2026

By:
Garrett Gilbert, Assistant General Manager
Cleveland County Water
PO Box 8
Shelby, NC 28151

Project Site Location
Multiple Sites In Cleveland County

**Cleveland County Water-
Cleveland County Water and Shelby Interconnections Project
Proposal #: 003-2026**

Sealed Proposals from qualified firms to provide various services related to the Cleveland County Water-
Cleveland County Water and Shelby Interconnections Improvements are subject to all the conditions, and provisions set forth herein and attached. Proposals will be received in the offices of Cleveland County Water administration building, 715 Polkville Road, Shelby, NC 28150 or via mail to PO Box 8, Shelby, NC 28151.

Proposals shall be submitted by 12:00 PM, Friday, October 30, 2026.

The above **Proposal number** shall be shown on front of the envelope in which this proposal is submitted. Cleveland County Water assumes no responsibility for unmarked envelopes being considered for award. Facsimiles are not acceptable.

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INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Submit one (1) signed original and four (4) signed copies of the proposal.
- 2. Proposal amendments thereto or withdrawal requests received after the time advertised for proposal opening will be void regardless of when they were mailed or postmarked.
- 3. Clearly address and mark the proposal as indicated in the notice.

CONDITIONS

- 1. Cleveland County Water reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals, and to waive all technicalities.
- 2. The right is reserved to make award as considered to be the most advantageous to the District.

PROPOSAL

In compliance with the request for proposal, and subject to all conditions thereof, the undersigned offers and agrees to furnish any or all items proposed.

Date

Authorized Signature

Company Name

Print or Type Name Above

Company Address

Company Fax

City, State, Zip

NC Sales Tax Number (Only If out of State)

Company Telephone Number

Federal ID#

Email Address

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

Description of Project

Responses to this RFQ will be used to determine the relative qualifications of various firms to perform the scope of work and the tasks specified. The District is seeking a firm with demonstrated expertise in design engineering and project management consulting with specific expertise in quality assurance/value engineering, construction feasibility review, cost estimating and scheduling. As mentioned previously, the objective of this RFQ is to solicit interest and credentials from qualified professional engineering firms licensed in the State of North Carolina. It is anticipated that an agreement for professional services will be negotiated and executed between the District and the firm who is determined to best meet the needs of the District for this project. All questions regarding this RFQ shall be presented to Garrett Gilbert at garrett@clevelandcountywater.com

Site visits are not required; however, if your firm desires a visit to the potential sites you may contact the Assistant General Manager, Garrett Gilbert by email at garrett@clevelandcountywater.com to schedule a visit. All site visits must be completed by October 16, 2026.

The following deadlines apply to this Request for Qualifications:

Request for Qualification Issued	September 21, 2026
Deadline for site visits by consultants	October 16, 2026 at 12:00 Noon
Clarifications/Questions Deadline	October 23, 2026 at 12:00 Noon
Statement of Qualification Submittal Deadline	October 30, 2026 at 12:00 Noon

Background

In September of 2024 the Cleveland County Water System was heavily damaged during Hurricane Helene. Intense flooding and high winds from the hurricane severely impacted Cleveland County, resulting in uprooted trees, disabled power lines, and damaged homes across the surrounding area. As a result, the drinking water system owned and operated by Cleveland County Water experienced system-wide power outages. Additionally, localized flooding and heavy rains from Hurricane Helene caused erosion that resulted in landslides and exposed creek crossings. The damaging impacts sustained by the system highlight Cleveland County Water’s critical need for redundancies and system hardening in order to ensure uninterrupted operation during intense weather events, such as ones similar to Hurricane Helene.

The District anticipates and has discussed with the United States Department of Agriculture the need to seek USDA financing through the form of grants to construct the needed improvements. It is anticipated

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that the selected consultant will need to be familiar with the USDA grants and loans process including but not limited to a Preliminary Engineering Report consistent with current USDA guidelines and USDA timeframes and design requirements, and the USDA RDApply process. The anticipated funding source is referenced as USDA Rural Development Disaster Assistance Funding (DAF).

Scope of Work

- Interconnections- 4 Interconnections with neighboring system City of Shelby.

Project Description

The proposed project would include interconnections with the City of Shelby Water System at four critical locations. The City of Shelby also owns and operates an extensive treatment and water distribution system providing water to residents within the city but is unable to provide other residents of Cleveland County including those served by Cleveland County Water. These four interconnections would make that possible so that each system can rely on the other for assistance during a future catastrophic event.

Qualification Statement Requirements

- 1) All proposing firms must have been professionally engaged in the project management and engineering fields with experiences in water distribution interconnection projects of similar size or greater in public sector for a minimum of five (5) years. In addition, all proposing firms must employ qualified personnel, who are licensed and qualified in the following disciplines: civil engineering, environmental engineering, electrical engineering, construction administration, and construction cost estimating/value engineering and project management. These professionals must not only be credentialed, but they must also be able to demonstrate that they have related experience in the engineering and construction industry.
- 2) The firm must be able to demonstrate that the staff it would assign to this project possesses the ability to lead and manage work teams that are multi-disciplinary and multi-functional. In addition, proposing firms must be able to demonstrate that they possess the ability to develop, monitor, control and manage changes in a project's scope, time, resources, cost and risk.
- 3) This RFQ contains, in general terms, the overall objectives of the District in obtaining the services of a consultant. While an attempt is made to describe the general expectations of the District and the anticipated work to perform, the District and the successful firm will need to define a more specific scope of work and fee schedule as part of a negotiation process.
- 4) If it becomes necessary to revise any part of this RFQ, written amendments will be provided to all potential firms proposing.

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- 5) All costs related to the preparation of the Statement of Qualifications and any related activities are the sole responsibility of the prospective firm. The District assumes no liability for any costs incurred by perspective firms throughout the entire selection process.
- 6) The District is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Prospective firms will commit to meet the nondiscrimination and equal employment requirements of the State of North Carolina. Minority and Women Owned Businesses are encouraged to submit a Statement of Qualifications.
- 7) Each firm providing a proposal for consideration by the District is responsible for obtaining the information on the conditions and restrictions involved in meeting the obligations and providing the services as set forth in this RFQ. The failure or omission of a firm to obtain adequate information will in no way relieve the firm of any obligation with respect to this RFQ or to an associated contract.

Form of Proposal/Qualifications

- 1) Proposals must be submitted by the date and time outlined in this RFQ. Late proposals will not be accepted. One (1) original and four (4) copies of the firm's proposal must be submitted. All proposals and supporting materials should be enclosed in a sealed envelope, properly marked, with the proposal number on the front of the envelope. All proposals must be valid for a period of one hundred (120) days after opening. Firms may be asked to interview with the District to discuss any portion of their proposal and/or their project approach before a decision is made concerning responses to this RFQ. All submitted responses will be retained as property of the District and will not be returned.
 - a) **The proposal must contain a handwritten signature of an authorized representative of the responding firm.** Responding firms will not be allowed to make any changes or corrections after proposals are submitted to the District.
- 2) General Information
 - a) Provide the firm name, address, telephone and fax numbers of the headquarters office, and, if applicable, the branch office designated for this project.
 - a) Provide a general description of the capabilities of your firm, including information related to its history, size, principals, professional staff and structure.
- 3) Experience and Personnel
 - a) Identify and describe projects your firm has completed which are similar in scope to this project. Please only list projects that the members have been involved with for the current firm/team that are submitting under.
 - b) Describe the experience of the firm with administration and reporting of loans and grants from various agencies, particularly with USDA Rural Development Programs.

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- c) Describe the personnel who will be assigned to this project. Indicate their specific role in these projects and experience in similar projects. Identify the person who is expected to be the primary contact.
- d) Provide five (5) references, including addresses and phone numbers of clients for whom your firm has completed similar projects (preferably municipalities).

4) Approach

- a) Technical Approach - Based upon the information presented herein, provide a description of the overall approach the firm will take for this project, and list the specific services that will be provided. The description should delineate specific tasks to be undertaken in each phase. In addition, the technical approach shall include how your firm will interact with the applicable regulatory agencies and complete the necessary steps in securing all permits for the project.
- b) Management Plan - Describe the management plan to be used, including staffing configurations. Provide assurance that the personnel needed to complete the projects in a timely manner are available.
- c) Quality Assurance - Describe the necessary steps that will be taken by your firm's management and staff to ensure and provide the best quality product to the Cleveland County Water- Broad River Water Plant and Distribution Improvements.
- d) Please provide a proposed schedule for the project, including the starting and completion dates for all major services.
 - i) USDA Preliminary Engineering Report and Environmental Document Submission
 - ii) Design and Permitting Process
 - iii) Construction/Bidding Time Frame
 - iv) Construction Time Period

Summary of Proposal Contents

In summary of the minimum requirements, all proposal responses should include, but not be limited to, the following information:

- 1) A letter of introduction and interest identifying the firm.
- 2) A detailed summary of the firm's relative experience with references and contact information.
- 3) Identification of all individuals who will be assigned by the firm to work on this project to include a detailed summary of each individual's professional credentials and relevant experience. This should also include a summary of qualifications and relevant experience of all subcontractor personnel/engineering firms if applicable.

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- 4) A detailed discussion of the projects approach that indicates an understanding of the goals and requirements of this RFQ with specific reference as to how the firm would propose to accomplish the work items described.
- 5) Proximity of key project members to the Cleveland County, North Carolina area.
- 6) Other information that the proposing firm may wish to include.
- 7) Proposals and supplemental information should be limited to no more than ten (10) pages of material, front and back included. A cover letter with the submission of your proposal does not apply towards the proposal page limit.

Selection Criteria and Process

- 1) Proposals will be evaluated and reviewed by the District for final selection. This evaluation may include discussions with all or some of the firms providing responses including the possibility of interviews if necessary.
- 2) Proposals will be considered based upon the documented qualifications and applicable experience of the firms proposing. It is anticipated that the successful firm and the District will work together to develop a more detailed scope of work with activities and issues to be addressed to include identification of specific project goals and schedule milestones.

Listed below are some of the criteria that may be used in the selection process.

- 1) Evaluation of the firm's ability to successfully complete all requirements as specified in this Request for Qualifications.
- 2) Demonstrated experience with similar projects involving the public sector (local governments) of similar size and organization.
- 3) Demonstrated understanding of the projects and abilities of the firm to successfully complete the expected scope of work on schedule and within budget.
- 4) Examination of how the firm will propose to accomplish project objectives (use of innovative methods, unique approaches, reasonableness of proposed approach).
- 5) Familiarity of region and other factors determined to be relevant.
- 6) Interviews with Firms (If needed)

Certificate of Insurance

Once selected, the firm hired to provide the services referenced in this RFQ will be required to provide proof of insurance to include professional liability, workers compensation, employer's liability, general liability and auto liability on a certificate of insurance form prior to commencing work. A copy of this RFQ's title page

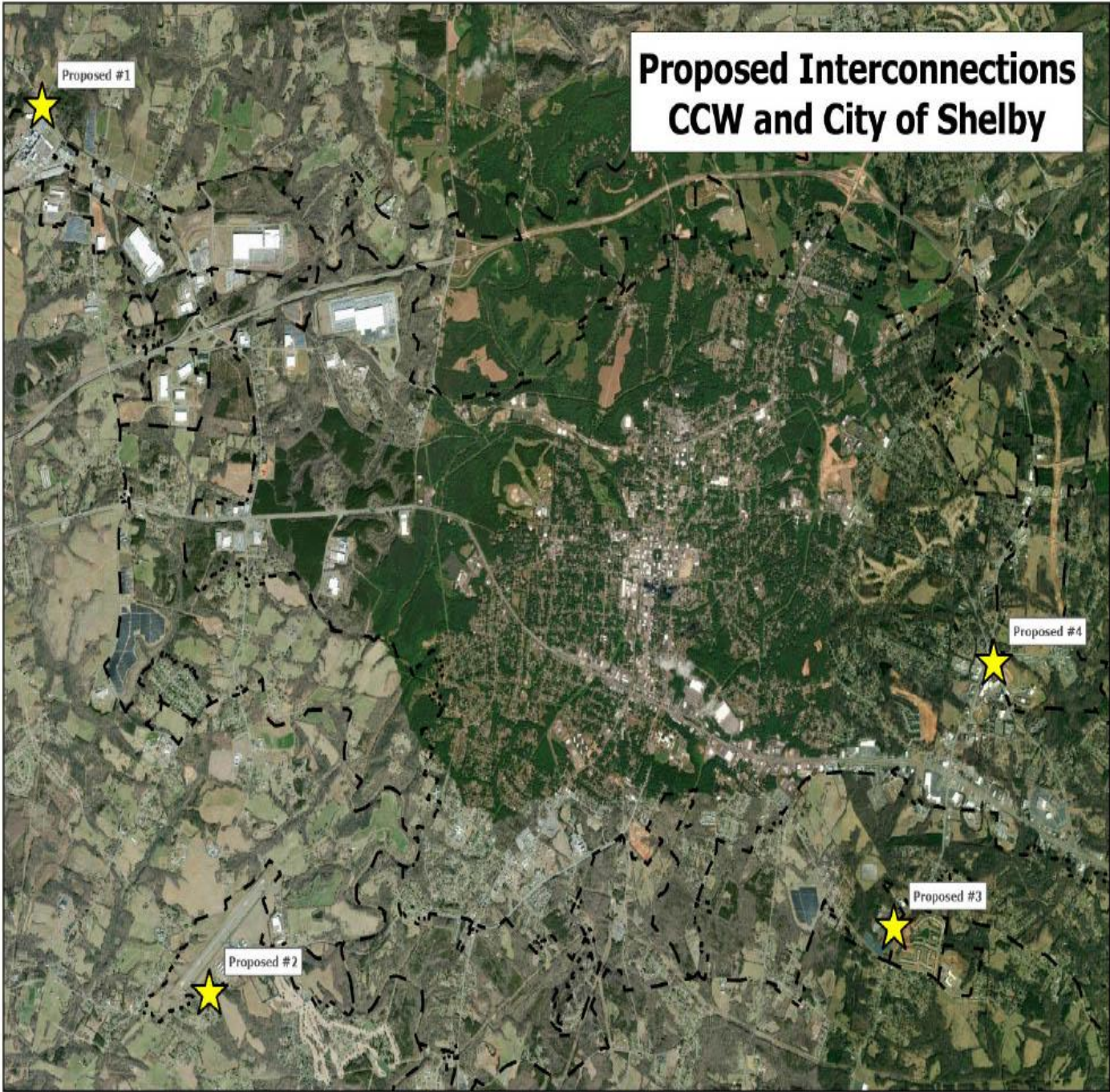
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properly signed to include the manual signature of an authorized representative of the firm and all appropriate address and contact information as listed on this form.

Project Funding and Proposed Schedule

The District anticipates applying for and receiving approval for the related funding necessary for this project from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development program. Cleveland County Water has met with and anticipates completing applications via the USDA application process. The selected firm, once under contract, will be requested to assist Cleveland County Water with completion of the anticipated applications. The selected firm will be required to utilize the standard Engineers Joint Contract Documents Committee (EJCDC) for the contract between CCW and the selected firm and in accordance with USDA guidelines. Various milestones of the project will be determined in conjunction with USDA and the selection of the most qualified firm, submittal of the funding applications and submittal of the required USDA Preliminary Engineering Report (PER). It is anticipated that once a firm is selected, there will be a preliminary meeting with CCW, USDA and the selected firm to discuss the application submittal process prior to contract execution with the selected firm.

Map of Proposed Connection Sites



END OF REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS