



November 15, 2024

**REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS
City of Bennettsville, SC
Wastewater Treatment Plant Evaluation and Capital Improvements Plan
ENGINEERING SERVICES
RIA Grant # P-24-5017
City of Bennettsville, SC RFQ #24-10-001**

**DUE DATE:
January 24, 2025**

RECEIPT LOCATION:
501 East Main Street
P.O. Box 1036
Bennettsville, SC 29512

OFFICIAL CONTACT:
Angela Sellers, Assistant Director of Public Utilities, (843) 479-2442,
angela.sellers@bennettsvillesc.com

The City of Bennettsville reserves the right to reject any and all submissions or any parts thereof and to waive any irregularities or minor informalities in any submission or in the procurement process and to make a contract award in the best interest of The City of Bennettsville.

This project is being funded in whole or in part by a state grant from the South Carolina Rural Infrastructure Authority (RIA). All RIA grant requirements will apply to the contract. More information about program requirements can be found in the RIA State Grant Project Management Procedures found at ria.sc.gov/resources/forms-documents.



CITY ADMINISTRATOR
WILLIAM C. SIMON, JR.

City of Bennettville, SC

OFFICE OF THE CITY ADMINISTRATOR

P.O. Box 1036

Bennettville, South Carolina 29512

1. INTRODUCTION

The City of Bennettville is issuing this Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to identify a licensed engineer to provide a full range of engineering services to support the implementation of the Wastewater Treatment Plant Evaluation and Capital Improvements Plan including expansion. These services will be provided under contract with the City of Bennettville, with funding provided in whole or in part by the South Carolina Rural Infrastructure Authority (RIA) under RIA State Grant # **P-24-5017**.

1.1. Method of Procurement

This is a qualifications-based selection. Award of the contract will be given to the most responsible, responsive, and most highly qualified engineering firm based on the factors outlined in Section 5, SELECTION CRITERIA. Cost is NOT a factor in the ranking of firms to provide services herein. DO NOT include any reference to consultant costs in the RFQ response. Any RFQ response with any discussion of cost will be disqualified. Contract fees will be negotiated after selection based on the project scope. The general scope of the work is outlined below.

Firms are advised that this evaluation and selection process is a competition and not simply a prequalification. It is the intent of the City of Bennettville to award the contract to a single Firm.

1.2. Project Description

The proposed project will identify the wastewater assets that are in need of repair or replacement. These repairs will be prioritized to assist the city with budgeting. Making the needed repairs can prevent catastrophic failure of equipment which could result in much higher costs to the City as well as potential health issues depending on the failure.

The proposed project would provide the city of Bennettville with a roadmap for improvements that are needed for their WWTP to operate efficiently as well as providing resiliency. The documentation will also assist the city with pursuing grant funding that may be needed for City staff to determine if a rate increase may be warranted to ensure adequate funding of the WWTP.

Relevant portions of the application for RIA funding, including a detailed project description, can be found here: [Purchasing | City of Bennettville, SC](#)



CITY ADMINISTRATOR
WILLIAM C. SIMON, JR.

City of Bennettville, SC

OFFICE OF THE CITY ADMINISTRATOR
P.O. Box 1036
Bennettville, South Carolina 29512

1.3. Information to be Supplied by The City of Bennettville

The City of Bennettville will provide the following information and resources to the selected firm for use during the project:

- Existing WWTP facility plans, operational data, and historical performance metrics.
- Environmental compliance reports and regulatory requirements
- Population growth projections and infrastructure development plans
- Prior studies and assessments related to the WWTP (if available)
- Maps of service area
- Annual revenue from sewer services and operational expenditures
- Contracts of other consultants who was retained to assist with compliance

1.4. Engineering Scope of Work

To support this project, the City of Bennettville is requesting engineering services to include the following scope of work:

- Assessment of existing Equipment and prioritization of removal/replacement
- Assessment of physical structures/overall plant layout: recommendations/plans for needed upgrades to modernize the plant.
- Assessment of systems and recommendations/plans to bring them up to date (i.e., Use of SCADA)
- Assessment of laboratory and recommendations/plans to modernize it
- Assessment of current chemicals used and recommendations.
- Assessment of obsolete equipment (i.e., Chlorinators)
- Plan for getting staff with proper licensure as current staff retires.
- Design plan for renovation of existing plant/lab.
- Wastewater rate study and financial analysis of revenues and expenditures with prioritized recommendations



CITY ADMINISTRATOR
WILLIAM C. SIMON, JR.

City of Bennettville, SC

OFFICE OF THE CITY ADMINISTRATOR

P.O. Box 1036

Bennettville, South Carolina 29512

Deliverables

- Comprehensive Assessment Report
- CIP with prioritized recommendations with cost estimates
- Wastewater Rate Study and financial analysis
- Presentation of findings and prioritized recommendations along with the rate study analysis to the City Council

1.5. Project Schedule

The estimated project schedule is as follows:

Complete Data Collection	April 25, 2025
Evaluate Current Conditions	June 27, 2025
Analyze Operations	August 22, 2025
Recommend Improvements	September 19, 2025
<i>Final Deliverables will be sent to RIA</i>	<i>September 19, 2025</i>
Information Presentation	October 21, 2025
Grant Closeout	November 15, 2025

Timely completion of the project is a key requirement, as delays could result in the loss of grant funding.

2. REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS (RFQ) PROCESS AND POLICIES

2.1. Submittal of Statements of Qualifications

The City of Bennettville is hereby issuing this Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to engineering firms that have the capability and interest in undertaking and performing the scope of work described in this RFQ. The RFQ will be publicly advertised in accordance with the RIA procurement guidelines.

The OFFICIAL CONTACT for this solicitation is:



CITY ADMINISTRATOR
WILLIAM C. SIMON, JR.

City of Bennettville, SC

OFFICE OF THE CITY ADMINISTRATOR
P.O. Box 1036
Bennettville, South Carolina 29512

Angela Sellers
Assistant Director of Public Utilities
The City of Bennettville
(843) 479-2442
angela.sellers@bennettvillesc.com

Each firm responding to this solicitation is officially a RESPONDENT. Each respondent must submit a sealed package containing an original and ten copies plus one (1) digital copy of its statement of qualifications to Angela Sellers at the address above no later than **January 24, 2025**. Statements of qualifications may be submitted in person, by messenger, or by regular mail. All submissions will be logged in and date and time stamped. **Any qualifications package that is received after the date and time specified will be logged and date and time stamped as "late" and returned unopened to the respondent.**

2.2. Procurement Timeline

Release date for RFQ	November 15, 2024
Final Date to Receive Written Questions/Clarifications	December 31, 2024
RFQ Closing Date	January 24, 2025
Completion of Selection Committee Review and Recommendation	February 21, 2025
Execution of Contract	March 28, 2025

2.3. Labeling of Submissions

All submissions must be submitted in a sealed envelope or package plainly marked "The City of Bennettville – WWTP Evaluation, ATTN: "Angela Sellers" with the name and address of the respondent in the upper left-hand corner. No responsibility will attach to the City of Bennettville or any official or employee thereof, for the pre-opening, post opening, or failure to open a submission not properly addressed and identified.



CITY ADMINISTRATOR
WILLIAM C. SIMON, JR.

City of Bennettville, SC

OFFICE OF THE CITY ADMINISTRATOR

P.O. Box 1036

Bennettville, South Carolina 29512

2.4. Proprietary/Confidential Information

All materials and written qualifications submitted pursuant to this RFQ shall become the property of the City of Bennettville and will not be returned. All respondents must visibly mark as "CONFIDENTIAL" each part of their submission that they consider containing proprietary information where the release of which would constitute an unreasonable invasion of privacy. All unmarked pages will be subject to release in accordance with the law. Marked pages will not be disclosed if they are deemed to meet the requirements under the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act, S.C. Code Section 30-4-10, *et seq.* Respondents should be prepared, upon request, to provide justification of why such materials should not be disclosed in accordance with the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act.

2.5. Questions/Requests for Clarification

All questions and/or requests for clarification regarding this RFQ should be provided in writing to Angela Sellers no later than December 31, 2024, at 5:00 pm. All questions submitted and their answers will be posted on the City of Bennettville website as an addendum to this RFQ prior to the RFQ deadline. No telephone inquiries will be accepted.

2.6. Addenda

If it becomes necessary to revise any part of this RFQ, a written addendum will be issued. All addenda issued by The City of Bennettville will become part of the official RFQ and will be posted on the City of Bennettville website, www.bennettvillesc.com. Receipt of all addenda must be acknowledged in the response to this RFQ.

2.7. Contact Policy

No direct or indirect contact regarding this solicitation may be made with any representatives of the City of Bennettville other than the official contact identified in this RFQ. If such contact is made, the City of Bennettville reserves the right to reject a submission by that respondent. All questions and/or requests for clarification must be provided in accordance with Section 2.5 of the RFQ. This contact policy applies to site visits and requests for technical information. Any technical information needed from the City of Bennettville to prepare a submission should be coordinated through the Questions/Requests for Clarification process outlined in Section 2.5.

2.8. Acceptance and Rejection of Submissions

Any submissions that do not conform to the essential requirements of the RFQ shall be rejected. The City of Bennettville reserves the right to waive informalities and minor



CITY ADMINISTRATOR
WILLIAM C. SIMON, JR.

City of Bennettville, SC

OFFICE OF THE CITY ADMINISTRATOR

P.O. Box 1036

Bennettville, South Carolina 29512

irregularities in submittals and reserves the sole right to determine what constitutes informalities and minor irregularities. The City of Bennettville also reserves the right to accept or reject any or all submissions received in response to this RFQ. The City of Bennettville is not obligated to enter into any contract on the basis of any submittal in response to this RFQ. The City of Bennettville reserves the right to request additional information from any firm submitting under this RFQ if such information is necessary to clarify the submission.

2.9. Cancellation/Rejection

The City of Bennettville may cancel this RFQ in whole or in part at any time if it is determined to be in the best interest of the City of Bennettville. The City of Bennettville may reject any or all submissions in whole or in part if it is determined to be in the best interest of the City of Bennettville.

2.10. Conflict of Interest

Respondents shall promptly notify the City of Bennettville in writing of all potential conflicts of interest for any prospective business association, interest, or other circumstance, which may influence or appear to influence the respondent's judgment or quality of services being provided hereunder. Such written notification shall identify the prospective business association, interest, or circumstance, the nature of work that such a person may undertake and request an opinion of the City of Bennettville as to whether the association, interest, or circumstance would, in the opinion of the City of Bennettville, constitute a conflict of interest. By responding to this RFQ, the respondent certifies that it has no conflict of interest with any employee, agent, elected official or officer of the City of Bennettville or any other conflict as may be set forth herein.

2.11. Collusion

More than one submission from an individual, firm partnership, corporation, association, or related parties under the same or different names will not be considered. If the City of Bennettville believes that collusion exists among respondents, all submissions from the suspected firms will be rejected. "Related parties" means respondents or the principals thereof, which have a direct or indirect ownership or profit-sharing interest in another respondent.

Respondents shall comply with all local, state, and federal directives, orders, and laws applicable to this RFQ and any resulting contract.



CITY ADMINISTRATOR
WILLIAM C. SIMON, JR.

City of Bennettville, SC

OFFICE OF THE CITY ADMINISTRATOR

P.O. Box 1036

Bennettville, South Carolina 29512

By responding to this RFQ, respondents certify that the response is made without previous understanding, agreement, or connection with any person, firm or corporation making a submission for the same item, and they certify the knowledge that this would constitute an illegal action.

3. STATEMENT OF QUALIFICATIONS CONTENTS

Respondents interested in providing the services outlined in this RFQ must prepare and submit a statement of qualifications that must not be more than the equivalent of 30 single sided 8 ½ by 11-inch pages in length (not counting the front and back covers, section dividers that contain no information, and any required forms such as resumes). The submission must include the following, in the order listed:

3.1. Cover Letter

The response should contain a cover letter signed by a person who is authorized to commit the respondent to perform the work described in this RFQ and should identify all subcontractors, materials, and enclosures being forwarded in response to the RFQ.

3.2. Firm Qualifications

Provide relevant information about the firm to include the following:

- Organization/company overview as it relates to the requirements of the RFQ.
- Organization/company overview of all subcontractors as it relates to the requirements of the RFQ.
- Number of years the firm has been providing the requested services with a brief description of recently performed projects that indicates the past performance and abilities of the proposed team. More detail on specific projects should be included in the Relevant Experience section.

3.3. Key Personnel

Provide a proposed project management structure that identifies the project manager and all personnel who will be assigned to work on this project, including a description of their abilities, qualifications (including education and licensure), and experience. Identify the proposed project manager who will be the sole point of contact for the City of Bennettville during day-



CITY ADMINISTRATOR
WILLIAM C. SIMON, JR.

City of Bennettville, SC

OFFICE OF THE CITY ADMINISTRATOR

P.O. Box 1036

Bennettville, South Carolina 29512

to-day operations and include their contact information. Include resumes for all key individuals (including sub-consultants) who will be completing a portion of the scope of work.

3.4. Relevant Experience

Provide descriptions of similar infrastructure projects that the organization and/or key personnel have completed, including tasks involved, timeframes, and outcomes. Include any relevant experience with RIA requirements or grant-funded projects. Also include any relevant work performed in a nearby jurisdiction or in the City of Bennettville's jurisdiction.

3.5. Project Approach

A statement of understanding of the work to be done and a detailed methodology and work plan to include a proposed list of required tasks and milestones to address the scope of work included in this RFQ. Include any additional recommendations, options or alternatives that should be taken into consideration by the City of Bennettville.

3.6. Firm Workload

Describe the recent, current, and projected workload of the respondent and any sub-consultants, related to how it might impact the respondent's ability to meet the project's timeline requirements as outlined in this RFQ.

3.7. References

Provide three (3) client references for relevant projects within the last 5 years that indicate the past performances and abilities of the proposed team. Include a key client contact person for each project with their current daytime phone number and email address.

4. EVALUATION AND AWARD PROCESS

4.1. Selection Committee

The City of Bennettville will conduct a formal selection process to determine the best qualified respondent based on the criteria detailed in Section 5. This process will include the formation of a selection committee, and the appointment of other technical advisors as needed to review all of the submissions and score them based on the established selection criteria outlined herein. The award will be made to the highest rated and ranked respondent based on the cumulative scores of the selection committee.



CITY ADMINISTRATOR
WILLIAM C. SIMON, JR.

City of Bennettville, SC

OFFICE OF THE CITY ADMINISTRATOR

P.O. Box 1036

Bennettville, South Carolina 29512

The City of Bennettville reserves the right to contact a firm to obtain written clarification of information submitted and to contact references to obtain information regarding performance, reliability, and integrity. After evaluating the submitted Statements of Qualifications, the selection committee may choose to interview a short list of at least three firms prior to ranking the respondents. If interviews will be conducted, short-listed respondents will be notified at least ten (10) business days prior to the interview date.

4.2. Notice of Intent to Award

The selection committee's recommendation for award will be presented to the City Council for consideration. If approved, a notice of "Intent to Award" will be posted on the City of Bennettville website. A notice will also be emailed to all respondents informing them of the committee's recommendation.

4.3. Protested Solicitations and Awards

Any respondent who is aggrieved in connection with the solicitation or award of a contract may protest according to the procedures in the [South Carolina Consolidated Procurement Code, S.C. Code Section 11-35-4210](#).

4.4. Contract Negotiations/ Award of Contract

After the close of the appeal period, if no appeals were received or successfully granted, the highest rated respondent identified in the "Intent to Award" will be invited to enter into contract negotiations with The City of Bennettville to finalize the scope of work, personnel, hours, hourly rates, use of sub-consultants, and other direct costs that will be required to complete the agreement between the City of Bennettville and the selected respondent. If an agreement cannot be reached with the highest ranked firm, the City of Bennettville will select the next highest ranked responsive and qualified firm, and the negotiation phase will be repeated. This process will continue until an agreement is reached with a qualified firm that can provide the required scope of services within the project budget. Any contracts awarded as a result of this procurement process will be between the respondent and the City of Bennettville.

Per RIA guidelines, any contract negotiated as a result of this procurement process will require approval from RIA prior to award/execution. Once a draft contract is negotiated, the City of Bennettville will submit it to RIA for approval. Once approval is granted, the City of Bennettville and the selected respondent may enter into the contract. Failure to adhere to this policy could result in disallowed grant costs and the cancellation of this solicitation.

5. SELECTION CRITERIA



CITY ADMINISTRATOR
WILLIAM C. SIMON, JR.

City of Bennettville, SC

OFFICE OF THE CITY ADMINISTRATOR

P.O. Box 1036

Bennettville, South Carolina 29512

The selection criteria and their relative importance in making the selection are:

5.1. Qualifications of Firm/Personnel (35%)

Technical expertise and competence, including education, professional licensure or certification, and years of experience of individuals who will be assigned to this project.

5.2. Related Experience on Similar Projects (20%)

Extent of relevant experience with infrastructure projects of a similar nature, including experience with RIA state-funded grants.

5.3. Past Performance (15%)

Performance recommendations with regard to work quality, schedule, budget, communication, and coordination of projects.

5.4. Project Approach (10%)

The soundness, suitability, comprehensiveness, and creativity of the respondent's stated approach to the project and the desired outcome of the project.

5.5. Recent, Current, and Projected Workload (15%)

Workload of the firm and key personnel, related to how it might impact the respondent's ability to meet the project's schedule requirements.

5.6. Proximity and Local Knowledge (5%)

Proximity to the project location and knowledge of the area and the infrastructure to be improved, as demonstrated through relevant experience.