



Municipal Considerations for Procurement and Writing RFPs for Professional Services

Presented by:

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Architecture ■ Construction Management
Engineering ■ Land Surveying

H. Douglas Barclay Courthouse Restoration
Pulaski, NY



**H. Douglas Barclay Courthouse Restoration
Pulaski, NY**

How To RFP

***Based on A Municipal Guide for Writing Requests for
Proposals for Professional Services (June 2025)***



Thompson Park Master Plan & Trail Development
Watertown, NY



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Competitive Bidding Requirements

General Municipal Law §103

- Applies to all political subdivisions in NYS
- Purchase contracts in excess of \$20,000
- Contracts for public works in excess of \$35,000
- Requires awards... “to the lowest responsible bidder after advertisement for sealed bids”.
 - Or, when authorized, by “Best Value”

Purpose of Competitive Bidding

- Guard against favoritism, fraud and corruption
- Foster honest competition in order to obtain the best goods and services at the lowest possible price
- Ensure the most cost-effective use of public monies for the benefit of the taxpayers
- Acquire maximum quality goods and services at the lowest possible cost

Bidding Thresholds

- Must reasonably estimate the aggregate amount of same goods and services to be made within a twelve-month period
- Purchases cannot be artificially divided for the purpose of avoiding meeting threshold limits
- Applies to both direct and indirect expenditures
 - (e.g., trade-in allowances)
- Source of money to be spent does not generally alter the requirement for bidding

Certain Exceptions to Competitive Bidding

- “Piggy-backing” off certain Federal, State, County and other government contracts (GML § 103 (16))
- Emergency Purchases (GML §103 (4))
- Surplus / Second-Hand Equipment (GML §103 (6))
 - From State, Federal, political subdivision or public benefit corporations
- Preferred Sources (State Finance Law §162)
- Professional Services
 - Exception by case law (no statutory definition)
 - Specialized skills, training, or expertise that involves professional judgement, discretion or a degree of creativity in performance of the contract

Procurement Policy (GML §104-b)

- Applies to all political subdivisions in NYS
- Required written internal policies and procedures
- Applies to all procurements not subject to competitive bidding under GML §103
- Generally, requires alternate proposals/quotations (RFPs) and how they will be obtained
 - When to use each method of procurement
 - Documentation of actions taken in connection with each method



Why RFPs Matter

What is an RFP?

- A Request for Proposal (RFP) is a competitive process to procure professional services [*engineers, architects, surveyors, lawyers, etc.*]
- Prioritizes **qualifications and value**, not just lower price

Benefits

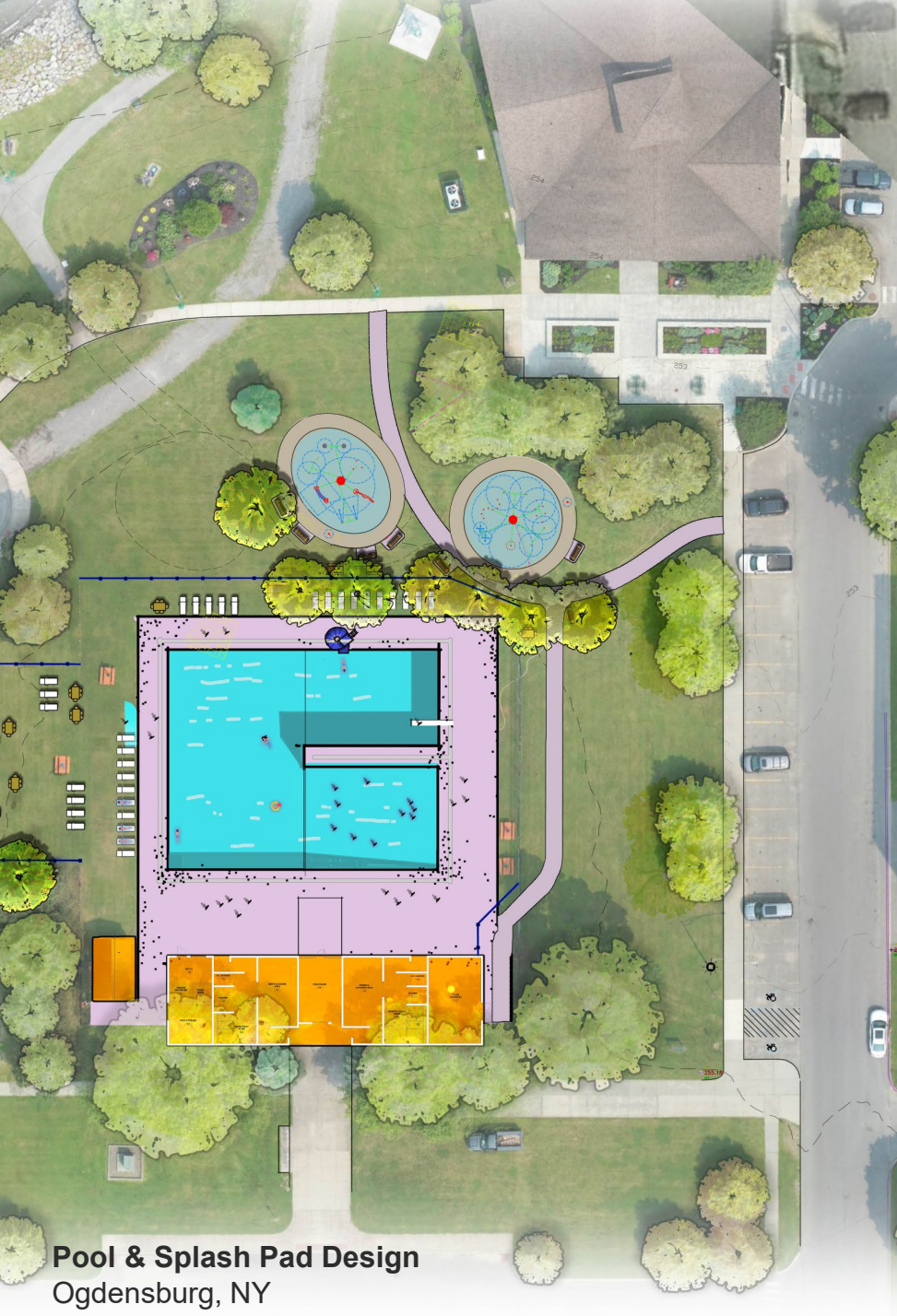
- Attracts qualified firms
- Encourages clear, structured responses
- Helps municipalities maximize value for their residents



Evaluation Goals

- Fair and equitable review of all proposals
- Focus on key criteria beyond price:
 - experience & qualifications
 - timeline & schedule
 - methodology & approach
 - cost & value

Tip: Define evaluation criteria before starting the RFP!



Pool & Splash Pad Design
Ogdensburg, NY

Define Project Scope

Clear scope = Better responses

Ask and document:

- What exactly is needed?
- What are the deliverables?
- What milestones matter?
- Are there reference documents or plans?



RFP Core Sections

Project Description

- Explain *why* the project exists and *what* you want done.

Scope of Services

- Be specific on tasks, deliverables, and expectations.

Timeline

- Include key dates and deadlines.

Funding Source

- Note if a grant or specific funding rules apply.



RFP Core Sections

Contact Info

- Provide contact guidelines for questions.

Submission Requirements

- Clear instructions for formatting and delivering proposals.

Reference Documents

- Include needed paperwork and documentation.



Submission Requirements

Make it easy to compare submissions!

Ask firms to include:

- Cover letter
- Firm profile
- Team description
- Similar project experience
- Their understanding of the Project Approach
- Proposed timeline
- References
- Fee estimate



Setting Evaluation Criteria

Define criteria and scoring *before* issuing.

- Relevant experience
- Understanding of project
- Quality of past work
- Proposed approach
- Cost/fee structure
- Timeline feasibility



Response Evaluation

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

Criteria	Maximum Score
Relevant experience and demonstrated expertise	30
Understanding of Project	20
Quality of past work and references	20
Cost-effectiveness	20
Proposed timeline	10
Total Possible Points:	100

Tip: Share criteria transparently in the RFP.

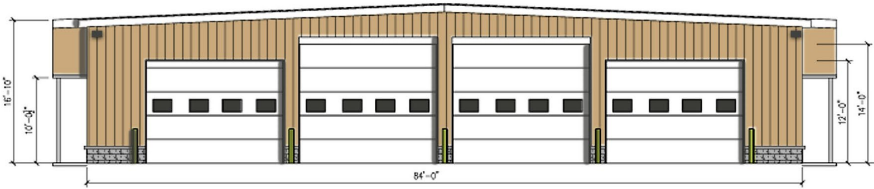


Your Action Steps

1. Prepare project details and scope.
2. Draft RFP with standard sections.
3. Set evaluation criteria.
4. Publicize the RFP to qualified firms.
5. Host a site walkthrough.
6. Collect and review proposals.
7. Interview, if needed.
8. Evaluate objectively and award based on best value.

Avoid These Mistakes

- Vague or overly broad scope
- Unclear submission instructions
- Not defining how proposals will be scored
- Omitting funding requirements
- Unclear contact information for questions
- Not including Reference Documents



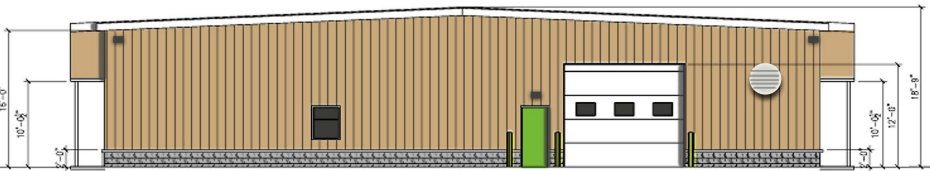
WEST ELEVATION

SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"



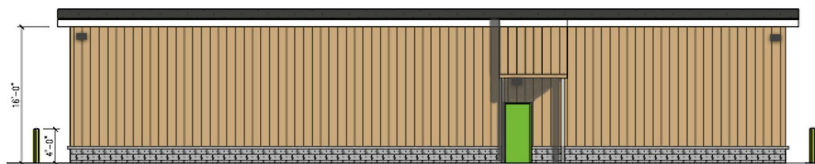
SOUTH ELEVATION

SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"



EAST ELEVATION

SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"



NORTH ELEVATION

SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"



Honor the Mountain Monument in Thompson Park
Watertown, NY

Q&A

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