



October 1, 2025

To All Interested Design-Build Firms:

Project: Design-Build Services for the Commonwealth Center for Biomedical Excellence

Subject: REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS (RFQ)

The Northern Kentucky Port Authority (NKY Port) is requesting a Statement of Qualifications (SOQ) from design-build firms (DB) for design-build services for the development of a new higher education project in Covington, Kentucky.

I. BACKGROUND

During the 2024 Regular Session of the Kentucky General Assembly, an allocation of \$125,000,000 was established in House Bill 1 for: *the Northern Kentucky Port Authority to plan, design, and construct a Commonwealth Center for Biomedical Excellence in the City of Covington in partnership with Northern Kentucky University and the University of Kentucky.*

The funding is intended to facilitate relocation of the Northern Kentucky University Salmon P. Chase College of Law (Chase Law) and the University of Kentucky College of Medicine – Northern Kentucky Campus (UK Medicine), both currently housed on the campus of Northern Kentucky University (NKU) in Highland Heights. The site will be located within the city limits of Covington.

II. GENERAL PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The NKY Port has contracted with HDR Engineering Inc. (HDR) to provide Criteria Architect & Owner Representative Services. The design criteria are currently in development. The successful DB will be required to finish the design and construct the facility as described below herein.

NKY Port is looking for a partner that has an experienced team that can deliver the vision set out for this project. This project will represent a significant development in the Covington downtown area.

III. SCOPE OF SERVICES

The selected DB team will be responsible for providing comprehensive design, engineering and construction services, including but not limited to:

- Refinement and implementation of the criteria package into detailed design documents
- Civil engineering, including site grading and drainage.

- Landscape architecture.
- Structural, mechanical, plumbing, & electrical engineering.
- Roadway and parking design.
- Infrastructure utility design to include electrical, gas, sanitary, water, and stormwater.
- Site lighting design.
- Cost estimating and value engineering.
- Coordination with regulatory agencies for permitting and approvals, to include all utility providers.
- Full construction services including construction administration and construction oversight.
- All furniture, fixtures, and equipment (FF&E), including audio/video (AV) equipment.
- The team must demonstrate the ability to collaborate with Kenton County, NKY Port, HDR, NKU, UK and stakeholders to deliver a project that meets community needs, adheres to budget constraints, and aligns with the vision and program established in the criteria documents.
- Coordinate, manage, and administer the services provided and ensure that any subconsultants' services are managed appropriately.

The DB shall include, as part of their contract, subconsultants that will be required based on the project scale, type of facility, and specialized functions. These subconsultants, along with their expertise and level of participation, shall be indicated in the firm's qualifications.

Preconstruction Services: The DB will work cooperatively with the stakeholders and Project Team, and will provide, among other services, schedule development, estimate development, design development, construction document preparation, constructability reviews, permits, budgeting, value engineering, and preconstruction planning throughout the preconstruction stages. The DB will provide program verification for their design to confirm the design aligns with the established program.

Construction Services: The DB shall construct the Project pursuant to the construction documents and in accordance with the schedule requirements. The DB shall hold all subcontracts and shall be fully responsible for the means and methods of construction, weekly progress meetings, testing and inspections, project safety, project completion within the schedule agreed upon in the preconstruction phase, compliance with all applicable laws and regulations including monitoring compliance. The NKY Port reserves the right to approve the DB's selection of subcontractors and any supplemental terms to the subcontract form.

IV. PROCURMENT PROCESS

Short List: Each firm responding to this RFQ will be evaluated and selected based on its qualifications and relevant experience and the qualifications and relevant experience of the particular proposed project team identified for the Project. After evaluating the responses to this RFQ, the NKY Port will select a short list of no fewer than three candidates that it considers to be the most qualified, except if the NKY Port determines that fewer than three firms are qualified, it will only select the qualified firms.

Request for Proposal: The short-listed firms shall be sent a Request for Proposal (RFP) that will invite the firms to a design competition. The proposal will include the firm's

proposed concepts for design in keeping with the furnished design criteria, their schedule approach, and total cost proposal for the project. The combination of the preferred design, schedule approach, and cost will be evaluated for the final selection of the firm. A stipend of \$35,000 will be provided to the unsuccessful firms for compensation of their design submissions. NKY Port will retain the work product from the unsuccessful firms.

Existing Facility Tour: Prior to submitting a response to the RFP, the short-listed firms will be invited to tour the existing facilities with the NKY Port and other stakeholders to help the firms prepare their responses to the RFP.

Interview: After submitting responses to the RFP, the short-listed firms will be interviewed by the NKY Port and other stakeholders. The purpose of the interview will be to meet the proposed DB team, become familiar with key personnel, and understand the project approach and ability to meet the stated objectives for the Project.

V. ANTICIPATED PROJECT TIMETABLE (All dates are approximate and subject to change)

<i>October 1, 2025</i>	Issue Request for Qualifications
<i>October 22, 2025, 4:00 p.m.</i>	Deadline for submittal of questions
<i>October 29, 2025, 4:00 p.m.</i>	Responses to questions issued (on or before)
<i>October 31, 2025, 4:00 p.m.</i>	SOQs DUE
<i>November 14, 2025</i>	Selection Committee complete review of submitted proposals
<i>November 17, 2025</i>	Issue short list
<i>Nov 17 thru Dec 18, 2025</i>	Tours of existing facilities
<i>December 19, 2025</i>	Criteria Package issued to DB teams
<i>January 2, 2026</i>	Issue Request for Proposal
<i>January 15, 2026</i>	Questions Due
<i>January 30, 2026</i>	Proposals Due
<i>Feb 2 thru Feb 27, 2026</i>	Review Proposals and Conduct Interviews
<i>March 16, 2026</i>	Selection Committee selects DB
<i>April 15, 2026</i>	Notice To Proceed (NTP)
<i>June 29, 2026</i>	Mobilize
<i>June 30, 2028</i>	Substantial Completion
<i>July 5, 2028</i>	Facility Open

VI. PROJECT BUDGET

Total funding for the project is \$125,000,000. The amount of funding that will be available for the design builder to perform all services including professional services, design, construction, and FF&E is approximately \$110,000,000.

VII. PROPOSAL CONTENT

Proposals shall conform to the Northern Kentucky Port Authority's Proposal Preparation, Submission and Evaluation Guidelines (see **Attachment 1**).

- A. **Cover:** Include project name, project location, firm name, address, telephone number, e-mail address, and proposal date.
- B. **Table of Contents:** Include an identification of the material by section and page number.
- C. **Letter of Transmittal:** Include the name and description of the organization submitting the proposal, briefly stating the proposer's understanding of the service to be provided.
- D. **Organization's Experience:** Include a list of up to five (5) similar projects (such as higher education, complex campus development, and highly technical vertical construction in a tight urban area) that the organization has participated in the past five (5) years. Attach a separate sheet for each project, giving a brief description of each project and the organization's participation. Highlight any proposed subconsultants who worked on these projects.
- E. **Project Organization and Staff Experience:** Include an organizational structure of the project team, including the relationship of the subconsultants to be used for this project. The name of the Principal in Charge of this project must be clearly indicated in this section of the proposal, along with the name and title of the Project Manager who will be in charge of this project. Provide a resumé for key staff members involved in the project, and include their name, title and/or duties for the project, professional registration, relevant certifications, a brief description of related experience, and qualifications.
- F. **Subconsultants:** Indicate the names and addresses of any subconsultants and/or associates proposed to be used in this project. State the capacity they would be used in as well as known services they will provide. Also state your experience in working with them and their past project experience, to the extent that it is not already highlighted in Item D above.
- G. **Project Approach:** Provide a description of typical issues encountered in similar projects and how you propose to overcome those issues. Discuss how you plan to staff the project to efficiently complete the work effort.
- H. **Scheduling:** Base the proposal on the schedule provided in this RFQ and provide any relevant statements related to your understanding of the schedule.
- I. **Quality Control:** Submit a project quality control plan or your organization's adopted plan. Quality control is to be performed by individuals not assigned to the project on an ongoing basis.

VIII. PROPOSAL EVALUATION

See the attached Northern Kentucky Port Authority Proposal Preparation, Submission and Evaluation Guidelines (Attachment 1) for the evaluation criteria. The NKY Port reserves the right to accept or reject any and all proposals, issue addenda, request clarification, waive technicalities, alter the nature and/or scope of the proposed project, request additional submittals, and/or discontinue this process.

IX. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

- A.** Project related communication initiated by a proposer to any NKY Port official or representative evaluating or considering proposals, from RFQ Issuance through award is prohibited unless at the explicit direction of the NKY Port and any such unauthorized communication may constitute grounds for rejection or elimination of a proposal from further consideration, in the sole discretion of the NKY Port.
- B.** The successful firm must be an Equal Opportunity Employer.
- C.** The proposal shall conform to all attached documents. All proposals should use this RFQ and its attachments as the sole basis for the proposal. The issuance of a written addendum (including responses to submitted questions) is the only official method through which interpretation, clarification or additional information will be given.
- D.** All costs for preparing an SOQ, proposal, attending the selection interview if required, or supplying additional information requested by NKY Port, are the sole responsibility of the submitting party, with the exception of the design competition stipend. Materials submitted will not be returned.
- E.** The proposal must be submitted via an emailed PDF document.
- F.** The form of contract will be provided to the short-listed firms in the RFP.

Submit one electronic (PDF) version of your proposal via email no later than **4:00 P.M. Eastern on October 31, 2025** to:

Christine Russell
Executive Director
Northern Kentucky Port Authority
Email: CRussell@be-nky.com

Please direct questions regarding this RFQ in writing via email to the individual named above.

Attachments:

- 1) Northern Kentucky Port Authority's Proposal Preparation, Submission and Evaluation Guidelines (5 pages)

ATTACHMENT 1

PROPOSAL PREPARATION, SUBMISSION AND EVALUATION GUIDELINES

I. Questions/Answers to Prospective Offerors

Any prospective offeror desiring an explanation or interpretation related to specific elements in this RFQ must request it in writing according to the schedule detailed therein. Requests should be directed to the individual in charge at the email address listed in the RFQ. Any information given to a prospective offeror will be furnished promptly to all other prospective offerors as an amendment to the RFQ.

II. Complete Proposals

Proposals shall represent the best efforts of the offerors and will be evaluated as such. Proposals must set forth full, accurate, and complete information as required by this section and other sections of this RFQ.

III. Unnecessarily Elaborate Proposals

Brochures or other presentations beyond those sufficient to present a complete and effective response to this solicitation are not desired and may be construed as unnecessarily elaborate and an indication of the offeror's lack of cost consciousness. Concise and clear proposals are sought.

IV. Retention of Proposals

All proposal documents shall be retained by the NKY Port and therefore will not be returned to the offerors. The NKY Port will not pay for preparation of SOQs, but will offer a stipend to the unsuccessful short-listed firm(s) for the RFP.

V. Examination of Proposals

Offerors are expected to examine all information contained in this RFQ. Failure to do so will be at the offeror's risk.

VI. Legal Status of Offeror

Each offeror must provide the following information in its proposal:

A. Name of the offeror;

B. Whether offeror is a corporation, joint venture, partnership (including type of partnership), or individual;

- C. Copy of any current license, registration, or certification to transact business in the State of Kentucky if required by law to obtain such license, registration, or certification. If the offeror is a corporation or limited partnership and does not provide a copy of its license registration, or certification to transact business in the State of Kentucky, the offeror shall certify its intent to obtain the necessary license, registration or certification prior to contract award or its exemption from such requirements;
- D. Copies of any current license, registration or certification required in RFQ;
- E. If the offeror is a partnership or joint venture, names of general partners or joint venturers.

VII. Offerors Authorized Agent

Each proposal shall set forth the name, title, telephone number, and address of the person authorized to negotiate on behalf of the offeror and contractually bind the offeror, if other than the person signing the proposal.

VIII. Certification and Representations

Offerors shall return with their SOQ and any other documents as may be requested in the RFQ.

IX. Signing of Offers

The offeror shall sign the proposal. Erasures or other changes must be initialed by the person signing the offer. Offers signed by an agent shall be accompanied by evidence of that agent's authority, unless that evidence has been previously furnished to the NKY Port.

X. Acknowledgement of Amendments

Offerors shall acknowledge receipt of any amendment to this solicitation by signing and returning the amendment or by letter or via PDF and email. The NKY Port must receive the acknowledgment by the date and time specified for receipt of offers. Offeror's failure to acknowledge an amendment may result in rejection of the offer.

XI. Late Proposals and Modifications and Withdrawals of Proposals

Any proposal received by the designated individual in the solicitation after the exact time specified for receipt will not be considered.

XII. Proposal Evaluation Weighting

Following is a list of general criteria which will be used to evaluate the proposals:

- A. Quality and responsiveness to the RFP. Weight: 15%
- B. Project approach and understanding, including strategy to perform requested work within the provided schedule. Weight: 40%
- C. Qualifications and relevant past experience. Weight: 45%

XIII. Staffing

DB shall provide, at its own expense, all personnel required in performing the services under this agreement. Such personnel shall not be employees of Owner.

The offeror must describe his or her qualifications and experience to perform the work described in this RFQ. Information about experience should include direct experience with other relevant projects and similar facilities. Areas of expertise of each proposed staff member shall be provided (e.g., engineering, economics, architecture, planning, etc.).

Offeror should provide the following information for every resumé:

- A. Full name
- B. Title and areas of specialty
- C. Affiliation (that is, staff of offeror or subconsultant)
- D. Experience directly related to the proposed project
- E. Education/training
- F. Resumés shall be included for all personnel expected to work on the project. Only resumés of staff or subconsultant staff employed by or under contract with the firm

XIV. Relevant Past Experience

Specific examples of similar or related projects previously conducted shall cite:

- A. Name of client organization
- B. Name, address, and current telephone number of client contact person
- C. Contract and inclusive dates
- D. Contract amount