

# ARCHITECTURAL SERVICES REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS (“RFQ”)

**ISSUE DATE:** June 30, 2025

**DUE DATE:** **10:00 a.m. on July 24, 2025** (the “Submission Deadline”)

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Respondents are asked to submit four (4) paper copies and one (1) electronic copy (on a flash drive) of their Statement of Qualifications (“SOQ”). Submittals received by email, fax, or after the Submission Deadline may be rejected without further review or consideration.

**SUBMIT TO:** Houston First Corporation, Attn: Paula Whitten-Doolin, 701 Avenida de las Americas, Suite 200, Houston, TX 77010. Submittals must be delivered in a sealed envelope in person, via mail or courier. Please write “**RFQ**” clearly on the outside of the sealed envelope.

**CONTACT INFO:** Any questions concerning the content or subject matter of this RFQ must be sent by email to [bids@houstonfirst.com](mailto:bids@houstonfirst.com) no later than **10:00 a.m. on July 17, 2025**. Material questions will be answered collectively, rather than individually, in the form of a Letter of Clarification and made available on the HFC website. Questions may be combined or edited for clarity or length at the discretion of HFC.

## OVERVIEW

Houston First Corporation (“HFC”) requests statements of qualification (“SOQs”) from experienced firms to provide architectural services in connection with the design of a new 25,000 square-foot restaurant and live entertainment venue in downtown Houston, Texas (the “Project”). This RFQ is the first step in a two-step process, being further detailed herein, for the selection of a firm offering the best value to HFC.

The Respondent selected will need to work expeditiously with HFC, and other consultants engaged by HFC, to ensure the orderly and timely completion of the Project. HFC has retained Griffin Partners, Inc. to perform consulting services and assist with development management in connection with the Project, save and except services constituting the practice of professional architecture or engineering services. HFC expects to engage a general contractor for the Project utilizing the construction manager-at-risk method and require substantial completion of the Project approximately 18 months from the effective date of the resulting agreement. The Project budget is under development currently and will be made available to Respondents when available.

## BACKGROUND

HFC is a local government corporation created by the City of Houston to facilitate economic growth through the promotion of the greater Houston area and the business of conventions, meetings, tourism, and the arts. The entity is responsible for the operation of the George R. Brown Convention Center, Avenida Houston, Partnership Tower, Wortham Theater Center, Jones Hall for the Performing Arts, Miller Outdoor Theatre, an array of outdoor venues/properties, and parking facilities that can accommodate nearly 10,000 vehicles. HFC also owns and operates both the Hilton-Americas Houston hotel and Partnership Tower.

The George R. Brown Convention Center is located on the east edge of downtown Houston, bounded by Rusk, Polk, US Highway 59, and Avenida de las Americas on the north, south, east and west, respectively. Adjacent to Discovery Green and the Hilton-Americas Houston hotel, the convention center is flanked by Partnership Tower and Minute Maid Park to the north and Toyota Center to the south.

HFC seeks to enhance the destination appeal of George R. Brown Convention Center and its environs by creating an engaging and vibrant Convention District. An integral part of that initiative includes forward-thinking projects to expand or otherwise create opportunities for, and infrastructure for, entertainment venues and mixed-use developments, as well as improving facilities for vehicular and pedestrian traffic.

### **SOQ FORMAT**

Respondents are directed to include and provide all of the following information in their SOQ, to the best of their ability:

- a. **Submittal Form:** Respondents are required to complete and submit the Submittal Form provided below as the first substantive page of their SOQ. The form must be signed by a person authorized to make representations on behalf of the Respondent.
- b. **Firm Profile:** Provide a brief profile of the Respondent, noting its history, structure, strengths, and abilities. Be sure to note any prior company names by which the firm has been known, the number of years the firm has been in business, and the location of the office from which the majority of work will be performed.
- c. **Essential Personnel:** Introduce the key personnel who would be assigned to provide services under any resulting agreement, explain their respective functions, and include a summary of their qualifications.
- d. **Experience:** Provide three references for ongoing or recently-completed projects and describe the extent to which the essential personnel named in the SOQ were involved. For each such reference, include a brief description of the project and a contact name, phone number, and email address. (HFC may not be used as a reference.)
- e. **Diversity Efforts:** Indicate how the Respondent intends to make good-faith efforts to utilize diverse companies to meet the Diversity Goal set forth in this RFQ.

While there is no page limit, Respondents are asked to avoid excessive graphics, title pages, or other extraneous information in their SOQ, other than as requested in this RFQ.

### **EVALUATION**

SOQs timely received in response to this RFQ that include a completed and signed Submittal Form will be reviewed and ranked based on the following weighted criteria: Firm Profile (20 points); Essential Personnel (25 points); Experience (25 points); and Diversity Efforts (10 points).

HFC reserves the right to schedule and conduct interviews with the top-ranked Respondents. If interviews are scheduled, then up to an additional 20 points may be added to the existing SOQ scores of the Respondents interviewed, for a maximum possible total of 100 points, based on their participation and responsiveness to questions during such interviews.

HFC will select the top-ranked team, on the basis of demonstrated competence and qualification as measured by the foregoing criteria, subject to negotiation of fair and reasonable compensation, which may include a not-to-exceed amount and/or prior-authorization requirement for services in excess of a mutually-agreed estimate of services hours. If HFC and such firm should fail to agree on such fair and reasonable compensation, then HFC reserves the right to and may conduct negotiations with the next most-qualified Respondent. If necessary, HFC will conduct negotiations with successive Respondents in descending order until a contract award can be made to a qualified Respondent whose price HFC believes is fair and reasonable.

#### **LETTERS OF CLARIFICATION**

Responses to all material questions timely submitted by potential Respondents, as well as revisions incorporated into this RFQ by HFC, if any, will be confirmed collectively in a letter posted online at <http://www.houstonfirst.com/do-business> ("Letter of Clarification"). When issued, Letters of Clarification become part of this RFQ and automatically supersede any previous specifications or provisions in conflict therewith. By submitting their SOQ, Respondents shall be deemed to have reviewed all Letters of Clarification on the website and incorporated them into their submittal. Verbal responses will not otherwise alter the specifications, terms and conditions as stated herein. It is the responsibility of Respondents to monitor the foregoing link and ensure they receive any such Letters of Clarification and incorporate them in their submittal.

#### **DIVERSITY PARTICIPATION**

The Respondent selected will be required to use good-faith efforts to award subcontracts to diversity participants certified by any of the identified certification agencies as defined in the [HFC Diversity Program](#). HFC has established the following goal for these services: **30%** of the total value of the Agreement. Respondents should note if they are certified as a diversity participant in their submittal; however, such certification shall not lessen or otherwise alter the requirement to use good faith efforts to award subcontracts to diversity participants.

#### **RESTRICTIONS ON COMMUNICATIONS**

Throughout the selection process, commencing with the Issue Date, Respondents are directed not to communicate with any HFC employee, officer or director regarding their SOQ or any matter relating to this RFQ, other than through [bids@houstonfirst.com](mailto:bids@houstonfirst.com), or in response to a direct inquiry from the HFC Office of General Counsel. Respondents who disregard this Restrictions on Communications provision do so at their peril, as HFC shall have the right to reject any SOQ or proposals received due to violation of this provision.

#### **CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

Respondents are advised that they have an affirmative obligation to disclose any affiliation or business relationship with an HFC employee, officer, or director creating a conflict of interest (or appearing to a reasonable person to potentially exist). Those who need the disclosure form may find it online at <https://www.ethics.state.tx.us/data/forms/conflict/CIQ.pdf>. By submitting their SOQ, Respondent represents to HFC that they have complied with the requirements of Chapter 176 of the Texas Local Government Code.

#### **PROTEST PROCEDURES**

Any protest relating to the form, terms and conditions, selection criteria, specifications, exhibits, or any other material RFQ content must be filed by the actual or potential Respondent with HFC General Counsel no later than five business days prior to the Submission Deadline. If the protest consists of a dispute regarding the Respondent recommended by the evaluation committee, or otherwise relates to the alleged misapplication of selection criteria, then HFC General Counsel

must receive the protest from an actual Respondent after the Submission Deadline, but at least three business days prior to consideration of a contract resulting from this RFQ by HFC.

All protests must be made in writing and delivered to Houston First Corporation, Attn: General Counsel, 701 Avenida de las Americas, Ste. 200, Houston, TX 77010. To be considered by HFC, protests must be timely received and include, at a minimum, all of the following information: (a) The name, address and contact information of the Respondent, with sufficient information to establish that a bona fide Respondent is the person or entity filing the protest; (b) The full title of the RFQ; (c) Material grounds for the protest, including the provisions of the RFQ and the applicable law or regulation that serves as the basis for the protest; (d) A statement of the specific relief requested by the Respondent; (e) Reference to and attachment of any pertinent documents or sources relied upon by the Respondent that the protesting party wishes to have HFC consider; and (f) An affidavit attached to support any factual allegations stated in the submission.

#### **WITHDRAWAL; ERROR**

Submittals may be withdrawn due to errors or for any other reason by a written request received by [bids@houstonfirst.com](mailto:bids@houstonfirst.com) prior to the Submission Deadline.

#### **PUBLIC INFORMATION**

HFC is subject to the Texas Public Information Act ("TPIA"). Information submitted by Respondents is subject to release under the provisions of the TPIA set forth in Chapter 552 of the Texas Government Code. Each page where confidential or proprietary information appears must be labeled as such clearly and unambiguously. Respondents will be advised of any request for public information that implicates their materials and will have the opportunity to raise objections to disclosure with the Texas Attorney General at their expense.

#### **RFQ PACKETS**

A complete copy of this RFQ, including exhibits, necessary forms and other relevant information is available on-line at [www.houstonfirst.com/do-business](http://www.houstonfirst.com/do-business). This RFQ provides the information necessary to prepare and submit a SOQ for consideration and ranking by HFC.

#### **NO OBLIGATION**

This RFQ does not commit HFC to award a contract or issue a purchase order, and submission of a SOQ shall not be construed as a contract nor indicate a commitment of any kind on the part of HFC. Respondents shall receive no compensation or reimbursement for any expense incurred in preparing a submittal in connection with this request. HFC reserves the right to waive any irregularities in any of the responses, select one or more service providers, reject all responses, or cancel or make alterations to the entire process. HFC further reserves the right to request clarifications and/or additional information from some or all Respondents.

**ARCHITECTURAL SERVICES**  
**SUBMITTAL FORM**

Respondents to the foregoing Architectural Services Request for Qualifications ("RFQ") are required to complete each field of this Submittal Form and are asked to include it as the first substantive page of their SOQ.

**1. Contact Information**

a. Company Name (the "Respondent"): \_\_\_\_\_

b. Address: \_\_\_\_\_

c. Contact Name/Title: \_\_\_\_\_

d. Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

e. Email: \_\_\_\_\_

f. Is the Respondent a certified diversity entity under the [HFC Diversity Program](#)? \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Terms and Conditions**

By completing this form and submitting a SOQ, the Respondent represents all of the following:

a. Respondent has the necessary experience, knowledge, abilities, skills, and resources to perform the services required to undertake and complete the services.

b. Respondent accepts the evaluation process set forth in the RFQ and acknowledges that some subjective judgments must necessarily be made during the effectuation of such process.

c. Respondent has not, within the past five years, been party to a service contract terminated for cause, or received material, adverse findings from any governmental authority having regulatory oversight of services similar to those required under this RFQ.

**3. Acknowledgment**

By signing below, Respondent represents and warrants that all of the foregoing is true, correct and may be relied upon by Houston First Corporation without exception:

\_\_\_\_\_  
By: \_\_\_\_\_ ("Respondent")

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_