

MATERIALS TESTING AND INSPECTION SERVICES REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS (“RFQ”)

ISSUE DATE: March 20, 2025

DUE DATE: **1:00 p.m. CT on April 2, 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: Mitch Miskowski, 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 no later than **9:00 a.m. CT on March 26, 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 construction materials testing and inspection services, including, by way of example and not limitation, soil compaction, concrete and asphalt paving, and steel pipe, in connection with the following projects: (a) as necessary for the development and construction of the George R. Brown Expansion (“the South Building Project”), enabling works, such as, but not limited to, the construction of, or realignment and reconfiguration, as applicable of, parking facilities/lots, elevated ramps, utilities (water, gas, storm water, sanitary sewer, electric, telecommunication), coordination with TxDOT in connection with the NHHIP, and utility facilities, conduits, lines, and related equipment (“Utility Enabling Works Project”). Construction on the Utility Enabling Works Project is to commence on or about April 2025 and be complete within one year.

HFC has selected Hines Southwest, LLC, a Delaware limited liability company (“Development Manager”) to act as owner’s representative. The Development Manager, under the direction of HFC, is responsible for coordinating, and providing advice and recommendations to HFC with respect to, all aspects of the Projects, including design, pre-construction and construction of the Projects.

HFC has selected Populous, Inc. (the “Architect”) to develop and generate design and construction documents pertaining to the Projects including, phased architectural and engineering services (structural, mechanical, electrical, plumbing, and civil), as well as specialty sub-consultants as needed.

HFC has selected Jacobs (the “Engineer”) to develop and generate design and construction documents pertaining to the Utility Enabling Works Project.

HFC has selected Gilbane Building Company and Flintco, LLC, a joint venture (“CMAR”), to provide construction services using the construction manager-at-risk method

This RFQ is the first step in a two-step process, being further detailed herein, for the selection of a construction materials testing and inspection firm offering the best value to HFC. The Respondent selected will need to work expeditiously and cooperatively with HFC, the Development Manager, the Architect, the Engineer, the CMAR, and any other consultants engaged by HFC to ensure the orderly and timely completion of the Projects.

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 GRB, 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 GRB 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 Daikan Park to the north and Toyota Center to the south.

HFC seeks to enhance the destination appeal of GRB 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 direct 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. Identify Respondent’s testing facility certifications, equipment, and testing capabilities.
- 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 construction materials testing services performed by Respondent 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.

FORM OF AGREEMENT

The Agreement for Consulting Services between Owner and Testing Agency is available online at <http://www.houstonfirst.com/do-business>. If the Respondent takes exception to any portion of the Services Agreement Form, then such Respondent must submit a list of such exceptions as part of its response to this RFQ and an explanation of the changes that Respondent requests to the excepted provisions of the Services Agreement Form; provided, however, that HFC reserves the right to reject responses including substantive objections without further review or consideration.

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, Development Manager, Engineer, Architect, or CMAR employee, officer or director regarding their SOQ or any matter relating to this RFQ, other than through 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

Respondent 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 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. 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.

MATERIAL TESTING AND INSPECTION SERVICES
SUBMITTAL FORM

Respondents to the foregoing Materials Testing and Inspection 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 materials testing and inspection 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 reviewed the Agreement for Consulting Services between Owner and Testing Agency and agrees, if selected, to enter into such agreement with Houston First Corporation.

d. 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:

_____ ("Respondent")

By:

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Name: _____

Title: _____