

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS



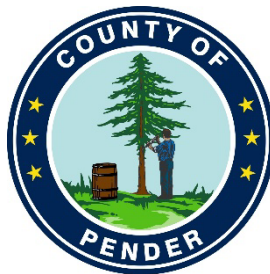
IT Assessment

RFP # 23-251

Issued: June 26, 2023

Deadline for Questions: July 5, 2023 @ 2pm

Proposals Due: July 20, 2023 @ 2pm



Trisha Newton, Purchasing Manager

PO Box 1578 • 805 S. Walker Street • Burgaw, NC 28425

910.259.1281 • Purchasing@pendercountync.gov

June 23, 2023

**RE: Request for Proposals (23-251)
IT Assessment Services**

To Whom It May Concern:

The County of Pender is requesting proposals from qualified consultants to provide a comprehensive Information Technology Assessment in order to develop a long-term technological road map and ensure appropriate staffing and resource allocation for the current and future needs of the county. The assessment shall consist of reviewing current IT infrastructure and staffing and evaluating the current use of technology (including applications, hardware, software, networks, and security) to identify any gaps in services and provide recommendations and action steps to move toward improvements and efficiencies.

Pender County is located within the southeastern coastal region of North Carolina and includes Atkinson, Burgaw, St. Helena, Surf City, Topsail Beach and Watha in addition to the unincorporated communities of Hampstead and Rocky Point. Pender County has a vast flat and gently rolling terrain that covers total area 933 square miles, of which 870 square miles is land and 63 square miles is water. Just north of Wilmington, the population of Pender County is roughly 60,000 people.

Attached you will find a "Request for Proposals" (RFP) which identifies the services to be undertaken.

In order to be considered, all proposals must be submitted in writing no later than **2:00 PM (EST) on July 20, 2023**. Consultants mailing proposal packages should allow delivery time to ensure timely receipt of their proposal. The responsibility for getting the proposal to the Pender County Finance Department on or before the specified time and date is solely and strictly the responsibility of the proposing contractor. The County will in no way be responsible for delays caused by any occurrence. Proposals may be hand carried or mailed to:

Pender County Finance

Attention: Trisha Newton, Purchasing Agent
PO Box 1578 or 805 S. Walker Street, Burgaw, NC 28425
Hours of Operation: 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. (EST) Monday through Friday
Phone: (910) 259-1281
Email: tnewton@pendercountync.gov

Please note it is the responsibility of the proposer to ensure that all addenda have been received prior to submitting a proposal. Visit www.PenderCountyNC.gov for up to date information. Click on "I Want To...", scroll down to "Open RFP's and Bids".

The County of Pender reserves the right to waive any informalities and to reject any and all proposals.

Thank you,

Trisha Newton, Pender County Purchasing Agent

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GENERAL INFORMATION

Pender County Government is seeking proposals for an information technology assessment in order to ensure appropriate staffing and resource allocation for the current and future needs of the county and develop a long-term technological road map. In recent years, the organization has grown in complexity and the requests for services by management, staff, and citizens have increased.

The assessment shall consist of reviewing current IT infrastructure and staffing and evaluating the current use of technology (including applications, hardware, software, networks, security, licensing, professional services, and other equipment) to identify any gaps in services and provide recommendations and action steps to move toward improvements and efficiencies.

The assessment must critically contrast and compare the effectiveness of the existing technology infrastructure with current industry standards or optimal emerging technology. Pender County wants to use the findings of the IT Assessment to create a strategic plan and implement improvements in the use of technology with innovative techniques and to ensure that staffing levels are efficient and other resources are allocated effectively.

The consultant will review (1) the current structure and organization of the Information Technology Services (ITS) Department, including staffing patterns and departmental needs, (2) funding levels that support IT functions and operations to determine if resources are being allocated in the most efficient manner, (3) existing equipment, systems, programs, and services and (4) will identify any enhancements to IT service delivery that will meet Pender County’s needs in a more cost-efficient and effective manner.

SCHEDULE

Advertisement of RFP	June 26, 2023
Deadline for Questions	July 5, 2023 by 2:00pm
Deadline for receipt of Proposals	July 20, 2023 by 2:00pm
Recommendation to BOCC for Award	August 21, 2023
Desired Completion	November 15, 2023
Presentation to BOCC	December 4, 2023

The county reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to adjust this schedule as it deems necessary.

OVERVIEW

The ITS Department is responsible for providing voice (VOIP, analog, cellular) and data for all 550 Pender County employees. Network resources are provided to more than 900 computers and servers as well as extended to staff working remotely in the field.

The ITS Department is responsible for the management, planning, maintenance, upgrades, reporting, and ongoing support for all systems, services, and applications as well as data center operations and disaster recovery planning. The ITS Department is also responsible for the planning, maintenance, upgrades, and support of the County's Enterprise GIS services and environment, websites, mobile applications, and 911 addressing and road naming.

The 2023 staffing level for the IT Department is 13 full-time positions. (Current org chart is attached.)

The 23-24 IT operating budget is \$2,313,623.

SCOPE OF WORK

The scope will include three (3) phases.

1. Discovery Services

Perform discovery to determine how Pender County is utilizing technology and resources in its present implementation. Conduct a strength, weaknesses, opportunities, threats (SWOT) analysis in the following areas:

- a. Review department structure and staffing patterns to assess appropriate departmental structure and staffing levels in relation to current capacities. This includes reviewing any existing job descriptions and salary ranges, as well as hosted services opportunities and training needs.
- b. Review IT budget and funding levels for the past three (3) years to determine if resources are being allocated and utilized in the most efficient manner to meet Pender County's needs. Specific focus on sustainable funding for on-going system maintenance and expansion is required.

- c. Review of equipment, systems, and programs to compare existing technology infrastructure with current industry standards and assess service approach as compared with best practices in the following areas to include, but not be limited to:
- 1) Network architecture and management
 - a) LAN/WAN network recommendations
 - b) Back-ups
 - c) Application virtualization
 - d) Future network acquisition recommendations
 - 2) Application portfolio management
 - a) ID methods or processes for managing/tracking County software inventory
 - b) Software acquisition recommendations regarding self-hosted or alternatives
 - c) Open-source options & licensing options
 - d) County websites, enterprise applications, and mobile applications
 - 3) Cloud-hosted phone system
 - 4) Cybersecurity & Risk Management
 - a) Policies for employee technology use and user lifecycle procedures
 - b) Training for both ITS staff and users
 - c) County Incident Response Plan
 - 5) Disaster recovery/ Business Continuity
 - a) Data center environment control parameters
 - b) Recovery planning recommendations
 - 6) Documentation of policies, procedures, and solutions
 - 7) Education and training
 - a) Employee and ITS staff
 - 8) Internet & firewall redundancies
 - a) High availability
 - 9) Business Process / Application Evaluation:
 - a) Individual departmental IT needs for each department and assess whether those needs are being met
 - b) Identify areas for improvement in these areas based on departmental & user feedback
 - 10) Information Technology Service Management (ITSM) System
 - a) Evaluate current system procedures and processes
 - b) ID methods or processes for managing and tracking IT assets
 - c) Technology Project Management capabilities to include tracking, reporting, and prioritization
 - 11) Geographic Information Systems (GIS)
 - a) Utilization, services, data, and staffing needs
 - b) Organizational location of GIS and tax mappers
 - 12) State or federal mandated policies, procedures, reporting, compliance, and other requirements

2. **Critical Analysis**

Review and provide analysis of Pender County's approach to services, compare current approach to relevant IT-centric best practices, for areas including, but not limited to, the items listed in Section 1. Review and provide analysis of Pender County's ability to provide such services based on current staffing levels, training, and collective skill pool.

3. **Recommendations and Action Steps**

The ITS Assessment should provide a written report on the current state of Pender County's ITS Department. The assessment should provide an analysis of how IT resources are deployed and how it rates when compared to industry standards and best practices. The report should identify gaps and provide recommendations and logical action steps achievable based on existing resources and future initiatives. The assessment should identify any enhancements to service delivery that may meet Pender County's needs in a more cost-efficient and effective manner. The assessment should also identify both the pros and cons, as well as estimated costs, of any delivery options. This report will be provided in written form as well as an in-person presentation to the Board of County Commissioners.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Contract: This RFP will result in a contract for services provided to Pender County. The awarded Proposer shall provide the County with a sample contract which can be revised by the County's legal department as needed. The contract shall provide a termination clause in which the County reserves the right to terminate the contract immediately with cause or with ninety days prior written notice without cause.

Insurance: Provide a copy of a certificate of insurance identifying current levels of professional liability insurance. Upon award, Pender County must be added as an additional named insured.

PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

Proposals shall include the following:

1. **Introduction:** Description of the professional qualifications of the firm and staff proposed for the assessment services. Clearly indicate each staff members' role in the project. Include information about the firm's professional experience in North Carolina.
2. **Work Plan:** A detailed description of the services to be provided and schedule of estimated timeframes for implementation/provision of those services.
3. **References:** A brief description of at least 3-5 projects that are similar in scope and size. For each project listed, include the name of the entity and the name and contact information for personnel who would be familiar with the work performed. Preference is to list similar North Carolina projects first.
4. **Fee Schedule:** Breakdown of potential fixed and/or variable costs to be incurred for these services, with a total price for completion of this contract.

Proposals should be submitted bound, using standard paper, and sections should be appropriately labeled for easy reference. Proposers must provide one original bound and one electronic submission. The hard copy submission must be received at the address below prior to the deadline for consideration. The electronic

Proposal may be provided on a USB drive or emailed to purchasing@pendercountync.gov. Proposals received after the deadline will not be considered.

Additional information for the County to review and consider is permitted, so long as the entire Proposal does not exceed 50 pages. **Should there be any way you cannot fully comply, you must detail any exceptions in writing in the Proposal. Firms may submit multiple proposals.**

Proposals are due on or before 2:00 pm on July 20, 2023. The submittal package should be clearly marked “RFP # 23-251 IT Assessment” and identify the company submitting the proposal. Proposals shall be addressed to the attention of Trisha Newton, Purchasing Manager at the one of the following addresses:

By Mail:
 Pender County Purchasing
 Attn: Trisha Newton
 PO Box 1578
 Burgaw, NC 28425

Mark Envelope:
 RFP # 23-251
 IT Assessment

In Person / By Courier:
 Pender County Purchasing
 Attn: Trisha Newton
 805 S. Walker St.
 Burgaw, NC 28425

Mark Envelope:
 RFP # 23-251
 IT Assessment

By email:

 Purchasing
 @pendercountync.gov

Subject Line:
 RFP # 23-251
 IT Assessment

All responses submitted become the property of the Pender County Government. Submitting a proposal in response to this RFP does not commit Pender County to award a contract or pay any costs incurred in the preparation, or travel to Pender County. The County will not consider late proposals or be liable for misdirected mail/packages. Additionally, the County reserves the right to cancel this Request for Proposal in part or in its entirety, waive minor defects or reject any/all Proposals. **Pender County encourages all qualified businesses, including DBE, Minority, and Women owned businesses to respond to this RFP.**

EVALUATION AND SELECTION

The selection process will be based on the responses to this RFP. A committee comprised of members of County Staff and/or other stakeholders in this project will provide a recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners for award of this contract. Recommendations will be made based on the following criteria and weighted percentages:

Completeness of Proposal – Demonstrated competence related to scope	15 %
Experience with Similar Contracts – On time and within budget	15 %
Cost and/or Price Structure – Ability to adhere to and control budget parameters	45 %
References – Prior experience and performance with Pender County or similar	25 %

References may be contacted along with other evaluations Pender County feels necessary to accurately determine the criteria listed above in the selection criteria. Scoring and ranking of the submissions will be based on the criteria above. Pender County reserves the right to interview firms who are being considered. In addition, Pender County reserves the right to reject all submissions.

The County reserves the right to reject any or all Proposals, to waive any non-material irregularities or informalities in any Proposal, to request additional clarification of Proposals, to be the sole judge of suitability of the services for its intended use and further, specifically reserves the right to make the award in the best interest of the County.

RFP PROVISIONS

The Request for Proposals' Provisions, Scope of Services and Terms and Conditions are integral parts of this RFP. The Proposer, by submitting a Proposal, agrees to comply with all provisions and conditions of this document.

1. Services performed shall be in full compliance with any and all applicable state, federal, local, environmental and safety laws, regulations, ordinances and standards or any standards adopted by nationally recognized testing facilities regardless of whether or not they are referred to in this RFP.
2. The County reserves the right to amend, at any time, any part of this RFP upon written notification to Proposers; and to change any of the scheduled dates, including the Proposal due date. All changes will become part of this RFP and will be incorporated into the agreement entered into between the County and the Proposer.
3. Proposals should be prepared providing a straightforward description of the vendor's ability to meet the requirements of this RFP. Responses should be concise and understandable by a "non-technical" audience.
4. The County is not liable for any costs or expenses incurred by the Proposers in the preparation of their Proposals or submissions related to this RFP.
5. By submitting a Proposal, the Proposer represents that it has thoroughly examined and become familiar with the work required under this RFP and is capable of providing and performing quality work to achieve the County objectives.
6. The Proposer accepts full responsibility for assuring the prompt and timely submission of the Proposal. The County will make no allowances for late delivery of mail. The Proposal may be hand-delivered or by courier to the physical location specified in the "**SCHEDULE**" section. If a Proposer requires to take exception to any part of the specifications of this RFP, please include a letter stating any exceptions along with a thorough explanation. All exceptions will be taken into consideration when evaluating and scoring Proposals.
7. The County reserves the right to reject any or all Proposals received or to negotiate separately with competing Proposers to this RFP and to award a contract based on services other than those set forth in this RFP. After reviewing the Proposals, the County may elect to withdraw the RFP,

make changes, waive technicalities, and issue a modified RFP in any part thereof deemed to be in the best interest of the County.

8. No assignment of the resulting contract may take place without the express written permission from the County. This includes assignment or sale of the Proposer to another institution.
9. The Proposer will assume responsibility for all services offered, whether provided by the Proposer or a subcontractor. The Proposer will identify any subcontractors in its Proposal by providing a list as an attachment to the RFP. The County will consider the Proposer to be the sole point of contact for contractual matters including payment of any and all charges resulting from the cost of any contract. The County reserves the right to approve or reject any subcontractor prior to use. All references to Proposer requirements throughout this RFP include subcontractors. If at any time the County determines that any subcontractor is incompetent or undesirable, the County shall notify the successful firm accordingly, and the successful firm shall take immediate steps for cancellation of the subcontract and replacement. Nothing contained in any contract resulting from this RFP shall create any contractual relationship between any subcontractor and the County of Pender.
10. All procurement documents and contracts will be subject to audit. The Proposer will give full and free access to all records and materials necessary to perform audit fieldwork, including data stored on computer systems, for the County and its authorized representatives. This provision applies to any subcontractor as well.
11. Any material submitted in response to this RFP will become a “public record” once the Proposer’s document(s) is(are) opened and the Proposer is determined to be a participant in the solicitation process and shall be subject to public disclosure consistent with Chapter 132, North Carolina General Statutes. Proposals submitted under this section shall not be subject to public inspection until a contract is awarded N.C.G.S 143-129.8(d).
12. Trade secrets or proprietary information submitted by a firm in connection with a procurement transaction shall not be subject to the public disclosure under the North Carolina Public Records Act pursuant to NC General Statutes §66-152(3). However, the firm must invoke the protection of this section prior to or upon submission of the data or other materials and must identify the data on other materials to be protected and state the reasons why protection is necessary. **Each individual page considered a trade secret or proprietary information must be labeled “Confidential” in the top right corner.** This right of privacy will be construed as narrowly as possible to protect the interests of the individual responding to the RFP while attempting to maximize the availability of information to the public.
13. All submissions should be valid for acceptance for at least 90 days from the date of submission. The “Board of Commissioners Meeting” Date listed in the “SCHEDULE” above is the anticipated award date.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

In addition to the RFP Provisions above, the County requires adherence to the general purchase order Terms & Conditions that can be found at:

<http://www.pendercountync.gov/vendortermsandconditons/> . All M/WBE and HUB are encouraged to respond.

Other Terms & Conditions as they apply are:

1. **Indemnification:** Proposer agrees to defend, indemnify, and hold harmless the County for all loss, liability, claims, or expense (including reasonable attorney's fees) arising from bodily injury, including death or property damage, to any person or persons caused in whole or in part by the negligence or misconduct of the Proposer, except to the extent same are caused by the negligence or willful misconduct of the County. It is the intent of this section to require Proposer to indemnify Pender County to the extent permitted under North Carolina law.
2. **E-Verify:** By responding to this RFP, Proposer agrees to comply with the requirements of Article 2 of Chapter 64 of the General Statutes, as applicable.
3. **Availability of Funds:** Any resulting contract shall be deemed in force only to the extent of appropriations available to each department for the purchase of such goods and/or services. The County's extended obligations on contracts that include funding through successive fiscal periods shall be contingent upon actual appropriations for the successive periods (additional years).
4. **Conflict of Interest:** All parties (including subconsultants) must maintain compliance with conflicts of interest guidelines that meet or exceed those required under 2 C.F.R. § 200.318(c)(1) for all projects funded in part or whole with federal or State financial assistance (direct or reimbursed). In addition to the prohibition against self-benefiting from a public contract under N.C. G.S. 14-234, no officer, employee, elected official, governing body member, or agent of Pender County may participate directly or indirectly in the selection, award, or administration of a contract supported by a federal or State award if he or she has a real or perceived conflict of interest. A real or perceived conflict exists when any of the following parties has a financial or other interest in or receives a tangible personal benefit from award of a contract: the officer, employee, elected official, governing body member, or agent involved in the selection, award, or administration of a contract; as well as any member of his or her immediate family; his or her partner; or an organization which employs or is about to employ any of these parties. Any such conflict shall be disclosed in writing and included with the Proposal. Contractors that are related to County personnel having any influence over the decisions to consider or award a contract are strictly prohibited from bidding/responding or accepting award of County contracts. Accepting gifts and favors from vendors and contractors is prohibited under N.C. G.S. 133-32, additionally officers, employees, elected officials, governing body members, and agents of Pender County are prohibited from accepting or soliciting gifts, gratuities, favors, or anything of monetary value from contractors, suppliers, or parties to subcontracts. Violating this policy will result in disciplinary action for the employee and termination of the contract and violating firms/persons may not be eligible for future contract awards.

-END-