

**BOROUGH OF STRATFORD
RFQ
FOR THE POSITION OF BOND COUNSEL**

I. PURPOSE AND INTENT

Through this Request for Qualifications (RFQ), the Borough of Stratford (hereinafter the "Borough") seeks to engage a vendor as for the 2026 year. This contract will be awarded through a fair and open process pursuant to N.J.S.A. 19:44A-20.4 et seq.

II. QUALIFICATION SUBMISSION

An original, clearly marked as the "ORIGINAL" and one copy provided on a USB in its full, complete and exact copies of each Qualification shall be in sealed envelopes for each position sought. Each sealed envelope must be marked with the name of position and addressed as follows:

Michelle Hack, Borough Clerk
Borough of Stratford
307 Union Avenue
Stratford, New Jersey 08084
"2026 BOND COUNSEL"

The Qualification must be received no later than **April 7, 2026 at 10:00 a.m.** and will be opened on at 11:00 a.m. in the Conference Room of the Borough Hall, 307 Union Avenue, Stratford, NJ 08084. **Faxed or Email Qualifications will NOT be accepted.**

All documents/information submitted in response to this solicitation shall be available to the general public as required by the New Jersey Open Public Records Act N.J.S.A. 47:1A-1 et seq. The Borough of Stratford will not be responsible for any costs associated with the oral or written and/or presentation of the Qualifications. The Borough of Stratford reserves the right to reject any and all Qualifications, with or without cause, and waive any irregularities or informalities in the Qualifications. The Borough of Stratford further reserves the right to make such informalities in the Qualifications. The Borough of Stratford further reserves the right to make such investigations as it deems necessary as to the qualifications of any and all vendors submitting Qualifications. In the event that all Qualifications are rejected, the Borough of Stratford reserves the right to re-solicit Qualifications.

Additional Requirements: In addition to the foregoing all respondents shall fully comply with the requirements of the New Jersey Local Public Contracts Law (N.J.S.A. 40A:11-1 et seq.). The proposal shall include, but not limited to:

- (a) a statement of ownership [stockholder disclosure certificate].
- (b) a list of any sub-contractors or contracted employees who will be providing services.
- (c) a statement of compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- (d) a mandatory equal employment opportunity notices and statement.
- (e) a Certificate of Liability Insurance in an amount not less than \$1,000,000.00 single limit.
- (f) copies of applicable producer insurance licenses for all persons providing services.
- (g) a copy of the entity's N. J. Business Registration Certificate.
- (h) A completed Russia-Belarus Activities and Investment form
- (i) sample contract for the local agency to review prior to award.
- (j) Political Disclosure Form

III. GENERAL INFORMATION ON THE BOROUGH OF STRATFORD

The Borough of Stratford operates under the Borough form of Government. The Borough of Stratford is approximately 1.6 square miles, has a population of 7,000, an annual operating budget of approximately \$6 million, approximately 27 full time employees. The Borough generally meets the second Tuesday of the month, and the Thursday preceding the second Tuesday as well as special meetings on an as needed basis.

IV. MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

Minimum Qualifications differ for each professional specialty; However, all applicants need to provide the following items contained in Section V.

V. MANDATORY CONTENTS OF QUALIFICATION

Definitions: While an applicant does not have to match each item exactly, the following is what is generally meant when used in this RFQ.

Scope: magnitude of the project, and value of the contract.

Size: when used in this context refers to such things as: budget, miles of roads, number of employees, acres of recreation area, size of municipal bonds, population, number of homes.

In addition to demonstrating an ability to meet all minimum qualifications, the firm must also include and address the following:

1. Contact Information: Provide the name and address of the firm; the name, telephone number, fax number, and e-mail address of the individual responsible for the preparation of the Qualification.
2. A fee schedule for the 2026 calendar year. A Qualification showing minimum and maximum ranges is not acceptable.
3. An executive summary of not more than two pages, identifying and substantiating why the vendor is qualified to provide the requested services.
4. A staffing plan listing those persons who will be assigned to the engagement if the vendor is selected, including the designation of the person who would be the vendor's officer responsible for all services required under the engagement. This portion of the Qualification should include the relevant resume information for the individuals who will be assigned. This information should include, at a minimum, a description of the person's relevant professional experience, years and type of experience, and number of years with the vendor.
5. A description of the vendor's experience in performing services of the type described in this RFQ. Specifically identify client size and specific examples of work within the scope of services required under this RFQ in similarly sized municipalities. It is imperative to show experience in similarly sized towns.
6. The location of the office, if other than the vendor's main office, at which the vendor proposes to perform services required under this RFQ. Describe your presence in New Jersey and any familiarity your firm has with the Camden County area.

7. Five references for which similar services have been provided for. Experience with similarly sized municipalities is ideal. Provide the contact names, titles and phone numbers.
8. If the vendor or any principal therein has been subject to any professional disciplinary action over the last three years, the bidder must provide a description of the litigation and/or disciplinary action.
9. In its Qualification, the vendor must identify any existing or potential conflicts of interest, and disclose any representation of parties or other relationships that might be considered a conflict of interest with regard to this engagement, or the Borough.

VI. INTERVIEW

The Borough Council reserves the right to interview any or all of the applicants submitting a Qualification. Although interviews may take place, the Qualification should be comprehensive and complete on its face. The Borough reserves the right to request clarifying information subsequent to submission of the Qualification.

VII. SELECTION PROCESS

All Qualifications will be reviewed by the Borough Clerk to determine responsiveness. Non-responsive Qualifications will be rejected without evaluation. For vendors that satisfy:

- IV "Minimum Requirements"; and
- V "Mandatory Contents of Qualification"

The Borough will evaluate Qualifications based on the following evaluation criteria, separate or combined in some manner, and not necessarily listed in order of significance:

- A. The vendor's general approach to providing the services required under this RFQ.
- B. The vendor's documented experience in successfully completing contracts of a similar size and scope to the engagement addressed by this RFQ.
- C. The qualifications and experience of the vendor's management, supervisory or other key personnel assigned to the engagement, with the emphasis on documented experience in successfully completing work on contracts of similar size and scope to the services required by the RFQ
- D. The overall ability of the vendor to mobilize, undertake and successfully complete the scope of work in a timely fashion. These criteria will include, but not be limited to, the following factors: the number and qualifications of management, supervisory and other staff proposed by the vendor to perform the services required by this RFQ; the availability and commitment to the engagement of the vendor's management, supervisory and other staff proposed.
- E. Costs and fee schedules.

VIII. SELECTION AND CONTRACT

The Borough will select the vendor deemed most advantageous to the Borough, price and other factors considered. The resulting contract will include this RFQ, any clarifications or addenda thereto, the selected vendor's Qualification, and any changes negotiated by the parties.

Qualifications will be evaluated by the Council of the Borough of Stratford on the basis of the most advantageous, price and other factors considered. The evaluation will consider:

- A. Experience and reputation in the field;
- B. Knowledge of the Borough of Stratford and the subject matter to be addressed under the contract;
- C. Availability to accommodate any required meetings of the agency;
- D. Compensation Qualification;
- E. Other factors if demonstrated to be in the best interest of the Borough of Stratford

Bond Counsel

Applicants must be licensed to practice law in the State of New Jersey and be a member of the Bar in good standing. Include a list of any other professional qualifications; experience and/or credentials you feel are relevant to this RFQ. If Proposer is a firm, it shall designate one professional within the firm to represent the Borough and provide the qualifications of that individual in addition to the firm's credentials.

Bond Counsel must have at least ten (10) years prior experience in tax law, securities law and state law and at least ten (10) years prior experience representing municipalities in connection with the approval of bond ordinances and the issuance of municipal bonds and/or notes. Counsel must maintain a bona fide office in the State of New Jersey.

Duties and Requirements.

The Bond Counsel shall:

- A. Provide legal services on general public finance matters, i.e. preparation of Bond Ordinances, etc.
- B. Provide legal services in connection with the issuance of short-term Obligations.
- C. Provide legal services in connection with the issuance of long-term Obligations.

Counsel will undertake the following tasks, as applicable and appropriate.

1. Meet with Borough officials, including its counsel, auditor, advisor and others as often as necessary for the issuance of the Bonds or Notes and items related thereto.
2. Review or draft all authorizing and operative financial documents necessary to effectuate the transaction. In developing a financing plan, Bond Counsel will give advice with respect to tax law, securities law and state law consequences and will review the proposed use of the proceeds of the Bonds or Notes to ensure compliance with the provisions of the Internal Revenue Code and regulations promulgated thereunder.
3. Attend meetings with rating agencies and/or insurance companies, as necessary, to assist in obtaining a credit rating for the Bonds or Notes.
4. Prepare all applications and filings and appear before the appropriate state agencies, if necessary, in connection with the sale of the Bonds or Notes.