



Frequently Asked Questions for the Vendor Pool

What is the purpose of this Request for Qualifications (RFQ)?

The purpose of this RFQ is to establish a vendor pool of qualified service providers who can offer their expertise and services to business district organizations who are awarded grants through this federally funded program.

What is the Vendor Pool for this grant?

The vendor pool for the Business District Capacity Grant will be a pre-qualified list of vendors who have been vetted and approved to provide services to business district organizations. These vendors will be selected based on qualifications, experience, and pricing.

Who can participate in this RFQ?

Any vendor or service provider who meets the specified qualifications in the RFQ outline is eligible to participate.

What are the selection criteria?

Vendors will be included in the pre-qualified pool based on their service offerings, track record of past work, business statement, and experience in the Corridors of Opportunity in Charlotte.

Does selection in the pool guarantee an award?

No, inclusion in the pool does not entitle the selected vendor to any work or payment from the Grantees or the City. The program will, however, use this pre-screened pool to make recommendations for the nonprofit organizations that are selected for this grant opportunity.

What are the advantages of being selected in the Vendor pool?

Inclusion in the pool increases your visibility and chances of securing work during the term of this grant (December 2024-December 2026). It may also lead to future business opportunities after the grant ends.

Can I submit qualifications for multiple service categories?

Yes, vendors can submit qualifications for multiple service categories based on their expertise and track record.

How long will vendors remain in the vendor pool?

The vendors will remain in the pool for the duration of the grant program from December 2024-December 2026. If the City decides to renew this pre-qualified list after the program, vendors may be asked to reapply for qualification at a future date.

What are the minimum and maximum contract sizes?

While funding allocations will be determined based on the requests and number of organizations applying for the S3 grant, we are hoping to allocate contracts in the range of \$50,000 minimum per organization to no more than \$250,000 per organization.

How many days will you require for mobilization?

This grant opportunity will be on ARPA timeline. Contracts with BDOs will be executed by December 2024 and all program activity must be completed by December 2026.

Is this an on-demand award?

Not exactly. The idea is to create a pool of vendors who can provide services structured around increasing capacity building of Business District Organizations. When BDOs submit applications for this grant, they will be able to select which services they would like to receive and the costs associated with these services. Awards to the BDOs will be based on these selections. We envision that we will have a better understanding for the demand for these services from the Vendor Pool once we determine the scope of work for each contract with the BDOs.

Are there multiple awards per contract?

Yes, there could be. There will be one contract with each business district organization (BDO) and each BDO can select services from various vendors. One vendor could work with multiple BDOs.

Probability for PO issue?

Grants will be disbursed to the BDOs who will then contract with services providers from the vendor pool.

Is the vendor pool only for nonprofit organizations?

No, the vendor pool is open to anyone who can provide the services we have outlined in the application.

Since strategic planning can have a wide-ranging scope and budget, may vendors enter a cost range on the worksheet?

If you are going to enter a range, please give us a breakdown of what your range entails. Also review the term sheet to make sure that it is in alignment with what the definition of strategic work could entail.

Is the hourly rate on the worksheet a blended rate for the firm?

If there are multiple staff members at different rates, then please provide the average rate for the firm to create a cost projection for the BDO budget.

Do you need an estimated range of hours it would take to complete a project (for example, a website)?

Being that BDOs are going to be at different stages of growth, the range for the hours required to complete a project will be different. We are planning to use the cost estimates provided by the Vendor Pool applicants to create the total grant package awards to the BDOs based on the activities they select. While the costs Vendors provide are not set in stone, they help give us an idea what to allocate for each of the activities.

For this reason, we have tried to build in the flexibility and envisioned that a rate could be used as a baseline estimate. If you in your submittal want to include what, for example, building a website from ground zero would entail, how many hours or what the hourly rate is, those would be helpful pieces of information.

If a vendor can offer two different services, should they provide two different applications (one per service) or fill out the worksheet twice?

If as a vendor you are able to provide, for example, strategic work and communication, you can include that in one application.

How is the payment to the vendors structured?

If a BDO is awarded a contract, funds are disbursed to the BDOs and then they are responsible for service payment to a Vendor. This is set up in this manner due to ARPA requirements for fund tracking. Grants will be disbursed to BDOs in increments to ensure that the BDOs accomplish the activities they selected for capacity building and are completing the payments to vendors for these activities.

Once the vendor pool is selected, will BDOs reach out to vendors with specific scopes/work samples to determine how they will spend the awarded funds?

When we develop a contract with a BDO, the defined scope will be based on the application and the terms of services we have defined. This should provide the outline and the scope of how BDOs will spend the awarded funds. They will then reach out to vendors with these defined scopes of work.

How do you present individual + collective capability statements?

You can articulate these differences in the application, either through answers in the boxes or uploading these statements in your application.

Once the vendor fills out the worksheet, can they send it to City staff for review to make sure information is correct?

Yes. City staff can answer any questions emailed to corridorsofopportunity@charlottenc.gov.

Will the Vendor Pool make space for multiple vendors who might providing similar services?

Yes, we are looking to have multiple vendors for each of the categories of services. There may be multiple organizations that will need strategic work that should be accomplished in the first six months, so we want to make sure we have multiple vendors that can provide services for this work.

Is there a maximum number of Vendors that will be included in the Vendor Pool?

There is not a maximum number of Vendors in the Pool and we are not selecting a preferred strategy development vendor or a preferred communications vendor. We would love to provide the Business District Organizations with multiple options so they can work with whoever is the best fit for their organization. If a Vendor meets the qualifications and share the information that we need to be able to pair vendors with organizations, then a vendor would be included in the pool. You can register as a Vendor with the City using this webpage: <https://www.charlottenc.gov/Growth-and-Development/Doing-Business/Vendor-Registration>.