AppHealthCare, in Cooperation with the Alleghany Sparta Trail Association, is Pleased to Issue

This
REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS
For

Concept Development, Right-of-Way, Permit, Design and Engineering Services for the Bledsoe Creek Greenway in the Town of Sparta and Alleghany County, North Carolina

Date of Issuance: November 19, 2026

Responses Due: December 21, 2026

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I. Request for Qualifications – General Project Data

Project Description	Bledsoe Creek Greenway in the Town of Sparta and Alleghany County, NC
Owner	AppHealthCare (Project to be transferred to local public Owner)
Issuing Office	AppHealthCare Sparta, NC (in cooperation with the Alleghany Sparta Trail Association)
Owner Contact	Karina Romero, AppHealthCare **PH: 828-264-4995 ext 3181** **karina.romero@apphealth.com.** Note: All questions must be submitted via e-mail

II. Introduction

AppHealthCare invites experienced and qualified multi-disciple design firms to submit qualifications for professional technical services pertaining to planning and concept development, community and local government consensus building, right-of-way, permitting, design, engineering, and construction for the Bledsoe Creek Greenway, referred to hereafter as the Greenway, in the Town of Sparta and Alleghany County, NC. The firm selected for this project is referred to hereafter as the Consultant. The Consultant is to provide management and technical assistance and help to solicit community and local government engagement and support for the Greenway. Development of a cooperative framework and future agreement between the various parties for the project and right-of-way development and ownership of the Greenway, or portions thereof, will be necessary for development of future right-of-way agreements and further design development.

III. Background

There is a growing desire in our community for walkable facilities that provide for the safe movement of both pedestrians and bicyclists, not just for recreational purposes but as an alternative transportation option for traveling to work and for running errands, for relieving stress, for overall physical health, for offsetting the effects of obesity and heart disease, for attracting new businesses and to make communities more livable and marketable. The long-range vision is to provide a system of connected trails and sidewalks for our businesses, residents, and visitors for public usage to foster and promote economic development, improve overall health, promote recreation, provide diverse and safe transportation options, and provide connections with our community so everyone can enjoy and experience the cultural heritage and beauty of Alleghany County.

IV. Existing Conditions

Neither the Town of Sparta or Alleghany County currently have a Greenway that would provide a safe corridor for bicycles and pedestrians to enjoy. This project would provide the first Greenway for the Town of Sparta and Alleghany County. The future Greenway concept will generally follow Bledsoe Creek as it runs from the Alleghany County Fairgrounds on US 21 north

to its terminus with Little River and US 21 on the south of the Town of Sparta. The distance is approximately 2.5 miles. This Greenway would help to preserve the natural corridor along Bledsoe Creek.

This Greenway would also provide the initial backbone for future trail and pedestrian sidewalk connections with the Town of Sparta, Main Street, medical and government facilities, the Alleghany County library, the three town parks, residents, and business locations. A direct connection from the Greenway to Veterans Park as it passes along the Sparta Parkway is also envisioned. Trailheads with parking would be provided at both ends of the Greenway with the potential for parking at other locations. The Greenway would also help promote potential future connections with the Mountain to Sea Trail and with New River in the county. The design process will evaluate several routes for the Greenway as part of the planning and concept development to determine the final and most economical route. Bledsoe Creek also runs along the same corridor as the Town of Sparta sewer easement as it passes from the Fairgrounds to its connection with the Sewer Treatment Plant on the Little River and may provide a corridor for several portions of the Greenway.

V. Scope of Services

The purpose of this RFQ is to invite professional design and engineering firms to express interest and demonstrate qualifications in consensus building between local government units, residents, businesses, and land-owners to design and construct a Greenway trail. The Greenway will be a new, approximately 2.5-mile, corridor to accommodate bicycles and pedestrians along Bledsoe Creek in the Town of Sparta and Alleghany County. In general, it is ultimately desired that an 8-to-10-foot-wide Greenway trail be provided that could accommodate two-way bicycle and pedestrian travel. The pavement structure should also provide drainage and accommodate small maintenance vehicles. Any pedestrian bridges that may be required should be designed by a licensed Professional Engineer and meet all State and Federal requirements; there are no limiting material requirements anticipated for any required bridges. Currently, no Greenway standards exist for our area as this project would be the first Greenway. It is desired that the Greenway be designed and constructed to accommodate and meet recognized standards for safety, accessibility, and connectivity, minimize environmental impact and provide a good value for the local community. The selected Consultant shall include a listing of recognized Greenway design standards applicable for rural locations in their proposal that are recommended for the final project.

Because this project spans both county and town jurisdictions in a predominately rural landscape, the selected Consultant must demonstrate deep expertise in community engagement, developing route alternatives with analysis methods to aid in selection of an optimum route and with navigating both residential, business, agricultural, and environmental interests and constraints. The Consultant will likely conduct community engagement workshops with the public to solicit input and consensus on the Greenway route as well as meetings with residential landowners and business owners along the proposed corridor. The selected Consultant shall assist in discussions and negotiations with various landowners for right-of-way agreements to provide the optimum route for the Greenway. Consultant shall also anticipate presentations and meetings with the Town of Sparta and Alleghany County governing bodies to

develop a consensus for the preferred Greenway corridor. The consultant will act as the central coordinator to align the strategic goals of both the County and the Town and community groups with respect to the Greenway development. This may entail conducting strategy meetings with key local government staff, NCDOT, business and community leaders and others to build consensus on project development and route selection. Consultant may also be involved in assisting local government jurisdictions in drafting or refining any inter-local agreements regarding Greenway right-of-way agreements, long-term maintenance, security, and any future cost-sharing as the project develops.

The Town of Sparta has a potential right-of-way corridor for portions of the Greenway along the sewer easement running the entire length of the project. It is also anticipated that portions of NCDOT right-of-way along NCDOT highways and NCDOT owned property may be incorporated into the final right-of-way for the Greenway to provide an accessible route. There may also be sections of the Greenway that could be constructed adjacent to Bledsoe Creek to provide a more natural and aesthetic corridor that currently runs through private property for which a new right-of-way would be required. The right-of-way work includes requesting or providing information regarding the Greenway route and the effects of the Greenway acquisition on the property; requesting or providing copies of surveys and titles regarding the proposed route on the various property and its ownership; contacting property owners to explain project impacts and performing or assisting in any negotiations for right-of way for the Greenway. The Consultant must have a team member with an active Corporate NC Real Estate Broker License for assistance with right-of-way for the project. Experience in providing right-of-way planning, property negotiations and easement document assistance may be a key requirement for the success of this project. It is desired that this project secure a right-of-way corridor and provide a complete Greenway design development that can subsequently be bid for construction.

Proposed offerors must prove that they possess the requisite experience, skills, and technical and administrative capability and capacity in directing and managing a multi-disciplinary team approach to project delivery. The Consultant shall outline all required permits required for construction of the project. The Bledsoe Creek watershed is assumed to be a navigable waterway under the jurisdiction of the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and the NC Department of Water Quality (NCDWQ). The Greenway will likely cross Bledsoe Creek and be in the riparian buffer at several locations and may be in the flood zone of Bledsoe Creek. The Consultant will manage the process with USACE and NCDWQ to obtain necessary permits. The Consultant will also be responsible for securing all necessary permits and engineering products necessary to ensure permitting requirements through any other local, state, or federal permits required relative to construction of a Greenway in flood zones. In addition, the Consultant shall coordinate with other agencies such as the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission, State Historic Preservation Office, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Ecological Services, if required, to obtain all necessary environmental documentation letters and permits. Other agencies that will have to be contacted for permits include, but are not limited to Blue Ridge Electric Power, North Carolina Department of Transportation, Town of Sparta, Alleghany County, and other local pertinent utilities. As part of the design process, required permits from local, state, and federal authorities shall be identified and the Consultant shall assist in helping to secure all such permits as may ultimately be required for the project.

Consultant should also be aware that NCDOT has plans to construct a new bridge on US 21South across Little River that may occur during the life of this project. Consultant shall coordinate the terminus and design of the greenway at its connection with Bledsoe Creek and Little River to accommodate this future US 21 highway bridge. Provisions for pedestrian access to Little River and for future parking at this area may also be a consideration for the final design of the Greenway. Pedestrian crossings shall be provided for all Greenway intersections with existing roads and streets. Pedestrian bridge crossings over Bledsoe Creek should also be anticipated as well as design of minor drainage features to provide for unimpeded runoff.

Consultant shall have experience at all levels of design progression from concept and consensus building, schematic, and all stages of design development to final design and bid documents. As design progresses, the Consultant shall provide periodic cost estimates for construction at intervals that may be outlined in the design contract. Currently, no funds for construction have been identified; however, it is anticipated that a deliverable of this project will be providing documents suitable for further NC Great Trails, State Park, Department of Transportation, and other grant applications to provide funding for final design and construction of the project as may be identified.

It is desired that the selected Consultant be involved in the project through construction completion as future funding is identified, with Consultant's contract modified accordingly. However, should additional funding to continue the project not become available or cannot be secured in a timely manner, the contract may be closed. Consultant shall have no expectation of future work associated with this project unless its future contract is modified accordingly.

VI. Project Location

The project is located within the Town of Sparta city limits, on property owned by Alleghany County, and would cross both business and resident property inside and outside city limits. Alternative routes will be explored as part of the concept design and right-of-way process to select a preferred corridor.

VII. Project Budget and Funding

Funding for the initial phases of work has been set at $45,000. Full grant funding for the project is currently $165,000. Professional fees are dependent on the scope of work as negotiated and will be included in the contract. Progression of the design and other services will be dependent on additional funding being made available during the project with Consultant's contract modified accordingly.

Please note that this project is partially funded by a N.C. Great Trails State Parks grant and any required grant terms will be included in the design contract. Other agencies and non-profits may also provide future funding to supplement design and construction of the project for which the Consultant should anticipate reasonable incorporation of grant terms. Currently, no Federal or NCDOT funds are provided for the project although it is anticipated that future sidewalk and pedestrian connections to the Greenway may be funded from these sources. The selected firm should have experience working with multiple funding sources and with accommodating those

requirements into the deliverables. Information from the design development phases of this project will be used to apply for future grant funding to construct the final greenway.

VIII. RFQ Timeline

The RFQ process shall adhere to the following schedule:

RFQ Schedule	Date & Time
RFQ Posting	Thursday, November 19, 2026
Last Day to Submit Questions	Tuesday, December 1, 2026 by 4:00 PM
Addendum(s) Issued to Question Responses	Friday, December 11, 2026 by 4:00 PM
RFQ Submission Due Date	Monday, December 21, 2026 by 4:00 PM

Please note that all times shown are Eastern Standard Time (EST).

IX. Registration, Questions, and Addenda

Registration: All prospective offerors intending to respond to the RFQ must register with AppHealthCare. Please email Karina Romero **karina.romero@apphealth.com** to register. Offerors must provide valid contact information including name, physical mail address, phone number and valid e-mail address.

Questions: Offerors should carefully review the requirements of this solicitation. No questions will be discussed via telephone. Questions concerning this RFQ will be received via e-mail until **4:00 PM on Tuesday December 1** at which time no further questions will be acknowledged. A summary of all questions and answers will be issued in the form of an addendum. Any comments or questions that arise concerning any requirement that is unclear or objectionable **must be submitted via e-mail to Karina Romero karina.romero@apphealth.com.**

Addenda: Any necessary addenda will be issued **via E-MAIL by 4:00 PM Friday, December 11** to all parties registered with AppHealthCare. All addenda issued shall be acknowledged in the offeror's submittal. It is the offeror's responsibility to assure that all addenda have been reviewed and acknowledged.

X. Rights to Submitted Material

All responses, inquiries, or correspondence relating to or in reference to this RFQ, and all reports, charts, and other documentation submitted by prospective offerors (other than materials submitted as and qualifying as trade secrets under North Carolina law) shall become the property of AppHealthCare when received and the entire response to the RFQ shall be subject to the public records of the State of North Carolina except where a proper trade secrets exemption has been made by the prospective offeror in accordance with the procedures allowed by North Carolina law.

AppHealthCare reserves the right to retain all responses submitted and to use any ideas in any response regardless of whether the prospective offeror is selected. Submission of a response indicates acceptance by the prospective offeror of the conditions contained in this RFQ.

XI. Responses to the RFQ

Responses must follow the format outlined herein. AppHealthCare may reject as non-responsive, at its sole discretion, any response, or any part thereof that is incomplete, inadequate in its response, or departs in any substantive way from the required format. Responses to the RFQ shall be organized in the following manner:

1. Response Cover Letter and Statements. Letter must acknowledge receipt of all addenda as may be issued.
2. Corporate Background and Experience.
3. Financial Statements, Rate Information, and License.
4. Project Understanding, Approach, & Schedule.
5. Team Organization, Experience, and Certifications/Qualifications & Minority and Woman-Owned Business Enterprise Participation.
6. Evidence of experience with projects of similar scope. Project summaries should include name of client, brief project description, Consultant partners, project duration, project cost, and change order data reflected as total number and percentage of overall project value.
7. Any projects where there were legal or technical problems encountered and the final resolution.
8. References, Resumes and Other Information (Include these items in the Appendix).

NOTE: FOR REVIEW CLARITY, PLEASE FOLLOW THE OUTLINE AND LABEL ALL SECTIONS AND ATTACHMENTS TO THE SUBMITTAL CLEARLY WITH TABS ACCORDING TO THE PERTINENT SECTION OF THE RFQ RESPONSE.

XII. Response Proposal Contents (Please follow the following format for tabs and responses)

1. Response Cover Letter, Statements and Executive Summary (5 points):

The Response should contain a cover letter, signed by a principal in the firm, indicating his or her title that he or she has authority to submit the Response on behalf of the firm,

a. The cover letter should contain the following statement: The undersigned has the authority to submit this Response on behalf of ***name of company*** in response to the above Request for Qualification dated 11/19/26 for providing concept development, right-of-way, permit, design and engineering services for the ***Bledsoe Creek Greenway*** in the Town of Sparta and Alleghany County, NC.

b. The cover letter should contain the following statement to be considered an offer meeting the terms of this Request:

This response is from a (Local) or (Other - As Noted)) as evidenced by the firm's principal place of business included with the firm information. The principal place

of business is _____. For purposes of this submittal, Local is considered as those counties in Region D of the North Carolina High Country Council of Governments (Yancey, Mitchell, Avery, Watauga, Ashe, Alleghany, Wilkes).

c. The cover letter shall acknowledge any addenda relating to the response, in the format noted below that has been provided by AppHealthCare. Failure to acknowledge any addenda that have been provided by AppHealthCare can be cause for rejection of the response.

ADDENDUM NO _____ ACKNOWLEDGED BY: _____

d. The Cover Letter shall include no more than a one-page Executive Summary that clearly outlines the overall capability of the firm and proposed team and which briefly summarizes the capability to perform the work items as outlined in the Scope of Work for which the firm proposes to perform.

2. Corporate Background and Experience (15 points):

Information shall be provided regarding the organizational structure of the firm (e.g., corporation, partnership, joint venture, etc.), year organized and year of incorporation, and information shall be noted relating to corporate officers, major shareholders, partners, etc.

Offerors must possess all licenses required by North Carolina law, including, at a minimum, an architectural or engineering license per N.C. General Statute Chapter 87, and shall submit proof of current licensing with their proposal. Provide evidence of license for the proposed firm to assist in the real estate and right-of-way development. Please also include details of experience with similar projects and authority of offeror to do business in North Carolina.

AppHealthCare may reject responses from any firm if it does not comply with State-required licensure for real estate, architecture, engineering, land surveying, and other professions. No firms will be considered that do not provide evidence of all required licensure. Evidence of licensure shall be included in the Appendix.

Provide annual workload for each of the last five (5) years with number of projects and total dollar value. Provide a list of the projects for which the company is currently committed, including name and location of each project, project manager name, time frame to complete and dollar volume of each project.

Identify at least three (3) to five (5) recently completed similar projects and the results finally achieved by each project. Preferred projects would be in North Carolina.

Attach letter from insurance company or its agent licensed to do business in North

Carolina and verifying the company's current coverage and ability to attain future professional insurance coverage required for the project.

3. **Financial Statement, Rate Information (10 points).** Attach the latest company balance sheet or income statement (i.e., profit/loss statement) and cash flow statement if available, based on company type. Statements by an independent certified public accountant (CPA) are preferred. Provide a standard rate sheet for personnel that are anticipated for the project (see below).

   DO NOT *include a cost response proposal with this submittal.* ***DO*** *include a standard rate sheet for the firm's personnel, including that of sub-consultants, and typical services anticipated to be provided for this type project. The response shall clearly note what expenses are reflected in those proposed rate charges. In accordance with G.S. 143-64.31, unit price information can be included in the solicitation. Once we select the most qualified firm, negotiations will take place and, at that time, a detailed cost response proposal will be requested from the Consultant. The Consultant will then be requested to provide an itemized list of all direct and indirect costs associated with the performance of tasks for this contract in the format and detail as requested.*

   All financial information provided in response to this section of the proposal shall be kept confidential provided the offeror marks the appropriate financial information and rate sheets as **CONFIDENTIAL.**

4. **Project Understanding, Approach and Schedule (30 points):**
   This section shall include, in narrative, outline, and/or graph form, the offeror's approach to accomplishing the tasks outlined in the Scope of Work section and other tasks envisioned by the Consultant necessary to provide a complete project as outlined in this RFQ. This statement shall include a detailed description of the understanding of the tasks to be performed for various project development phases and outline that the Consultant has a good understanding of the scope of work associated with this response.

   Identify your team's experience in conducting community engagement and building consensus with local government units and experience with obtaining permits and approvals as required by regulatory agencies regarding projects similar in nature. Prior capability and experience of the firm and individuals involved in providing right-of-way assistance for local government units shall be noted.

   Capability to perform services in a timely manner and to comply with the schedule developed for completion of the project shall be noted. Capability to provide a project schedule to manage all phases of the project shall be noted. The ability to prepare, maintain and revise a detailed project schedule and manage any specialty and other sub-consultants shall be noted. Understanding of the sequence and durations of required design activities, future specialty or delegated design, other

Consultant utilization, design development stages, permit requirements, right-of-way development, utility considerations, public concerns, bidding and award procedures, construction services, construction procurement processes and other considerations for a complete project should be addressed.

The Consultant shall briefly address its management approach and philosophy, address its in-house quality control procedures to manage the design development process for itself and sub-consultants, address cost control methods, value engineering / scope reduction during design, and coordination of in-house disciplines and of all sub-consultants. Experience with management of consultants involved in similar projects shall be noted. Please note all proposed team members and their design experience.

The experience and expertise of the Consultant's proposed project management staff shall be indicated; note that the proposed management staff for this project shall not later be revised. Demonstrated design management knowledge and experience and the capability to provide and implement a coordinated design in the performance of projects of similar size and complexity shall be noted.

Provide information noting capability for completion of 30, 60, 90% design development phases, completion of bid documents, bidding and construction management of similar projects. Experience with management of projects from concept planning through construction completion shall also be noted. The ability to manage schedule and budget shall be noted.

5. **Team Organization, Experience, and Certifications/Qualifications (15 points).**
   The Consultant shall provide an organizational chart that identifies relationships and roles of each individual and who s/he will report to in the overall project organization, including specialty design, any delegated design, right-of-way, and other professional service sub-consultants that will be utilized by the Consultant. Only those individuals who will be assigned to this project should be included in the organizational chart. Where individuals will be assigned to other projects as well, the percentage of their time that will be spent on this project should be indicated.

   The proposal shall clearly note the proposed project manager for the Consultant and who will be involved in daily interactions and meetings with AppHealthCare for the project duration; note that the management staff for this project shall not later be revised. Include a statement from your firm committing to assigning these proposed personnel if your firm is the selected firm and noting that the approved project management personnel will not be removed or reassigned without approval in writing from AppHealthCare.

   This section must include the proposed staffing and organization of personnel to be assigned to this project. If sub-consultants are identified and the proposer is selected, deviations from the identified sub-consultants may only be made if

approved by AppHealthCare. The offeror shall provide information as to the qualifications and experience of all executive, managerial, legal, and professional personnel to be assigned to this project, including resumes citing experience with similar projects and the responsibilities to be assigned to each person.

The Consultant will be required to have Computer Aided Design and Drafting (CADD) capability, have the capability to digitize existing drawings for CADD and PDF use as required. Geographic Information System (GIS) capability for mapping may also be required. Capability in these areas shall be addressed in the proposal. Ability to perform all phases of design development, construction document preparation, bidding and construction administration shall be noted.

The ability to perform tasks and deliverables within a multi-year budget and grant award cycle should be addressed in the proposal. Experience with similar projects and the flexibility to adjust deliverables to match fiscal, grant and budget constraints should be addressed in the proposal.

Attach a copy of the latest annual renewal submission to the relevant licensing board.

6. **Evidence of experience with projects of similar scope (10 points).**
   Provide a list of at least three (3) projects and associated references for similar work that have been performed in the past five (5) years for which the Consultant or the Consultant team was primarily responsible. These projects should be of similar scope and complexity as the project. The references shall include contact persons, companies / positions / titles, email addresses, and telephone number. Each project summary should include the following, as applicable:

   a. Description of the project including scope.
   b. Description of services rendered by the Consultant or team firm, specifically note extent of community involvement, right-of-way development, permit, design and construction services provided.
   c. Degree of involvement (prime Consultant or as sub-consultant).
   d. Associate firms involved and their assigned responsibilities.
   e. Main principal and associate staff members involved, along with their assigned responsibilities.
   f. Project design and construction schedules (initial schedule and actual/final schedule), including an explanation of delays, if any.
   g. Description of role in the project public development process, including public outreach approach, consensus building and assistance with local agreements.
   h. Description of role in permitting and right-of-way process and outcomes.
   i. Project references including current names, physical mail addresses, e- mail addresses and telephone numbers.

Additional detail information pertaining to references may be included in the Item 8 Appendix below.

7. **Any projects where there were legal or technical problems encountered and the final resolution(s) (10 points).**
   Please include a brief narrative of projects in which your firm has been involved in the last five (5) years which have experienced legal or technical problems. The narrative should briefly describe the problem, describe the final solutions or outcomes, and describe how your firm was involved in the outcomes.

   Litigation/Claims: Please include responses to the below items. If yes to any of the questions below, list the project(s), dollar value, contact information for owner and provide a full explanation with relevant documentation for projects for which work has been performed during the last five years.

   a. Has your company ever failed to complete work contracted to it? _____Yes ___No
   b. Has your company filed any claims, or had any claims filed against it, within the last five years? _____Yes ____No
   c. Has your company been involved in any suits, mediation, or arbitration with Local Governments within the last five years? ___Yes ____No
   d. Has your company been involved in any suits or arbitration with other agencies, individuals, or organizations within the last five years? _____Yes ___No

8. **Appendix: References, Resumes and Other Information (5 points)**
   Include all other detail and descriptive information for project references not included in the above sections. Reference information may also include letters from project owners. It is desired that the references be made aware the firm has submitted qualifications for this project and that they may be contacted by AppHealthCare. Please ensure that current contact information is provided for all references. An additional project reference may also be included in this Appendix section of the submittal item if desired. Résumés for key project personnel (short summary) and other info considered important may also be included in this Appendix. **The Appendix page total shall not exceed 10 pages in length.**

The entire submittal, **excluding** the Appendix, should not exceed **20** single-sided pages in length. The Response should include tabbed dividers, numbered 1 through 8, that are organized into the Response requirement sections as noted in this section. The maximum page limit for all items is **30** single-sided pages. One electronic PDF copy shall be submitted.

XIII. Response Proposal Submission

Completed responses should be delivered by **4:00 PM on Monday, December 21, 2026.** LATE RESPONSES CANNOT BE ACCEPTED. Responses shall be submitted via e-mail to Karina Romero karina.romero@apphealth.com. **One electronic PDF copy shall be provided.**

XIV. Evaluation Process

In accordance with G.S. 143-64.31, AppHealthCare and a selection committee shall select firms qualified to provide architectural and engineering and other services based on demonstrated competence and qualification for the type of professional services required, without regard to fee other than unit price information. Negotiation of a contract for those services at a fair and reasonable fee with the best qualified firm will be conducted. If a contract cannot be negotiated with the best qualified firm, negotiations with that firm will terminate and negotiations with the next best qualified firm will be initiated.

Responses received on or before the due date will be reviewed and ranked in order of choice. AppHealthCare and the selection committee will evaluate the complete and acceptable Statement of Qualifications that are timely and properly submitted. The composition of the committee is at the sole discretion of AppHealthCare. Firms will not be provided the actual result of any rating. They will only be advised whether they have, or have not, been selected for presentations. Highest ranked firms, typically only the top 2 to 3 firms, will likely be invited to present their qualifications to the committee. The presentation format will be a panel interview not exceeding 60 minutes including up to a 30-minute presentation followed by 20 minutes of questions. Invited firms shall have the key representatives from their proposed technical teams available with management from the firm leading the presentation.

Responses received after the due date will not be opened and will not advance in the evaluation process. Firms will be notified that their submissions were not received by the due date and consequently, they have been eliminated from further consideration.

XV. Minority Business Enterprises

Pursuant to General Statutes of North Carolina Section 143-128, AppHealthCare encourages Certified Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) businesses to participate in the contracting and procurement programs to include - Professional Services; Goods and Other Services; and Construction. The selected firm will be required to assist and help manage any MBE participation that may later be required for the construction contract including identifying participation of any certified MBE businesses in their proposal.

XVI. Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation criteria points have been noted for each section 1 through 8 and include, but are not limited to, the following items:

- Adherence to the RFQ instructions.
- Specialized or appropriate expertise in the identified type of project.
- Experience in working with local government units and a variety of public and private interest groups.
- Experience in working to secure right-of-way and permits for similar projects.
- Past performance on similar projects.
- Adequate staff and proposed design or consultant team proposed for the project.
- Current workload and other projects anticipated to be awarded.

- Proposed design approach for the project including the design team and consultants / sub-consultants.
- Recent experience with managing project costs and schedules.
- Experience with managing and complying with various grant requirements.
- Experience with the local construction market environment and pricing.
- Construction administration capabilities.
- Proximity to and familiarity with the area where the project is located.
- Record of successfully completed projects without major legal or technical problems.
- Number and types of projects with legal or technical problems and final resolved outcomes.
- Other factors which may be appropriate to the project.

XVII. Right of Rejection or Cancellation

AppHealthCare reserves the right to reject responses for failure to fully respond to this request or to cancel this request for qualification, either in whole or in part for any reason.

XVIII. Response as a Part of the Contract and Additional Terms and Conditions

Part, or all, of this RFQ and the successful Response and Presentation may be incorporated into the final negotiated contract. AppHealthCare also reserves the right to add terms and conditions during final contract negotiations.

XIX. Preparation Cost

AppHealthCare is not responsible, and will not pay, any cost associated with the preparation, submittal, or presentation, of any Response.

XX. Contract Terms

Final scope of work and payment breakdown will be discussed during contract negotiations with the successful firm. AppHealthCare and the Committee have a reasonable expectation of satisfactory completion and execution of the contract terms as a condition of the Consultant selection.