



Planning Department

April 11, 2006

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL FOR SPECIALIZED CONSULTING SERVICES RFP #06-48

I. Project

Consultant Services to Wake County Government for K – 12 Wake County Public School System Enrollment Projections – Development of Student Enrollment Projections Software Program

II. Project Overview

Wake County has witnessed unprecedented growth and increasing ethnic diversity over the past two decades. As North Carolina's second most populous county [2006 population projection: 775,000] and home to the internationally acclaimed Research Triangle Park, along with Durham County, the area provides a world-class combination of economic vitality, educational opportunity, environmental quality, and community quality of life. Because of these attributes, Wake County's population is forecasted to sustain this level of growth into the next decade.

Wake County Public School System (WCPSS) is in the midst of unparalleled K-12 student population growth. The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NC DPI) 2005-2006 20th Day membership report documented 120,504 students: an increase of 6,400 students (5.64%) from the 2004-2005 academic year. This growth has created a substantial demand for local public facilities and infrastructure, particularly K-12 public schools. WCPSS currently operates 88 elementary schools, 28 middle schools, 18 high schools, and 4 special/optional schools.

Since the late 1990s Wake County Planning Department staff – in conjunction with WCPSS Growth Management and Facilities staff - has annually produced student enrollment projections for the Wake County Public School System. The projections are used as the basis for yearly WCPSS budget appropriations, student assignments, and staffing and capital resource allocation. The projections are also used to forecast long-term capital needs.

The current enrollment projections model generates district –level yearly projections (20 years ahead) by grade and by grade level (K-5, 6-8, 9-12). The model also produces a number of disaggregated estimates using additional applications. For example, yearly enrollment estimates by school and by grade for the next school year and yearly student growth projections by residency by six (6) planning areas (20 years ahead) are generated. These projections are revised annually, incorporating updated demographic and student membership data.

While the variance between the projection and actual WCPSS 20th day student membership was quite small in prior years (consistently within the +/-1% target range), projected enrollment has been increasingly lower than actual enrollment for the past three school terms (2003-2004 through 2005-2006). 127,513 students are projected for the upcoming 2006-2007 school term – an increase of over 7,000 students.

Error Analysis of Recent WCPSS Student Enrollment Projections

Academic Year	Mid-Range Projection	<i>NC DPI WCPSS 20th Day</i>	Difference: 20th Day - Mid-Range Projection
2001-2002	101,313	101,432	+119
2002-2003	105,437	104,461	-976
2003-2004	108,320	108,969	+649
2004-2005	113,150	114,068	+918
2005-2006	118,041	120,504	+2,463

To assist Wake County Government in improving its Wake County Public School System student enrollment accuracy, Wake County Government is interested in engaging a firm in a professional services contract to:

- Develop a Windows-based student enrollment software program application for projecting K-12 public schools enrollment by, grade, grade-level, school and planning area. The software program must operate on a Windows 2000 and Windows XP platform. The user interface must be a Windows conforming GUI. It is assumed that any model developed will become property of Wake County, can be used for multiple years and can be maintained by the County.
- Analyze and report student population trends for the public and non-WCPSS systems (charter, private, home schools) and countywide socio-economic and development trends.

- Develop methodologies and databases to generate annual resident population projections by age and gender, total K-12 school age population projections, and WCPSS K-12 student population for a twenty-year period.
- Develop methodologies for projecting short-term enrollment (one to three years), as well as long-term (twenty years).
- Produce a User's Instructional Manual for the software program and provide staff training and program support services upon the installation of the software application.
- Brief Wake County Government and Wake County Board of Education staff and officials on findings and recommendations at specified occasions.

A work plan will be generated outlining the scope, tasks, deliverables and schedule for completing the enrollment projections.

III. Selection Schedule

Primary Task/ Activity	Completion Date
Proposals Due from Consultants	May 4, 2006
Interviews with Short Listed Consultants	May 18, 2006
Consultant Selected/ Preliminary Contract Discussions	May 26, 2006
Professional Services Contract Finalized and Consultant Begins Work	June 2, 2006
Work Plan Finalized	June 5, 2006
Work Performed (including model development and trial runs)	As Agreed Upon
Staff Training Initiated	August 14, 2006
Preliminary Projections Report Issued	October 16, 2006
Final Report of Assignment Issued	November 15, 2006

IV. Consultant Qualifications

It is anticipated that tasks will be made incorporating comprehensive demographic analyses of total resident and school age populations. As such, the Consultants should have a deep and thorough understanding of the issues and concerns of demographic and student enrollment forecasting methodologies and databases. It would be helpful to have a working knowledge of the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction requirements. Qualifying firms will have a larger regional and national perspective on issues and concerns of large, growing, ethnically diverse school systems.

V. Overview of Services Requested

Wake County requests the services of a qualified and experienced consulting firm to develop a K-12 student enrollment projection model and to analyze and report on demographic and school age population growth trends. The consultant(s) may be asked to conduct research on specific items or develop a comparison of certain items among school districts throughout the state and/or throughout the country. The consultant(s) will perform each task in close working relationships with Wake County and with the Wake County Public School System. Significant interaction with key staff associated with Wake County and the Wake County Public School System will be necessary.

In some cases, research will need to be performed. A working knowledge of current trends for K-12 student forecasting is important, particularly of interest is knowledge pertaining to estimating and projecting interstate and international migration. Demonstrated experience in tracking and analyzing the relationships between local public and non-public school systems is also of importance. It is expected that research and analysis of current trends will be used in the development of reports and studies.

Tasks that the consultant may be given include, but are not limited to:

- Review and analyze recent WCPSS and non-WCPSS student population trends;
- Review assumptions, methodologies and data inputs and outputs of current WCPSS student enrollment projections models.
- Compile and collect other data not currently incorporated in the current model and evaluate and define its relationship to or impact on school age population growth in Wake County.
- Develop student enrollment and resident population projection methodologies.
- Design and conduct test trials of student enrollment projections software program.
- Prepare, submit and present preliminary and final enrollment projections and resident projections report for a twenty-year period.
- Provide staff training and support services.

VI. Proposal Submission Requirements

Submittals shall be made on 8 1/2" x 11" paper, side bound with Table of Contents and reference tabs for key sections. The package submitted shall not exceed forty (40) pages single-sided, or twenty (20) pages double-sided (front/back covers, Table of Contents, tab pages and appendixes are excluded from these totals). A complete response to each of the following categories is required:

- A. **Letter of Interest** - generally describing nature of firm and K-12 public school experience, and identifying all sub-consultant firms, including the contractual relationship between the principal and associate firm(s).
- B. **Organization of Team**
 - 1. Team Organization Chart - showing all staff proposed and their title for this project. Discuss the responsibilities to be fulfilled by each team member who will be assigned to the project including sub-consultant(s).

2. Detailed resumes for staff proposed to work on the project.
3. Summary of at least three similar enrollment projection models developed for K-12 public education agencies that the consultant completed. Each of the project summaries shall include the following:
 - a. Description of projections software, year completed and implementation status.
 - b. Description of services rendered.
 - c. Degree of involvement (principal or sub-consultant).
 - d. Associate firms involved and their assigned responsibilities.
 - e. Key principal and associate staff involved, along with their assigned responsibilities.
 - f. Brief summary of the projections model along with key issues studied and conclusions reached.
 - g. Client references thoroughly familiar with the consultant's work, including names, addresses and telephone numbers.
 - h. Include in an appendix to the proposal up to 3 samples of similar studies/reports. Samples should be limited to an executive summary or some portion of the document that is less than 20 pages in length.
4. Listing of projects currently underway within the firm(s)/team and schedule for completing them.
5. Other relevant information that the consultant believes demonstrates their qualifications for the project.

C. **Approach**

1. Provide a detailed description of the consultant's understanding and approach to the project; outline the consultant's work plan and the approach to scheduling the work that will be performed.
2. Describe methods used to collect data and sources that are projected to be used to provide the necessary input.
3. Explain the management tools, techniques and procedures your team uses to maintain the project schedule.
4. Explain your team's procedures for document quality control and coordination of the various team members preparing the study.
5. Describe your plan for managing communication of the various aspects of the project – the task understanding, the research gathering, the analysis of data, the development of draft reports, and the issuance of the final reports.
6. Explain why you believe your team is the most qualified firm to provide the requested services for this project.

- D. **Contract Amount** - Submit a contract payment schedule for all consultant services associated with this assignment, including but not limited to: software development, report preparation and presentation(s), and staff training (up to 3 sessions) and support and travel costs. Compensation will be negotiated with the selected consultant for each task issued.

VII. Selection Process

This RFP and any subsequent action taken as a result thereof, is issued by the Wake County Procurement Services in accordance with North Carolina General Statutes on behalf of the County. Proposal responses should be directed to Procurement Services, specifically to the Purchasing Director, as outlined below. In regards to this RFP and subsequent procurement process, vendors shall make NO CONTACTS, either written or verbal, with any Wake County employee, staff member, or Board of Commissioner members during the period beginning with the issuance of this document through approval of award unless authorized by the proposal contact.

The process for the project will involve three stages:

- A. **Stage One: Pre-qualification** - The initial phase will commence with the establishment of a Selection Committee, comprised of staff from Wake County Government and Wake County Public School System. The Consultant is encouraged to clearly document why their team should be considered for this project. Upon receipt of the Proposal Packages from respondents, Selection Committee members will review each proposal individually and collectively. The Selection Committee will identify firms that appear to be most qualified to provide services for the project.
- B. **Stage Two: Interviews** - Separate interview sessions will be scheduled with the "short-listed" firms to permit Selection Committee members to further evaluate each firm's qualifications and proposal. Each "short-listed" firm will receive a designated time for an interview. Promptly after the interviews, the Selection Committee will make its selection and forward written recommendations to the County Manager for approval.
- C. **Stage Three: Contract Negotiations** - Following the County Manager's approval of a consultant(s), the Wake County Planning Department will begin contract negotiations with the selected consultant. In the event negotiations prove unsuccessful with one particular firm(s), the County Manager will collaborate with the Selection Committee on selection of another firm with which to begin negotiations.

VIII. Evaluation Criteria

The following criteria will be the basis on which consultants will be selected for further consideration:

1. Past experience of the Consultant team on similar projects – locally, statewide and nationally.

2. Specialized or appropriate expertise in K-12 public school enrollment projections in rapidly growing urban, ethnically diverse districts.
3. Proposed approach for this project.
4. Proven ability to conduct research, assemble and analyze various socio-economic data with regards student enrollment trends and projections.
5. Record of successfully completing well-written, clearly articulated and professional quality studies and reports.
6. Demonstrate that adequate staff is available over the course of this project.
7. Proposed team for the project.
8. Proven ability to prepare and maintain project schedules.
9. Familiarity with Wake County, the Wake County Public School System and its demographics and the NC Department of Public Instruction.
10. Consultants' proposed contract payment schedule for professional services.
11. Other factors that may be appropriate for the project.

IX. Submission of Proposal Packages

The County must receive proposals no later than **May 4, 2006 at 4:00pm**. *The Proposer's name, RFP number, and proposal closing time and date must be marked clearly on the proposal submission.* The time of receipt shall be determined by the time clock in the Wake County Procurement Services office. Late proposals will not be accepted. The County will not be held responsible for the failure of any mail or delivery service to deliver a proposal response prior to the stated proposal due date and time. It is solely the Proposer's responsibility to: (1) ascertain that they have all required and necessary information, documents and addenda, prior to submitting a response; (2) ensure that the response is received at the correct location and time. Late responses, regardless of delivery means, will not be accepted.

Should any Proposer find discrepancies, omissions or ambiguities in this RFP, the Proposer must at once request in writing an interpretation from proposal contact. All questions submitted must be in writing. The deadline for submitting questions is **April 19, 2006, 10:00 a.m.** All questions will be answered to the extent possible in the form of addenda to the specifications. All written requests for clarification should be addressed to the attention of Tom Wester at twester@co.wake.nc.us.

Failure to request an interpretation will be considered evidence that the Proposer understands the provision of the RFP.

The issuance of a written addendum is the only official method by which interpretation, clarification or additional information will be given by the County. Only questions answered by formal written addenda will be binding. Oral and other interpretations or clarification will be without legal effect.

Twelve (12) complete paper proposal packages and one digital version on CD in a commonly accepted computer format such as Portable Document Format (.pdf) must be received at the following address by 4:00 p.m., May 4, 2006:

Wake County Procurement Services
337 S. Salisbury Street (27601)
Post Office Box 550 (27602)
Raleigh, NC

Attn: Tom Wester – Director

X. General Comments

1. Any cost incurred by respondents in preparing or submitting a Request for Proposal for the Project shall be the respondents' sole responsibility.
2. Questions regarding this proposal should be addressed to Tom Wester at the address above, via email at twester@co.wake.nc.us or phone at (919) 856-6153 .
3. Wake County Planning's standard professional services contract will be used for this work. If a copy of this typical contract is desired, please send your request to Tom Wester.
4. All responses, inquiries or correspondence relating to this Request for Proposal will become the property of Wake County when received.
5. Respondents are advised to refrain from contact with Selection Committee members. Any specific questions regarding the Request for Proposal should be directed to the Wake County Planning office. If any firm with regards to this Request for Proposal asks a question of general concern, a copy of the written response will be sent to all firms.
6. All submittals are to be provided on 8½" x 11" paper, side bound and must include a Table of Contents.

General RFP Requirements

When responding to this RFP, please follow all instructions carefully. Please submit proposal contents according to the outline specified and submit all hard copy and electronic documents according to the instructions. Failure to follow these instructions will be considered a non-responsive proposal and may result in immediate elimination from further consideration. By virtue of submitting a proposal, interested parties are acknowledging:

The County reserves the right to reject any or all proposals if it determines that select proposals are not responsive to the RFP. The County reserves the right to reconsider any proposal submitted at any phase of the procurement. It also reserves the right to meet with select Proposers at any time to gather additional

information. Furthermore, the County reserves the right to delete or add functionality up until the final contract signing.

The Contractor shall be familiar with all Federal, State and Local Laws, Ordinances, Rules and Regulations that in any way may affect the work. Ignorance on the part of the Contractor shall in no way relieve them from responsibility. All Contractors submitting proposals agree that their pricing is valid for a minimum of one year after proposal submission to the County. Contractors are to provide all work effort needed to meet the detailed functional requirements as part of their proposal.

Proposals will be received by Wake County Government at the time and place so stated in this document. At that point, Wake County will close the receipt of proposals and begin the evaluation process. The only information that will be released will be the names of the respondent(s). No other information will be disclosed, except as required by the evaluation process, until a contract is awarded.

Wake County, solely at our option, may disclose the name(s) of any firms or companies being considered or elevated during the process. Realizing the nature of a competitive environment and protecting the integrity of the process, respondents are not to contact any county staff or elected official in reference to the process. As information becomes available and is relevant for release, that information will be shared with respondents. Any and all information submitted in conjunction with this RFP and the evaluation process will not be returned to the respondent.

All firms submitting proposals are encouraged to submit the most competitive proposal possible, as the failure to do so may lead to elimination.

Certification

The Proposer hereby certifies that they have carefully examined this Request for Proposal and documents attached hereto for terms, conditions, specifications, covenants, requirements, software, services, etc. and the Proposer certifies that they understand the scope of the work to be done, that the Proposer has knowledge and expertise to provide the scope of the work, and that their proposal is based upon the terms, conditions, specifications, services, software and requirements of this RFP and attachments. The Proposer further agrees that the performance time specified is a reasonable time. By their signature on the response to the RFP, the Proposer certifies that their proposal is made without prior understanding, agreement, or connection with any corporation, firm or person submitting a proposal for the same materials, supplies, or equipment, and is in all respects fair and without collusion or fraud, so that all proposals for the purchase will result from free, open and competitive proposing among all vendors. Further, the Proposer certifies that they understand collusive bidding/proposing is a violation of Federal law and can result in fines, prison sentences, and civil damage awards.

Conflict of Interest

By submission of a response, the Proposer agrees that at the time of submittal, they: (1) have no interest (including financial benefit, commission, finder's fee, or any other remuneration) and shall not acquire any interest, either direct or indirect, that would conflict in any manner or degree with the performance of Proposer's services, or (2) will not benefit from an award resulting in a "Conflict of Interest." A "Conflict of Interest" shall include holding or retaining membership, or employment, on a board, elected office, department, division or bureau, or committee sanctioned by and/or governed by Wake County. Proposers shall identify any interests, and the individuals involved, on separate paper with the response and shall understand that the County, in consultation with legal counsel, may reject their proposal.

Assignment

No assignment of the Proposer's obligations nor the Proposer's right to receive payment hereunder shall be permitted without prior consent of the County. The Proposer may not sell, assign, transfer or convey the contract resulting from this RFP, in whole or in part, without the prior written approval from Wake County.

Indemnification

Contractor will indemnify and hold the County harmless from any and all liability, expense, judgment, suit, or cause of action for personal injury, death, or direct damage to tangible property which may accrue against the County to the extent it is caused by the negligence of Contractor, its subcontractors, or their employees or agents, while performing their duties under this Agreement, provided that the County gives the Contractor prompt, written notice of any such claim or suit. The County shall cooperate with Contractor in its defense or settlement of such claim or suit. This section sets forth the full extent of the Contractor's general indemnification of the County from liabilities that are in any way related to Contractor's performance under this Agreement.

Independent Contractor

It is understood that in the performance of any services herein provided, the Proposer shall be, and is, an independent contractor, and is not an agent or employee of the County and shall furnish such services in its own manner and method, except as required by this contract. Further, the Proposer has, and shall retain the right to exercise full control over the employment, direction, compensation, and discharge of all persons employed by the Proposer in the performance of the services hereunder. The Proposer shall be solely responsible for, and shall indemnify, defend, and save the County harmless, from all matters relating to the payment of its employees, including compliance with Social Security, withholding, and all other wages, salaries, benefits, taxes, exactions, and regulations of any nature whatsoever.

Governing Law

This RFP and any contract resulting there from shall be governed by and construed according to the laws of the State of North Carolina. Should any portion of any contract be in conflict with the laws of the State of North Carolina, the State laws shall invalidate only that portion. The remaining portion of the contract(s) shall remain in effect.

Confidential Information/Public Records Law

The County assumes no responsibility for confidentiality of information offered in a proposal. The RFP does not intend to elicit proprietary information. However, if proprietary information is submitted as part of the proposal, the information is to be labeled as such. Proposals are not subject to public inspection until after the contract award. Wake County reserves the right to share any information submitted in response to this RFP or process with any person(s) or firm(s) involved in the review and evaluation process. Proprietary or confidential information must be clearly labeled as such at the time of initial submission and to the extent provided by N.C.G.S. Chapter 132, will not be made available for public inspection. In the event that a request for inspection is made under public records law, the Proposer will be notified of the request and may participate in any subsequent civil action to compel disclosure of confidential information.

Compliance with Laws and Regulations

Proposer must comply with all applicable State and Federal Laws. In the event any Governmental restrictions may be imposed which would necessitate alteration of the material, quality, workmanship or performance of the items offered on this proposal prior to their delivery, it shall be the responsibility of the successful Proposer to notify Wake County at once, indicating in their letter the specific regulation which required such alterations. The County reserves the right to accept any such alterations, including any price adjustments occasioned thereby, or to cancel the contract.

Acceptance

Submission of any proposal indicates a Proposer's acceptance of the conditions contained in this RFP unless clearly and specifically noted otherwise in the proposal.

Furthermore, the County is not bound to accept a proposal on the basis of lowest price, and further, the County has the sole discretion and reserves the right to cancel this RFP, and to reject any and all proposals, to waive any and all informalities and or irregularities, or to re-advertise with either the identical or revised specifications, if it is deemed to be in the County's best interests to do so. The County reserves the right to accept or reject any or all of the items in the proposal, and to award the contract in whole or in part and/or negotiate any or all items with individual Proposers if it is deemed in the County's best interest. Moreover, the County reserves the right to make no selection if proposals are deemed to be outside the fiscal constraint or not in the best interest of the County.