



City of Falls City, NE

Request for Qualifications

Design Services for Transmission Line and Substation

June 17, 2025

City of Falls City
2307 Barada Street Falls City, NE 68355

402-245-2851

www.fallscitynebraska.org

Request for Qualifications (RFQ)

For: Transmission Line Engineering Services

Issued by: City of Falls City, Nebraska

Owner's Representative: Farris Engineering, Inc.

Date Issued: 6.17.2025

1. Introduction and Purpose

The City of Falls City Electric Department ("City") is requesting Statements of Qualifications (SOQs) from qualified engineering firms ("Consultants") for engineering services related to the procurement of right-of-way (ROW), design, and construction management for approximately 15 miles of 115 kV transmission line and a new up to 50 MVA substation. The City is seeking Consultants with demonstrated expertise in high-voltage design, substation engineering, and project execution for municipal utility systems.

This RFQ is issued with the support of Farris Engineering, Inc., who is serving as the City's Owner's Representative. The City will follow a Qualifications-Based Selection (QBS) process. The successful Consultant will be selected based on the strength of their proposed team, technical approach, and past performance. Top-ranked firms may be invited to participate in an interview with the City's selection committee.

A selection committee consisting of the Board of Public Works, City's Owners Representative, the Public Works Director, and the City Administrator will be responsible for reviewing submitted qualifications. The committee will evaluate all eligible firms and create a shortlist of no fewer than three (3), but no more than five (5) firms based on evaluation criteria.

Shortlisted firms will be invited to participate in formal interviews before the City Council of the City of Falls City. These interviews will provide an opportunity for City leadership to assess each firm's approach, team expertise, and overall alignment with project objectives. Following the interviews, the City Council will make the final selection of the most qualified firm.

2. Project Background and Description

Falls City, Nebraska, is a municipally owned utility provider serving a population of approximately 4,200. The City owns and operates its own electric distribution system and generation station, which includes 20 MW of dual-fuel RICE-compliant units and 10 MW of non-RICE generation. The distribution system primarily operates at 13.8 kV Y, with legacy 5 kV lines being phased out.

Currently, the City is served by a 69 kV transmission line from OPPD with a maximum capacity of 15 MVA. Falls City's energy mix includes 6 MVA of firm capacity from OPPD's Nebraska City Power Plant, 3 MVA from Western Area Power Administration (WAPA), and the remainder from market purchases and city-owned generation.

To support future economic development and improve system reliability, the City has secured state grant funding to establish a new interconnection point to the Southwest Power Pool (SPP) via a 115 kV switchyard located approximately 15 miles southwest of Falls City in rural Kansas. Preliminary design and routing studies have been completed.

The proposed 115 kV transmission line will interconnect with a new 115/13.8 kV substation and tie into the City's existing distribution system and power plant infrastructure. The substation is currently planned to include an up to 50 MVA transformer and three additional bays: one for a connection to the City's new Power Distribution Center (PDC), one to the generation switchyard, and one spare for future expansion. This project is partially funded by the Nebraska Department of Economic Development (NDED). As such, the project must comply with specific grant conditions, including work eligibility verification (E-Verify) and environmental coordination. Respondents should be prepared to assist with stakeholder engagement, right-of-way acquisition, and regulatory permitting processes in both Nebraska and Kansas.

The City has secured grant funding to improve the reliability and expand the capacity of its municipal electric system to support current and future economic development. This funding enables the City to establish a new interconnection point with the regional transmission network.

3. Scope of Services

The selected firm will work under the direction of the City, in coordination with Farris Engineering, and will be expected to provide the following services:

A. Transmission Line Engineering and Design

- Technical evaluation of transmission interconnect options (e.g., looped vs. radial feed)
- Evaluation of meter points and interconnection requirements
- Site analysis and engineering design for line routing and structure placement

B. Substation Site Evaluation and Design Coordination

- Evaluation of potential substation locations (e.g., Wastewater Plant, Power Plant, MegaSite)
- Technical coordination with City staff and Owner's Rep on site selection and interconnect strategy

C. Regulatory and System Integration Support

- Guidance navigating Southwest Power Pool (SPP) and Network Integration Transmission Service (NITS) processes
- Support in securing a NITSA (Network Integration Transmission Service Agreement)

D. RFQ/RFP Technical Consultation

- Provide technical input and consultation for development of procurement documents for future subconsultants or contractors

E. Project Management Support

- Assist with identification of project milestones, lead times, and critical path items
- Provide scheduling input and ongoing design coordination as needed

F. Public and Stakeholder Coordination

- Participate in meetings with local stakeholders, utility partners, or regulatory entities as needed

- Provide technical materials and support for public meetings, council briefings, and permitting coordination.

G. Constructability and Phasing Input

- Evaluate constructability and recommend phasing strategies to accommodate utility disruptions, procurement timelines, and potential funding constraints
- Assist the City and Owner's Representative in aligning design milestones with grant administration and council actions

H. Deliverables and Documentation

- Provide preliminary engineering reports, technical memoranda, one-line diagrams, and final design drawings.
- Deliverables must include AutoCAD (.dwg) and PDF formats for all plan sets, one-line diagrams, and route profiles.
- Provide KMZ/KML or GIS-compatible shapefiles for routing and permitting support.
- Include stamped drawing sets from Nebraska and Kansas-licensed professional engineers.
- Submit CSI-format construction specifications, basis of design documents, and any permitting exhibits requested by the City or regulatory bodies. in formats suitable for regulatory and procurement submission
- Ensure all documentation complies with Nebraska licensing standards and is signed/sealed by a Nebraska-licensed professional engineer

I. Environmental, Survey, and Third-Party Coordination

- Provide environmental consultants, surveyors, and geotechnical engineers to support permitting, routing, and constructability evaluations.
- Gather and prepare materials necessary for environmental assessments, cultural resource reviews, and right-of-way coordination.
- Provide technical input to support public engagement processes, including landowner outreach and permitting presentations.

4. Submittal Requirements

Firms responding to this RFQ shall include the following (up to 30 pages maximum) in their SOQ:

1. Cover Letter
2. Firm Qualifications and Experience
3. Key Personnel and Resumes
4. Relevant Project Experience (SPP/NITS familiarity preferred)
5. References (minimum three)

6. **Written Narrative of Project Execution Approach** – A clear and detailed narrative describing how your firm will execute this project, including stakeholder coordination and communication strategies.
7. **Statement of Availability** – A declaration of your firm’s capacity and availability to begin and support this project within the anticipated timeline.

5. Minimum Qualifications

Qualified respondents must be licensed professional engineers in both Nebraska and Kansas with specific experience in electric transmission systems and substation design. The selected firm must also demonstrate successful past performance in:

- ROW acquisition and utility easement coordination
- High-voltage (115 kV or higher) transmission line routing and design
- Substation engineering and equipment specification
- Environmental permitting and regulatory compliance
- Construction management for utility-scale electrical infrastructure

6. Evaluation Criteria

SOQs will be evaluated based on:

Evaluation Factor	Weight (%)	Description
Firms Experience & Past Performance	30	Relevant project experience, past performance with similar work, and references.
Key Personnel & Qualifications	25	Experience, certifications, and technical expertise of key team members assigned to the project.
Technical Approach & Understanding	20	Proposed work plan, methodology, and demonstrated understanding of the project’s objectives and challenges.
Capacity & Availability	15	Ability to complete the project within the required timeframe, current workload, and resource availability.
Familiarity with Community Needs	10	Understanding of local challenges, community priorities, and ability to engage stakeholders effectively.

7. Compliance Requirement – E-Verify Clause

As a condition of NDED grant funding, the selected engineering firm must agree to the following provision:

Verification of Work Eligibility

The selected firm shall use a federal immigration verification system, such as E-Verify or an

equivalent designated by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, to confirm the work eligibility of all new employees hired on or after the effective date of this contract and physically performing services in Nebraska.

Failure to comply with this requirement will disqualify the respondent from consideration.

8. Anticipated Schedule

- **RFQ Published:** Tuesday, June 17, 2025
- **Questions Due:** Monday, June 30, 2025 (by end of day)
- **RFQ Submission Due:** Friday, July 15, 2025 (by end of day)
- **Timeline:** Substantial Completion Estimated by End of Year 2030

9. Additional Requirements and Provisions

- **Pre-Submittal Conference (Optional):** A virtual pre-submittal conference may be scheduled at the City's discretion to answer questions and clarify scope. Attendance is not mandatory but is encouraged.
- **Conflict of Interest Disclosure:** Respondents must disclose any actual or potential conflicts of interest, including relationships with transmission providers, utilities, or affiliated consultants. Failure to disclose known conflicts may disqualify a respondent.
- **Insurance and Licensing Requirements:** The selected firm must carry professional liability insurance of no less than \$1,000,000 per claim and maintain proper licensing and registration to perform engineering services in the State of Nebraska.
- **Right to Modify or Cancel:** Falls City reserves the right to reject any or all submissions, waive informalities, cancel this RFQ at any time, or modify the scope based on funding availability, regulatory changes, or evolving project needs.
- **Cost Proposal Clarification:** Cost proposals are not requested at this stage. Finalist firms may be invited to submit fee schedules or cost structures in a subsequent phase.

10. Submission Instructions

Please submit one (1) PDF copy of your Statement of Qualifications electronically to:

Trevor Campbell

Utilities Supervisor

City of Falls City

Email: t.campbell@fallscityne.us

Submittals must be received no later than **5:00 PM on Friday, July 15, 2025**. Submittals will be reviewed by the Board of Public Works

For questions regarding this Request for Qualifications, please contact David Hunter at Farris Engineering by email at dhunter@farris-usa.com or by phone at 402-414-0598.