



**MUNICIPAL FINANCIAL ADVISOR CONSULTING SERVICES
REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS**

SEALED QUALIFICATIONS DUE DATE
Friday, January 7, 2025 @ 2:00 p.m. CST

392 N Main St
Crossville, TN 38555

Telephone: (931) 484-5113
Attn: Nathan Clouse
Email: nathan.clouse@crossvilletn.gov

Date Issued: January 17, 2025

1 OVERVIEW AND PURPOSE

1.1 Project Background and Overview

The City of Crossville, Tennessee, (the “City”) is soliciting this Request for Qualifications (RFQ) from qualified firms to provide Municipal Financial Advisor services, as defined within the meaning of Municipal Advisor as promulgated by the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) and Municipal Securities Rulemaking Board (MSRB). The purpose of this Request for Qualifications is to solicit responses from individuals or firms qualified and competent to render these services.

The City’s current and future financing needs include:

- **General Obligation Bonds and Loans.** As of June 30, 2024, the City has approximately \$35 million in outstanding General Obligation and/or Revenue Supported Bonds and Loans that funded a mix of both general government and water and sewer projects. The bonds are backed by the full faith and credit of the City and are also payable from the revenues of the applicable proprietary fund. The City currently carries a AA- GO rating AA- Water and Sewer Revenue ratings from S&P.

Future Capital Projects. The City’s five-year Capital Investment Planning (CIP) project list is extensive and calls for numerous projects that will require the issuance of additional long-term debt.

1.2 Context

The City is seeking to retain a highly qualified service provider with recognized competence and integrity to assist City staff in securing the best solutions for financing the capital investment needs of the City. Developing solutions will require advisory services including, but not limited to, debt policy review, debt service and budget analysis, market monitoring for refinancing opportunities, preparation and review of materials for bond rating interviews, providing necessary documents, and facilitating the State Comptroller’s required approval of the City’s debt issuances and other services related to the issuance of debt obligations.

- The Municipal Financial Advisor relationship, paid through a retainer or on a fee-for-service basis, is a primary requirement of the advisor(s) hired as a result of this Request for Qualifications. The services provided by the advisor(s) will be objective and exclusively benefit the City. A fiduciary relationship, as promulgated by MSRB Rule G-23, is required.

Information related to this solicitation, including any addenda, will be posted to the City’s Website at <https://www.crossvilletn.gov>. For questions related to this RFQ, contact Nathan Clouse, Finance Director via Email at nathan.clouse@crossvilletn.gov.

2 SCOPE OF PROJECT

BASE ACTIVITIES

The respondent awarded shall provide independent financial advisory services to the City primarily for general obligation bond sales, revenue bond sales, bond refunding, bank loans, and other financing transactions, as well as general financial advisory services in connection with bond issuance. Such services are anticipated to include, but may not necessarily be limited to:

2.1 Debt Management Program

- Assist and advise in maintaining a long-range financial plan for the City.
- Assist and advise in the development of debt limits, debt service coverage ratios, debt capacity, call feature structure, reserve funds, or other debt policies as requested.
- Assist in the procurement and negotiation of credit support mechanisms as needed.
- With input from the City, periodically solicit proposals for and select bond service providers, including paying/escrow agents, verification agents, and other service providers.
- Identify policy issues and direction(s) related to effective administration of the capital investment program.
- Assist and advise in debt structure and/or restructuring decisions.
- Monitor and advise debt refunding opportunities.
- Prepare outstanding principal and interest debt schedules for each issue.
- Compute requested debt calculations such as total debt to estimated market value, total debt to assessed value, total debt per capita, net debt to estimated market value, net debt to assessed value, net debt per capita periodically and on an as-needed basis.
- Work with the City's Finance Department staff, legal counsel (both staff and outsourced), bond counsel, and disclosure counsel to maintain an effective and compliant debt program.

2.2 Bond Sale Service

- The respondent awarded the purchase will be proactive in providing information to the City regarding issues, trends, and practices in municipal financing that may be considered for further study and evaluation.
- The respondent awarded the purchase will provide technical advice as requested by the City, orally or in written form, concerning miscellaneous issues and questions that may arise relative to debt structure, the financial markets in general, budget development, levels of liquid reserves, taxation rates, sensitivity to adverse financial impacts, modeling of restricted revenue funds, or any other topic of financial interest.
- Assist in the marketing and sale of bonds.
- Assist in the preparation of bond sale documents.
- Assist in evaluating and re-evaluating existing bids and proposals as they relate to bond sales.
- Analyze the market conditions prior to, during, and subsequent to the bond sale. Summarize the reception of the bonds in the market and evaluate performance relative to the market and

other securities of similar credit.

- Provide due diligence review of underwriters for proposed negotiated sales.
- Advise on the recommended method of sale, i.e., competitive or negotiated.
- Assist with preparation for and acting in the leadership role for rating agency presentations and follow-up.
- Advise on credit enhancement options.
- Coordinate the distribution of all electronic and printed documents.
- Evaluate bids and confirm the lowest and best bid, verify true interest cost, and compliance with the notice of sale.
- Negotiate with the winning underwriter to restructure and size as necessary.
- Prepare the final closing document.

2.3 Public Hearings and Presentations

Attendance at public hearings and staff meetings to present or discuss the Debt Management programs or issuance, if requested.

3 TERM OF AWARD

The services provided under this procurement solicitation shall be established as a contract with an initial term of one (1) year, effective upon full execution by both parties. Terms of renewals may be made for up to two (2) additional years. There will not be an automatic renewal. Either party may provide written notice of termination no later than three (3) months before the end of the current term. This agreement will continue to renew annually under these conditions unless terminated as specified above.

4 SUBMITTAL REVIEW

4.1 Criteria

Responses to this Request for Qualifications will be evaluated by a panel of City staff and may include elected officials. The following criteria will be used to evaluate submissions:

A. Experience and Qualifications (up to 55 points)

Firm and Personnel: Experience and qualifications of the firm and key personnel with similar services for Tennessee municipal clients.

Client References: Quality and relevance of client references provided.

Conflicts of Interest: Any conflicts of interest between the firm, key personnel, and the City.

B. Capabilities and Unique Strengths (up to 25 points)

Capabilities: Overall capabilities of the service provider.

Resources: Capacity to deliver services within industry-standard response times.

Value-Added Features: Exceptional features and unique strengths of the firm and its team that differentiate it from competitors.

C. Thoroughness and Quality of Response (up to 20 points)

Responsiveness: Thoroughness and responsiveness to the entire procurement solicitation.

Understanding of Needs: Demonstrated understanding of the City's needs.

Reservation of Right and Evaluation

The City reserves the right to reject any or all qualifications, to waive technicalities or informalities, and to accept any qualifications deemed to be in the best interest of the City.

4.2 Interviews

The City reserves the right to perform interviews of some or all the respondents based on the submittal review. Interviews will be conducted in the City if practical. The City will develop a scoring matrix based on the above submittal review prior to interviews.

5 REPRESENTATIONS, CONDITIONS, AND OTHER REQUIREMENTS

5.1 Communications

All communication of any nature with respect to this RFQ shall be addressed to the Finance Director identified in this RFQ. With the exception of communications with the Finance Director for this RFQ, prospective firms and their staffs are prohibited from communicating with elected City officials, City staff, and any selection committee member regarding this RFQ or submittals from the time the RFQ was released until the results of the selection are publicly announced. Violation of this provision may lead to disqualification of the firm's qualification for consideration.

5.2 Duties and Obligations of Firms in the RFQ Process

Interested firms are expected to fully inform themselves as to all conditions, requirements, and specifications of this RFQ before submitting a qualification. Firms must perform their own evaluation and due diligence verification of all information and data provided by the City and their own evaluation and due diligence of any consultants the firm proposes to engage to provide any of the professional services. The City makes no representations or warranties regarding any information or data provided by the City. Firms are expected to promptly notify the City in writing to report any ambiguity, inconsistency, or error in this RFQ. Failure to notify the City accordingly will constitute a waiver of claim of ambiguity, inconsistency, or error.

5.3 Addenda

In order to clarify or modify any part of this RFQ, addenda may be issued and posted at the City's official website at: www.crossvilletn.gov

Any requests for information or clarification shall be submitted in writing to Nathan Clouse, Finance Director at nathan.clouse@crossvilletn.gov by the deadline for questions, January 31, 2025, at 12:00 p.m.

5.4 No Collusion, Bribery, Lobbying, or Conflict of Interest

By responding to this RFQ, the firm shall be deemed to have represented and warranted that the qualification is not made in connection with any competing firm submitting a separate response to this RFQ and is in all respects fair and without collusion or fraud. Furthermore, the firm certifies that neither it, any of its affiliates or sub-consultants, nor any employees of any of the foregoing has bribed or lobbied, or attempted to bribe or lobby, an officer or employee of the City in connection with this RFQ.

5.5 Public Records

Confidentiality of Qualification Information: Each qualification and supporting document must be submitted electronically. All qualifications and supporting qualification documents will become public information after the City has announced an intent to award the contract to the selected respondent. At that time, all qualifications will be available for inspection by the general public upon request.

5.6 Cost of Qualification Preparation

The City shall not be liable for any expenses incurred by any firm responding to this RFQ. Firms submitting a qualification in response to this RFQ agree that the materials and submittals are prepared at the firm’s own expense with the express understanding that the firm cannot make any claims whatsoever for reimbursement from the City for the costs and expenses associated with preparing and submitting a qualification. Each firm shall hold the City harmless and free from any and all liability, costs, claims, or expenses incurred by, or on behalf of, any person or firm responding to this RFQ.

5.7 Advertising

In submitting an RFQ, the respondent agrees not to use the results therefrom as part of any commercial advertising without prior written approval of the City.

5.8 Ownership of Work Products

The City shall have exclusive ownership of all intellectual property rights in all designs, plans and specifications, documents, and other work products prepared by, for, or under the direction of the selected firm pursuant to any contract under this RFQ, including work product prepared by sub-consultants (collectively, the “Intellectual Property”), including, without limitation, the right to copy, use, disclose, distribute, and make derivations of the Intellectual Property for any purpose, or to assign such rights to any third party. The Intellectual Property shall be prepared in the City’s name and shall be the sole and exclusive property of the City, whether the work contemplated therein is performed. The City will grant the firm a royalty-free, non-exclusive license to use and copy the Intellectual Property to the extent necessary to fulfill the contract.

5.9 City Rights and Reservations

The City expects to select one (or more) firm(s) but reserves the right to request substitutions of any key team member, including staff and sub-consultants. The City reserves the right to contact any firm/team for any additional information, including but not limited to experience, qualifications, abilities, equipment, facilities, and financial standing. The City reserves the right to modify any part of this RFQ as issued with an addendum. The City, at its sole discretion, reserves the right to reject any or all responses to the RFQ, to cancel the RFQ, to re-advertise for new RFQ responses either with identical or revised specifications, or to accept any RFQ response, in whole or part, deemed to be in the best interest of the City. The City reserves the right to waive technicalities and informalities.

A response to this RFQ shall not be construed as an agreement nor indicate a commitment of any kind. The City reserves the sole right to award an agreement or agreements to the most qualified firm(s) on the basis of the best overall qualification that is most advantageous to the City. The City also reserves the right to make multiple awards based on experience and qualifications if it is deemed in the City’s best interest.

5.10 Agreement

The contents of this RFQ and all provisions of the successful respondent deemed responsive by the City may be incorporated, either in whole or in part, into an agreement and become legally binding when approved and executed by both parties. Contents of the agreement may contain changes from the City’s perspective as a result of the RFQ process and qualification(s) received. The final negotiated agreement may include the scope of work as outlined in this RFQ, along with the successful firm’s submittal and any additions or deletions made at the discretion of the City as a result of the RFQ process.

Please see the attached Sample Professional Services Agreement, which will be used as a template for the negotiated agreement.

6 REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS (RFQ) INSTRUCTIONS

6.1 RFQ Schedule and Qualification Submission

Provided below is the anticipated schedule of events. The City reserves the right to adjust the schedule and to add/remove specific events to meet the unique needs of this Project.

Advertisement of RFQ:	17 th day of January, 2025
Deadline for Receipt of Written Questions:	31 st day of January, 2025, at 12:00 p.m.
Submission Deadline and RFQ Opening:	7 th day of February, 2025 @ 2:00 p.m.
Anticipated Selection Announcement:	11 th day of February, 2025

Qualifications shall be printed, including one (1) electronic copy on a USB thumb drive in PDF format and organized in the same format as the original submission, and be enclosed in a sealed envelope or package, addressed to the City of Crossville. The name and address of the firm, the RFQ Title – “Municipal Financial Advisor Consulting Services,” shall be placed on the outside of the package. All items required for a responsive qualification shall be included. It is the sole responsibility of the respondent to ensure that the qualification package is received no later than the established due date and time at the proper location.

Qualifications received after the due date and time will not be considered. Qualifications submitted by facsimile or other electronic means will **not** be accepted. Submit/Deliver to:

In Person or By Overnight Delivery

City of Crossville
 ATTN: BIDS
 392 N. Main Street
 Crossville, TN 38555

Regular Mail

City of Crossville
 ATTN: BIDS
 392 N. Main Street
 Crossville, TN 38555

6.2 **Qualification Content**

The qualification submission may be formatted at the discretion of the respondent; however, it must, at a minimum, address the areas outlined below. The City values and encourages responses that are both clear and concise.

Coversheet: General Information

- A. Consultant's name, address, email address, and phone number, along with the name and e-mail address of a contact person, if different than the firm's name or signature on the qualification.
- B. State any conflicts of interest your firm or any key team member may have with this Project.
- C. Identify and describe any regulatory findings and/or fines, pending claims, disputes, and/or litigation and any that occurred within the past five (5) years involving your firm or any of your proposed sub-consultants. With respect to resolved matters, describe the outcome.
- D. Debarment – The Respondent certifies by submission of a response to this RFQ that neither it nor its principals is presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in this transaction by any Federal, State, or Local department or agency.

The qualifications shall be styled at the discretion of the submitter; however, at a minimum, it must address these areas:

Experience and Qualifications

- A. Firm Overview: Provide an overview of the firm, including the organizational structure (e.g., corporation, non-profit, partnership) and a brief history.
- B. Local Government Experience: Describe the firm's experience, expertise, and capabilities with respect to local government clients within the state of Tennessee.
- C. Key Personnel: Identify key personnel who would be assigned to the City, detailing each member's education, certifications, experience, and qualifications relevant to this procurement.
- D. Availability: Indicate the degree of availability of each identified individual for this procurement.
- E. Service History: Indicate how long the firm has been providing the services for various clients based on the City's Request for Qualifications.
- F. Past Success: Describe the firm's past success in providing services similar to those anticipated by the City's Request for Qualifications.
- G. Work Examples: Provide examples of work produced for similar clients.
- H. Client References: List at least five Tennessee cities with enterprise funds for whom the firm has provided similar services in the last four years. For each client, describe the work performed, noting similarities and differences with the City, and provide contact information for a reference. Include the City if it is a current or past client.
- I. Please provide a table listing all municipal advisory transactions conducted in Tennessee over the past five years, excluding any transactions performed at the state level. This table should include only deals completed for cities, counties, utilities, IDB's, and other

local governmental entities within Tennessee and can be submitted as an exhibit or appendix to the response.

- J. Conflict of Interest: Indicate any conflicts of interest between the firm and/or its key personnel and the City.

Capabilities and Unique Strengths

- A. Relevant Capabilities: Describe the firm’s capabilities, especially regarding similar scopes of services and clients, that make it well qualified for this procurement.
- B. Resource Depth: Describe the depth of resources, indicating the firm’s capacity to render services within industry-standard response times.
- C. Value-Added Features: Describe any exceptional, value-added features of the firm’s response.
- D. Competitive Advantage: Explain what sets the firm apart from its competition.