



## PUBLIC NOTICE

### REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS NO.: PC26-026

### SPECIAL MAGISTRATE SERVICES

The City of Panama City, Florida (the "City"), through the City's Development Services Department, seeks Qualifications from qualified Florida licensed attorneys to provide services in accordance with City of Panama City Ordinance 2324 and Florida Statutes Chapter 162 as a Special Magistrate. The City is re-advertising a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for Special Magistrate Services. Multiple magistrates are needed. All references to Florida Statutes, City of Panama City and Panama City Codes, and other laws/regulations will be interpreted to include "as amended from time to time."

**The complete RFQ documents for this project are available upon email request to the City's Purchasing Division at [purchasing@panamacity.gov](mailto:purchasing@panamacity.gov).** Addenda, if any, will be posted on the City's Purchasing Bid Requests webpage <https://www.panamacity.gov/bids.aspx> and on the City's Bonfire Portal at <https://panamacity.bonfirehub.com/portal/?tab=openOpportunities>. It is the sole responsibility of Respondents to ensure the receipt of all addenda. Therefore, it is recommended that Respondents periodically check the City's Purchasing Bid Requests webpage or the City's Bonfire Portal for updates through the issuance of addenda.

The City's Purchasing Division will receive Qualifications via the City's Bonfire Portal at <https://panamacity.bonfirehub.com/portal/?tab=openOpportunities> until 2:00 p.m. CT on **Wednesday, February 25, 2026** (the "Qualifications Due Date"). The Qualifications received will be opened **publicly** in City Hall, Lower-Level, Room 010 located at 501 Harrison Avenue, Panama City, FL 32401. For questions regarding registering with the Bonfire Portal or for assistance with Qualifications submission, please contact the Bid Specialist Johnnie Gallegos at [purchasing@panamacity.gov](mailto:purchasing@panamacity.gov). Qualifications received after this time will be automatically rejected. The responsibility for submitting Qualifications before the stated time and date is solely and strictly that of the Respondent. The City is not responsible for any delayed, late, lost, misdelivered, or non-delivered Qualifications, no matter the cause.

Neither the City of Panama City nor its representatives shall be liable for any cost incurred by any Respondent in the preparation of its response to this Request for Qualifications.

Information submitted in response to this RFQ will become the property of the City and is subject to Florida public records laws.

The City reserves the right to accept any Qualifications deemed to be in the best interest of the City, to waive any minor irregularities, scrivener's errors, minor omissions, minor deviations, and/or technicalities in any Qualifications, or to reject any or all Qualifications with or without cause and to re-advertise for new Qualifications, in accordance with the applicable sections of the Florida Statutes, the City Charter and City Code, this RFQ, and the best interest of the City.

**RESPONDENTS ARE ADVISED THAT QUALIFICATIONS SUBMITTED WITH IRREGULARITIES, DEFICIENCIES, AND/OR TECHNICALITIES THAT DEVIATE FROM THE MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS, EXPERIENCE, AND SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS OF A REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS ("RFQ"), REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS ("RFP"), INVITATION TO BID ("ITB"), INVITATION FOR BIDS ("IFB"), INVITATION TO QUOTE ("ITQ"), REQUESTS FOR LETTERS OF INTEREST ("RFLI"), AND REQUEST FOR SPONSORSHIPS**



(“RFS”) SHALL RESULT IN A NON-RESPONSIVE DETERMINATION. ONLY MINOR IRREGULARITIES, DEFICIENCIES, AND TECHNICALITIES MAY BE ALLOWED TO BE TIMELY CURED BY RESPONDENTS AT THE SOLE DISCRETION OF THE CITY. MATERIAL IRREGULARITIES, DEFICIENCIES, AND TECHNICALITIES CANNOT BE CURED BY THE RESPONDENT, AND ARE NOT WAIVABLE BY THE CITY.

## I. General Conditions

- A. The City of Panama City, Florida (the "City"), through the City's Development Services Department, seeks Qualifications from qualified Florida licensed attorneys to provide services in accordance with City of Panama City Ordinance 2324 and Florida Statutes Chapter 162 as a Special Magistrate. The City is re-advertising a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for Special Magistrate Services. Multiple magistrates are needed. Applicants must demonstrate the requisite knowledge, experience, technical expertise, and organizational and financial capacity to perform services requested under this RFQ. All references to Florida Statutes, City of Panama City and Panama City Codes, and other laws/regulations will be interpreted to include "as amended from time to time."
- B. The City's Purchasing Division will receive Qualifications submitted via the City's Bonfire Portal at <https://panamacity.bonfirehub.com/portal/?tab=openOpportunities> until 2:00 p.m. CT on Wednesday, February 25, 2026 (the "Qualifications Due Date"). The Qualifications received will be opened **publicly** in City Hall, Lower-Level, Room 010 located at 501 Harrison Avenue, Panama City, FL 32401.

For questions regarding registering with the Bonfire Portal or for assistance with Qualification submission, please contact the Bid Specialist Johnnie Gallegos at [purchasing@panamacity.gov](mailto:purchasing@panamacity.gov). Qualifications received after this time will be automatically rejected. The responsibility for submitting Qualifications before the stated time and date is solely and strictly that of the Respondent. The City is not responsible for any delayed, late, lost, misdelivered, or non-delivered Qualifications, no matter the cause.

Neither The City of Panama City nor its representatives shall be liable for any cost incurred by any Respondent in the preparation of its response to this Request for Qualifications.

- C. The City reserves the right to accept any Qualifications deemed to be in the best interest of the City, to waive any minor irregularities, scrivener's errors, minor omissions, minor deviations, and/or technicalities in any Qualifications, or to reject any or all Qualifications with or without cause and to re-advertise for new Qualifications, in accordance with the applicable sections of the Florida Statutes, the City Charter and City Code, this RFQ, and the best interest of the City.

Respondents are advised that qualifications submitted with irregularities, deficiencies, and/or technicalities that deviate from the minimum qualifications, experience, and submission requirements of a Request for Qualifications ("RFQ"), Request for Proposals ("RFP"), Invitation to Bid ("ITB"), Invitation for Bids ("IFB"), Invitation to Quote ("ITQ"), Requests for Letters of Interest ("RFIL"), and Request for Sponsorships ("RFS") shall result in a non-responsive determination. Only minor irregularities, deficiencies, and technicalities may be allowed to be timely cured by respondents at the sole discretion of the city. Material irregularities, deficiencies, and technicalities cannot be cured by the respondent, and are not waivable by the city.

- D. From the date of release of this solicitation until award of the contract(s), **no** contact or communication with City personnel or elected officials related to this solicitation is permitted. Any such contact or communication may result in the disqualification of the Respondent's Qualifications. Direct all communications to the Purchasing Division via email to

[purchasing@panamacity.gov](mailto:purchasing@panamacity.gov)

- E. Each Respondent shall examine the Request for Qualifications and other contract documents and inform him or herself regarding any and all conditions and requirements that may affect cost, progress, or performance of the work to be performed under the contract. Ignorance on the part of the Respondent in no way relieves the Respondent of the obligations and responsibilities assumed under the contract.
- F. All questions and requests for additional information must be made in writing to the Purchasing Division by email to [purchasing@panamacity.gov](mailto:purchasing@panamacity.gov). All questions and requests for additional information must be received no later than **5:00 p.m. CT, on February 18, 2026**. Late or misdelivered requests for additional information or clarification may not receive a response.
- G. The Purchasing Division will issue responses to inquiries received and any other corrections or amendments it deems necessary via written addenda, prior to the Qualifications Due Date. Respondents should not rely on representations, statements, or explanations other than those made in this RFQ and in any written addenda to this RFQ. Where there appears to be conflict between the RFQ and any addenda issued, the last addendum issued shall prevail.

Addenda will be made available on the City's Purchasing Bid Requests webpage <https://www.panamacity.gov/bids.aspx> and on the City's Bonfire Portal <https://panamacity.bonfirehub.com/portal/?tab=openOpportunities>. It is the sole responsibility of Respondents to ensure the receipt of all addenda. Therefore, it is recommended that Respondents periodically check the City's Purchasing Bid Requests webpage or the City's Bonfire portal for updates through the issuance of addenda. Prior to submitting the Qualifications, the Respondent should check the City Bid Requests webpage and the City's Bonfire Portal to ensure they have received and reviewed all addenda.

- H. All changes, modifications, or interpretations shall be handled by the Purchasing Department. In no case will verbal communication between the City and a Respondent override written communications or documentation. All communications must be in writing to be considered part of this Request for Qualifications (RFQ).
  - I. The City reserves the right to delay or modify the dates and timelines for the RFQ as needed.
  - J. Submission of Qualifications indicates acceptance by the Respondent of the conditions contained in this RFQ, unless clearly and specifically noted in the Qualifications submitted and confirmed in the contract between the City and the firm selected.
  - K. All information requested shall be submitted. Failure to submit all information may result in Qualifications being considered a "non-responsive" and, therefore, rejected.
  - L. Qualifications shall be binding upon the respondent and irrevocable for 90 calendar days following the Qualifications Due Date. Any response in which a respondent shortens the acceptance period may be rejected.
  - M. This solicitation is subject to all legal requirements contained in the applicable Panama City Ordinances and Resolutions, as well as all applicable County, State and Federal statutes. Where conflict exists between this solicitation and these legal requirements, the authority shall prevail in the following order: Federal, State, and local.

- N. Information submitted in response to this RFQ will become the property of the City and is subject to Florida public records laws.
- O. The Respondent acknowledges that the City is a Florida municipal corporation and subject to the Florida Public Records law. The respondent agrees that to the extent any document produced under this agreement constitutes a public record. The respondent shall comply with the Florida Public Records Law. Chapter 119, Florida Statutes requires that all material submitted in connection with a Qualifications response shall be deemed to be public record subject to public inspection upon award, recommendation for award, or thirty (30) days after Qualifications opening, whichever occurs first.

All materials that qualify for exemption from Chapter 119, Florida Statutes or other applicable law must be submitted as a separate file, clearly identified with the file name "Exempt from Public Disclosure". The City will not accept Qualifications when the entire document is labeled as exempt from disclosure. The City's determination of whether an exemption applies shall be final, and the Respondent agrees to defend, indemnify, and hold harmless the City and the City's officers, employees, and agents against any loss or damages incurred by any person or entity as a result of the City's treatment of records as public records.

- P. The Special Magistrate shall comply with Florida's Public Records Act, Chapter 119, Florida Statutes.
- Q. **If the Special Magistrate, as a contractor, has questions regarding the application of Chapter 119, Florida Statutes, to the Special Magistrate's duty to provide public records relating to this contract, contact the City Clerk at (850) 872-3021; [cityclerk@panamacity.gov](mailto:cityclerk@panamacity.gov) or [publicrecords@panamacity.gov](mailto:publicrecords@panamacity.gov); or 501 Harrison Avenue, Panama City, Florida 32401.**
- R. No elected official or employee of the City will participate in any decision relating to the agreement that affects his personal interest or relating to any agreement in which he has a personal or pecuniary interest, direct or indirect, in the contract or in the proceeds.
- S. No contract will be awarded to any person, firm, corporation, or other entity that is in arrears or in default to the City upon any debtor contract or that is in default as surety or otherwise upon any obligation to the City, or that has failed to perform faithfully any contract with the City.
- T. A person or affiliate who has been placed on the convicted vendor list following a conviction for a public entity crime may not submit a response on a contract to provide any goods or services to a public entity, may not submit a bid on a contract with a public entity for the construction or repair of a public building or public work, may not submit bids on leases of real property to a public entity, may not be awarded or perform work as a contractor, supplier, subcontractor, or contractor under a contract with any public entity, and may not transact business with any public entity in excess of the threshold amount provided in Section 287.017, for category two for a period of 36 months from the date of being placed on the convicted vendor list.

- U. Any Respondent who is deemed to have a conflict of interest prohibited by Chapter 112, Florida Statutes or by the Rules of Professional conduct of The Florida Bar, shall be disqualified.
- V. The City hereby notifies all that it will take affirmative action to insure that disadvantaged and women business enterprises will be afforded full opportunity to participate in any contract which may result from this Request for Qualifications and will not be discriminated against on the grounds of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age or physical handicap in consideration of contract award.
- W. The selection of a Respondent will not guarantee any minimum amount of services under the contract. The selection of a Respondent by the City does not guarantee the Respondent a contract.
- X. The Notice of Award will be posted on the City's website. Failure to file a written protest to the Purchasing Agent within the time prescribed in section 120.57(3), Florida Statutes, shall constitute a waiver of protest proceedings.
- Y. The City further reserves the right to:
  - 1. request clarification and additional information from any Respondent during the evaluation process;
  - 2. negotiate with the selected Respondent(s) to include further services not identified in this RFQ;
  - 3. re-advertise with either an identical or a revised scope of work or cancel requirements in their entirety;
  - 4. issue subsequent RFQs based on refinement of concepts proposed in response to this request;
  - 5. conduct investigations of the qualifications of the Respondent as deemed appropriate;
  - 6. request that the Respondent modify their proposal to more fully meet the needs of the City.

## **II. Scope of Work**

The Scope of Work to be performed by the awarded firm or individual consists of, but is not limited to, the following:

- A. The Magistrate shall review case files prior to attending hearings.
- B. The Special Magistrate shall conduct hearings as provided in Chapter 162, Florida Statutes and Panama City Ordinance 2324 related to the enforcement of the Panama City Code of Ordinances, other adopted ordinances, land development regulations, permits, and policies of the City.

- C. The Special Magistrate agrees to observe all pertinent laws in the exercise of his or her duties, including but not limited to the Sunshine Law, the Public Records Law, Chapter 112 of Florida Statutes relating to conflicts of interest, and laws relating to procedures for quasi-judicial hearings.
- D. The Special Magistrate shall serve at the pleasure of the City Commission and shall not be deemed an employee of the City.
- E. The City shall provide such clerical and administrative personnel as deemed reasonably necessary to support the Special Magistrate's activities and assist in the proper performance of duties. The Special Magistrate shall not be authorized to engage, hire, or use any other person except those provided by the City to assist in the performance of duties, at the City's expense.
- F. The jurisdiction of the Special Magistrate is not exclusive. An alleged violation of a code provision may be pursued by another remedy at the option of the City Manager and nothing shall prevent the City from taking such other lawful action, including but not limited to resorting to equitable actions.
- G. The Special Magistrate shall serve until a successor has been duly appointed and qualified unless otherwise directed by the City Commission. Selection of a Special Magistrate to assist with a particular case shall be decided on a rotation basis if more than one Special Magistrate is selected by the City Commission to serve.
- H. All other relevant assignments relating to code enforcement Special Magistrate services, as may be requested.

### **III. Qualifications**

- A. Respondent must be a member in good standing of The Florida Bar for a minimum of eight (8) years; and
- B. Be engaged in the practice of law; and
- C. Shall carry and provide proof of professional/malpractice insurance before award of contract; and
- D. Be knowledgeable of Florida law and Panama City's Code of Ordinances.
- E. Residency in Panama City is not required.

### **IV. Response Format and Submission Requirements**

- A. All Qualifications shall include the following information, organized in a clear and concise manner:
  1. **Title Page.** This shall show the individual's name, physical address, telephone number, email address, and date of submission.
  2. **Profile and Statement.** Profile shall be brief with a two-page maximum. Provide a history

of your experience and expertise as it relates to this position.

3. **Up-to-date Resume.** Include current licenses and certifications.
4. **Statement of Availability.** Explain your local availability and degree of accessibility to the City.
5. **Pricing.** Pricing should be in the format of hourly rates. While not a qualification, pricing may be considered during submission evaluation.
6. **Qualifications Submittal Form** which is included in Attachment 1 of this RFQ.
7. **Addendum Acknowledgement Form** which is included in Attachment 1 of this RFQ.
8. **Anti-Collusion Form** which is included in Attachment 1 of this RFQ.
9. **Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form** which is included in Attachment 1 of this RFQ.
10. **Drug Free Workplace Form** which is included in Attachment 1 of this RFQ.
11. **Waiver of Exemption of Meetings/Presentations Form** which is included in Attachment 1 of this RFQ.

## V. Contract Price

The City shall negotiate a contract for services at a rate of compensation which the City deems is fair, competitive, and reasonable.

## VI. Evaluation Procedures

The procedure for the evaluation of Qualifications and selection of Respondent(s) is as follows:

1. Request for Qualifications issued.
2. Receipt of Qualifications.
3. Opening and listing of all Qualifications received.
4. Preliminary review by City's Purchasing staff for compliance with the submission requirements of the RFQ, including verification that each submission includes all documents required.
5. Review by City staff and/or an Evaluation Committee (the "Committee") certifying that the Respondent is qualified to render the required services according to State regulations.
6. The Committee, appointed by the Director of Development Services or Designee, will meet to individually provide the recommended individual, individuals, firm, or firms to be considered for contract negotiations. The Purchasing Division staff will compile the preliminary tally for each individual/firm, whereby the Committee will establish a shortlist of individuals/firms deemed the most highly qualified to perform the required services.

7. The Committee will forward its recommendation to the City Manager.
8. After reviewing the Committee's recommendation, the City Manager may:
  - a. Approve the recommendation of the Committee and authorize City staff to enter into contract negotiations with the recommended individual(s)/firm(s);
  - b. Prepare a recommendation for the City Commission and seek approval to hire the recommended individual(s)/firm(s);
  - c. Reject the Committee's recommendation and instruct the Committee to re-evaluate Qualifications and make further recommendations;
  - d. Reject all Qualifications; or
  - e. Recommend that the City Commission reject all Qualifications.
9. If the City Manager prepares a recommendation to the City Commission, after reviewing the City Manager's recommendation, the City Commission may vote to:
  - a. Direct City staff to enter into a contract with one or more individual(s)/firm(s);
  - b. Reject all Qualifications;
  - c. Table their decision to a future date; or
  - d. Instruct staff to re-evaluate Qualifications and make further recommendations.

## **VII. Evaluation Criteria**

Qualifications will be evaluated by considering the following:

- Respondent's Experience and Qualifications

## **VIII. CONTRACT**

Upon the selection of one or more individuals/firms and completion of successful contract negotiations, a contract (or contracts) will subsequently be executed between the Special Magistrate(s) and the City setting forth the specific terms and conditions of the engagement consistent with the RFQ.

**ATTACHMENT 1  
REQUIRED FORMS**

**QUALIFICATIONS SUBMITTAL FORM**  
**RFQ No. PC26-026**

---

In compliance with the Advertisement for Proposal, this Individual or Firm proposes to perform all work as detailed in this Qualifications submittal.

By this Qualifications Submittal, this Individual or Firm certifies, and in the case of a joint Qualification Submittal each party certifies as to its own organization, that this Qualification Submittal has been arrived at independently, without consultation, communication, or agreement as to any matter relating to this solicitation with any other competitor.

---

Submitted By:

Name of Firm if applicable

Prepared By:

Name of Individual

Contact E-Mail:

Address:

Phone:

License No.

---

Signature of Individual  
or, if submitted by a firm, Authorized Representative of Firm

Date

SEAL: (*If submittal is by Corporation*)

## **ADDENDUM ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

I acknowledge receipt of the following addenda:

ADDENDUM NO. \_\_\_\_\_ DATED \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Individual/Firm: \_\_\_\_\_

Authorized Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

It is the sole responsibility of Respondents to ensure the receipt of all addenda. Prior to submitting the Qualifications, the Respondent should check the City Bid Requests webpage <https://www.panamacity.gov/bids.aspx> and the City's Bonfire Portal <https://panamacity.bonfirehub.com/portal/?tab=openOpportunities> to ensure they have received and reviewed all addenda.

## **ANTI-COLLUSION CLAUSE**

Individual/firm certifies that their response is made without prior understanding, agreement or connection with any Corporation, Firm or person submitting a response for the same services and is in all respects fair and without collusion or fraud.

Name of Firm, if applicable: \_\_\_\_\_

Authorized Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURE FORM**

For purposes of determining any possible conflict of interest, all individuals/firms, must disclose if any City of Panama City Commissioner(s), employee(s), elected officials(s), or if any of its agencies is also an owner, corporate officer, agency, employee, etc., of their firm.

Indicate either "yes" (a City Commissioner, employee, elected official, or agency is also associated with your firm), or "no". If yes, give person(s) name(s) and position(s) with your firm.

YES\_\_\_\_\_

NO\_\_\_\_\_

**NAME(S)**

---

---

---

---

**POSITION(S)**

---

---

---

---

Name of Firm, if applicable: \_\_\_\_\_

Authorized Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **DRUG FREE WORKPLACE**

To have a drug-free workplace program, a business shall:

1. Publish a statement notifying employees that the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession, or use of a controlled substance is prohibited in the workplace and specifying the actions that will be taken against employees for violations of such prohibition.
2. Inform employees about the dangers of drug abuse in the workplace, the business's policy of maintaining a drug-free workplace, any available drug counseling, rehabilitation, and employee assistance programs, and the penalties that may be imposed upon employees for drug abuse violations.
3. Give each employee engaged in providing the commodities or contractual services that are under Proposal a copy of the statement specified in subsection (1).
4. In the statement specified in subsection (1), notify the employees that, as a condition of working on the commodities or contractual services that are under Proposal, the employees will abide by the terms of the statement and will notify the employer of any conviction of, or plea of guilty or nolo contendere to, any violation of Chapter 893 or of any controlled substance law of the United States or any state, for a violation occurring in the workplace no later than five (5) days after such conviction.
5. Impose a sanction on, or require the satisfactory participation in a drug abuse assistance or rehabilitation program if such is available in the employee's community, by an employee who is so convicted.
6. Make a good faith effort to continue to maintain a drug-free workplace through implementation of this section.

As the person authorized to sign the statement, I certify the following:

(Check one and sign in the space provided.)

This firm/individual complies fully with the above requirements.

This firm/individual does not have a drug free work place program at this time.

Name of Firm/Individual: \_\_\_\_\_

Authorized Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

## WAIVER OF EXEMPTION OF MEETINGS/PRESENTATIONS

Pursuant to section 286.0113(2), Fla. Stat. (2011), any portion of a meeting at which a negotiation with a vendor is conducted pursuant to a competitive solicitation, at which a vendor makes an oral presentation as part of a competitive solicitation, or at which a vendor answers questions as part of a competitive solicitation is exempt from public meeting requirements. The City encourages transparent and open meetings and decision-making but will honor any request by a Firm to maintain the exemptions provided by section 286.0113(2).

Please indicate your preference regarding any meetings at which you may provide an oral presentation or answer questions regarding your submittal or at which negotiations may be conducted:

***Waive*** all requirements to keep such meetings and negotiations exempt from public meeting laws.

***Maintain*** all requirements to keep such meetings and negotiations exempt from public meeting laws.

Name of Firm, if applicable: \_\_\_\_\_

Authorized Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_