

HARNETT COUNTY



REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

COMPENSATION STRATEGY STUDY

Proposals Due November 24, 2025, no later 4:00 pm.

**Submit Proposals to:
Harnett County Finance
Attn: Renea Warren-Ford
Procurement Manager
455 McKinney Parkway, Lillington, NC 27546**

**Submit via UPS, FedEx or in person
Include Bid No. HR-11242025 on the outside of a sealed envelope.**

455 McKinney Parkway

Lillington, North Carolina 27546

PURPOSE

Harnett County Local Government ("the County") is seeking proposals from experienced and qualified consulting firms to conduct a compensation strategy study which will include recommendations and suggestions for implementation and maintenance.

Goals of the study are to:

- Ensure the County can attract and retain high quality employees
- Ensure market competitiveness with peer communities and the regional labor market

Key, example review objectives include:

- Analyzing position market rates and appropriate min/max points.
- Refining the County's current pay for performance program to ensure it appropriately recognizes and rewards exceptional employee performance.
- Examining appropriateness and design of potential career development ladders and other incentive approaches such as educational attainment, professional certifications, or second language skills.
- Examining internal pay equity

Project objectives should ensure program outcomes and recommendations that are internally equitable, externally competitive, understandable, legally defensible, easily maintained and administered by the County staff, flexible to change as market conditions evolve, and appropriate for the County's goals, structure, and reward system.

GENERAL CLARIFICATIONS AND QUESTIONS

General clarifications and questions related to the request should be sent to Renea Warren-Ford at bids@harnett.org. Please include **Compensation Study** in the subject line.

BACKGROUND

Harnett County is one of the fastest growing counties in North Carolina with approximately 146,000 residents. Harnett's tagline of "Strong Roots, New Growth," describes a county in transition, one that values its rural agricultural heritage while also embracing new growth and industry.

Harnett County is optimally located just between North Carolina's capital city of Raleigh and the internationally recognized Research Triangle Park to the north, and the nation's largest military installation in Fort Bragg to the south. The county is also centrally located in North Carolina and is within close proximity to the Great Smoky Mountains and Blue Ridge Parkway, and to the numerous Atlantic Ocean beaches and the Outer Banks.

Harnett County also possesses abundant natural resources including nearly 6,000 acres of park land and 26 miles of hiking and walking trails. Harnett is home to Raven Rock State Park and some of the best white water rapids in the region along the Cape Fear River.

The County currently employs approximately 1,100 employees in 25 departments providing a full range of services including public safety, development and planning, elections, solid waste, water and sanitary sewer services, health and human services, rural transit, management of public records, and recreational and cultural activities for residents.

Harnett County operates under a Board of Commissioners and County Manager form of government. The Board, comprised of five elected officials, holds the policy-making and legislative authority for the County. The Board of Commissioners appoint the County Manager to supervise all County offices and departments, citizen appointed boards, commissions and agencies, and prepares and submits an annual budget and Capital Improvement Program to Commissioners.

The most recent study was performed in 2023 and was implemented in July of 2023. The County completed a Position Analysis and Job Description revision project in 2022.

SCOPE OF SERVICES

The purpose of the Compensation Strategy Study is to assist the County in reviewing and analyzing the current staff compensation structure and obtain recommendations for improvements to the existing structure to ensure internal equity and external competitiveness. All regular, full-time and part-time staff positions will be included in the study. The County's goal is to provide competitive pay levels to its current employees and future prospective employees. The scope of services should include:

Compensation Strategy Review

Analyze the effectiveness of the existing base compensation strategy (annual merit pay and classification) and recommend changes, if needed. Recommend a base compensation strategy which maintains market competitiveness, uses pay for performance as a guiding principle, and leverages annual merit pay as the primary pay increase mechanism.

- a. Assist the County with identifying an appropriate market.
- b. Evaluate current salary structure, comparing with other local government entities both in North Carolina and those of similar size within our local region and the private sector, making recommendations (e.g. broadening our bands, using market trends, addressing compression, internal equity, etc.) as appropriate. Recommendations should include the geographic factors that impact salaries in this area.
- c. Analyze any statewide or regional standards that employers use to assist with justifying compensation decisions, especially as it relates to determining salaries for new hires, promotions, etc. Explain the effectiveness of these standards.
- d. Conduct an analysis of the current compensation and classification process/procedures and identify strengths and weaknesses, recommend necessary changes which include best practices and provide alternative options.
- e. Conduct an internal equity analysis of employee salaries and make recommendations, as needed. The analysis will also include the development of appropriate internal relationship guidelines.
- f. Conduct a customized compensation survey to determine whether current employees are compensated appropriately relative to market for similar positions based on the agreed upon

new market. The survey will be used to determine the relative internal value of each classification so that a fair and equitable compensation structure can be established.

- g. Review all rewards that the County currently offers and recommend an overall compensation system that includes other incentives.
- h. Recommend pay practices that provide for in-grade and progressive rewards.

Final Report and Conclusion

- a. Provide a final report to include an executive summary, the approach, all findings, principal recommendations, a detailed cost analysis and Implementation Plan with the associated costs. The Implementation Plan, which includes a communication strategy and associated materials, slides, explanatory booklets, etc. and cost analysis should be broken down in phases and priority.
- b. Consultants will be expected to attend several meetings with Human Resources staff and other internal stakeholders to provide information, answer questions and make a preliminary and a final presentation prior to meeting with the Board of Commissioners.
- c. Consultants will be expected to also attend several Board of Commissioners' meetings to provide information, answer questions and make a preliminary and a final presentation to the Board regarding the proposed recommendations.

COMPLETION SCHEDULE

The study shall be completed and submitted to Harnett County no later than **4:00 PM on January 16, 2026** for implementation in the County's FY2026-2027 budget.

SERVICE CONTENTS

Please provide the following:

1. **Company Background** – Provide information on the company background to include the following:
 - a. Firm local name, address, and phone number
 - b. Contact person, phone number, and e-mail address
 - c. Number of years in business
 - d. Provide brief summaries of key personnel assigned to this account including the designation of the person who will have the primary responsibility in conducting the study.
 - e. Provide the office location for each staff member
 - f. Describe contractual relationships, if any, with any other organization(s) that will be providing services regarding this project.

2. **Relevant Experience**

- a. Provide information on specific knowledge and experience relevant to conducting comprehensive Compensation studies, and recommending new Compensation plans similar to the services requested in this solicitation
- b. Provide a minimum of five (5) public sector references where your firm has completed comprehensive pay plan studies during the past five (5) years. Include client name, location, contact person, phone number, and e-mail address.

3. **Work Plan and Approach**– Provide detailed information on the methodology, approach and timeline that demonstrates how your firm will ensure that the study meets the requirements of the Request and the needs of the County. This section should include a well-defined work plan consistent with the project tasks demonstrating the ability and the strategy that will be used to complete the elements within the statement of work including:

- a. Description of the firm’s approach to the development of a compensation system, including information on the job evaluation system proposed, an explanation of the factors (or other criteria used in the evaluation) and the weighting of the factors, along with sample job descriptions and employee questionnaires.
- b. Tentative timeline for each task and deliverables required within the project.
- c. Description of the method by which the County will be apprised of progress throughout the review and study process.

4. **Fee Proposal** – The fee proposal should be submitted and include all costs associated with the performance of the services specified, including labor, materials, travel related expenses, and all related costs.

EVALUATION/AWARD CRITERIA

All responses received from qualified proposers will be reviewed and discussed by the Human Resources Director, County Manager, Finance Officer, and any other County leaders as selected by the County Manager. The County may hold discussions with all proposers judged reasonably susceptible of being selected for award, or potentially so. However, the County also reserves the right to reject any or all proposals if it determines that select proposals are not responsive to the RFP. The County also reserves the right to make an award without holding discussions. In either case, the County may determine a proposer to not be qualified and/or a proposal to not be reasonably susceptible of being selected for award, at any time after the initial closing date for receipt of proposals and the review of those proposals. Furthermore, the County reserves the right to delete or add functionality up until the final contract signing.

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

All firms will be required to follow Federal Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) policies. Harnett County will affirmatively assure that on any project constructed pursuant to this advertisement, equal employment opportunity will be offered to all persons without regard to race, color, creed, religion, natural origin, sex, and marital status, status with regard to public assistance, membership or activity in a local commission, disability, sexual orientation, or age.

MINORITY AND SMALL BUSINESS PARTICIPATION PLAN

It is the policy of Harnett County that Minority and Women Owned Businesses (MBEs) and other small businesses shall have the opportunity to compete fairly in contracts financed in whole or in part with public funds. Consistent with this policy, Harnett County will not allow any person or business to be excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or otherwise be discriminated against in connection with the award and performance of any contract because of sex, race, religion, or national origin.

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following factors by an evaluation team consisting of County management personnel. The award made to the firm whose proposal has been determined to be most advantageous to the County.

- a. Methodology and understanding of the requirements of the study
- b. Experience in providing this type of service for this size contract
- c. Demonstrated ability to meet commitments as requested in the RFP
- d. Relevant experience and qualifications
- e. Public sector experience
- f. Total cost
- g. Timeline for completion of project
- h. Reference responses

Please refer any questions to:

Renea Warren-Ford
Procurement Manager
bids@harnett.org

Please include **Compensation Study** in the subject line.

REFERENCES

1. Agency or Firm Name:

Business Address:

Contact Person:

Telephone Number:

2. Agency or Firm Name:

Business Address:

Contact Person:

Telephone Number:

3. Agency or Firm Name:

Business Address:

Contact Person:

Telephone Number:

4. Agency or Firm Name:

Business Address:

Contact Person:

Telephone Number:

5. Agency or Firm Name:

Business Address:

Contact Person:

Telephone Number:

EXECUTION OF PROPOSAL PAGE

Date: _____

By submitting this proposal, the Vendor/Contractor certifies the following:

An authorized representative of the vendor/contractor has signed this proposal.

It can obtain insurance certificates as required within 10 calendar days after notice of award.

The Vendor/Contractor has determined the cost and availability of all equipment, materials and supplies associated with performing the services outlined herein.

All labor costs, direct and indirect, have been determined and included in the proposed cost.

If required, the Vendor/Contractor has attended the pre-proposal conference and is aware of the prevailing conditions associated with performing this contract.

The Vendor/Contractor agrees to complete the scope of work for this project with no exceptions.

Therefore, in compliance with the foregoing Request for Proposal, and subject to all terms and conditions thereof, the undersigned offers and agrees, if this proposal is accepted within (60) days from the date of the opening, to furnish the services for the prices quoted.

Vendor/Contractor: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City, State, Zip Code: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Principal Place of Business _____

if different from above _____

By _____

Title: _____

(Type or Print Name)