



**JEFFERSON COUNTY
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JEFFERSON COUNTY, WISCONSIN

Request for Proposal

**Executive Search Consultant
County Administrator Recruitment and Selection Services**

September 12, 2024

**Request for Proposals
For
County Administrator Recruitment and Selection Services**

Request Release Date: September 12, 2024

Due Date: October 11, 2024, 12:00 p.m.

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I. Background

Jefferson County, established in 1836, is located in southeastern Wisconsin, strategically positioned between the metropolitan areas of Milwaukee and Madison. The County boasts a diverse population of approximately 88,000 residents, offering a blend of urban and rural living. Jefferson County is characterized by its rich agricultural heritage, vibrant family-oriented communities, diversified manufacturing sector, and highly valued natural resources.

The County operates under a traditional Board of Supervisors form of government, with 27 departments employing over 600 full and part-time employees in various capacities, including management, professional, law enforcement, technical, administrative, clerical, and general labor positions. The County Administrator is responsible for overseeing the day-to-day operations, implementing policies, and managing an annual budget of \$95.3 million. This role also includes planning for the future and ensuring the effective use of County resources to maintain and enhance the quality of life for its residents.

With approximately 39 committees, boards, and commissions, Jefferson County offers a dynamic environment where local governance and community involvement play a pivotal role in decision-making and policy implementation. The County's accessible location, combined with its strong sense of community and commitment to innovation, makes it an ideal place for both residents and businesses to thrive.

II. Purpose of Request

Jefferson County is seeking proposals from experienced executive search firms or individuals to provide comprehensive consulting services for a national search to recruit and select a new County Administrator. The County is committed to finding a highly qualified and visionary leader who can guide the organization through the complexities of local governance, oversee the effective management of a \$95.3 million budget, and ensure the continued delivery of high-quality services to the community.

The goal of this search is to identify candidates with a proven track record in public administration, strong leadership abilities, and a deep understanding of the unique challenges and opportunities facing Jefferson County. The successful consultant will work closely with the County's Executive Search Committee to develop a robust recruitment strategy, attract a diverse pool of applicants, and assist in the selection process to ensure the best possible match for the County's needs.

By engaging a professional search firm, Jefferson County aims to conduct a thorough, efficient, and transparent recruitment process that reflects the County's commitment to excellence in public service.

III. **Scope of Services**

Jefferson County's Board of Supervisors has established an Executive Search Committee tasked with overseeing the recruitment and selection process for a new County Administrator. The County seeks to engage a qualified consultant to guide this process, ensuring it is comprehensive, efficient, and aligned with the County's strategic objectives. The selected consultant will work closely with the Executive Search Committee to perform the following services:

1. Job Description Review and Update:

- Evaluate the current job description for the County Administrator position.
- Recommend and implement updates to ensure the job description reflects the current needs of the County and incorporates best practices in public administration.

2. Development of a Recruitment Plan:

- Create a detailed recruitment plan in collaboration with the Executive Search Committee.
- Establish a timeline for key milestones in the recruitment process, ensuring all legal requirements are met.

3. Candidate Outreach and Recruitment:

- Design and execute a national search strategy to attract a diverse pool of highly qualified candidates.
- Utilize a combination of traditional and innovative recruitment methods, including targeted advertising, professional networks, and direct outreach.

4. Screening and Evaluation of Candidates:

- Conduct an in-depth review of candidate credentials, focusing on experience, leadership qualities, and alignment with the County's goals.
- Provide the Executive Search Committee with a written summary of the top candidates, including approximately ten finalists for initial consideration.

5. Facilitation of the Interview Process:

- Assist the Executive Search Committee in developing interview questions and evaluation criteria.
- Coordinate and facilitate candidate interviews, including community forums and site visits.

6. Reference and Background Checks:

- Conduct comprehensive reference checks for finalist candidates, ensuring their qualifications and experiences are thoroughly vetted.
- Provide detailed reports to the Executive Search Committee, highlighting key findings from the background checks.

7. Final Selection and Negotiation Assistance:

- Support the Executive Search Committee in making the final selection of the County Administrator.
- Assist in negotiating employment terms, ensuring that the final agreement aligns with the County's compensation policies and expectations.

8. Confidentiality and Compliance:

- Maintain the highest level of confidentiality throughout the recruitment process, in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.
- Ensure all aspects of the recruitment and selection process comply with Jefferson County's policies and legal requirements.

IV. County Resources

Jefferson County will provide the selected consultant with a comprehensive set of resources to facilitate the recruitment and selection process for the County Administrator. These resources include, but are not limited to:

1. Electronic Access to Key Documents:

- The County will provide electronic copies of the current job description, organizational charts, strategic plans, and other relevant documents to assist in understanding the role and responsibilities of the County Administrator.

2. Budgetary and Compensation Information:

- Detailed information regarding the County's 2024 budget, compensation structures, and benefits packages will be made available. This includes data on salary ranges, benefits, and other compensation-related policies to ensure alignment with market standards.

3. Community and Stakeholder Engagement:

- Information and contacts for key community stakeholders, including members of the County Board, department heads, and community leaders, will be provided to facilitate engagement and input during the selection process.

4. Technology and Communication Tools:

- The County will provide access to communication platforms and technologies necessary for conducting remote interviews, virtual meetings, and other digital interactions. This ensures a smooth and efficient recruitment process, especially in accommodating candidates from across the nation.

V. Requirements of the Proposal

Proposals submitted in response to this Request for Proposal (RFP) should be comprehensive and provide specific information as outlined below. All proposals must be organized in the following order to facilitate the evaluation process:

A. *Introduction*

1. Provide the official name, address, phone number, and email of the consulting firm or individual submitting the proposal.
2. Identify the principal contact for this proposal, including name, title, and contact information.
3. Include the name of the person authorized to execute a contract on behalf of the firm or individual.

B. *Experience and Qualifications*

1. Offer a brief description of the organization, including its history, mission, and areas of expertise.
2. Provide detailed information on the experience and qualifications of the proposed staff members who will be performing the services. This should include their roles, relevant experience, and any certifications or special qualifications.
3. List the names of similar-sized public entities, especially governmental, where the firm or individuals have conducted successful executive searches within the past five years. Include reference contact information (name, title, phone number, and email address) for each.
4. Provide examples of at least three recent executive search engagements, highlighting outcomes and client satisfaction.

C. *Approach/Methods Used to Perform the Project*

1. Present a tentative schedule for each phase of the recruitment process, including profile development, recruitment, candidate screening, and selection.
2. Detail the approach to be used in addressing each search activity listed in the Scope of Services. This should include strategies for ensuring diversity in the candidate pool, methods for evaluating candidates, and techniques for maintaining confidentiality.
3. Describe the methods that will be used to communicate and collaborate with the Executive Search Committee, including how the consultant will manage meetings, updates, and decision-making processes.
4. Discuss any experience in effective community engagement and public input processes, particularly how the consultant plans to involve community stakeholders in the evaluation of final candidates.

D. *Cost Proposal*

1. Provide a total not-to-exceed cost for the entire search process, including an itemized breakdown of costs associated with major components of the search (e.g., candidate outreach, background checks, etc.).
2. Clearly define any additional services and/or reimbursable expenses not included in the basic fee, with an estimate of these costs.
3. Include any alternate proposals that identify areas where costs might be reduced without compromising the quality of the recruitment process.

E. *Additional Material*

1. Submit sample work products such as recruitment brochures, candidate questionnaires, reference check formats, and background reports.
2. Provide a statement of the firm's philosophy and policies regarding client satisfaction, particularly in the event of an unsuccessful search or the premature dismissal or resignation of the selected candidate within two years of appointment. State any guarantees or commitments offered in these situations.
3. Include a sample of any standard contract forms that would be used if selected.

F. *Proper Submission Requirements*

1. Submit five (5) hard copies of the proposal, along with one (1) electronic copy. The electronic copy should be emailed to the Human Resources Director at the address provided below.
2. Proposals must be received by 4:00 p.m. on the due date specified in this RFP.
3. Clearly label the envelope or container, and email subject line: "PROPOSAL FOR EXECUTIVE RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION SERVICES."

Contact Information for Submission:

Terri M Palm, Human Resources Director
Jefferson County Courthouse
311 S Center Ave, Room C2040
Jefferson, WI 53549
terrip@jeffersoncountywi.gov

VI. Selection Process

The selection process for the Executive Search Consultant will be thorough and objective, with the aim of identifying a firm or individual that is best equipped to meet the needs of Jefferson County. The process will involve several key stages:

A. **Initial Screening**

Upon receipt of proposals, the Executive Search Committee will conduct an initial review to ensure all submissions meet the mandatory requirements as outlined in the RFP. Proposals that do not meet these requirements will not advance to the next stage.

B. **Evaluation of Proposals:**

Proposals that pass the initial screening will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

1. Professional Experience: Experience in conducting executive searches for similar-sized public entities, particularly in government or public administration.
2. Staff Credentials: The qualifications and experience of the individual(s) assigned to perform the search, with a focus on their expertise in public sector recruitment.
3. Approach and Methodology: The consultant's proposed approach to the recruitment process, including their methods for attracting a diverse pool of candidates, evaluating candidates, and ensuring transparency and confidentiality throughout the process.
4. Cost: The total proposed cost of services, including any additional or reimbursable expenses, and the overall value offered by the consultant.
5. Timeline: The proposed timeline for completing the search, with an emphasis on the consultant's ability to meet deadlines and accommodate the County's schedule.
6. References: Feedback from references provided by the consultant, particularly from similar engagements in the public sector.

C. **Interview:**

1. Firms or individuals selected to proceed to the next step will be invited to make a short presentation before the Executive Search Committee. This presentation will allow the consultant to discuss their proposal in detail, respond to any follow-up questions, and demonstrate their understanding of Jefferson County's needs.
2. Finalists will be notified the afternoon of October 11, 2024. **The interviews will be scheduled the week of October 14, 2024.**

D. **Final Selection:**

1. After the interviews, the Executive Search Committee will deliberate and select the consultant they believe offers the best combination of experience, approach, and value for Jefferson County.
2. The selected consultant will be notified and begin contract negotiations with the County. If negotiations are successful, the contract will be awarded, and the recruitment process will commence.
3. Should the County be unable to reach an agreement with the initially selected consultant, the County reserves the right to negotiate with the next highest-rated firm or individual.

E. **Acceptance/Rejection of Proposals:**

Jefferson County reserves the right to accept the proposal that is deemed most advantageous to the County. The County also reserves the right to reject any and all proposals at any time without penalty and to waive immaterial defects and minor irregularities in proposals.

VII. Miscellaneous Information

A. Proposal Disposition:

- All materials submitted in response to this RFP will become the property of Jefferson County upon delivery. These materials will be retained for the County's use and may be included in the public record, subject to applicable public records laws.
- Any proprietary or confidential information submitted with the proposal must be clearly marked as such. However, non-disclosure of such information cannot be guaranteed due to public records laws.

B. Equal Opportunity:

- Jefferson County is committed to providing equal opportunity in all its programs, activities, and employment practices. The County does not discriminate based on age, race, sex, creed (religion), color, disability, association with a person with a disability, sexual orientation, marital status, pregnancy, political belief or affiliation, military participation, use or nonuse of lawful products during nonworking hours, national origin, ancestry, arrest record, conviction record (except as authorized by law), genetic information (including improper acquisition of genetic information), or any other characteristic as prohibited by law.
- The successful consultant will be required to comply with all applicable federal and state equal opportunity laws, orders, and regulations.

C. Incurred Costs:

Jefferson County will not be liable for any costs incurred by the consultant in the preparation and submission of a proposal, conducting a presentation, or any other activities related to responding to this RFP.

D. Questions/Contact Information:

Any questions regarding this RFP should be directed to the Jefferson County Human Resources Director at the contact information provided below. Inquiries should be submitted in writing via email no later than ten (10) days before the proposal submission deadline. Responses to significant inquiries will be shared with all potential respondents to ensure transparency.

Terri M Palm, Human Resources Director
Jefferson County Courthouse
311 S Center Ave, Room C2040
Jefferson, WI 53549
(920)674-7103
terrip@jeffersoncountywi.gov

E. Contractual Obligations:

1. The selected consultant will be expected to enter into a contract with Jefferson County based on the terms of this RFP and the proposal submitted. Any exceptions or changes to the standard contract language must be included in the proposal for consideration.
2. The County reserves the right to negotiate the final terms and conditions of the contract, including the scope of services and compensation.

F. Right to Cancel:

Jefferson County reserves the right to cancel or modify this RFP at any time prior to the execution of a contract. The County may also choose to reject all proposals if it is determined to be in the best interest of the County.