



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS EDA PROJECT #08-79 05672

The University of New Orleans Research and Technology Foundation is a 501 (c)3 that was created for the betterment of the University of New Orleans. It supports the research, scholarship, and commercialization activities at UNO and advances the development of the greater New Orleans economy by providing space for growing business, public, and non-profit enterprises. The Foundation leads and maintains The Beach. This public-private partnership combines the best of the Research & Technology Foundation and the University to bring together academia, government, and entrepreneurial endeavors to maximize innovation and find solutions in the STEM and social science fields.

The Foundation cultivates these rich public-private connections to support the tenants at The Beach. These collaborative connections give tenants the unique opportunity to engage in joint proposals, collaborate on research projects with university researchers, and supplement their workforce through internships for undergraduate and graduate UNO students.

ABOUT THE BEACH AT UNO

A premier research & technology park, The Beach at UNO is a vibrant community where academia, government, and entrepreneurial endeavors come together to maximize transformative solutions and build shared prosperity for our region.

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

The UNO Research and Technology Foundation ("UNORTF") is currently seeking "proposals" (**Statements of Qualification**) for architectural and engineering services for an anticipated capital project ("NEXUS") at its research park known as The Beach at UNO 2045 Lakeshore Drive, New Orleans, Louisiana 70122.

SCOPE OF WORK

The NeXus Center will be housed within approximately 15,000 square feet of the Center for Energy Resources Management ("CERM") at the Beach. It is intended to provide H2theFuture coalition partners (see **Exhibit A**) with a home while offering a welcoming space to future community partners and corporate tenants. The NeXus Center meets several needs, including: 1. A workplace for clean-energy companies that embody environmental sustainability; 2. A physical asset that spurs innovation and attracts new economic activity to New Orleans; and 3. The symbolic heart of the clean-energy movement.

Several sustainability and green initiatives will be utilized to offset the carbon footprint of the space and building footprint. The NeXus Center should be designed to stand as a showcase facility, a hydrogen hub for the energy transformation in South Louisiana. The Center will be designed with environmental-sustainability practices – appropriate to housing the most promising green hydrogen and renewable energy companies. Additional project background is identified on Exhibit A attached hereto.

The successful respondent will design a state-of-the-art facility which will include a collection of classrooms, innovation labs, open-floor and closed offices, and conference space. Modifications to the existing facility may also include a redesign of the entrance, exterior building treatment, modifications to the building's windows and thermal envelop, and an evaluation of additional best practices for reducing the building's carbon footprint, which could include replacement of the HVAC system. The facility redesign may also include enhancements to the front and back elevators which serve as the entrance. The design may include site improvements in the surrounding area, including parking (to add solar capacity), pedestrian spaces, walkways, and possible improvements elevating the significance of the building to the larger initiative, such as educational, demonstration, conference facilities in the adjacent space known as The Sandbox. The successful respondent will communicate with H2theFuture coalition partners and may collaborate with the coalition on the design of the space in order to ensure that the facility is best suited to meet the coalition's needs.

INSTRUCTIONS: Proposer shall submit the following to the UNORTF, 2021 Lakeshore Drive, Suite 420, New Orleans, Louisiana 70122, Attn: President/CEO not later than October 6, 2023.

- a. One (1) digitally signed proposal (maximum of three files) on a USB Flash Drive, in Microsoft Word format or as a PDF file, marked "**Architectural & Engineering Services for UNORTF/NEXUS**";
- b. A signed cover letter including the company's name, address and primary contact for the proposal. The primary contact information shall include submitter name, telephone, and email address.

Proposals should clearly demonstrate the Proposer's qualifications to perform the needed services and attend all factors applicable in a professional relationship. Proposals should include detailed resumes or curricula vitae for the principals performing the services.

Proposals shall include all planning, design and engineering phases of the project as well as all services necessary for the successful execution of the project including consultations, survey, soil investigations, supervision, travel, "as built" or record drawings, arrow diagram ("CPM/PERT") where applicable, and incidental costs, design to close out of project. There will be a requirement for sufficient visits to the project to ensure that the project proceeds in accordance with the approved plans and specifications.

Any contract between UNORTF and contractor providing A & E services shall be subject to all EDA grant requirements.

The UNORTF will not accept proposals submitted by fax. All proposals **must be received** by the UNORTF on or before the Delivery Deadline. The R&T Foundation will not accept proposals delivered after the said deadline. The UNORTF will not credit delivery claims not clearly documented by original receipt.

Proposal Timetable:

RFP Release	September 7, 2023
Deadline for Submitting Questions	September 21, 2023
Proposal Submission/Delivery Date	October 6, 2023
RFP Evaluation and Interviews, if required	No later than October 11, 2023
Notification	October 13, 2023

EVAULATION PROCESS

After reviewing submissions, an evaluation committee will score and rank the returns based on the criteria listed

below. After a short list has been determined, the committee may request information, clarifications, presentations, or interview some, or all the top ranked Respondents. The evaluation committee will determine the best value offer based on the submitted proposals and will begin contract negotiations.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Respondents will be scored using the valuation table below as requested in proposal requirements section of this RFP.

CRITERIA	POINTS
Overall Proposal Presentation	5
Firm Profile/Experience/Background	35
Professional Qualifications for Project	40
Experience Reducing Embodied Carbon through Renovation	10
SEB/DBE Participation	10
TOTAL	100

Substantive questions must be submitted by Proposers by the date noted above via email to the following party: **Julie Howe** via email: jhowe@thebeachuno.org **by 4:00 PM (CST)**. Questions and responses will be provided to all parties submitting substantive questions.

The UNORTF reserves the right to reject any and all responses received for this RFP or to select the Respondent(s) that, in the opinion of UNORTF, will be in the best interest of and/or the most advantageous to the UNORTF. The UNORTF also reserves the right to reject the response of any Respondent(s) who has previously failed to properly perform under the terms and conditions of a contract, to deliver on time contracts of a similar nature, and who is not in a position to perform the requirements defined in this RFP. The UNORTF reserves the right to waive any irregularities and technicalities and may, at its discretion, withdraw and/or resubmit a new RFP for services in the future.

Upon identification of an Architectural & Engineering firm meeting the UNORTF requirements of the herein described scope of work, the parties may negotiate a final agreement and fix the relationship by a formal contract.

DIRECT OR INDIRECT SEB/DBE PARTICIPATION GOAL OF 25%

The UNO Research & Technology Foundation, Inc. encourages the acquisition of goods and services from and direct participation of small and emerging business (“SEBs”), disadvantaged business enterprise (“DBEs”) and/or certified Minority Business Entities (“MBEs”) from the State of Louisiana and New Orleans Region. For your understanding, the term SEB as used in this Invitation to Bid means a business entity that has a Small Entrepreneurship (“SE”)/Hudson Initiative Certification from the Department of Louisiana Economic Development (“LED”). The term DBE as used herein means a business entity that is certified as a disadvantaged business enterprise under the State and Local Disadvantaged Business Enterprise program (“SLDBE”) or the Louisiana Unified Certification Program Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (“LAUCP-DBE”). Collectively, SEBs and DBEs may be referred to collectively as Emerging Business Entities (“EBEs”). Both the Hudson Initiative and DBE Program are race- and gender-neutral programs intended to provide additional contracting and procurement opportunities for certified small businesses and disadvantaged business enterprises by encouraging CONTRACTORS who receive state contracts to use good- faith efforts to utilize such certified entities in the performance of those contracts.

The UNO Research & Technology Foundation desires to achieve, to the greatest extent possible, commercially meaningful, and useful participation by SEBs and DBEs. By providing equitable opportunities for SEBs and DBEs, the

UNO Research & Technology Foundation derives multiple benefits, including contributing to the economic vitality of our communities and ensuring a broader selection of competitively priced goods and services. **The UNO Research & Technology Foundation's desired SEB/DEB goal for this project is 25%. Should your firm meet this goal or wish to meet this goal with the utilization of other firms, please identify all firms upon submittal of your proposal, and include their role and estimated percentage (%) of participation within your design team. Below are links to directories for a list of such firms.**

[UCP Search \(la.gov\)](#)

[The City of New Orleans: Office of Supplier Diversity, Disadvantaged Business Enterprise System \(dbesystem.com\)](#)

The UNORTF will evaluate each proposal submitted and will make every effort to administer the proposal process in accordance with the terms and dates discussed in the RFP. However, the UNORTF reserves the right to modify the qualification process and dates as deemed necessary.

To achieve a uniform review process and obtain the maximum degree of comparability, it is required that the proposals be organized in the manner specified below. Proposal shall include all of the following:

1) Title Page

Indicate project name above, the name of your firm, address, email address, telephone number(s), facsimile machine number(s), name of contact person and date.

2) Table of Contents

Clearly identify your materials by section, page number, and tabs.

3) Letter of Transmittal (*please limit to one page*)

Briefly state your firm's understanding of the services to be performed and make a positive commitment to provide services as specified. Give the name(s) of the person(s) who is/are authorized to make representations for your firm, their title, address, email address, telephone number(s) and facsimile number(s).

4) Summary of Firm Background to include the following:

- Bidder's Name(s)
- Bidder's Address
- Bidder's Contact Information (and preferred method of communication)
- Legal Form of Bidder (e.g. sole proprietor, partnership, corporation)
- Date Bidder's Company Formed
- Description of Bidder's company in terms of size, range and types of services offered and clientele.
- Bidder's principal officers (e.g. President, Chairman, Vice President(s), Secretary, Chief Operating Officer, Chief Financial Officer, General Managers) and length of time each officer has performed in his/her field of expertise.
- Bidder's Federal Employee Identification Number (FEIN)
- Evidence of legal authority to conduct business in Louisiana (e.g. business license number).
- Evidence of status of good standing with the L.A. Secretary of State
- Evidence of established track record for providing services and/or deliverables that are the subject of this proposal. Specific examples of prior work in line with this scope should be outlined.

- State whether the Bidder or its parent company (if any) has ever filed for bankruptcy or any form of Reorganization under the Bankruptcy Code.
- State whether the Bidder or its parent company (if any) has ever received any sanctions or is currently under investigation by any regulatory or governmental body.

5) References

Provide full names, addresses, and phone numbers for up to three past- client references capable of explaining and confirming Respondent’s capacity to successfully complete the project referenced in this proposal. Please list all past projects similar to this project. UNORTF staff may contact these references or industry sources, investigate previous projects and current commitments, interview some or all of the proposed team members, and take other information into account in its evaluation of the responses, including contacting individuals not listed explicitly as references.

6) Team

Please provide resumes for all principals, architects, designers. Additional information to be included in your firm’s response should be a list of projects, historical in nature, as well as sustainable projects during the past five (5) years that are now completed or which your firm is actively engaged in. Please identify team members with special designations or having worked on projects that have included the below criterial.

- LEED & WELL certification
- Experience with energy modeling, envelope analysis and restoration
- Demonstrated experience with renovation of existing facilities whereby LEED Gold/Platinum certification was achieved;
- Demonstrated experience with full mechanical system replacement
- Demonstrated experience with net zero buildings
- Demonstrated experience with on-site energy generation
- Demonstrated experience with innovation and research facilities
- Demonstrated experience with coworking environments

Please identify any EDA Federal Grant projects you have worked on or been affiliated with as well as any previous UNORTF projects.

7) Estimated Timeline

Estimated timeline for project is as follows:

- Design to CD’s – six (6) months
- Bid/Award/Contract – three (3) months
- Construction – up to twenty-four (24) months
- Closeout/warranty – one (1) month

Please provide any comments you wish to share regarding the above timeline.

8) Insurance Requirements

The Firms shall purchase and maintain for the duration of the contract insurance against claims for injuries to

persons or damages to property which may arise from or in connection with the performance of the work hereunder by the Firms, its agents, representatives, employees, or subcontractors. The Agency shall be defined as the University of New Orleans Research and Technology Foundation, Inc.

A. *Minimum Scope and Limits of Insurance*

1. Workers Compensation.

Workers Compensation insurance shall be in compliance with the Workers Compensation law of the State of the Firms' headquarters. Employers Liability is included with a minimum limit of \$500,000 per accident/per disease/per employee. A.M. Best's insurance company rating requirement may be waived for workers compensation coverage only.

2. Commercial General Liability.

Commercial General Liability insurance, including Personal and Advertising Injury Liability, shall have a minimum limit per occurrence of \$1,000,000 and a minimum general aggregate of \$2,000,000. The Insurance Services Office (ISO) Commercial General Liability occurrence coverage form CG 00 01 (current form approved for use in Louisiana), or equivalent, is to be used in the policy. Claims-made form is unacceptable.

3. Automobile Liability.

Automobile Liability Insurance shall have a minimum combined single limit per occurrence of \$1,000,000. ISO form number CA 00 01 (current form approved for use in Louisiana), or equivalent, is to be used in the policy. This insurance shall include third-party bodily injury and property damage liability for owned, hired and non-owned automobiles.

B. *Deductible and Self-insured Retentions*

Any deductibles or self-insured retentions must be declared to and accepted by the Agency. The Firms shall be responsible for all deductibles and self-insured retentions.

C. *Other Insurance Provisions*

The policies are to contain, or be endorsed to contain, the following provisions:

1. General Liability and Automobile Liability Coverages.

- a. UNO Research and Technology Foundation, Inc. and Board of Supervisors of University of Louisiana System, its officers, agents, employees, and volunteers shall be named as an additional insured as regards negligence by the Firms. ISO Form CG 20 10 (current form approved for use in Louisiana), or equivalent, is to be used when applicable. The coverage shall contain no special limitations on the scope of protection afforded to the Agency.
- b. The Firms' insurance shall be primary as respects the Agency, its officers, agents, employees and volunteers. Any insurance or self-insurance maintained by the Agency shall be excess and non-contributory of the Firms' insurance.
- c. Any failure of the Firms to comply with reporting provisions of the policy shall not affect coverage provided to the Agency, its officers, agents, employees and volunteers.
- d. The Firms' insurance shall apply separately to each insured against whom claim is made or suit is brought, except with respect to the policy limits.

2. Workers Compensation and Employers Liability Coverage.

The insurer shall agree to waive all rights of subrogation against the Agency, its officers, agents, employees and volunteers for losses arising from work performed by the Firms for the Agency.

3. All Coverages.

- a. Coverage shall not be canceled, suspended, or voided by either party (the Firms or the insurer) or reduced in coverage or in limits except after 30 days written notice has been given to the Agency. A ten-day written notice of cancellation is acceptable for non-payment of premium. Notifications shall comply with the standard cancellation provisions in the Firms' policy.
- b. Neither the acceptance of the completed work nor the payment thereof shall release the Firms from the obligations of the insurance requirements or indemnification agreement.
- c. The insurance companies issuing the policies shall have no recourse against the Agency for payment of premiums or for assessments under any form of the policies.
- d. Any failure of the Firms to comply with reporting provisions of the policy shall not affect coverage provided to the Agency, its officers, agents, employees and volunteers.

D. *Acceptability of Insurers*

All required insurance shall be provided by a company or companies lawfully authorized to do business in the jurisdiction in which the Project is located. Insurance shall be placed with insurers with a A.M. Best's rating of A:VI or higher. This rating requirement may be waived for workers compensation coverage only.

If at any time an insurer issuing any such policy does not meet the minimum A.M. Best rating, the Firms shall obtain a policy with an insurer that meets the A.M. Best rating and shall submit another Certificate of Insurance as required in the contract.

E. *Verification of Coverage*

Firms shall furnish the Agency with Certificates of insurance reflecting proof of required coverage. The Certificates for each insurance policy are to be signed by a person authorized by that insurer to bind coverage on its behalf. The Certificates are to be received and approved by the Agency before work commences and upon any contract renewal thereafter. In addition to the Certificates, Firms shall submit the declarations page and the cancellation provision endorsement for each insurance policy. The Agency reserves the right to request complete certified copies of all required insurance policies at any time. Upon failure of the Firms to furnish, deliver and maintain such insurance as above provided, this contract, at the election of the Agency, may be suspended, discontinued or terminated. Failure of the Firms to purchase and/or maintain any required insurance shall not relieve the Firms from any liability or indemnification under the contract.

F. *Subcontractors*

Firms shall include all subcontractors as insureds under its policies OR shall be responsible for verifying and maintaining the Certificates provided by each subcontractor. Subcontractors shall be subject to all of the requirements stated herein. The Agency reserves the right to request copies of subcontractor's Certificates at any time.

1. Workers Compensation Indemnity

In the event Firms is not required to provide or elects not to provide workers compensation coverage, the parties hereby agree that Firms, its owners, agents and employees will have no cause of action against, and will not assert a claim against, the State of Louisiana, its departments, agencies, agents and employees as an employer, whether pursuant to the Louisiana Workers Compensation Act or otherwise, under any circumstance. The parties also hereby agree that the State of Louisiana, its departments, agencies, agents and employees shall in no circumstance be, or considered as, the employer or statutory employer of Contractor, its owners, agents and employees. The parties further agree that Firms is a wholly independent Firms and is exclusively responsible for its employees, owners, and agents. Contractor hereby agrees to protect, defend, indemnify and hold the State of Louisiana, its departments, agencies, agents and employees harmless from any such assertion or claim that may arise from the performance of this contract.

G. *Indemnification/Hold Harmless Agreement*

Firms agrees to protect, defend, indemnify, save, and hold harmless, the State of Louisiana, all State Departments, Agencies, Boards and Commissions, its officers, agents, servants, employees, and volunteers, from and against any and all claims, damages, expenses, and liability arising out of injury or death to any person or the damage, loss or destruction of any property which may occur, or in any way grow out of, any act or omission of Firms, its agents, servants, and employees, or any and all costs, expenses and/or attorney fees incurred by Firms as a result of any claims, demands, suits or causes of action, except those claims, demands, suits, or causes of action arising out of the negligence of the State of Louisiana, all State Departments, Agencies, Boards, Commissions, its officers, agents, servants, employees and volunteers. Firms agrees to investigate, handle, respond to, provide defense for and defend any such claims, demands, suits, or causes of action at its sole expense and agrees to bear all other costs and expenses related thereto, even if the claims, demands, suits, or causes of action are groundless, false or fraudulent.



PROJECT DESCRIPTION & LOCATION

EXHIBIT A

The University of New Orleans Research & Technology Foundation, owner and operator of “The Beach” is collaborating with the H₂theFuture coalition to establish the “The NeXus Center,” which will serve as the physical and programmatic hub of the green hydrogen cluster. The success of a cluster relies, in part, on the ability to bring stakeholders together to exchange ideas and information. The NeXus Center will serve as the “center of gravity” for cluster stakeholders and the physical manifestation of the H₂theFuture concept.

The NeXus Center will be located within Orleans Parish at “The Beach,” a declared Research Park District by the City of New Orleans. The Beach is a thirty-acre site located on the shores of the historic Pontchartrain Beach. It is owned by the UNO Research & Technology Foundation, a 501 (c)3 organization. The Foundation harnesses the power of a public-private partnership with the University of New Orleans (coalition partner leading the H₂Testbed: Maritime Center project), bringing out the best of academia, government, and entrepreneurial endeavors to maximize innovation and shared prosperity. The Beach offers public agencies, non-profit organizations, and private companies a space to innovate and create through technological, cultural, and scientific interaction. Beyond the impressive physical presence of the campus—800,000 square feet of customizable office and laboratory space—The Beach hosts a community that fosters a spirit of inquiry and the exchange of ideas. The entrepreneurial campus atmosphere encourages research, development, technology advancement, training, and educational opportunities, strengthening economic competitiveness, and workforce development.

The NeXus Center will bring together stakeholders from across the project area. The project area is the united 35 parishes of South Louisiana, which totals nearly 3.5M residents, of whom 56% are white, 30% Black, 8% Latino, and 2% Asian (2020 Decennial Census). Throughout the project area, 18% of the population lives below the poverty level, compared to 13% nationally. This will immediately serve Orleans Parish (FIPS 22071) with additional impact in surrounding parishes: Plaquemines Parish (22075), St. Bernard Parish (22087), Jefferson Parish (22051), St. Tammany Parish (22103), and St. Charles Parish (22089).

The NeXus Center is the home of H₂theFuture. It will drive multiple solutions. First, it should provide a unifying space that facilitates knowledge transfer and collaboration between entrepreneurs, academia, students, and corporate entities. In this regard, it is similar to successful innovation district models in other parts of North America, such as the St. Louis Cortex District, the Brooklyn Navy Yard in New York, and the MarsDD in Toronto. Similarly, The NeXus Center cements the South Louisiana region’s relevance and intention to become a hub for clean energy.

With 30 acres, 5 of which can be available for development, there is ample room for expansion to include future developments, including a prototyping and testing facility, such as “The Workshop” (a facility originally proposed by the H₂theFuture proposal, but eliminated due to funding limitations). The NeXus Center will catalyze future development, drive employment opportunities for local and regional communities in one of the most disenfranchised sections of New Orleans.

This project is the anchor to the H₂NeXus workstream and complements the H₂NeXus – Program component application from Greater New Orleans Development Foundation. Located at The Beach (the brand name for the University of New Orleans Research & Technology Park), the NeXus Center will be a well-designed collection of classrooms, innovation labs, open-floor and closed offices, and conference space. It is intended to provide coalition partners with a home while offering a welcoming space to future community partners and corporate tenants. The NeXus Center meets several needs, including: 1. A workplace for clean-energy companies that embodies environmental sustainability; 2. A physical asset that spurs innovation and attracts new economic activity to New Orleans; 3. The symbolic heart of the clean-energy movement. This construction application is led by the UNO Research and Technology Foundation (R&T Foundation), with the support of The University of New Orleans, a public research university located across the street. The NeXus Center goals will be well supported by this public-private partnership that has created a coalition of academic and entrepreneurial leaders who are committed to driving research and an innovation ecosystem throughout the Southeast Louisiana region. From design to operations and beyond, this project is joining forces to leverage existing resources and build new and meaningful partnerships with mission-driven entities to advance equity and shared wealth creation.

From the design phase to final operations, The NeXus Center will be a community-driven project that incorporates diverse stakeholder voices and needs. To that end, the UNO R&T Foundation, in partnership the Greater New Orleans Development Foundation (H₂NeXus Program applicant), will develop a series of workshops and one-on-one interviews to gather input from all H₂theFuture coalition members and community leaders. This information-gathering phase is key to ensure a final outcome reflective of the needs and hopes of target audiences. The design process will be based on ongoing conversations between stakeholders and architects whereby audiences give direct feedback to proposed design and building solutions. Additionally, collaboration with the Louisiana Black Chamber of Commerce Foundation will be a requirement for the UNO R & T Foundation and A & E firm to ensure procurement contracts are equitably shared among MBE/DBE businesses.

A comprehensive promotion and launch campaign in conjunction with H₂Business Development and H₂Workforce awareness campaigns to demonstrate that The NeXus Center shall form a part of the entire green hydrogen cluster.

The NeXus Center will be located at The Beach within 15,000 square feet of the Center for Energy Resource Management (CERM). The CERM area will create state-of-the-art office space for industry and growing small businesses as well as facilities to promote academic/industry partnerships including student training in this up-and-coming industry. Several sustainability and green initiatives will be utilized to offset the carbon footprint of the space.

The NeXus Center should be designed to stand as a showcase facility, a hydrogen hub for the energy transformation in South Louisiana. The Center will be designed with environmental-sustainability practices – appropriate to housing the most promising green hydrogen and renewable energy companies.

The NeXus Center is intentionally aligned with EDA investment priorities. Through the partnerships with the region’s Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Opportunity Hub (OHUB), and the Louisiana Black Chamber of Commerce Foundation, the concept ensures that historically disenfranchised communities have a decision-making role in how the benefits of the Center are allocated **equitably**. By placing The NeXus Center in New Orleans and leveraging it as a catalytic driver for an urban revitalization in the area, this project will serve as a source of economic **recovery** (post-Katrina, Ida, Covid) and **resilience** to future economic downturns. With **workforce** and **commercialization** partnerships that connect 16 colleges and universities with industry partners active in the green hydrogen sector, The NeXus Center will be a breeding ground for workforce development and entrepreneurship.

The Nexus Center, as the hub for new energy in Louisiana and America, will seek public, private, and academic partnerships that will provide additional grant funding (e.g., DOE), income (e.g., via partnerships with offshore wind companies), and royalties (e.g., IP commercialization with universities)

While The NeXus Center is being planned and built, the NeXus initiative will be housed in a temporary office at The Beach.