NYC Department of Design and Construction issues RFQ for design, construction of new borough-based jails

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New York, NY The NYC Department of Design and Construction (DDC), on behalf of the Mayor’s Office of Criminal Justice (MOCJ) and the NYC Department of Correction (DOC), issued a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for design-build teams that will construct the new borough-based jails (Borough-Based Jails Program) in Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens and the Bronx.

For information about the RFQ and how to submit proposals, visit https://designbuild.ddcanywhere.nyc.

Passed by the City Council in early October, the city plans to close the jails on Rikers Island and build smaller, safer, and fairer borough-based jail facilities.

This is part of a once-in-many-generations opportunity to build a smaller and more humane justice system that includes four facilities grounded in dignity and respect, offering better connections to
and space for families, attorneys, courts, medical and mental health care, education, therapeutic programming and service providers.

“In evaluating responses from firms that want to contract with us, DDC will emphasize a proven history of exceptional performance along with good labor relations and the ability to meet important diversity goals, while seeking innovative designs for buildings that will become civic assets in the years to come,” said DDC commissioner Lorraine Grillo. “The response to our previous solicitations indicates that there’s great interest in our Design-Build program in the industry.”

“The firms eventually selected to design and build our new facilities have a tremendous opportunity to impact the lives of DOC staff, individuals in custody, volunteers and visitors,” said Department of Correction commissioner Cynthia Brann. “We want these new jails to reflect the very best in modern correctional practice, and New Yorkers expect and deserve nothing less.”

“Rarely does the architectural design and construction community get an opportunity to create important civic buildings that can have a positive lasting effect on the life of the city,” said Elizabeth Glazer, director of MOCJ. “We look forward to submissions that reflect both the quality and innovation that these buildings deserve and the magnitude of the transformation of the criminal justice system.”

Procurement for all work will take place through a two-step process: Submittal of a Statement of Qualifications (SOQ) in response to an RFQ followed by submittal of a Proposal by short-listed vendors in response to a Request for Proposals (RFP).

SOQs will be evaluated to create short-lists of firms that are deemed qualified to respond to the follow-up RFPs. Up to three vendors will be short-listed per project. Responses to the RFPs will then be evaluated and will lead to contracting with the Design-Build teams that will design and construct the four new facilities.

The use of Design-Build allows the city to manage only one outside team of designers and contractors, with a single point of responsibility for both design and construction services. The team works together from the beginning of the project, providing unified design and construction services to fit the City’s schedule and budget. The result is a more cost-efficient project with a shorter timeline from design initiation to completion.

The design process will be transparent and public, to ensure the best results for the city are achieved, before, during and after the Design-Build contracts are awarded. Neighborhood workshops will give local communities a chance to provide their views and input. Technical experts — including experts on urban design and planning, architectural design, building performance and justice reform — will provide feedback on design guidelines and other specifications. City officials with the Department of City Planning, the Public Design Commission and others will help guide the project along throughout the process.

In order to be eligible to respond to an RFP, firms must have responded to the RFQ released and
have been selected to progress to the next stage. There are seven total anticipated Design-Build contracts, three for early program work in Brooklyn and Queens, such as demolition of an existing jail, and four for the Design-Build teams that will design and construct the four Borough-Based Jails themselves.

In November 2019, DDC issued two RFQs for early program work. The first RFQ was for a new parking garage at the Queens site. The second RFQ was for dismantling an existing building and building swing space to facilitate DOC’s transfers for court appearances during the design and construction at the Brooklyn site.

DDC issued one RFQ to pre-qualify teams for the design and construction of the facilities, which will result in four additional anticipated Design-Build contracts:

Manhattan – To dismantle the existing building, build a temporary intake to facilitate DOC’s transfers for court appearances during construction, and design and build a new facility;
Bronx – To clear the existing site and design and build a new facility;
Brooklyn – To design and build a new facility;
Queens – To design and build a new facility.

In selecting the Design-Build teams and carrying out a collaborative Design-Build approach to project delivery, DDC is committed to using best practices as defined by the Design-Build Institute of America. DDC will utilize a best-value selection that prioritizes design, quality, past performance and qualifications. DDC will make available stipends to short-listed firms that participate in the Request for Proposal (RFP) process, but are not selected to be awarded a Design-Build contract.

The city also highly encourages participation in the jails program by Minority- and Women-Owned Business Enterprises (M/WBEs) and will set significant requirements for M/WBE participation in the program’s Design-Build contracts.

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