REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS FOR DESIGN SERVICES

RFQ #2027-028 University of Maine Energy Center (UMEC)

October 10, 2026

The University of Maine (UMaine), located in Orono, Maine, seeks qualifications from professional engineering and architectural firms, or multidisciplinary teams, to provide design services for the University of Maine Energy Center (UMEC).

General

The University of Maine intends to procure professional design services for a UMEC project to renew and replace critical central steam plant boilers and auxiliary equipment while ensuring the capability to utilize renewable fuels. The UMEC project will be essential to maintaining a reliable steam supply to the district energy system that serves approximately 85% of the Orono campus. The project will also support the University's 2040 carbon reduction commitments when the plant uses renewable fuels.

Three of UMaine's four existing fossil-fuel-fired boilers, along with associated auxiliary systems, have reached or exceeded their anticipated service life and require replacement.

A significant prior design effort was undertaken for additions to the existing central plant intended to achieve four principal objectives:

- Reliability and resiliency of campus steam service;
- Capability to utilize liquid and gaseous renewable fuel(s);
- Low life-cycle cost; and
- Long-term energy-cost stability

The prior design included building additions to house four new boilers, air emission control systems, a new multi-flue stack, renewable-fuel capability, fuel storage tanks, plant level UPS, all-new ancillary plant equipment, control room, offices, and classroom space.

A construction cost estimate completed in October 2024, based on the prior design, determined that the proposed design exceeded available project funding. The University's current target construction budget for the project is approximately $75 million.

The University has undertaken a separate campus electrical infrastructure upgrade project, which includes capacity to power an electrically driven UMEC project, fed from dual dedicated underground feeders from the new 4160-volt power distribution center located at the east campus substation.

The selected design team will be responsible for not just the design of the plant-specific electrically driven equipment and plant power reliability systems but will be responsible for the design of the connection to the campus electrical distribution system.

The existing central plant will need to continue to operate requiring the design team to develop a phased approach for construction through transferring the campus to the new system.

The University remains committed to the four principal objectives while having the ability to operate on natural gas or No. 2 fuel and looks for the selected design team to develop a UMEC project that best meets the University's operational, reliability, sustainability and budget objectives.

• **Phase 1 – Qualifications-Based Assessment:** Strictly qualifications based. Respondents will be evaluated and scored using relevant experience, qualifications of the proposed team, and other RFQ criteria established by the University Project Team. The University anticipates shortlisting approximately three firms for Phase 2. Each finalist's Phase 1 score will be divided by 10 and carried forward into the final selection as a maximum of 10 points (e.g., a Phase 1 score of 78 carries forward as 7.8 points out of 10).

• **Phase 2 – Paid Limited Professional-Services Assessment:** Phase 2 is intentionally structured as a stipend based, limited professional-services assessment performed by the shortlisted firms rather than an uncompensated request for prospective design work. The University is asking each finalist to review substantial existing project information and provide independent professional judgment regarding the viability of that information, the appropriate path forward, value-management opportunities, operational integration, and alignment with the current construction budget. Finalists are not expected to produce completed design solutions, construction documents, or speculative design work prior to award.

> *Each Phase 2 finalist that satisfactorily completes the required Phase 2 assessment will receive the same fixed payment of $10,000 under a limited professional-services agreement, regardless of its final ranking or whether it is selected for the subsequent design-services contract. If a finalist is ultimately selected for the project, the Phase 2 payment will not be credited against, deducted from, or otherwise incorporated into the negotiated fee for the subsequent design-services contract. Phase 2 services will be performed solely under a separate limited professional-services agreement and do not constitute authorization to commence design services for the Project. Full design services may commence only following final selection, successful scope and fee negotiation, and execution of the University's design agreement.*

The RFQ outlines the Phase 2 process at a high level. Detailed Phase 2 assessment questions and workshop questions will not be published in the RFQ. They will be provided only to the finalists and will be included in the initial Phase 2 document package issued within 48 hours of finalist notification.

Design for the project will begin immediately following execution of a design agreement with the selected firm or lead firm.

SECTION II: REQUIRED SUBMISSION INFORMATION (PHASE 1)

The team's Statement of Qualifications shall respond to each specific selection criteria, with responses organized in discrete sections and in the same order as presented below. Each team's submittal must include an index, with tabs corresponding to each criterion.

A. Letter of Interest with Team Profile: Individual firms or teams desiring to be considered should submit a letter indicating interest and the ability to start work immediately. For teams, please indicate which firm is the lead firm. Please include the email address and physical address of letter signatory.

B. Design & Technical Experience: Experience in the design and engineering of central utility plants and steam-generation infrastructure of similar size and scope in the past ten (10) years, which demonstrates the firm's ability to manage the project through all project phases:

1. Include examples of central steam plant and steam utility designs preferred for post-secondary or institutional campuses. Indicate project delivery method for each
2. Include examples of utility infrastructure renewal, boiler replacement, and integration into existing operational steam and electrical infrastructure.
3. Include information regarding firm's ability to manage schedule and budget in each project description.
4. Do not include projects unless personnel from the previous work will be assigned and dedicated to this project.

C. Principal Team Members: Resumes and roles of each team member expected to perform the work and their anticipated time commitment to this project. Proposed project principal, project manager, and principal mechanical/steam-plant technical lead must be clearly identified.

D. References: Names, telephone numbers and email addresses of references specific to the relevant projects as well as references for proposed project team members. Provide a minimum of three (3) references (name, address, telephone number, and email address) who are current or former clients for whom similar work has been performed within the last three (3) years and who can be contacted by UMaine with respect to the firm's reputation for work, responsibility, timeliness, cost, and efficiency. References from current UMaine employees will not be accepted. Letters of reference may be submitted with additional information as appropriate.

E. Consultants: A list of outside consultants expected to be used for this project, including the expected extent of involvement these consultants will contribute to the project through construction.

F. Sustainable/Green Building & Efficiency Design: Demonstrated experience incorporating sustainable design concepts, energy efficiency, and renewable energy integration.

G. Other Related Information: As desired, provide any other information the firm or team considers relevant to the evaluation of the firm's or team's qualifications. Prospective designs or solutions for the projects will not be evaluated for selection purposes during Phase 1.

SECTION III: SUBMISSION PROCESS

A. Submission and Selection Schedule

The process schedule is anticipated to be as follows:

- **University advertises for qualifications: Saturday October 10, 2026**
- **Deadline for Questions due no later than 4:00pm: Tuesday October 27, 2026**

  Email Questions to cppmquestions@maine.edu
- **Response to Questions due no later than 4:00pm: Friday October 30, 2026**
- **Phase 1 Qualifications submissions due no later than 2:00pm: Tuesday November 10, 2026**
- **Anticipated notification of shortlisted Phase 2 finalists: Week of November 16th.**

- **Issuance of Phase 2 Package & Questions to Finalists:** Within 48 hours of finalist notification
- **Existing Central Steam Plant Tour:** December 1st – 3rd.
- **Phase 2 Formal Question Period Closes:** December 18th, 2026
- **Interactive Finalist Workshops / Interviews:** Week of January 11th, 2027
- **Anticipated notification of selected firm:** Week of January 25, 2027

B. Contact Person

Questions regarding this RFQ shall be submitted by email to:

Jacob Olsen
Senior Director of Capital Planning and Project Management
cppmquestions@maine.edu

Questions with responses and updates will be posted on the FM web site as appropriate:
https://www.maine.edu/general-services/capital-planning-project-management/

Do not contact any other University employee, representative or student regarding this RFQ unless specifically directed to do so in writing by the designated contact.

C. Submissions

1. Time, Date and Place Due: Submittals are due no later than 2:00pm on Tuesday November 10, 2026.

All submissions shall be addressed and submitted to:
Jacob Olsen
Senior Director of Capital Planning and Project Management
University of Maine System
Office of Facilities Management
5765 Service Building, Room 111
Orono ME 04469-5765

Submissions received after the deadline will not be considered. Faxed or emailed submissions will not be accepted. Firms assume all risks of the method of delivery chosen. UMS assumes no responsibility for delays caused by any package or mail delivery service.

2. Submission Identifier: The outside of containers in which proposals are submitted must be clearly marked with the firm's return address and the notation: Qualifications to Provide Design Services, University of Maine; University of Maine Energy Center (UMEC)

3. Number of Copies: One (1) printed original, four (4) hard copies and one (1) .pdf copy on thumb drive.

D. Phase 2 Schedule and Information Protocol

- Finalists are notified of advancement to Phase 2.

• Within 48 hours of notification, each finalist receives the designated Phase 2 project-information package, including detailed assessment/workshop questions, existing design documents, relevant project information, and the independent third-party construction cost estimate.

• Finalists may begin submitting written questions immediately upon receipt of the Phase 2 package.

• Approximately two weeks after finalist notification, the University conducts a tour of the existing Central Steam Plant for each finalist.

• Following the plant tour, the formal question period remains open for approximately three additional weeks. Questions are due by 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday.

• The University provides written responses no later than 5:00 p.m. Friday of that week. All substantive questions and responses are distributed to all finalists.

• After the three-week formal question period closes, finalists have approximately two additional weeks to prepare for the three-hour interactive finalist workshop/interview.

E. Plant Tour Protocol

The tour is intended primarily to allow finalists to observe existing physical and operating conditions. University representatives may provide factual clarification concerning observable existing conditions. Substantive questions concerning project intent, prior design decisions, budget, future requirements, scope, or interpretation of the existing project documents should be submitted through the formal written-question process. Material questions raised during a tour shall be documented and answered in writing for all finalists.

F. Neutral Treatment of Prior Project Participants

The RFQ and Phase 2 materials shall not identify previous designers, consultants, contractors, subcontractors, or other prior participants by name. Respondents shall use neutral terminology, such as 'existing design documents,' 'prior design package,' 'existing project information,' 'prior project studies,' and 'third-party construction cost estimate.' This is particularly important because firms or individuals previously associated with the project may participate on responding teams.

SECTION IV: SELECTION & EVALUATION PROCESS

A. General

All qualifications submitted in response to Phase 1 of this RFQ will be reviewed for completeness prior to referral to the Selection Committee.

B. Selection Committee

The Selection Committee will consist of representatives from the University of Maine, University of Maine Facilities Management, and University of Maine System Capital Planning and Project Management.

C. Phase 1 Submittal Evaluation Criteria

Phase 1 will be strictly qualifications based. Respondents will be evaluated and scored on a 0–100 scale using relevant experience, qualifications of the proposed team, and criteria established in Section II. The University anticipates shortlisting approximately three firms for Phase 2.

D. Phase 2 Assignment & Interactive Presentation

The purpose of Phase 2 is to obtain each finalist's independent professional judgment regarding the most appropriate path forward. The University is not presupposing that the existing design should be utilized, value engineered, partially utilized, or abandoned. A finalist may conclude that the previous design is fundamentally viable and should be continued; that portions should be treated as schematic design or design-development-level information; or that substantial redesign or a new basis of design is warranted.

The Phase 2 assessment is not intended to constitute a comprehensive peer review, code review, independent design verification, or professional adoption of the existing design documents. Finalists are expected to perform only the level of review reasonably necessary to form and communicate their professional recommendation.

Each finalist will participate in an interactive in-person presentation with the selection committee lasting up to three hours. The session should allow the finalist to present its assessment and recommendation and then engage in substantive discussion with the selection committee. The proposed project principal, project manager, and principal mechanical/steam-plant technical lead shall participate meaningfully. Finalists shall provide copies of the presentation materials used during the workshop.

Phase 2 Evaluation: Finalists will be evaluated on a 90-point scale based on the quality of their professional assessment and recommendation, demonstrated understanding of the Project and existing conditions, approach to budget and value management, operational and phasing considerations, technical judgment, proposed project approach, and performance during the interactive workshop. The Phase 2 score will be combined with the carried-forward Phase 1 score for a maximum final score of 100 points.

SECTION V: CONTRACTING & CM@R REQUIREMENTS

A. To be considered, design firms or teams must be capable of starting work immediately following the conclusion of the selection process. The selected team shall designate a single lead firm or contracting entity with which the University will enter into the design agreement. The lead firm shall be responsible for coordination of the entire design team and its consultants. The University will not enter into multiple prime design agreements for the Project.

B. Following completion of Phase 2 scoring, the University will establish the final qualifications-based ranking for selection of the chosen firm. The University will negotiate scope and fee with the highest-ranked firm in accordance with applicable UMS procedures. The Maine Bureau of General Services recommended A/E fee structure will be used as a reference in evaluating the proposed design fee. The selected firm will be required to provide supporting documentation and rationale for its proposed fee.

C. Future CM@R Coordination: The University anticipates a separate procurement for a Construction Manager at Risk. The selected design consultant will be expected to collaborate effectively with the future CM@R during design, preconstruction, estimating, constructability review, value engineering, phasing, schedule development, procurement planning, and cost reconciliation while retaining professional responsibility for the design.

D. Licensing, Deliverables & General Terms: The firm with whom the University will sign a contract must have an architect or engineer licensed to work within the state of Maine who will be

required to seal all design documents. The firm shall be required to provide all construction and record drawings for this project on electronic media (CAD) in either .dwg (preferred) or .dxf format, as well as in .pdf format and prepare contract documents in accordance with CSI MasterFormat 2004 or most recent version.

The selected firm will be required to enter into the University's standard design agreement, including applicable UMS terms, conditions, insurance requirements, design criteria, and scope-of-services requirements.

The Firm or Team selected will be required to show evidence of, and maintain through the one-year project correction period following substantial completion of the project, Professional Liability (Errors and Omissions) Insurance through a Company licensed to do business in Maine, with a minimum coverage per occurrence of One Million Dollars ($1,000,000).

Other required insurance types and limits are described in AIA Document B102 – 2017 Standard Form of Agreement Between Owner and Architect under Article 1.5. The AIA B102 template can be viewed at the University of Maine System Office of Facilities Management and General Services web site at:
http://www.maine.edu/general-services/capital-planning-project-management/capital-construction-design-documents/

Scholarships, donations or gifts to the University will not be considered in the evaluation of responses.