

Request for Proposal

Title: Trenton Water Works Regionalization Support Services

Issue Date: April 16, 2025

Proposal Due Date: May 30, 2025

1. Introduction

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP), working in partnership with the City of Trenton and the Townships of Hamilton, Ewing, Lawrence, and Hopewell (the “Participants”), is seeking proposals from qualified consultants or firms to assist in the establishment of a Regional Water Utility. Currently, Trenton Water Works (TWW) a municipally owned department in the City of Trenton provides water to over 200,000 people residing in the City of Trenton and in portions of the surrounding municipalities in Ewing Township, Hamilton Township, Lawrence Township and Hopewell Township. Under the regional governance structure all five (5) participating towns will have representation and influence over key decisions, fostering a sense of shared ownership and mutual responsibility. This participatory approach is crucial for maintaining trust and cooperation among the towns, as it ensures that the unique needs and priorities of each community are addressed.

The benefits of a regional governance structure are twofold. Firstly, it enables the pooling of resources and expertise, allowing for more efficient and effective management of the water system. By working together, the towns can achieve economies of scale, reduce costs, and enhance service quality. Joint decision-making also encourages innovation and the sharing of best practices, leading to improved operational strategies and technological advancements.

Involving all towns in the governance structure fosters a more equitable distribution of resources and services. Decisions about infrastructure investments, maintenance, and resource allocation are made with the collective good in mind, ensuring that all communities benefit fairly from the regional system. This collaborative approach also strengthens the system's resilience, as towns are more likely to support each other during emergencies and disruptions.

Work is anticipated to begin on July 1, 2025. The timeline for completion of this project is 24 months.

2. Background

Trenton Water Works (TWW) is a public community surface water system located in Mercer County, New Jersey that provides water to over 200,000 people residing in the City of Trenton and in portions of the surrounding municipalities in Ewing Township, Hamilton Township, Lawrence Township and Hopewell Township. The system relies upon surface water from the Delaware River to meet demand and provide an average of 28 million gallons per day (MGD) with summer peaks of 33 MGD.

The water is treated at a conventional filtration plant located along Route 29 in the City of Trenton consisting of the Delaware river intake, raw water pumps, coagulation, flocculation, clarification, filtration, disinfection, corrosion control treatment, and a high lift pumping station.

Treated water from the plant is distributed in two different ways: 1) After treatment with zinc orthophosphate for corrosion control, through a 36-inch water main to a gravity zone in downtown Trenton that serves approximately 30% of the customers in the TWW service area; and 2) Through a 48-inch water main to the Pennington Reservoir, an uncovered finished water reservoir with a capacity of 100 million gallons (MG), of which 78 MG is available for use. The reservoir serves as a balancing tank for pressure purposes and provides up to three days of water during emergencies affecting the intake or treatment plant. Water leaving the reservoir is pumped through Central Pump Station to serve 70% of TWW customers in the high service area including portions of Trenton, Ewing, Lawrenceville, Hamilton, and Hopewell. When the water treatment plant is offline, the reservoir can supply the gravity zone by opening gate valves which normally isolate the two pressure zones.

The TWW service area system consists of approximately 683 miles of transmission and distribution piping. TWW supplies water to Aqua Hamilton through three (3) interconnections and maintains an interconnection with Aqua Lawrenceville. TWW also maintains an interconnection with New Jersey American Water – Raritan (NJAW) that could potentially supply TWW with 11.5 MGD.

3. Qualifications and Objectives of the “Firm”

Qualifications and Responsibilities

Candidate firms must be subject matter experts in the water sector or applicable field and possess industry standard qualifications necessary to provide technical, managerial, and financial analysis and advice in support of the regionalization effort. Additionally, knowledge of local government finance, laws, and regulations are required. Candidate firms must have experience and capabilities to serve as a convener and neutral third-party facilitator among the Participants, as well as liaison to the general public of the service area. Candidate firms must have experience with regulatory compliance.

The selected “firm” will act as the project lead and will play a critical role in the regionalization effort, tasked with managing the entire process to ensure that the initiative meets its goals as stated above. This involves meticulous planning, coordination, and execution of various stages of the project, ranging from initial assessments and stakeholder engagement to implementation and monitoring of outcomes.

One of the key responsibilities of the project lead is working closely with the towns involved in the regionalization effort. This requires effective communication and collaboration with local government officials, utility managers, and community stakeholders throughout the process to understand their unique needs and concerns. By fostering strong partnerships and encouraging active participation, the project lead ensures that all voices are heard, paving the way for a more inclusive and responsive approach to drinking water management. The project lead must also facilitate regular meetings and workshops to keep stakeholders informed and engaged throughout the process, addressing any challenges or feedback promptly.

Additionally, the project lead must ensure that the regionalization effort adheres to regulatory requirements and industry standards. This involves working with candidate firms that are subject matter experts in the drinking water sector, possessing the qualifications necessary to provide comprehensive technical, managerial, and financial analysis and advice. The project lead is responsible for evaluating these firms to ensure they have the experience and capabilities to act as conveners and neutral third-party facilitators among the participants. Furthermore, the project lead serves as a liaison to the general public, communicating the benefits and progress of the regionalization effort transparently to gain community support and trust. Through strategic leadership and collaboration, the project lead plays a vital role in achieving the long-term vision of a sustainable and high-quality drinking water service for the region.

The project lead must provide a monthly status report that includes financial, contractual and project updates to the Executive Steering Committee and the Working Group and post monthly summary updates on the Regionalization website.

4. Scope of Work

The project scope includes the tasks listed below. The selected firm will be responsible for TASK 1 – Project Management. The selected firm may engage the assistance of a subcontractor to support completing the remainder of the tasks with approval of the Executive Steering Committee

1. Project Management and Terms of Engagement

- Serve as the project lead ensuring all tasks in the Scope of Work are completed.
- Conduct necessary baseline assessments, analysis, and stakeholder engagement to develop and implement a new regional governance and management structure.
- Act as a leader and facilitator, ensuring that the transformation is carried out effectively, within budget, and on schedule, while meeting the needs and expectations of all stakeholders involved.
- Develop individualized work plans and/or Requests for Proposals (RFPs) for tasks listed under Section 4, Scope of Work, outside the Firms areas of expertise establish criteria for evaluating the proposals, ensure the RFPs meet all legal, regulatory and industry standards, select contractor, engage contractors after approval by the Executive Steering Committee or designee, monitor performance, and maintain detailed records of contract activities, amendments and communications to ensure transparency and accountability.
- Allocate and manage resources in an efficient matter, including personnel, budget, and technology, to keep the project on track.
- Address any conflicts or issues that arise during the transition, working to find resolutions that satisfy all parties involved.
- Establish metrics to monitor progress of the transition and performance
- Establish a routine meeting schedule with the Executive Steering Committee and the Working Group
- Establish Executive Steering Committee (Mayors, NJDEP Commissioner & Assistant Commissioner of NJDEP Water Resource Management)

- Establish the Working Group comprised of appropriate local government and state government representatives based on recommendations from the Steering Committee. Present to the Steering Committee for final approval.
 - Develop Work Plan and Milestones
 - Document and report progress and recommendations to the Executive Steering Committee
2. **Needs Assessment and Goal Setting**
- Conduct a thorough analysis of community utility needs.
 - Assess the potential contributions of all Participants
 - 1. Asset Identification and Valuation
 - 2. Liability Assessment
 - 3. Financial Statements Review
 - Define clear objectives for the utility services
 - Establish organizational mission and objectives
3. **Establish Governance and Organizational Structure**
- Assist in establishing a governing body with qualified members.
 - Provide guidance on roles and responsibilities.
 - Oversee the development of draft governing documents including by-laws and ordinances.
 - Develop organizational structure capable of ensuring compliance with state and federal laws and regulations.
4. **Community Engagement**
- Organize public meetings and conduct surveys pre- and post-development of the regional governance structure
 - Develop educational campaigns and materials to inform residents.
 - Establish a website that provides the public with project status and contains reports, FAQs and educational materials
5. **Operational Planning**
- Explore operational alternatives
 - Develop standard operating procedures
 - Develop processes for performance monitoring and reporting.
 - Establish key performance indicators (KPIs)
6. **Financial Planning**
- Develop budget for routine operations and maintenance
 - Develop long-term asset management plan
 - Recommend fair and equitable rate structures
 - Identify potential funding sources

7. **Regulatory Compliance**

- Identify necessary permits and certifications for all aspects of the project
- Ensure the regionalization effort promotes adherence to and is consistent with public health, safety and environmental standards including the federal and state Safe Drinking Water statutes and regulations, municipal ordinances, all other state laws and regulations including those of the Department of Community Affairs, Board of Public Utilities and Department of the Treasury
- The firm itself will not be responsible for Trenton Water Works compliance with the Safe Drinking Water Act

8. **Miscellaneous Services**

- The selected firm, at the request of the NJDEP, may be asked to provide other related services

5. **Proposal Submission Requirements**

Proposals should include the following:

- Executive Summary
- Understanding of Project Objectives
- Detailed Work Plan and Methodology
- Experience and Qualifications of Key Personnel
- Project Timeline
- Cost Proposal
- References

One electronic copy of the proposal must be submitted to Kristin.tedesco@dep.nj.gov by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, May 30, 2025.

Consultants are required to complete and submit the following forms, along with any certificates identified below, which can be found here: <https://www.nj.gov/treasury/purchase/forms.shtml>

- Ownership Disclosure Form
- Disclosure of Investigations and Other Actions Involving Bidder Form
- Disclosure of Investment Activities in Iran Form.
- Two-Year Chapter 51/Executive Order 333 Vendor Certification and Disclosure of Political Contributions for Non-Fair and Open Contracts
- MacBride Principles Certification Form
- Business Registration Certificate
- Certificate of Insurance (ACORD form)
- Source Disclosure Certification Form
- Affirmative Action Compliance
- Subcontractor Utilization Plan, if applicable
- State of New Jersey Standard Terms and Conditions (SSTC)
- Disclosure of any contracts with Trenton Water Works in the past 3 years

As noted above, Consultant is subject to the SSTC provided via the links below:

<https://www.nj.gov/treasury/purchase/forms/CombinedStateofNewJerseyStandardTermsandConditionsandWaiveredSupplement.pdf>

Consultant must also establish and maintain an active profile in NJSTART (www.njstart.gov), the State of New Jersey's eProcurement system. Submission of forms, as available, through NJSTART is also acceptable. It is recommended that all potential Consultants read through all Quick Reference Guides (QRGs) located on the NJSTART Vendor Support Page (<https://www.nj.gov/treasury/purchase/vendor.shtml>) for further information.

6. Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on:

- Understanding of project objectives
- Experience and qualifications
- Proposed methodology and work plan
- Cost-effectiveness
- References and past performance

7. Bidder Questions

Bidders may submit questions no later than 5:00 p.m. Wednesday, April 30th, 2025 to Kristin.tedesco@dep.nj.gov. Responses to questions will be emailed to all prospective Bidders and posted online on the same webpage where the RFP was posted (<https://dep.nj.gov/bids/>).

8. Contact Information

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