



**Clear Hills County
313 Alberta Ave
Box 240
Worsley, AB
T0H 3W0**

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

DESCRIPTION:

Audit Services

REFERENCE #: 2025-P17

Proposal Closing Time:
August 22, 2025
4:00 p.m. Local Time

**Clear Hills County
Request for Proposal (2025-P17)
Audit Services**

Introduction

Clear Hills County invites qualified accounting firms to submit proposals to perform annual financial audits for the County. Audits must be planned and executed in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards and the provisions of the Municipal Government Act. Audits will result in an opinion to the County's Council as to fairness of the annual consolidated financial statements and related schedules. The Auditor should have experience and expertise in performing municipal audits, be free of any obligations or interests that may conflict or affect their ability to perform and act as the Auditor of the County and have the capacity to provide this service in a timely manner.

Definitions

Throughout this Request for Proposal, the following definitions apply:

"Auditor" means the successful Proponent to this Request for Proposal.

"Audit Services" means the financial audit of and resulting opinion on the annual consolidated financial statements of the Clear Hills County.

"County" means Clear Hills County.

"Proponent" means an accounting firm that submits a proposal in response to this Request for Proposal.

"Proposal" means a submission in response to this Request for Proposal.

"PSAB" means the Public Sector Accounting Board of Canada.

"RFP" means Request for Proposal.

"Services" means the work requested to be performed as per this Request for Proposal.

TERM AND GENERAL CONDITIONS OF ENGAGEMENT

Term of Engagement

Clear Hills County will consider varying terms, up to a maximum term of 5 years, when reviewing the proposals.

Acceptance of Proposals

Clear Hills County reserves the right to reject any and all Proposals for any reason or to accept any Proposal on the basis of Proposals received which the County, in its sole discretion, deems most advantageous to itself. The lowest of any Proposal may not necessarily be accepted. The Proponent acknowledges the County's right under this clause and absolutely waives any right of action against the County's failure to accept its Proposal whether such right of action arises in contract, negligence, bad faith or any other cause of action. The acceptance of any Proposal is subject to funds being legally available to complete this transaction and/or approval by the County's Council.

Awarding of Contract

Notice in writing to the successful Proponent of the approval of its Proposal and the appointment of auditors by the County's Council and the subsequent execution of an engagement letter and contract shall constitute the making of the Contract for Services. The Proponent will not, without written consent of the County, assign or transfer this contract or any part thereof.

Insurance

The Auditor shall maintain professional liability insurance with respect to professional liability as required and specifically named for the Services, including errors and omissions, with a limit of not less than \$1,000,000 per occurrence with respect to the Services alone. The Auditor shall ensure that all insurance maintained by the Auditor in accordance with the Services shall name the County as an additional insured. The Auditor shall, without limiting its obligations or liabilities and at its own expense, provide and maintain insurance for its own equipment and continuously carry insurance with insurers licensed in Alberta. The Proponent is responsible for all insurance costs (as required by law). The Proponent will provide verified copies of required insurance policies when requested.

Experience and Qualifications

The Proponent must meet the following minimum requirements to be considered for evaluation pursuant to this RFP:

1. The assigned supervisory staff must hold a valid accounting designation and have previous experience in performing a municipal audit engagement.
2. Completed a municipal audit of similar size and scope (or greater) within the last three years.
3. Demonstrate an understanding of legislation relevant to the local government environment.
4. Have sufficient staffing, facilities, financial resources and expertise to address the scope of the audit services.

5. Demonstrate a commitment to providing reasonable annual continuity of experienced and qualified personnel.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Background Information

Clear Hills County is located in the beautiful Peace Region of north western Alberta, along the British Columbia border. The current population is approximately 3023.

The County's 2025 Operating budget is approximately \$18 million, with an additional \$7.8 million capital budget. The major services provided by the County are road construction and maintenance, solid waste management facilities, water and wastewater services, development control, agricultural equipment rentals, weed inspection and roadside weed and brush control.

The chart of accounts contains approximately 6725 active accounts. The County issued approximately 1417 accounts payable cheques in 2024. Taxation collected for 2024 was approximately \$19 million. The County employs approximately 12 full time and 72 part time/seasonal employees. Payroll is completed bi-weekly, and employees are paid by direct deposit.

Audit firms who are considering a Proposal pursuant to this request are encouraged to visit Clear Hills County's website at www.clearhillscounty.ab.ca for a more detailed overview of the County's characteristics and activities. Also, on this website are documents pertinent to this proposal: the 2024 Audited Financial Statements and the monthly Councillor Expense Reports.

Financial Systems and Statistics

Clear Hills County uses the Microsoft Dynamics GP/Diamond software package which includes modules for the general ledger and financial reporting, payroll, accounts receivable, property tax, cash receipting, inventory and accounts payable.

Tangible Capital Asset inventory and valuations are maintained in CityWide software.

SCOPE OF SERVICES

Services

The Auditor will be required to examine the financial records, systems and controls of Clear Hills County in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards and the provisions of the Municipal Government Act, and to then provide financial statements and written audit reports with an audit opinion on the consolidated financial statements. The Auditors will be

required to present and explain any necessary audit reports to Council either in person or by conference call.

In compliance with the Municipal Government Act, Council will appoint an Auditor (or Audit Firm) for audit services: however, other firms may be used for other financial services if it is deemed more advantageous or appropriate to do so. The County, therefore, expressly reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to use other financial services and financial firms.

The County wishes to be advised of any weaknesses in internal control noted during the audit or other area of concern, prior to the issuance of the Management Letter. The Auditor shall provide appropriate beneficial suggestions to improve areas of concern. The Auditor shall communicate in a post-audit report and in the form of a Management Letter to Clear Hills County any reportable conditions, as determined by the Auditor, found during the audit.

The Auditor will ensure all new or changed reporting requirements and auditing standards are communicated to Clear Hills County, in writing, and ensure that the financial statements and notes are in compliance with current reporting requirements and auditing standards.

The Auditor will respond to and discuss with Clear Hills County's staff accounting, auditing, tax and other issues arising throughout the year. Inquiries, if any, are infrequent, usually brief and specific in nature, and may require a written confirmation. It is expected that such inquiries would be included in the fee schedule provided and would not incur additional billing or that Clear Hills County staff would be advised of any additional charges prior to services being provided.

Qualified Statement

The Auditor shall immediately upon discovery of information or conditions, which would otherwise lead to the inclusion of a qualified opinion with respect to the financial statements, inform and fully discuss such matters with the appropriate County staff. In addition, the Auditor shall as far as possible, allow a reasonable period of time for County staff to make an investigation, analyze, report and take such corrective action as to avoid the inclusion of such qualification.

Annual Audit Schedule

Before September 30th of each year, the Auditor shall correspond with County staff to discuss and agree upon a schedule of activities which will lead to the completion of the annual audit. The schedule of activities shall be finalized by September 30th of each year and shall set out the key dates by which necessary information is to be assembled by both parties. The basic timeline will be as follows:

- Interim audit mid-November to mid-December of each year.

- Schedule of client assistance, provided by the Auditor to the County staff by the 1st week of February.
- Year-end trial balance, provided by County staff to the Auditor approximately two weeks prior to year-end audit.
- Year-end audit, within the second last to last week of March of each year.
- Draft financials, provided by the Auditors to County staff no less than one week prior to the presentation to Council.
- Audit report and presentation to Council on the fourth Tuesday of April of each year.

County staff will assist the Auditor by preparing a full set of working papers, schedules, a trial balance and supporting documentation on a timely basis. The Auditors will be responsible for the draft financial statement preparation, will create the final statements and will take responsibility for the production of the audit report in bound form.

Both the County staff and the Auditor will be jointly responsible for the preparation and processing of all confirmation letters.

The County's solicitors will provide annually a representation letter as required pursuant to the Canadian Bar Association and the Auditing Standards Committee of the CCIA.

AUDIT PROPOSALS

Proposal Requirements

A covering letter shall be provided with the proposal clearly stating the accounting firm's understanding of the services to be provided. The letter must include the name(s) of the person(s) who will be authorized to make representations for the firm, their title(s) and telephone number(s). The person signing the covering letter must be authorized to bind the Proponent.

Proponents must respond to the items listed below in the order they are presented. The proposal should include a table of contents identifying the topics by page number. Proposals, as a minimum, should include:

- 1. Company Profile & Contact:** A brief profile of your firm (1 to 2 pages) indicating the scope of its practice, the range of activities performed by the firm such as auditing, tax service, accounting or management services. Identify the Proponent's contact person, phone number and email address. State the home office address as well as the address and

phone number of any local office that will manage or assist in managing this audit. Identify the number of staff located locally.

2. **Experience with Municipal Audits:** List current and past public sector audit clients and indicate the number of years your firm has been the auditor for each client. Describe your familiarity and experience with PSAB accounting and auditing standards.
3. **Auditing Staff:** Name and brief resume of the partner(s), manager(s) and other key staff who would be assigned to this audit.
4. **Audit Implementations:** Proposals must clearly show the firms understanding of the work to be performed, audit approach and commitment to perform the work within the time period specified in the annual schedule. This would include the approach to be used to gain an understanding of the County's structure and systems as well as a proposed schedule and any specific techniques or processes to be used for the interim audit and annual audit.
5. **Other Services:** Description of the methodology to be used for keeping the County abreast of any changes in accounting principles or legislation that would impact the annual financial statements. Description of non-auditing professional services provided to other local government clients and innovative products offered by your firm as well as any specific pricing structure for such services.
6. **Fee Proposal:** Proponents are to complete the fee schedule attached as Appendix II. The fee schedule should include an all-inclusive maximum cost for the requested work for each year.
7. **Billing Dates:** The proposed schedule of billing dates.
8. **References:** Three references at least two of which must be municipal audits within the last three years. Include number of years of service to and contact name, telephone number and email address for each reference.
9. **Other:** Any other pertinent information that may assist the County in selecting an appropriate proposal.

Proposed Evaluation Criteria

Proponents must meet the following mandatory requirements to be considered for further evaluation:

1. Proposal completed and signed by a person authorized to bind the Proponent to statements made in the submission.
2. Three duly signed copies of the proposal submitted.
3. Proposal received at the closing location by the specified closing date and time.

Proposals that comply with the mandatory requirements will be evaluated on the basis of the following criteria using the scoring matrix outlined in Appendix I:

1. Understanding of Engagement
2. Municipal Audit Experience
3. Audit Firm Personnel Qualifications and Experience
4. Audit Implementation
5. Additional Services
6. References
7. Audit Fee

Shortlisted firms may be required to attend a brief interview at the Clear Hills County office. At a minimum, the audit partner and audit supervisor shall attend.

The Proponent must provide an affirmative statement that is independent of Clear Hills County.

Submission of Proposals and Terms for Acceptance

Three copies of the proposal must be submitted in a sealed envelope, clearly marked "RFP for External Audit Services", by mail or in person, to:

Corporate Services Manager
Clear Hills County
Box 240
313 Alberta Avenue
Worsley, AB T0H 3W0

Facsimile and electronic submissions will **not** be accepted.

Submissions will be received until **4:00 p.m. local time on Friday, August 22, 2025.**

If you choose to send your proposal by courier, please be advised that courier services to the County are intermittent. It is the responsibility of the Proponent to ensure their proposal is received by the submission deadline.

Proposals received after the deadline will not be considered and will be returned to the sender unopened.

All proposals submitted will be irrevocable for ninety (90) days following the closing, subject only to the following:

- Notwithstanding the above, a Proponent will be permitted to withdraw their proposal prior to the closing, provided that it has first notified the County in writing of its intention to do so. A firm that has so withdrawn a proposal may submit a new proposal prior to the

closing, pursuant to this request, provided that such action is done in compliance herewith.

- Unless otherwise authorized in writing by the herein designated County Officer, a Proponent must not contact or communicate with any elected or appointed officer or employee of the County other than the designated employee in relation to the proposal prior to the award of such proposal by Council. Any such communication will result in disqualification of the proposal from further consideration.

Default/Termination

The County may, by Notice of Default to the successful Proponent, immediately terminate in whole or in part of the contract if the Proponent fails to perform the services required. In the event the County does terminate the contract in whole or in part as specified above, the County may purchase services so terminated and the Proponent shall be liable to the County for any excess costs for such services and for reasonable liquidated damages.

The County, at its sole discretion, may immediately terminate any contract awarded through this RFP process if there is a major violation of agreed conditions or where the Proponent has taken an action against the County.

Addenda

Addenda may be issued during the Proposal period in response to queries received. Addenda will be sent in electronic format to all Proponents who have received RFP packages. All addenda must be considered and acknowledged when responding to this RFP. Verbal answers are binding only when confirmed by written addenda.

CLEAR HILLS COUNTY CONTACT AND DISCLAIMER

Contact

Any inquiries regarding this request for proposal should be directed to the designated Clear Hills County Officer, Lori Jobson, Corporate Services Manager, in writing, to: lori@clearhillscounty.ab.ca.

Disclaimer

The information contained in this RFP is supplied solely as a guideline for Proponents and is not guaranteed or warranted by Clear Hills County to be accurate, nor is it necessarily comprehensive or exhaustive.

Each Proponent is responsible to review and understand the terms and conditions of this RFP, and the Scope of Services being requested. Clear Hills County will not be responsible for any loss, damage or expense incurred by a Proponent as a result of any inaccuracy or incompleteness in this RFP, or as a result of any misunderstanding or misinterpretation of the terms of this RFP on the part of the Proponent.

Further, Clear Hills County is not liable for any costs incurred in the preparation of the proposals.

Clear Hills County is subject to the provisions of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. As a result, while Section 20 of the Act does offer some protection for third party business interests, Clear Hills County cannot guarantee that any information provided to Clear Hills County can or will be held in confidence.

APPENDIX I
PROPOSALS FOR
EXTERNAL AUDIT SERVICES
EVALUATION MATRIX

PROPONENT _____

CRITERIA	MAXIMUM SCORE	FIRMS SCORE	COMMENTS
Mandatory Criteria Cover letter completed and signed by person authorized to bind the Proponent to statements made in the submission. Sealed package containing three copies of the proposal. Proposal must be received at the closing location by the specified closing date and time.			
Point – Rated Criteria			
1. Understanding of Engagement/Proposal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstration of full understanding of County structure and governance. Knowledge of information systems used by the County. 	5		
2. Experience with Municipal Audits <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Municipal auditing experience. County auditing experience. 	15		
3. Personnel <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technical experience of the firm in performing public sector audits and experience with organizations of a similar size and complexity. Experience and qualifications of audit team proposed for the County's audit. 	10		
4. Audit Implementation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statement of full understanding of the audit objectives and overall scope of work to be performed. Audit plan including number of persons-hours anticipated to perform the services, broken down between interim and final audits for each year of the term. Quality of the proposal in terms of methodology and approach to the audit, 	15		

<p>including a description of substantive and compliance testing, and internal control evaluation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Estimate of County staff time required including a schedule outlining when required. 			
<p>5. Additional Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accounting firm's ability to provide additional services to the County such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ PSAB advice ○ GST advice ○ General Income Tax Act Advice 	5		
<p>6. References</p>	10		
<p>7. Audit Fee</p> <p>The proposed fees for each year of the term which are to be shown exclusive of GST and include :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional fees of audit and support staff based on person hours. • Estimate disbursement and administrative fees. • Value added services bundled with the audit service fees. 	40		

Total Points

100

APPENDIX II
PROPOSALS FOR
EXTERNAL AUDIT SERVICES
FEE SCHEDULE

Name of Proponent: _____

Name of Contact: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Phone Number(s): _____

Fax Number: _____

Email: _____

Staff Assigned	Hours	Rate	Fee
Partners			
Managers			
Seniors			
Staff Support			
Total Hours/Fees			
Other Disbursements (identify below)			
Total Fixed Fee			

Other Disbursements:

Signed and submitted for and on behalf of:

Company: _____
(Name)

(Address)

(City, Province & Postal Code)

Signature: _____

Name & Title: _____

Dated at _____ **this** _____ **day of** _____, **20**__.