

**REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS AND PROPOSALS**

**GENERAL CONTRACTOR /  
CONSTRUCTION MANAGER SERVICES  
(GCCM)**

**CARTER COUNTY MUSEUM EXPANSION &  
EXPANSION**

**CARTER COUNTY GEOLOGICAL SOCIETY**  
PO Box 445  
Ekalaka, MT 59324

December 19, 2025



## I. REQUEST FOR GCCM QUALIFICATIONS AND PROPOSALS

The Carter County Geological Society, a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization located in Ekalaka, Montana hereby requests Qualifications/Proposals for general contractor / construction management (GCCM) services from qualified construction firms to participate in a collaborative process to undertake pre-construction services and construction services for the renovation and expansion of the Carter County Museum, located at 306 N Main Street in Ekalaka, MT. The Carter County Geological Society (CCGS) will receive responses until 5:00 PM (MDT), Thursday, January 15, 2026.

**Project Description:** The success of the Carter County Museum (CCM) at generating enthusiasm in the region's cultural and natural history has resulted in a record of exponential growth in artifact and fossil collection, visitation, outreach, and program participation. As a result, the CCM is now requesting competitive proposals from qualified construction firms for GCCM services for the construction of an approximately 5,800 square foot renovation and approximately 15,000 square foot expansion of the Carter County Museum. Once constructed, the building will be owned by Carter County and operated by the CCM.

This project provides the opportunity for a GCCM team to partner with CCM and the Architectural/Engineering team to support a project that will have significant impact on the social and economic development of Carter County and the surrounding region of Montana, Wyoming, and the Dakotas.

A non-mandatory pre-proposal conference will be conducted on Wednesday, January 7, 2026 at 1:00 pm (MDT) at the Carter County Museum, 306 N Main Street, Ekalaka, MT 59324. A tour of the existing facilities will follow the conference.

### **RFQ/P Contact**

Ronda Carlson, AIA, LEED AP BD+C  
Project Manager  
Cushing Terrell  
13 N 23<sup>rd</sup> St., Billings, MT 59101  
rondacarlson@cushingterrell.com  
(406) 896-6217

### **RFP Timeline**

Release of RFP – December 19, 2025  
Pre-Proposal Conference – January 7, 2026  
Last Addendum – January 9, 2026  
Proposals Due – January 15, 2026, 5 pm  
Announce Shortlist – January 22, 2026  
Interviews – Week of January 26, 2026  
Anticipated Announcement of Selection – February 6, 2026

CCM intends to enter into a GCCM Contract for Pre-Construction Services for the Project. This GCCM contract will include a maximum Pre-Construction Services Fee, GCCM Fee percentage and Fixed Costs for General Conditions Work. This GCCM contract has provisions for adding Construction Services through acceptance of a Guaranteed Maximum Price ("GMP") by contract amendment. The amendment would include construction services through completion of the Project. Alternatively, CCM may, at its sole discretion, choose not to continue with any GCCM contract beyond the completion of Pre-Construction activities and solicit bids from qualified contractors for the construction of the Project.

CCM will use the RFQ/P process to evaluate each of the Proposers' qualifications. CCM will only review the RFP deliverable for the GCCM firms deemed as qualified based on the RFQ deliverable. Final selection will be determined from the deliverables submitted in response to the RFQ/P document, interviews and any other information sought by CCM to assess a firm's ability to complete the Project as required.

The process for the final development of the design and delivery of the Project will be a collaborative process. When selected, the GCCM will function as part of a team composed of CCM, Architect, Engineers, Consultants, and others as determined by CCM.

This RFQ/P shall not commit CCM to enter into any agreement, to pay any expenses incurred in preparation of any response to this request, or to procure or contract for any supplies, goods, or services. CCM reserves the right to accept or reject any and all responses received as a result of this RFQ/P if it is in CCM's best interest to do so.

This Procurement is governed by the laws of the State of Montana and venue for all legal proceedings shall be the Town of Ekalaka, Carter County.

By offering to perform services under this Procurement, all Proposers agree to be bound by the laws of the State of Montana, and including, but not limited to, applicable wage rates, payments, gross receipts taxes, building codes, equal opportunity employment practices, safety, etc.

## II. INTRODUCTION

The Carter County Geological Society, doing business as the Carter County Museum (CCM), has received funding from private contributions, county government funds, loans, and the Montana Department of Commerce Montana Historic Preservation Grant program to renovate and expand the Carter County Museum and is accordingly soliciting this Request for Qualifications/Proposals for GCCM services. These efforts and activities are viewed as key tools for the renovation and expansion of the museum. Payment terms will be negotiated with the selected offeror.

This project involves the renovation of the current building, which includes ADA compliance, installation of an HVAC system and lighting, replacement of the existing roof and reinforcement of existing roof trusses, and landscaping and construction of a new ADA compliant expansion on property owned by Carter County and located adjacent to the existing museum.

This project will focus on three primary improvements and additions:

- Guest Services: A new entrance, lobby, reception area, and restrooms that provide essential amenities, create a positive initial experience, and create a welcoming atmosphere that prepares visitors to experience the museum.
- Exhibition Space: Serving as the core of the museum, the expanded space will seamlessly connect to the current space and offer additional space to display the museum's vast and diverse collections, artifacts, specimens, and exhibits, allowing visitors to immerse themselves in the museum's offerings and engage with the displays.
- Museum Support Space: Housing various functional spaces for the "behind the scenes" work required for the museum's smooth operation, this includes staff spaces, laboratories, offices, collections storage areas, and mechanical spaces.

The building will include all necessary mechanical, electrical, plumbing, and fire protection systems along with technology, audio visual, and security systems. The work also involves site work around the exterior of the proposed building including landscaping with native plants, a new on-site septic system, water well, and electrical infrastructure.

All elements of the construction process must meet Montana Public Works Standard Specifications. Particular attention will be paid to GCCM firms who have experience with, and competence in, historical preservation and museum design, and progressive, cost effective, energy efficient, and aesthetically-pleasing structures suitable for the intended uses of multi-faceted community-based museum facilities.

For the design, CCM has selected:

Cushing Terrell  
13 N. 23<sup>rd</sup> Street  
Billings, MT 59101  
(406) 896-6126  
Principal-in-Charge: Shannon Christensen  
Project Manager: Ronda Carlson

### Design/Construction Timeline

Completion of Schematic Design:	May 2026
Completion of Design Development:	May 2026
Completion of Construction Documents	
For Museum Expansion:	July 2026
Expansion GMP Established:	August 2026
Commence Expansion Construction:	September 2026
Completion of Construction Documents	
For Museum Renovation:	October 2026
Renovation GMP Established:	November 2026
Expansion Changing Exhibits Area Completed	
And Exhibits Installed:	May 1, 2027
Expansion Installation of Dinosaur Mounts Completed:	December 31, 2027
Commence Renovation Construction:	January 2028
Renovation Construction Completion:	August 2028
Commission and Renovation Move-In:	Fall 2028

### III. SCOPE OF PRE-CONSTRUCTION SERVICES

Firms receiving this RFQ/P shall propose a **maximum** Pre-Construction services fees. All Pre-Construction services will be provided on a cost-reimbursement basis up to the stated maximum. The specific scope, terms, and cost of Pre-Construction services may be negotiated prior to signing the final GCCM pre-construction services contract, based on the proposer's input as well as CCM's requirements. In general, services are anticipated to include the following:

1. General goals
  - Serve as a partner to the design team and provide preconstruction guidance
  - Develop and update schedules, estimates, and action-plans at scheduled milestones
  - Guide decisions regarding phasing of the project to optimize quality, schedule, and budget
  - Strategically approach the subcontractor market with a focus on providing quality, schedule, and budget value to the CCM
  - Provide timely information, estimates, schemes, and participate in decisions regarding construction materials, methods, systems, phasing, sustainability and costs to assist in determinations which are aimed at providing the highest quality building, constructed using the most sustainable construction materials and practices, within the budget and schedule
2. Quality assurance
  - Partner with design team to improve design through constructability reviews
  - Provide design team with collaborative input on design decisions that impact construction quality
  - Complete thorough visual and invasive investigations of existing sit conditions and strategically plan for challenges
  - Complete reviews of adjacent occupied sites and strategically plan for impacts
  - Actively participate throughout the design process to ensure the GMP are acceptable and within budget. Postponing design analysis until the moment of establishing the GMP is not acceptable and not in keeping with the intent of this process.

3. Scheduling and coordination
  - Provide design team with collaborative input on design decisions that impact construction schedule
  - Develop clear construction staging and impact maps, diagrams, schedules, and plans accounting for site challenges
  - Develop clear communication of impacts and schedules to Project stakeholders
  - Guide design team to make changes beneficial to smooth on-boarding of subcontractors
  - Work with CCM and design team on phasing, scheduling, and other strategies to complete construction of the project on or before the agreed upon date
  - Provide input to CCM and the design team regarding long lead time materials and equipment, impact on the construction schedule and strategies for mitigating the impact
  - Develop a preliminary construction schedule(s)
4. Budgeting and estimating
  - Provide design team with collaborative input on design decisions that impact construction budget
  - Complete thorough and accurate line item cost estimating throughout pre-construction
  - Provide input on current market climate and economic conditions
  - Balance budget and schedule with needs of CCM
  - Evaluate budget and make suggestions for cost-saving changes or value enhancements
  - Provide GCCM budget comparisons with the design team's cost estimates
5. Bidding process
  - Develop detailed and well-organized bid packages in coordination with design team
  - Advertise, manage, and obtain bids per trade for CCM review
  - Lead and manage bid package opening and tally results for review
  - Manage any bid package amendments and communicate revisions to bidders
  - Clearly define scope, scope gaps, exclusions, and bid packages to keep GCCM allowances in the GMP to a minimum

#### IV. SCOPE OF CONSTRUCTION SERVICES

The GMP may be requested, at CCM's sole discretion:

- During the Construction Documents phase and prior to bidding most or all the bid packages;
- After completion of the Construction Documents and prior to bidding most or all the bid packages; or
- After bidding most or all the bid packages.

The established GMP will be the maximum amount paid for the construction of the Project unless scope changes are requested by CCM. Acceptance of the GMP by contract amendment will constitute completion of Pre-Construction services, and that GMP Amendment will initiate the construction period for the Project where the firm will take the role as General Contractor and Construction Manager.

At the time of execution of the GMP Amendment, the GCCM will be required to submit a 100% Performance and 100% Labor & Materials bond for the completion of the specified Project. In the event that the GCCM is unable to furnish an acceptable GMP or bonding, CCM retains the option to cancel the GCCM's services and start a new process for the construction of any individual Project, issue the Project for award to the lowest responsible bidder, or terminate the contract and negotiate a replacement contract with the next highest rated Proposer from this solicitation.

The selected Contractor will be required to comply (as a minimum allowable rate schedule) with State of Montana Wage Rates adopted and effective at the time of signing the GMP Amendment. All reporting, documentation, etc. shall remain as per the State of Montana requirements. This project is subject to all State requirements as outlined in the Montana Code Annotated ("MCA").

## V. SELECTION PROCEDURE

Under this RFQ/P, the selection procedure is intended to evaluate the capabilities of interested GCCM firms to provide services to CCM for the Project. Any submission that does not contain the required documentation may be deemed non-responsive and will be rejected on that basis without further consideration or obligation of CCM.

The selection committee will establish a consensus rating for each category based on the overall merit of the written proposals in accordance with the criteria listed below. Interviews with the proposed teams are intended to be held according to the schedule provided above. CCM will inform selected GCCM of the time slot for their interview. The GCCM will be selected by the committee based on the overall merit of its RFQ/P proposal response, information attained throughout the RFQ/P phase, references, interviews, and information obtained from any other reliable source(s).

### RFQ Submission Contents/Scoring Criteria

	Rating:	Weight:	Total Possible Score:
<b>A. Minimum Qualification Requirements</b>			
1. Signature of Officer or Principal	----	----	PREREQUISITE
2. Bonding Capacity	----	----	PREREQUISITE
3. Safety	----	----	PREREQUISITE
4. MT Construction Contractor Registration	----	----	PREREQUISITE
<b>B. Firm Information</b>			
1. Experience and Workload	0-10	5	50
2. Project Management and Approach	0-10	15	150
3. Project Team and Experience	0-10	30	300
3. GCCM Specific Information and References	0-10	10	100
4. Project Approach and Strategies	0-10	10	100
5. Legal and Financial Information	0-10	5	50
6. Proposed Fees and Costs	0-10	5	50
<b>TOTAL:</b>			<b>800</b>

#### A. Minimum Qualification Requirements

##### 1. Signature of Officer or Principal

- a) The proposal must be signed by an officer or principal of the firm. The signature requirement for the RFQ/P response may be satisfied by the signature of a corporate officer or principal of the responding firm on a cover letter submitted with the RFQ/P response.

##### 2. Bonding Capacity

- a) It is required that the proposing firm have single-project bonding capacity for any/all Project(s) they plan to submit on. CCM is not providing an Estimated Cost of Work as part of this RFQ/P. However, the total estimated GMP construction budget is \$8,000,000. Provide single-project and aggregate bonding program amount. Please note that bonding capacity is a requirement that, if not met, will preclude the proposer from moving forward in the selection process.
- a)
- b) In addition to proof of bonding capacity, please provide:
  - i. Bonding company and agent with phone and email contact information;
  - ii. Years of relationship;
  - iii. If less than 5 years, or not your exclusive source, name all others used in the last 5 years and provide additional explanation regarding transitions or changes.

### **3. Safety**

- a) Provide incidence rate, experience modification rate, AND loss ratio. An incidence rate greater than the latest average for non-residential building construction for Montana as established by the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) for the prior year or an experience modification rating (EMR) greater than 1.0 or a loss ratio of more than 100% may result in immediate disqualification on this item.
- b) Provide your firm's number of employees for BLS's most recent reporting period and the firm's applicable NAICS code.
- c) Proposer may submit an explanation for incident rate, EMR, and/or loss ratio greater than those listed here for further consideration by CCM. CCM reserves the sole right to waive the pass/fail requirement if, in CCM's sole judgment, sufficient justification exists for any explanation provided. CCM also reserves the right to request additional information and/or clarification on this item but is not obligated to do so prior to making its determination on whether or not to waive the requirement.

### **4. MT Construction Contractor Registration**

- a) Provide evidence of a valid Montana Contractor Registration in good standing.

## **B. Firm Information**

### **1. Experience and Workload**

- a) Identify any unique capabilities, characteristics, technology, and/or techniques that make your firm stand out above the competitors on this Project. How would the selection of your firm add value to the Project?
- b) What is your firm's approach to dealing with the current manpower shortage and limited material availability?

### **2. Project Management and Approach**

- a) How do you anticipate leading your team and integrating with CCM, Design team, and other stakeholders to facilitate decision making in a timely manner?
- b) What strategies does your firm use to stay within the established budget and schedule?
- c) Describe your approach to identifying and reconciling constructability issues and assessing alternative construction options in the pre-construction and construction phases.

### **3. Project Team and Experience**

CCM is seeking team members who have excellent communication skills, can engage well with stakeholders, and represent the interests of the project at a high level of commitment. Please note this is the HIGHEST weighted scoring category.

- a) Describe your firm's approach to adequately staffing the Project. List the staff your firm anticipates being part of the Project both onsite and offsite. Staff list to include (but is not limited to): Principal, Project Manager, Superintendent, Estimator, Project Engineer.
- b) For each team member:
  - i. Describe his/her responsibility on the Project and their primary office location.
  - ii. Describe his/her experience and how it is relevant to this Project. For the Project Manager and Field Superintendent, identify projects with:
    - a. Interaction in pre-construction with stakeholder groups; and,
    - b. High-level public engagement and communication skills.
  - iii. Provide references with contact information for each team member's last three projects in a similar role. (CCM may perform reference checks prior to interviews.)
- c) Describe your firm's experience and understanding regarding area subcontractors and bidding conditions. Explain how your firm will assure adequate coverage of competitive subcontractor bids for all portions of the project.

#### **4. GCCM Specific Information and References**

- a) List 2 similar projects demonstrating experience and capacity to act as a GCCM on renovation and expansions to structures with similar construction values or higher along with references for each. For each project, provide the following:
  - i.        Total Pre-Construction services fee, hours, and duration.
  - ii.        Contract completion date versus actual completion date. If the project was not completed by the original contract date, explain why and the strategies your team implemented to minimize the delay. If the project was completed ahead of schedule, describe the factors that enabled an early completion.

#### **5. Project Approach and Strategies**

- c)        Describe your firm's approach to self-performed work and how it would benefit the Project.
- d)        Explain your firm's philosophy and format for creating a Cost of Work estimate (ECoW).
- e)        Provide strategies your firm uses to maximize bidder participation while maintaining total construction budget control and keeping projects on schedule.

#### **6. Legal and Financial Information**

- a) In the last five years, have you (if you answer "yes," provide full explanation):
  - i.        Had an Owner claim against your Performance Bond?
  - ii.        Been declared in default and/or terminated on a project?
  - iii.        Assessed damages for delay in delivery of project?
  - iv.        Taken legal action, filed liens, or dispute resolution proceedings of any kind against an Owner for anything other than non-payment for accepted work?

#### **6. Proposed Fees and Costs**

- a) Pre-Construction Services Fee:
  - i.        Provide your firm's maximum, not-to-exceed Pre-Construction Services Fees based upon the design/construction schedule in Section II and Section III for the Project(s) your submission includes.
  - ii.        Provide hourly rates and total hours for personnel assigned and other/travel expenses for each as a separate attachment.
  - iii.        Cost of this work is to be paid on a cost-reimbursement basis up to the stated maximum. These fees are for the schedule in Section II, services described in Section III, and any other pre-construction services describe in your Proposal.
  - iv.        Zero-dollar or token amount of Pre-Construction Services Fee on proposals is unacceptable. Firms are encouraged to provide realistic fees for the level of services described in this RFQ/P as the evaluation will include comparison of the fees to the level of effort of pre-construction services expected by CCM.
- b) Using CCM's GMP estimated construction budget for the Project, provide the following:
  - i.        Your firm's GCCM fee percentage. Your firm's fee percentage MUST include, at minimum, those items identified in Attachment A, Guaranteed Maximum Cost for Reimbursable expenses for General Conditions ("GMCR") Worksheet labeled as being "IN FEE."
  - ii.        For items not in the fee, complete the unit and unit price/rate portion for each line in Attachment A, GMCR Worksheet.
    - i.        It is CCM's intention to use these unit prices/rates for proposal evaluation and as a basis for negotiating a contractual, maximum fixed costs for General Conditions upon final establishment of the phased construction durations and total project scope.
    - ii.        GMCRs will be rated on completeness, format, items that are "in the fee" vs. delineated cost, etc.
    - iii.        Do NOT provide a GMCR total at this time.
  - iii.        Your Indirect Expenses percentages for:
    - i.        Performance & Payment Bonds;

- ii. General Liability & Auto/Vehicle Insurance; and,
- iii. Builder's All-Risk Property Insurance.

*Note: As part of the selection process, the selection committee will not negotiate or adjust any of the fees, unit prices, or percentages listed. What is submitted in the Project submissions on this RFQ/P response will be what is rated. The parameters above are intended to create an equal basis for an objective evaluation of each firm's GCCM fee percentage and GMCR unit price/rates. Please take the time to ensure the GMCR units and rates are an accurate representation of the costs to be applied to the Project. If some additional personnel or GMCR cost items are added as being "in the GCCM fee," the CCM will consider those during the rating process.*

## **VI. SELECTION OF SUBCONTRACTORS AND SUPPLIERS**

Selection of subcontractors and suppliers shall be performed in the manner provided in the contract documents (see Attachments) and at the appropriate stage/phase of the design and construction process.

## **VII. POINT OF CONTACT FOR QUESTIONS**

All questions to request information regarding this RFQ/P shall be submitted electronically to Ronda Carlson, Project Manager, at [rondacarlson@cushingterrell.com](mailto:rondacarlson@cushingterrell.com). The last day to submit questions is January 7, 2026. Responses to questions will be provided on [cartercountymuseum.org](http://cartercountymuseum.org) by January 9, 2026, in the form of addendum.

## **VIII. SUBMITTAL OF INFORMATION**

All Submittals will be made via email to Ronda Carlson, Project Manager, at [rondacarlson@cushingterrell.com](mailto:rondacarlson@cushingterrell.com) by 5 pm local time on January 15, 2026. Only responses submitted electronically will be considered.

## **IX. INSTRUCTIONS TO PROPOSERS**

Proposals must:

1. Follow the format outlined in the Selection Procedure above.
2. Be signed by an officer or principal of your firm; both the RFQ deliverable and the RFP deliverable.
3. The PDF document is not to exceed 30 sheets. Document sheets (single or double-sided pages) shall include whatever pictures, charts, graphs, tables, and text the firm deems appropriate to be part of the review of the firm's qualifications. A separate transmittal letter, cover page, cover sheets, and dividers are exempted from the page limit. Page size is limited to 8-1/2 x 11 inches, with basic text information no smaller than 12-point type.
4. Clear, concise, and space efficient proposals are appreciated.

## **X. INTERVIEWS**

Interviews of the GCCM's proposed project team are scheduled for week of January 26, 2026, at a location to be determined in Ekalaka, Montana. Each firm will be notified by CCM of the specific time for their interview.

Interviews are anticipated to be approximately 75 minutes in length and will be treated as a conversational question and answer session between the firm's project team and the Selection Committee.

GCCM personnel required at the interview shall include, at a minimum:

- Principal-in-Charge;
- Project Manager;

- Project Estimator;
- Superintendent.

## **XI. FORM OF AGREEMENT**

CCM will use an AIA Document A133-2019 *Standard Form of Agreement Between Owner and Construction Manager as Constructor*, AIA Document A201-2017 *General Conditions of the Contract for Construction*, and *Supplementary General Conditions*, which will form the basis for the final agreement (GCCM Contract). A sample agreement is available upon request and may be subject to modification.

CCM reserves the right to negotiate all terms in the final contract, including but not limited to any terms or conditions of any Sample Contracts, which are in the best interests of CCM. Negotiated changes will be (1) within the general scope of work described herein, (2) unlikely to affect the field of competition under this RFQ/P, and (3) unlikely to substantially affect pricing of GCCM Fees proposed in the evaluation process (in any event, proposed GCCM Fees will not be adjusted after GCCM selection).

It is the intention of CCM to enter into a GCCM Contract with the selected GCCM. The initial scope of the GCCM Contract will be limited to Pre-Construction activities only. However, the proposed GCCM Fee and General Conditions Cost submitted in this Proposal will be applied to any construction services added to the contract by GMP amendment.

The Pre-Construction activities will include design constructability reviews, value engineering, estimating, cost estimate reconciliation with Architect/Engineer's estimates, schedule and sequencing planning, and subcontractor bidding as more fully described above.

It is CCM's right to NOT PROCEED beyond each of the design phase reviews until budget reconciliation has been achieved between CCM, Architect/Engineer, and the GCCM. Execution of a GMP amendment or termination of Pre-Construction services will constitute completion of Pre-Construction activities. If construction services are added through acceptance of a GMP, an amendment to the GCCM Contract will be executed. If the construction phase amendment is executed, a 100% Performance bond and a 100% Labor & Materials bond for the completion of the Project will be required.

If CCM chooses not to continue the GCCM Contract beyond the completion of Pre-Construction activities, the GCCM's compensation shall be limited to the Pre-Construction services maximum, not-to-exceed fee stated in the GCCM Contract.

## **XII. ATTACHMENTS**

The following attachments are incorporated in this RFQ/P:

- Attachment A: RFQ/P Signature and Authority Affidavit Form
- Attachment B: Guaranteed Maximum Cost for Reimbursable expenses for General Conditions (GMCR) Worksheet

**END OF RFQ/P**