



MADISON COUNTY **Request for Proposal (RFP)** **Human Resources Management Services**

Issue Date: Tuesday, February 10, 2026

Proposal Due Date/Time: Friday, March 13, 2026

Submitted To:

Madison County Board of Supervisors
c/o County Auditor Michele Brant
112 N. John Wayne Dr.
Winterset, IA 50273

1. Introduction and Purpose

Madison County, Iowa is soliciting sealed proposals from qualified firms or individuals to provide **outsourced Human Resources services** under contract for approximately 140 county employees. The selected proposer will serve as the County's primary HR leadership resource and will be responsible for planning, directing, and administering comprehensive human resources programs in alignment with County policies, Iowa law, and federal regulations. This RFP will result in a professional services contract, subject to approval by the Board of Supervisors.

Below is information relating to the expected services, information to be included in the proposal, a list of key dates, and the criteria that will be used to review the proposals.

Each bidding firm will submit **three sealed (3) hard copies** and **one sealed (1) digital copy (USB)** of its proposal by the **deadline of 4:00 p.m., Friday, March 13, 2026** to:

Madison County Board of Supervisors
Attn: County Auditor Michele Brant
112 N. John Wayne Dr.
Winterset, IA 50273

Mark the envelope: "Proposal for Human Resource Services RFP – [Firm Name]."

Faxed proposals will not be accepted.

Emailed proposals will not be accepted.

For further information please contact:

Name: County Auditor Michele Brant
Email: mbrant@madisoncounty.iowa.gov

2. Organizational Overview

The County operates under the administrative direction of the Board of Supervisors and employs personnel across multiple departments and elected offices. The selected HR services provider will work closely with the Board of Supervisors, County Auditor, any designated HR staff, department heads, elected officials, county employment attorneys and our current benefits providers to ensure consistent, lawful, and effective human resources operations.

3. Scope of Services

The contractor shall provide strategic, operational, and advisory HR services including, but not limited to, the following:

A. Human Resources Policy & Compliance

1. Research, develop, update, and maintain County HR policies, including the employee handbook.
2. Evaluate effectiveness of existing policies and recommend revisions as needed.
3. Monitor and ensure compliance with all applicable federal and Iowa employment laws and regulations.
4. Manage HR-related public records requests in compliance with Iowa public records law.
5. Serve as HIPAA Privacy Officer for HR-related matters.
6. Coordinate with county legal counsel as appropriate

B. Employee Relations & Performance Management

1. Serve as the County's primary authority on employee relations matters.
2. Conduct or oversee internal employee investigations.
3. Mediate employee conflicts and disputes.
4. Develop and monitor corrective action and performance improvement plans.
5. Support supervisors in performance evaluation processes.
6. Make recommendations regarding disciplinary actions, promotions, and terminations in consultation with the county's legal counsel.

C. Classification, Compensation & Benefits Administration

1. Conduct position analysis and evaluate job descriptions and classifications.
2. Administer the County's compensation programs and make recommendations to ensure market competitiveness.
3. Administer employee benefits in coordination with our benefits provider, including:
 - o Open enrollment coordination
 - o Benefits communication and employee meetings
 - o Enrollment processing and payroll premium coordination
 - o COBRA administration
 - o Claims data analysis and reporting to the Board of Supervisors
4. Track and administer FMLA requests, documentation, return-to-work coordination and any payroll change coordination.
5. Administer workers' compensation claims, OSHA reporting requirements and any payroll change coordination.

D. Recruitment, Hiring & Separation

1. Train and assist department heads and elected officials on lawful hiring practices.

2. Manage the full recruitment lifecycle, including:
 - o Job postings and advertising
 - o Application tracking
 - o Background checks
 - o Physicals and drug testing
 - o Candidate screening and interviewing support
 - o Reference checks
 - o Offer letters
3. Coordinate onboarding and new employee orientation.
4. Coordinate with county legal counsel as appropriate
5. Manage employee separation processes, including:
 - o Final pay calculations
 - o Exit interviews
 - o COBRA notices
 - o Required documentation and reporting

E. Records Management

1. Maintain and oversee personnel files in compliance with federal and state record retention laws.
2. Establish and enforce HR record retention policies.
3. Ensure confidentiality and security of HR data

F. Labor Relations & Safety

1. Assist the Board of Supervisors and county legal counsel with collective bargaining and union contract negotiations as requested.
2. Act as the primary contact for workplace injuries and safety incidents.
3. Coordinate workplace safety initiatives and regulatory compliance

G. General HR Administration

1. Conduct employment verifications.
2. Provide regular HR reports and updates to the Board of Supervisors.

4. Governance and Authority

1. The contractor shall act as the County's designated HR Director for operational purposes.
2. Final employment actions remain with the Board of Supervisors, applicable department heads, or as required by law or upon advice of county legal counsel.
3. The contractor shall have authority to:
 - o Interpret HR policies
 - o Direct supervisors and department heads on HR compliance matters
 - o Conduct investigations and issue recommendations
4. The contractor shall always maintain independence and professional judgment.

5. Service Delivery Expectations

Proposers should describe:

1. Proposed service delivery model (on-site vs. remote, hours per week/month)
2. Availability for meetings with Board, department heads, and employees
3. Communication protocols
4. Response time & coverage commitments for employee relations issues, inquiries and compliance matters

5. Use of HR systems, tools, or software
6. Approach to confidentiality and data security

The contractor must be prepared to administer services in compliance with applicable **Iowa laws**, including:

- **Iowa Civil Rights Act (Iowa Code Chapter 216)** - prohibits unfair employment practices, including discrimination in hiring, classification, terms and conditions of employment based on protected characteristics.
- **Iowa public employer rights (Iowa Code §20.7)** - confirms public employer authority to direct work and manage personnel matters.
- **Equal employment opportunity and nondiscrimination requirements** - contractors must incorporate nondiscriminatory hiring and employment practices, consistent with state policy promoting equal opportunity.

Proposers are responsible for maintaining compliance with all applicable federal and state employment laws, including but not limited to wage and hour laws, nondiscrimination, FMLA, ADA, and workers' compensation requirements.

6. Qualifications and Experience

Proposers must demonstrate:

1. Proven experience/qualifications providing senior-level HR leadership services.
2. Knowledge of Iowa Code and federal employment laws.
3. Experience with public sector, county, or unionized environments (preferred).
4. Ability to manage sensitive matters with integrity and confidentiality.
5. Experience administering benefits, FMLA, workers' compensation, and labor relations.

7. Proposal Submission Requirements

Proposals should include:

1. Executive summary
2. Organizational qualifications and experience; proposals by individuals must be able to meet County background and security requirements
3. Proposed service delivery and staffing model
4. Relevant experience and references
5. Proposed pricing and fee structure
6. Recommendation for hours per week/month, with optional scalability
7. Conflict of interest disclosure
8. Proof of insurance (or ability to obtain upon award)
9. References

8. Pricing

Proposers shall submit a detailed pricing proposal, which may include:

- Fixed monthly or annual fee
- Hourly rates and expected hours per week/month
- Optional services pricing
- Assumptions and exclusions

9. Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on:

- Cost / Value for the money
- Experience and qualifications
- Understanding of scope and proposed approach
- Public sector HR experience
- Service continuity and coverage plan
- References
- Risk management and compliance approach

10. Contract Terms

- Initial contract term: two (2) year with renewal options subject to Board of Supervisors approval
- The County reserves the right to reject any or all proposals
- The County reserves the right to waive irregularities or informalities
- Contract subject to approval by the Board of Supervisors
- Termination provisions as defined in the contract. Upon termination or expiration of the contract, the contractor shall cooperate fully in transitioning HR records, systems, and processes to the County or a successor provider.
- See Appendices A & B for further requirements

The final contract will establish terms for performance standards, reporting, confidentiality, data protection, public records compliance, indemnification, and insurance.

11. Calendar

	<u>Milestone</u>	<u>Date</u>
RFP Issued		<u>Tuesday, February 10, 2026</u>
Questions Due		<u>Monday, March 2, 2026</u>
Proposals Due		<u>Friday, March 13, 2026</u>
Bid Opening & evaluation:		<u>Tuesday, March 17, 2026</u>
Anticipated Award:		<u>Between Tuesday, March 17 & 24, 2026</u>
Contract Start Date:		<u>Monday, June 1, 2026</u>

APPENDIX A

INSTRUCTION TO BIDDERS AND GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS

1. **LANGUAGE, WORDS USED INTERCHANGEABLY** - The word "COUNTY" refers to the COUNTY OF MADISON, IOWA throughout these Instructions to Bidders and General Terms and Conditions. Similarly, BIDDER refers to the person or company submitting an offer to sell its goods or services to the COUNTY. The words QUOTATION, BID and PROPOSAL are all offers from a BIDDER, but may represent different methods of obtaining price and other information from the BIDDER.
2. **BIDDER QUALIFICATIONS** - No Bid shall be accepted from, and no contract will be awarded to, any person, firm or corporation that is in arrears to the County upon debt or contract, that is a defaulter, as surety or otherwise, upon any obligation to the County, or that is deemed irresponsible or unreliable by the County. If requested, Bidders shall be required to submit satisfactory evidence that they have a practical knowledge of the particular supply/service bid and that they have the necessary financial resources to provide the proposed supply/service as described in the attached Technical Proposal specifications.
3. **BID FORM** - Each Bidder must submit an original Bid (if a bid form is attached it must be used) plus any additional sheets provided by the Bidder that may be required for additional information. The Bidder shall sign his/her Bid correctly, and the Bid may be rejected if it shows any omissions, alterations of the form, additions not called for in the Bid, or any irregularities of any kind. If a bid form is attached, the County will not consider replies that are not on the County's form. Bidders may submit additional information and brochures relative to the services for which they are offering pricing, but those submittals will only be considered in addition to, not in lieu of, any bid submitted on the County's form. In case of a discrepancy between the unit price and the extended price, the unit price shall prevail.
4. **SPECIFICATION DEVIATIONS BY THE BIDDER** - Any deviation from this specification MUST be noted in detail and submitted in writing and attached to the Bid Form. Completed specifications should be attached for any substitutions offered, or when amplifications are desirable or necessary. The absence of the specification deviation statement and accompanying specifications will hold the Bidder strictly accountable to the specifications as written herein. Failure to submit this document of specification deviation, if applicable, shall be grounds for rejection of the item when offered for delivery. If specifications or descriptive papers are submitted with Bids, the Bidder's name should be clearly shown on each document.
5. **BIDDER REPRESENTATION** - Each Bidder must sign the Bid with his/her usual signature and shall give his/her full business address on the form provided in this Bid.
6. **COLLUSIVE BIDDING** - The Bidder certifies that the bid submitted by said Bidder is done so without any previous understanding, agreement or connection with any person, firm, or corporation making a bid for the same contract, without prior knowledge of competitive prices, and it is, in all respects, fair, without outside control, collusion, fraud or otherwise illegal action.
7. **BROCHURES** - Bids may include adequate brochures and advertising literature describing the service offered in such fashion as to permit ready comparison with our specifications where applicable.
8. **SPECIFICATION CHANGES, ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS** - All changes in Bid documents shall be through written addendum and furnished to all Bidders. Verbal information obtained otherwise will not be considered in awarding of Bids.
9. **BID CHANGES** - Bids amendments thereto or withdrawal requests received after the time advertised for Bid Opening will be void regardless of when they were mailed.

10. **HOLD HARMLESS AGREEMENT** - The Bidder agrees to protect, defend, indemnify and hold harmless the County of Madison, its officers, and its employees, their agencies and agents, from any and all claims and damages of every kind and nature made, rendered or incurred by or on behalf of every person or corporation whatsoever, including the parties hereto and their employees that may arise, occur, or grow out of any acts, actions, work or other activity done by the Bidder, its employees, subcontractors or any independent contractors working under the direction of either the Contractor or subcontractor in the performance of this contract.
11. **COMPLETION DATE** - The completion as stated in the Bid Form shall be the time required to complete project after the award of the Contract. Where multiple items appear on a Bid request, the Bidder shall, unless otherwise stated by the County, show the completion date for each item separately. If only a single completion date is shown, it will mean that all tasks of the project included in the Bid can and will be delivered on or before the specified date. The Bidder agrees that the project will be completed in the time stated, assuming that the time between the Bid Opening and the Notice to Proceed does not exceed the number of days so stipulated. The right is reserved to reject any Bid in which the completion time indicated is considered sufficient to delay the operational needs for which the service is intended.
12. **BID REJECTION OR PARTIAL ACCEPTANCE** - The County reserves the right to reject any or all Bids. The County further reserves the right to waive technicalities and formalities in Bids, as well as to accept in whole or in part such Bids where it is deemed advisable in protection of the best interests of the County.
13. **BID CURRENCY/LANGUAGE** - All Bid prices shall be shown in US Dollars (\$). All prices must remain firm for the duration of the contract regardless of the exchange rate. All bid responses must be submitted in English.
14. **PAYMENTS** - Payments will be made for all goods/services delivered, inspected and accepted within 30 days and upon receipt of an original invoice.
15. **MODIFICATION, ADDENDA AND INTERPRETATIONS** - Any apparent inconsistencies, or any matter requiring explanation or interpretation, must be inquired into by the Bidder in writing at least 72 hours (excluding weekends and holidays) prior to the time set for the Bid Opening. Any and all such interpretations or modifications will be in the form of written addenda. All addenda shall become part of the contract documents and shall be acknowledged and dated on the Signature Page.
16. **LAWS AND REGULATIONS** - All applicable State of Iowa and federal laws, ordinances, licenses and regulations of a governmental body having jurisdiction shall apply to the award throughout as the case may be and are incorporated here by reference.
17. **TELEGRAPHIC/ELECTRONIC BID SUBMITTAL** - Telegraphic and/or bid offers sent by electronic means, other than specified herein, are not acceptable and will be rejected upon receipt. Proposing firms will be expected to allow adequate time for delivery of their bid either by airfreight, postal service, or other means.
18. **MISCELLANEOUS** - The County reserves the right to inspect Contractor's facilities prior to the award of this bid. The County reserves the right to negotiate optional items with the successful Bidder.
19. **MODIFICATION OF AGREEMENT** - No modification of award shall be binding unless made in writing and signed by the County.
20. **CANCELLATION** - Either party may cancel the award in the event that a petition, either voluntary or involuntary, is filed to declare the other party bankrupt or insolvent or in the event that such party makes an assignment for the benefit of creditors.

21. **TERMINATION OF AWARD FOR CAUSE** - If, through any cause, the successful Bidder shall fail to fulfill in a timely and proper manner its obligations or if the successful Bidder shall violate any of the covenants, agreements or stipulations of the award, the County shall thereupon have the right to terminate the award by giving written notice to the successful Bidder of such termination and specifying the effective date of termination. In that event, and as of the time that notice is given by the County, all finished or unfinished services, reports or other materials prepared by the successful Bidder shall, at the option of the County, become its property, and the successful Bidder shall be entitled to receive compensation for any satisfactory work completed, prepared documents or materials as furnished. Notwithstanding the above, the successful Bidder shall not be relieved of liability to the County for damage sustained by the County by virtue of breach of the award by the successful Bidder. The County may withhold any payments to the successful Bidder for the purpose of set-off until such time as the exact amount of damages due the County from the successful Bidder is determined.
22. **TERMINATION OF AWARD FOR CONVENIENCE** - The County may terminate the award at any time by giving written notice to the successful Bidder of such termination and specifying the effective date thereof, at least sixty (60) working days before the effective date of such termination. In that event, all finished or unfinished services, reports, material(s) prepared or furnished by the successful Bidder or under the award shall, at the option of the County, become its property. If the award is terminated due to the fault of the successful Bidder, termination of award for cause relative to termination shall apply. If the award is terminated by the County as provided herein, the successful Bidder will be paid an amount as of the time notice is given by the County which bears the same ratio to the total compensation as the services actually performed bear to the total services the successful Bidder covered by the award, less payments of compensation previously made.
23. **FORCE MAJEURE** - For the purpose hereof, force majeure shall be any of the following events: acts of God or the public enemy; compliance with any order, rule, regulation, decree, or request of any governmental authority or agency or person purporting to act therefore; acts of war, public disorder, rebellion, terrorism, or sabotage; floods, hurricanes, or other storms; strikes or labor disputes; or any other cause whether or not of the class or kind specifically named or referred to herein not within the reasonable control of the party affected.
 - a. A delay in or failure of performance of either party shall not constitute a default hereunder nor be the basis for, or give rise to, any claim for damages, if and to the extent such delay or failure is caused by force majeure.
 - b. The party who is prevented from performing by force majeure (i) shall be obligated, within a period not to exceed fourteen (14) days after the occurrence or detection of any such event to give notice to the other party setting forth in reasonable detail the nature thereof and the anticipated extent of the delay, and (ii) shall remedy such cause as soon as reasonably possible.
24. **ASSIGNMENT** - Bidder shall not assign this order or any monies to become due hereunder without the prior written consent of the County. Any assignment or attempt at assignment made without such consent of the County shall be void.
25. **EQUAL OPPORTUNITY** - The successful firm agrees not to refuse to hire, discharge, promote, demote, or to otherwise discriminate in matters of compensation against any person otherwise qualified solely because of race, creed, sex, national origin, ancestry or physical handicap.
26. **TIME PERIOD** - Prices are to be honored for the time period stated in your response on the Signature Page.
27. **EXTENSION** - Any or all of the awards made as a result of this Request for Bid may be extended for an additional period of time, up to one year, if mutually agreed between the parties.
28. **FOB POINT** - In terms of loss or damage, as well as where title to the goods is passed, please quote FOB - Destination.

29. **METHOD OF AWARDING/QUOTING** - The County reserves the right to make awards based on the entire bid or on an individual basis. However if you offer your bid based on an "all or none" condition, the County may consider your bid non-responsive and reject the entire bid.
30. **TAXES** - The County of Madison is exempt from sales tax and certain other use taxes. Any charges for taxes from which the County is exempt will be deducted from invoices before payment is made.
31. **BID INFORMATION IS PUBLIC** – All documents submitted with any bid or proposal shall become public documents and subject to disclosure under Iowa Code Chapter 22 unless otherwise held confidential under Chapter 22 upon opening of the bid, which is otherwise known as the "Iowa Open Records Law". By submitting any document to the County of Madison in connection with a bid or proposal, the submitting party recognized this and waives any claim against the County of Madison and any of its officers and employees relating to the release of any document or information submitted. Each submitting party shall hold the County of Madison and its officers and employees harmless from any claims arising from the release of any document or information made available to the County of Madison arising from any bid opportunity.
32. **PURCHASE ORDER** – Purchase Orders will not be issued from the County of Madison.
33. **"NO GIFT" STANDARD** - The County of Madison is committed to upholding the highest ethical standards in all of our business practices. This standard recognizes the need to avoid even the perception of improper gifts or favors to employees. Therefore, we ask all vendors to abide by our "No Gift" standard. The "No Gift" standard also applies to all offers of discounts or free items at any place of business targeted toward a County employee and not available to the general public, regardless of the value.
34. **CONFLICT OF INTEREST:** Disclose any potential conflicts; warrant none exist at contracting.
35. **SEPARATE CONTRACT REQUIRED:** Submission of a proposal does not create a contract; a formal, signed contract will be executed with the selected vendor that complies with the requirements of this RFP. If Contractor's exceptions or proposed responses materially alter the RFP, or if the Contractor submits its own terms and conditions or otherwise fails to follow the process described herein, the County may reject the Proposal, in its sole discretion. The County reserves the right to either award a Contract without further negotiation with the successful Contractor or to negotiate Contract terms with the successful Contractor if the best interests of the County would be served.

APPENDIX B
MINIMUM INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS

- A. At all times during the contract/agreement the outside party will carry and maintain, at the outside party's expense, the following insurance:
 1. Commercial General Liability Insurance Policy, including but not limited to, insurance for premises construction operations (when applicable), contractual liability, completed operations with respect to liability arising out of the ownership, use, occupancy or maintenance of the premises and all areas appurtenant thereto, to afford protection with respect to bodily injury, personal injury, death or property damage of not less than One Million Dollars (\$1,000,000) per occurrence combined single limit/Two Million Dollars (\$2,000,000) general aggregate.
 2. The County reserves the right to require increased liability limits, not to exceed Fifteen Million Dollars (\$15,000,000) from bidders, should the project represent an elevated hazard level to the County as determined by the Madison County Board of Supervisors.
 3. Comprehensive Automobile Liability Insurance Policy with limits for each occurrence of not less than One Million Dollars (\$1,000,000) Combined Single Limit with respect to bodily injury, property damage or death.
 4. Workers Compensation Insurance Policy or similar insurance in form and amounts required by law.
- B. Should the bid require design elements (i.e. architectural, engineering, or professional system designs), the outside party may be required to carry professional errors and omissions coverage with a limit for each claim of not less than One Million Dollars (\$1,000,000).
- C. Coverage must be maintained by a financially stable carrier with a minimum AM Best rating of A-. It will be the outside party's responsibility to provide proof of its carrier's rating.
- D. The outside party shall agree to the following:
 1. Madison County will be named as an additional insured with respect to all casualty insurance policies.
 2. Certificate of insurance will be submitted to the County Auditor's Office prior to commencement of the contract/agreement and shall include a thirty-day notice of cancellation provision.
 3. If the outside party fails to perform any of its obligations under the County's Insurance and Policy Requirements, Madison County reserves the right to either purchase the required insurance coverage and assess the cost directly to the outside party, or to declare the outside party's bid invalid.
 4. Hold Harmless Agreement – The outside party shall indemnify and hold harmless Madison County, its agents and employees, from and against all claims, damages, losses and expenses including attorneys' fees arising out of or resulting from the performance of the work, provided that any such claim, damage, loss or expense:
 - a. is attributable to bodily injury, sickness, disease or death, or to the damage to or destruction of tangible property (other than the work itself) including the loss of use resulting therefrom, and
 - b. is caused in whole or in part by any negligent act or omission of the outside party or its subcontractor, anyone directly or indirectly employed by any of them or anyone for whose acts

any of them may be liable, regardless of whether or not it is caused in part by a party indemnified hereunder.

c. Each contract/agreement shall contain the following language (when applicable): Contractor/Permittee/Licensee agrees that for all work done in the county road right of ways, easements and county property, it shall be solely responsible for work zone safety and shall hold the County harmless and agree to indemnify the County for all claims that arise from its work in the right of way, and further, it agrees that it will adhere to the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices during the project