

# MEMO

## Human Services Building Capital Project

To: Henderson County Board of Commissioners  
Through: Justin Hembree, Interim County Manager  
From: David Nicholson  
Date: 2/1/2006  
Re: Human Services Building – Furniture

---

At the Board of Commissioners' meeting of January 18, 2006, the Board requested staff to provide the Board with information concerning the purchase of office furniture for the new Human Services Building.

There are two basic methods of purchasing furniture where there is a requirement for formal bids. The County can choose to develop our own set of bid specifications or we can choose to 'piggy-back' upon furniture that has already been bid. This idea can be done by using other local governments, North Carolina's State Contract or US Communities. Staff believes that US Communities, which is a nationwide governmental purchasing program, is the best choice for the majority of the purchase. It was formed by several organizations including NACo to provide high quality furniture, greater price breaks and service by bidding furniture on a nationwide basis. Under North Carolina law, we are authorized to purchase through US Communities without seeking additional competitive bids – since it has already been placed out to bid for all governments across the nation. Besides the competitive nature of the bids, all furniture purchases have a built-in future price guarantee for the same or similar furniture. For example should DSS need to expand into the future space in five years, Henderson County is guaranteed the same price as today. Also, there are already negotiated price breaks for large orders and the local vendor's already have a set commission.

The two major departments who will occupy this building have been working on furniture needs for nearly a year. The preference was to use a company that could provide both local service and already competitively bid prices. A local vendor, Professional Business Interiors (PBI), who can sell through US Communities, has been working with the Department of Social Services since spring of 2005 and with the Public Health Department since late summer to assist them in the design, layout and possible furniture solutions. PBI has worked with the City of Hendersonville on its City Hall renovation and the Henderson County Public School System. They have assisted several county governments including Buncombe, Haywood, Watauga, Macon, Caldwell and Polk with new furnishings. They also have knowledge in the specialized needs of a medical office building.

Here is a summary of the steps that have already been taken by the staffs and the local company.

- Complete walk-through of both departments including a needs assessment for DSS
  - Every office was analyzed and all current furniture was ranked to its condition and possible future uses.
  - Inventories were taken of all filing needs at both the office level and for larger areas such as medical records and DSS overall filing system.
  - Other major issues, such as the open office/panel systems were reviewed.

- Based on this information and a set of the architectural plans, discussions were held which reviewed every new office to determine its use and needs.
- Several draft furniture plans were developed and reviewed by county staff and finally signed off on. (This information was the basis of the placement of telephone and other cable outlets and electrical outlets.)
- A draft cost proposal (less the quantity discounts) was developed to be used for budgetary purposes.

Staff recommends that Henderson County proceed with using PBI to provide the majority of the furniture for the Human Services Building. They have shown the initiative to work with these staffs in the development of a furniture plan for almost a year. We believe that using this company and approach we can get the order placed soon and therefore be in position to have the furniture in place by the time that we will occupy the building.

However, we realize that other companies can sell us furniture utilizing US Communities and the Board may have the desire to seek proposals from other companies. We offer these alternative methods for seeking bids.

- Alternative A
  - Advertise that Henderson County will accept proposals for furniture through US Communities. (There are four furniture manufacturers covered under this program.)
  - Provide interested vendors with a set of floor plans. (They would be required to provide design drawings on the open office areas and large filing systems.)
  - Staff would meet with them to discuss office needs, colors, etc.
  - Request proposals be developed within a 30 day time period
  - Require that the proposals include a detailed list by office, associated costs and brochures/flyers that show their proposed furniture
- Alternative B
  - Follow the same procedures as above with the exception of allowing vendors to present proposals by categories such as desks, conference areas, chairs, filing systems, etc.
- Alternative C
  - Develop a complete set of bid specifications for each office and every piece of furniture including equivalents.

Should the Board wish to seek other proposals from vendors, who can sell through US Communities, we would recommend that we use one turn-key vendor to service the project. We also believe that the supplier should be from Western North Carolina. I have received calls from furniture vendors as far away as Green Bay, Wisconsin. Who would service the account in case of problems? Should we vary from using one vendor through a standardized program such as US Communities, there are problems such as determining the quality of the furniture, coordinating color selections, and timing of the installation.

HENDERSON COUNTY  
HUMAN SERVICES BUILDING FURNITURE

Request for Quotes  
February xx, 2006

This request for quotes is for furniture for the new Henderson County Human Services Building, 1200 Spartanburg Highway, Hendersonville, NC 28792. This is phase 1 of a multi-phased purchase. The other phases will take place over the next month, depending on the projected project completion date, and is contingent upon availability of funds.

Henderson County reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals and to waive any or all informalities. Henderson County also reserves the right to increase/decrease number of individual components if configuration changes as required.

For further information or questions about this RFQ, please contact David Nicholson, Capital Project Coordinator, by E-mail at davidn@hendersoncountync.org.

**SPECIFICATIONS**

- QUOTE IS ALL OR NONE
- Required delivery date will be approximately September 15, 2006. However, the successful vendor will be notified of the required delivery date based on the completion of the building. It is the responsibility of the vendor to pay any storage charges for a period of 30 days beyond the estimated delivery day.
- All furniture must be purchased through US Communities.
- Bidders must provide a list of governmental clients including the types of services and furniture provided.
- If an equivalent manufacturer is proposed, the equivalent must be of the same quality and meet the same specifications as the furniture requested.
- Size and Color are specified.
- Installation required, shown as separate line item ("Installation" includes delivery, setup, installation, positioning, and removal of packing materials. The successful vendor is encouraged to schedule an appointment to tour the building 30-60 days before delivery.)
- Sales tax must be included on quote as separate item.
- Warranty terms should be provided.

**ITEMIZED LIST – Department of Social Services**

| QTY | ITEM          | PROPOSED<br>EQUIVALENT | PRICE |
|-----|---------------|------------------------|-------|
| 108 | Desks         |                        |       |
| 103 | Keyboards     |                        |       |
| 86  | Task Chairs   |                        |       |
| 254 | Side Chairs   |                        |       |
| 86  | Lateral Files |                        |       |

HENDERSON COUNTY  
HUMAN SERVICES BUILDING FURNITURE

| <u>ITEMIZED LIST – Department of Social Services</u> |                   |  |  |
|--|-------------------|--|--|
| (continued from Page 1)                              |                   |  |  |
| 2  | Sofas             |  |  |
| 2  | Lounge Chairs     |  |  |
| 6  | Panel Stations    |  |  |
| 15   | Bookcases         |  |  |
| 6  | Conference Tables |  |  |
|  |                   |  |  |

Itemized List – Public Health

| QUANTITY | ITEM           | STYLE NO. | SIZE |
|----------|----------------|-----------|------|
| 69       | Desks          |           |      |
| 73       | Keyboards      |           |      |
| 141      | Task Chairs    |           |      |
| 394      | Side Chairs    |           |      |
| 89       | Lateral Files  |           |      |
| 7        | Sofas          |           |      |
| 36       | Panel Stations |           |      |
| 80       | Bookcases      |           |      |
| 24       | Tables         |           |      |