

**BOROUGH OF METUCHEN
FORUM THEATRE
REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT**

METUCHEN, NEW JERSEY

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS FOR RESTAURANT/CATERING

I. INTRODUCTION

The Borough of Metuchen (“Borough”) is seeking Statements of Qualifications from experienced restaurateurs with proven catering expertise to partner in the redevelopment of the Borough’s historic Forum Theatre as part of an exciting, community-focused cultural destination. This is a unique opportunity for a public-private partnership with the Borough and its chosen redeveloper, the New Brunswick Development Corporation (“DEVCO”), in the development and operation of a restaurant, bar, and catering operation to be located in the new Forum Theatre building. This public advertisement constitutes the Borough’s formal solicitation to determine the interest of qualified respondents in the aforementioned project.

II. FORUM THEATRE & METUCHEN ARTS DISTRICT REDEVELOPMENT

Metuchen Arts District is a vision to transform the area surrounding the Forum Theatre into a vibrant hub for arts, culture, and community activities. At the heart of the Metuchen Arts District vision is the transformed Forum Theatre.

Funding for the new Forum Theatre will be principally provided through the New Jersey Economic Development Authority (NJEDA) Cultural Arts Facilities Expansion (CAFE) program. The CAFE program provides tax credits to incentivize broad scale capital projects for arts and cultural venues in New Jersey, focusing on development and rehabilitation of cultural arts facilities as a key component of the state’s economy. This funding will allow the Borough to redevelop the Forum Theatre into a dynamic cultural hub that supports live performances, public events, and community gatherings, anchored by a high-quality restaurant and catering operation that complements and enhances the cultural experience. The goal is to position Metuchen as a regional cultural destination, enhance community engagement, and contribute to the town’s cultural and economic vibrancy while preserving its unique character.

The Borough appointed DEVCO as the redeveloper for Forum Theatre site, pursuant to the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law, N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-1, *et seq.* (“Redevelopment Law”), to implement the vision set forth in the redevelopment plan for the Metuchen Arts District, which is on file with the Borough Clerk and available on the Borough website. The proposed redevelopment will include an approximately 338-seat theater, gallery, flex/rehearsal space, and restaurant space with rooftop terrace.

The chosen Respondent will work with the Borough and DEVCO to implement the vision for the restaurant space and lease the completed restaurant space from the owner of the Forum Theatre.

III. WHAT THE BOROUGH IS SEEKING

The Borough is seeking a qualified Respondent with demonstrated experience in restaurant operation, bar operation, and catering and/or event services, as well as significant financial resources to contribute toward development of the restaurant in the form of prepaid rent. The chosen operator will be expected to lease the restaurant portion of the Forum Theatre project. The chosen restaurant operator must prepay rent in the amount of \$4,000,000 at an agreed-upon schedule during construction and will be responsible for the cost of all necessary furniture and equipment above the current \$700,000 allowance.

IV. WHAT THE BOROUGH IS OFFERING

The following is an outline of benefits the operator ultimately chosen by the Borough can expect:

- Negotiable minimum rent and percentage rent to enable return on investment
- Use of an approximately 6,500 square-foot restaurant and rooftop terrace space, along with an approximately 1,500 square-foot kitchen
- Collaboration with the Borough on the restaurant concept for the new Forum Theatre building
- Exclusive rights to cater events at the Forum Theatre
- Rights to use of a concessionaire's liquor license during the term of the lease
- Ability to utilize the kitchen in support of off-premise catering
- Benefit from low property tax and maintenance expenses
- Long term agreement, based upon meeting certain metrics

V. REQUIRED INFORMATION IN YOUR RESPONSE

Any Statement of Qualifications must include the following information (if a joint venture, information on all constituent companies must be included):

- A. A detailed description of your company and any member of your team and their individual and collective restaurant experience and development history, including:
 - Length of time the Company has been in business
 - Experience/Resumes of the key personnel and project team
 - Financial stability and capabilities
 - Operational resources
- B. The attached Respondent Information Form (signed by the authorized officer).
- C. A listing of any relevant experience operating full-service restaurants and/or bars, including:
 - Type of establishment (bar, casual, fine dining, etc.)
 - Alcohol licensing experience and compliance history
 - Number of restaurants currently and previously operated
 - Square footage and seating capacities for each establishment
 - Annual volume of business for each establishment

- Experience operating restaurants or bars in performance or event venues
- A listing of relevant restaurant-related projects, if any, with detailed information as to the nature, size, scope, cost, date of the project and amount of debt issued and equity raised.

D. A listing of any relevant catering and event services experience, including the following:

- On-site catering for performances, galas, weddings, and private events
- Number of events, event sizes, and capacities served
- Coordination with venues, production teams, and event promoters
- Concessions, pre-show dining, intermission service, and post-event receptions

E. References including current telephone numbers (including financial institutions).

Although the Borough encourages creativity in this process, please limit the format of your response to standard letter size documents, which should be bound and tabbed for easy review by the evaluation team. Other visual materials, if any, should be approximately 24” by 36” and on rigid board for presentation. Please provide 3 copies with your response to this Request for Qualifications (RFQ). You are responsible for any additional copies requested by the Borough.

Your firm will be responsible for all costs of preparation of the response to the RFQ. The Borough will not return any materials submitted.

VI. THE SELECTION PROCESS/CRITERIA

Upon review and evaluation of the Statements of Qualifications, the Borough will identify the Respondent(s) they deem qualified to operate the restaurant, bar, and exclusive catering at the Forum Theatre complex. Respondents to this Request for Qualifications will be evaluated based on experience with operation of upscale restaurants, bars, and catering/events, as well as financial and operational capacity. Qualified Respondents may be invited to participate in a subsequent Request for Proposals or negotiation process. The Borough is not required to and shall not conduct any debriefings subsequent to its decision.

VII. SUBMISSION DUE DATE AND PRINCIPAL POINT OF CONTACT

Statements of Qualifications are due in the office of the Borough of Metuchen by 11:00 a.m. on February 24, 2026, and should be addressed to the attention of:

Deborah Zupan, RMC
 Borough Clerk
 500 Main Street,
 Metuchen, NJ 08840

Please transmit 3 complete sets of your response packet to the above address. Please also submit your response packet as a PDF to the Borough Clerk at dzupan@metuchen.com with a copy to Borough Redevelopment Counsel, M. James Maley, Jr., Esquire, at jmaley@maleygivens.com with the subject “Metuchen Arts District Restaurant RFQ Submission – [Respondent’s Name]”. **Do not send the PDF submission before 11:00 a.m. on February 24, 2026.**

After the submission deadline, the Borough may contact one or more respondents to request additional information or an informational meeting.

VIII. RESERVATION OF RIGHTS; OPRA DISCLOSURE

The Borough reserves all rights in relation to the subject matter of this Request for Qualifications, including the right, in its sole and absolute discretion, to:

1. Reject any or all Statements of Qualifications received, in whole or in part, for any reason or for no reason, and to discontinue the Request for Qualifications process at any time without prior notice.
2. Waive any informalities, irregularities, or minor defects in any submission, and to accept or reject any submission that, in the Borough's judgment, is in the best interest of the Borough.
3. Request additional information, clarifications, or supplemental materials from any Respondent, and to permit corrections of non-material errors or omissions.
4. Modify, amend, supplement, or withdraw this Request for Qualifications at any time, including but not limited to changes in scope, schedule, or evaluation criteria, through the issuance of written addenda.
5. Conduct investigations as deemed necessary to determine the qualifications, financial capacity, experience, and responsibility of any Respondent, including contacting references, financial institutions, or other third parties.
6. Select one or more Respondents for further consideration, negotiation, or issuance of a subsequent Request for Proposals, or to determine that no Respondent is qualified or acceptable.
7. Negotiate with one or more Respondents simultaneously or sequentially, and to terminate negotiations at any time without liability.
8. Require Respondents to enter into such agreements and provide such assurances, certifications, insurance, and security as the Borough may deem necessary prior to the execution of any agreement.
9. Award no contract, lease, license, or other agreement unless and until such agreement is approved by the Borough's governing body and executed by all required parties.

Nothing contained in this Request for Qualifications shall be deemed to create any contractual or legal rights or obligations on the part of the Borough. All costs incurred by Respondents in the preparation and submission of responses to this Request for Qualifications shall be borne solely by the Respondents, and the Borough shall not be responsible for any such costs.

Respondents are hereby notified that materials submitted to the Borough in response to this Request for Qualifications may be subject to disclosure under the New Jersey Open Public Records Act, N.J.S.A. 47:1A-1 et seq. ("OPRA"), and other applicable law. By submitting a response to this Request for Qualifications, each Respondent acknowledges and agrees that the Borough shall not be liable for any required disclosure of materials submitted in response to an OPRA request and waives any claims against the Borough arising from such disclosure.

**BOROUGH OF METUCHEN
RESPONDENT INFORMATION FORM**

RESPONDENT

- A. Legal Name of Respondent: _____
- B. Corporation, Partnership or Sole Proprietorship: _____
- C. Date of Establishment: _____
- D. State of Formation: _____
- E. Address of Respondent: _____

- F. Telephone #: _____
- G. Fax # _____
- H. E-mail Address: _____
- I. Address: _____
- J. Name of Contact: _____ Title: _____
- K. Other Members of Respondent's Team: _____

- L. Names, addresses, title or position (if any), and nature and extent of the interest of the officers and principal members, shareholders and investors of the Respondent, must be set forth as follows:
1. If the Respondent is a corporation, the officers, directors or trustees, and each stockholder owning more than 10 percent of any class of stock.
 2. If the Respondent is a non-profit or charitable institution or corporation, the members who constitute the board of trustees or board of directors or similar governing body of the organization.
 3. If the Respondent is a partnership, each partner, whether general or limited partner, and either the percent of interest or a description of the character and extent of interest or ownership of the partnership.
 4. If the Respondent is a business association or a joint venture, each participant and either the percent of interest or a description of the character and extent of such interest.

5. If the Respondent is some other entity, the officers and each person having an interest of more than 10 percent.
6. State any relationship or interest, either direct or indirect with any member of the governing body of the Borough of Metuchen, the County of Gloucester or any of its agencies or authorities, the State of New Jersey or any of its agencies or authorities.

CERTIFICATION

The undersigned is a duly appointed representative of the Respondent and has reviewed, understands and accepts the terms and conditions of this Request for Qualifications as set forth herein. The undersigned further affirms that he/she is authorized to submit this response to the Borough of Metuchen. The Respondent understands that this response is a public document and is subject to public disclosure under the New Jersey Open Public Records Act and other common and applicable laws.

I, THE UNDERSIGNED, BEING DULY SWORN UPON MY OATH SAY: The information contained in the response and in all attachments submitted herewith is to the best of my knowledge and belief true, accurate and complete. I have the authority to submit this response to the Borough on behalf of the Respondent. I understand that if such information is willfully false, I am subject to criminal prosecution under N.J.S.A. 2C:28-2 and that the Borough, at its sole discretion, may reject or make any decision within its power on the selection of an Respondent under this selection procedure.

NAME OF RESPONDENT _____

SIGNATURE _____

NAME (PRINT OR TYPE) _____

TITLE _____

DATE _____

Subscribed and sworn
before me this ____ day of
_____, 2026.

Notary Public
My Commission expires: