



MEMORANDUM

Comfort Lake-Forest Lake Watershed District

Date: October 20, 2026
To: CLFLWD Board of Managers
From: Mike Kinney, District Administrator
Subject: 2027-2028 Professional Services RFP - REVIEW



District Wide

Background/Discussion:

Pursuant to [Minnesota Statutes §103B.227](#), the District is required to solicit, at least every two years, letters of interest and associated proposals for legal, accounting, and engineering/technical consultant services. The District added human resources (HR), information technology (IT), and insurance agent services to the request for proposals this biennium. At the [August 13th regular board meeting](#), the Board moved to direct the Administrator to publish and post solicitation for 2027-2028 professional services. The RFP was sent on August 14th, and the submissions were due on September 28th, 2026. The District received 22 proposals, which is the most the District has ever received.

At the [October 8th regular board meeting](#), the Board selected Abdo for the District's accounting/payroll services and the annual audit.

Remaining Proposals Received (in alphabetical order by area of expertise and firm name)

Area of Expertise	Firm Name
Engineering/Technical	Bolton & Menk
	Emmons & Olivier Resources (EOR)*
	Inter-Fluve
	Kimley-Horn
	Moore Engineering
	Young Environmental
Human Resources	CEO Inc. (Ellen Hinrichs)
	Chandler Henley Consulting
	Optima HR Solutions
Insurance Agency	Corporate Four Insurance Agency
	NFP
	North Risk Partners*
IT Services	Metro Sales Inc.
	Procellis
	Rymark IT*
	Sentinel Technology Services
Lake Surveys	Blue Water Science*
Legal	Fafinski Mark and Johnson
	Smith Partners*

*Firms with which the District contracted for 2025-2026 are marked with an asterisk.



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2027 Budget:

Budget line items related to these proposals are listed below. View the 2027 budget online at <https://clflwd.org/plans-reports-and-audits/>.

- Engineering
 - 1-004-4500 Consulting engineer: \$12,000 (For board meeting attendance/general admin)
 - Note that the majority of costs are billed directly to permitting and project line items and are funded by fees or grants.
- Human Resources
 - 1-004-4337 Consultant/Professional Services: \$40,000 (This line item is shared with other general professional services depending on the District's needs, such as new office space consulting)
- Insurance Agency
 - 1-003-4270 Insurance (LMCIT): \$26,000 (Insurance agents typically operate on commission structure as a percentage of premiums)
- IT Services
 - 1-002-4203 Computer Supplies/Software/IT Support: \$63,002 (\$24,300 of this is earmarked for IT professional services)
- Lake Surveys
 - Several line items under 3-011 Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Prevention & Management. Staff will bring forward a detailed AIS plan and proposal in early 2027.
- Legal
 - 1-004-4410 Legal: \$42,000
 - Note that many costs are billed directly to permitting and project line items and are funded by fees or grants.

Recommendations:

Staff have reviewed the proposals and have spoken with the associated firms as appropriate. Staff would recommend the following firms for 2027-2028 services based on budget, experience, and level of service required:

Reviewed on October 8th:

- Accounting/Payroll: Abdo
- Audit: Abdo



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Review on October 22nd.

- Engineering: Emmons & Olivier Resources (and keep other proposals on file as part of the engineering pool for certain projects/tasks)
- Human Resources: Optima (discuss shared service across other government entities); continued occasional support from CEO, Inc. (Ellen Hinrichs) is also recommended.
- Insurance Agency: North Risk Partners
- IT Services: Rymark IT
- Lake Surveys: Blue Water Science
- Legal: Smith Partners

Recommended Motion:

Manager _____ moves to authorize the administrator, on the advice of counsel, to enter into professional services agreements for the next biennium with **[name each firm]**.

Seconded by Manager _____.

From: [Michael Kinney](#)
To: [Michael Kinney](#)
Cc: [Brad Jernberg](#); [Tori Philippi](#); [Emily Heinz](#)
Subject: HR Support
Date: Friday, October 16, 2026 9:22:45 AM
Attachments: [2026 Bio.Ellen Hinrichs.CEO Inc.pdf](#)

Managers,

As we review the proposals for professional services, I would like to include this from Ellen Hinrichs of Career Enhancement Options. There was some apparent confusion about her interest in continuing to support the District into 2027 and potentially into 2028. I have been working with Ellen for almost 20 years, and she has been a great resource to the District on many occasions. As she transitions to more of a part-time consultant to allow more time for travel and family before full retirement, I thought it would be best to look into the HR support more broadly. This may include the firm recommended in the staff memo or potentially partnering with other entities to contract with or hire a full-time HR person. Overall, this transition will allow some flexibility to the District as we continue to move forward while seeking the most cost-effective way to deliver this critical service to staff and the District.

Thank you.

	Mike Kinney, M.S. District Administrator Phone 651-395-5855 Cell 715-307-2609 Main 651-395-5850 Email Michael.Kinney@clflwd.org Web www.clflwd.org Office 44 Lake St. South, Suite A, Forest Lake, MN 55025
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Career Enhancement Options, Inc. (CEO, Inc.)

CEO, Inc. has worked with a variety of individuals and organizations enhancing communication and leadership development to increase engagement, build stakeholder satisfaction, and ensure results. CEO provides expertise on human resource policy and practices to attract, secure and align talent to achieve strategic objectives.

CEO's experience spans a diverse client base including: Allete, Cargill, CarVal, CenturyLink, Counties (Hennepin, Ramsey and Scott), General Mills, HSBC, Medtronic, Meritas Law, MNSCU, National Association of Realtors, United Health Group, US Bank, Schwab, TreeHouse, University of Minnesota, Urban Ventures, Watershed Districts (CLFLWD, PLSLWD, RCWD and RPBCWD), Xcel Energy, and Ziegler.

Please contact us at:

612.272.4527

Ellen.Hinrichs@icloud.com

Ellen Hinrichs, M.A., is a human resource development consultant and coach who provides expertise to increase individual, team and organizational effectiveness.

As the owner and president of **Career Enhancement Options, Inc.**, Ellen applies expertise through coaching, training, and designing human resource strategies and tools. With over 25 years of experience, Ellen coaches and designs trainings for leaders, teams and individual contributors to strengthen and develop competencies that create value and produce results.

Ellen has worked with a variety of businesses, government entities and nonprofit organizations helping to realign resources to the core mission, convert opportunities into growth, and build capacity for greater impact. With an understanding of an organization's culture and goals, Ellen has created and updated Employee Handbooks, Performance Review Systems, and Job Descriptions. She has also partnered with leaders in interviewing and onboarding talent to help ensure a right fit and a smooth transition. With a heightened strategic perspective, Ellen has worked with boards of nonprofits and leadership teams in redefining their mission, vision and values and crafting a strategic plan.

She earned a BA degree in English and Communication from Augsburg College, and an MA degree in Human Resource Development from the University of St. Thomas. Prior experience includes years with two global consulting firms: Towers Perrin (now Willis Towers Watson) and DBM (now Lee Hecht Harrison). Ellen is certified in numerous tools and programs such as MBTI, DiSC, TKI, Covey, and InsideOut Development. She has also been credentialed as a coach with International Coach Federation (ICF) specializing in leadership and career coaching, and has taught management courses in two MBA programs.