

**THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE ENDOWMENT FUND
OF WESTERN CAROLINA UNIVERSITY**

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

**For a Project
Involving
Multi-Family Housing
in
Webster Village**

DUE DATE: January 9, 2026

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ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

I. SCHEDULE OF RFQ ACTIVITIES AND DEADLINES

Request for Qualifications issued	November 24, 2025
Pre-submittal site visits (optional)	Upon Request
RFQ Responses due	January 9, 2026
Complete review of responses and develop shortlist of Developers	January 10-January 16, 2026
Site visits by shortlisted Developers	TBD
Shortlisted Developers presentations/ interviews	TBD
Developer selection	February 2026

II. DUE DATE

Responses must be in writing and received by January 9, 2026.

III. CONTACT INFORMATION

All questions should be submitted in writing **via email** to:

Michael T. Byers, Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance
Western Carolina University
460 HFR Administration Building
65 West University Drive
Cullowhee, NC 28723
mtbyers@wcu.edu

All questions will be answered on the Western Carolina University Community and Economic Engagement website: <https://www.wcu.edu/engage/regional-development/index.aspx>

PROJECT INFORMATION

I. PROJECT OVERVIEW AND WEBSTER VILLAGE

A. Project Overview

Based on the need for non-student housing in Jackson County (multi-family housing), the Board of Trustees of the Endowment Fund of Western Carolina University (“WCUEF”), acting as the lead “shepherd” for this component of the Webster Village Partnership (the “Partnership”), intends to seek a private developer to cause multi-family housing to be developed on the Webster Village property. It is our intent to review qualifications and proposed concepts from developers that would generate multi-family housing to meet the need for non-student, rental housing. WCUEF volunteered to take the lead on this portion of the Partnership (see “Webster Village Overview” attached) because WCU is a primary driver of the need for this type of housing. But the project is intended to benefit all organizations in the area whose employees struggle to find a place to live (Harris Community Hospital, Southwestern Community College, Jackson County Schools, WCU, etc).

B. Webster Village Partnership

A partnership to address various types of housing-needs in the area was formed between Mountain Projects, Jackson County Economic Development, Givens Estates, and Western Carolina University, with special acknowledgement to support from Harris Community Hospital. Through a grant from Dogwood Health Trust, property was acquired near Webster, NC (see attached Master Plan Concepts) to allow for the development of various forms of housing. The attached Webster Village Overview provides details.

C. Multi-Family Housing Project

WCUEF is issuing this Request for Qualifications (“RFQ”) to identify a development team (“Developer” or “Firm”) to provide full-service development, including designing, financing, constructing, owning, and managing a multi-family housing facility (the “Project”) on the Webster Village site.

WCUEF will enter into a form of development agreement and long-term ground lease (30-40 years) with the selected Developer. Ownership of the Project ultimately will revert to WCUEF at the expiration of the ground lease term. The transaction documents will reflect certain requirements of WCUEF and the Partnership, (e.g. the review and approval of Project feasibility plans, the approval of any standard forms of building tenant leases, rent escalation, etc)

II. PROJECT SITE

The site for this project is depicted on the attached Master Plan Concepts. The Partnership knows that the projects will benefit greatly by minimizing the necessary investment for site preparation and

infrastructure. The Partnership is currently seeking grant-funding from multiple sources to meet these infrastructure needs. In 2024-2026, Jackson County committed \$1.5 million toward this need. The selected Developer will be included in planning as the Team continues to seek grant-funding for project infrastructure.

III. PROJECT DESIGN CONCEPTS & CRITERIA

The Project will be positioned as a multi-family housing facility with appropriate amenities as negotiated.

The following design concepts and criteria are not intended to be fully comprehensive in scope for the Project, but they establish the Partnership's general preferences for the Project. Alternatives to the criteria given will be considered, particularly if they result in a reduction in the cost of the Project or benefit the other components of the Village.

Improvements must be constructed in a good and workmanlike manner in accordance with all applicable requirements of state and local laws and ordinances, as well as the regulations of all departments, boards, bureaus, officials, and authorities having jurisdiction.

A. Programming Needs

The following describes the programming needs of the Project, as foreseen by the Partnership:

- A project that serves as a multi-family housing facility to serve the needs of organizations in the area for housing for employees of all types
- Quality architectural detailing and materials at all ground floor elevations
- State of the art high speed internet for tenants
- Residential value-added exterior spaces, as well as site amenities to include landscaping, etc
- Planned service access for deliveries and waste removal (e.g., trash, recyclables, and compost food waste), and facility maintenance access
- Parking solutions to meet the needs of the Project
- Site design to use vernacular materials and design concepts to create community continuity, which may also create signature outdoor spaces, linkages, and views
- The Project shall contribute to the architectural context of the Webster Village / surroundings and reinforce the Webster Village identity and sense of place
- Building envelope materials and roofing to be approved by WCUEF

B. Utilities

The Developer will be responsible to arrange for all services associated with the operation of the facility, including but not limited to:

- Domestic water
- Storm drainage
- Site electrical
- Internet/data/fiber
- Waste removal
- Sanitary sewer
- Natural gas (if applicable)
- Cable television (if applicable)
- Telephone service (if applicable)
- Maintenance, Landscaping and Grounds care

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

I. RESPONSE FORMAT

Developers are asked to submit one (1) digital version (i.e., via email, flash drive, etc) to the person at the address provided in the Administrative Information section of this RFQ.

II. INFORMATION REQUESTED

Please provide the following information:

1. Letter of Interest. A letter stating the Firm's interest in this project.
2. Firm Information. Provide information about the firm.
3. Project Experience. Provide the Firm's most recently completed projects of relevance to this project.

III. EVALUATION AND SELECTION

A team will evaluate all responses to this RFQ and make recommendations to WCUEF concerning Developers who should be invited to make in-person presentations (short-listed). The following criteria will be evaluated for these purposes:

1. Qualifications of the firm
2. Experience and outcomes in planning, designing, constructing, owning, and managing comparable facilities; and
3. Evidence of effective and efficient construction and project management; and
4. Compatibility with the Webster Village concept
5. Developer's financial stability and longevity; and
6. Developer's capacity to finance, construct, own, and manage a project of the size and scope contemplated in this RFQ.

Short-listed Developers will be contacted by WCUEF officials to arrange site visits and schedule presentations for final selection.

At the conclusion of the presentations, WCUEF will select the Developer, provide a Letter of Intent and begin work negotiating and executing a development agreement and a ground lease between WCUEF and Developer for development of the Project.