

# Northern Forest Center

## Request for Proposals: Mass Timber Housing Product Developer

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### Project Summary

The Northern Forest Center (the Center) seeks a mass timber product developer to design standardized mass timber assemblies for single- and multi-family housing construction suitable for rural communities in the Northern Forest region. The product must contribute to a long-term strategy to lower the cost of market-rate home construction and increase long-term home affordability (i.e., minimize heating and cooling demand) in Northern Forest communities. The developer must explore the use of mass timber products that could make use of regional wood, including eastern hemlock and spruce-pine-fir, as a primary structural building material and document the projected requirements of the mass timber supply chain in the Northern Forest to serve this function.

### Project Background

The Center has secured funds from the U.S. Forest Service and Northern Border Regional Commission (NBRC) to advance a unique wood market segment: single- and multi-family mass timber housing designs for new construction, at a scale appropriate to rural housing, that may over time be delivered by regional supply chains. Fundamentally, the project will support the following economic outcomes:

- A new, innovative, and regionally replicable model for rapid creation of single- and multi-family workforce housing units in the Northern Forest region (rural northern New England and northern NY); and
- Creation of new market opportunities for dimensional lumber produced in the Northern Forest region as well as substantial value-adding and new manufacturing business opportunities in the forest products industry.

The selected contractor will play a critical role in advancing this project, serving as a partner to the Center and other stakeholders (USFS, NBRC, and members of an emerging advisory group) as they work to expand mass timber housing development opportunities in this region.

The mass timber housing assemblies designed within the scope of this contract may be selected for use in a second phase of this project – site-specific design and pre-development work for sites in St. Johnsbury, VT and Bethel, ME. These are owned, and will be developed, by Northeastern Vermont Regional Hospital and Sustainable Forest Futures (a supporting organization of the Northern Forest Center), respectively. By the end of 2025, we aim to have all design and engineering in place to construct 50 units of mass timber housing on the two sites (combined). We anticipate that housing at each project will consist of:

- A combination of single-family homes, duplexes, and modest (4-6 unit) multi-family buildings
- No building above 2 stories
- A combination of 1- to 3-bedroom units ranging in size from about 800 to 1,400 square feet

We are aware of numerous other entities seeking to develop low-cost, high-quality housing who would be keenly interested in the product being developed and see the initial two-site, 50-unit build as an initial demonstration of significant buildout to follow.

## Scope of Work

The selected contractor must:

1. Design and engineer a construction-ready mass timber housing assembly and design and fabrication documents for three typologies, all consistent with a rural New England vernacular.

The assembly must meet the following considerations:

- a. Include a single-family, duplex, and multi-unit assembly (8-unit, 3-story maximum for the latter) with different sizes and configurations.
  - b. Units may range from approximately 800 sf for a 1-bedroom to 1,400 sf for a 3-bedroom.
  - c. On average, units should cost less than \$300,000/unit to construct and finish if a single contractor were to build all 50 of the planned units described above.
  - d. Maximize energy performance and incorporate use of renewable energy.
  - e. Evaluate and include options to use regional wood species
2. Provide a description of the projected supply chain elements and product types that would be necessary to manufacture the proposed units in the Northern Forest region.

Proposals should include a full project team capable of the design, engineering, and fabrication of the units. We anticipate that the scope of work will include architecture, structural and MEP engineering, building science consultation, mass timber specialty design and engineering, supply chain analysis, and construction and assembly consultation.

## Usage Rights

The Contractor will acknowledge support from the U.S. Forest Service, the Northern Border Regional Commission, and the Northern Forest Center in all materials produced for or about the project.

## Project Timeline

Work will commence in May 2024. Final products must be delivered by May 2025 or earlier. A more detailed schedule with interim milestones and deadlines will be established with the chosen contractor.

## Proposal Submittal

Submit proposals by email to Isabella Ronson, Program Coordinator ([ironson@northernforest.org](mailto:ironson@northernforest.org)), no later than midnight on April 5, 2024.

## Anticipated Selection Schedule

The Center seeks to award this contract no later than May 10, 2024.

## Elements of Proposal

Include in a single PDF document:

1. Personnel: Identify personnel to be assigned to this project and their relevant experience.
2. Approach: Describe your proposed approach to this project and successful completion of the scope of work.
3. Experience
  - a. Describe experience with similar projects
  - b. List potential sub-contractors you anticipate inviting to work on the project.
  - c. Provide three references for similar projects, including contact information.
4. Scheduling

- a. Address current workload and ability to begin work if selected.
  - b. Prepare a schedule for completing the scope of work outlined in this RFP.
5. Budget: Provide proposed price or pricing structure for the overall contract and an estimate of reimbursable expenses. Proposals up to \$400,000 will be considered.
6. Equal Opportunity Employer: Affirm that your company is an Equal Opportunity Employer as defined here: <https://www.eeoc.gov/employers>.

### **Evaluation Criteria**

The Center will select finalists for an interview. Final selection will be based on:

- General qualifications
- Relevant experience and approach
- References
- Schedule and availability
- Costs

The Center reserves the right to reject any and all proposals and negotiate with any or all of the firms that submit a proposal. This RFP does not commit the Center to select any respondent, award any work, pay any costs incurred in preparing a response, or procure or contract for any services or supplies.

### **Questions**

You may contact Isabella Ronson ([ironson@northernforest.org](mailto:ironson@northernforest.org)) for the purpose of clarifying information requested by this proposal.