JOINT CITIES OF WATAUGA, RICHLAND HILLS AND

NORTH RICHLAND HILLS, TEXAS

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS (RFQ # 2026-09-JUD)

CONTRACT JUDICIAL SERVICES FOR PRESIDING MUNICIPAL COURT JUDGE

SOLICITATION SUMMARY & PURPOSE

The cities of Watauga, Richland Hills, and North Richland Hills, Texas, operating as Home-Rule municipalities under each City's Charter, are formally issuing a Request For Qualifications (RFQs) from highly qualified, experienced, and licensed attorneys to provide contract judicial services for the Municipal Court. This RFQ represents a collaborative search by all three municipalities to identify qualified candidates for the Presiding Municipal Court Judge within each respective jurisdiction. The three cities participate in a joint Detention Facility, Dispatch Center, and Teen Court. Each municipality maintains a single court overseen by a Presiding Judge who handles Class C misdemeanors, traffic violations, state statutory violations, and city ordinance enforcement within their respective municipal boundaries, while managing Associate Judges to ensure continuous judicial proceedings. Together, the three municipalities require a combined 62 to 68 minimum monthly docket hours and process a 3-year annual average of 22,846 cases filed and 8,550 arraignments/warrants.

In accordance with Chapter 29 and Chapter 30 of the Texas Government Code and each City's Charter, the City Councils intends to appoint a Presiding Municipal Court Judge to serve a statutory two-year term. The ideal candidate will demonstrate high ethical standing, deep familiarity with Texas criminal procedure, and a commitment to the objective and efficient administration of local justice.

ISSUING DEPARTMENT: City Manager's Office
STATUTORY GOVERNANCE: Texas Government Code Ch. 29 & 30 | Municipal Court of Record
SUBMISSION DEADLINE: November 30, 2026, at 3:00 PM CST
SUBMIT TO: Purchasing, North Richland Hills, TX

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1. Introduction & General Information

1.1 Municipal Court Overview

The cities of Watauga, Richland Hills, and North Richland Hills, Texas, are home-rule municipalities operating Municipal Courts of Record under Chapter 30 of the Texas Government Code. The Courts exercise jurisdiction over Class C misdemeanors, traffic violations, state statutes, within city limits. Judicial operations are led by a Presiding Judge who oversees Associate Judges available to ensure continuous court proceedings when required.

1.2 Statutory Authority & Judicial Office

The Presiding Municipal Judge is appointed by a majority vote of the City Council in accordance with Chapter 29 and Chapter 30 of the Texas Government Code and the City Charter. The appointed judge serves as an independent contractor providing judicial services for a statutory two-year term of office. Each City Council will appoint the Municipal Court Judge.

1.3 Judicial Independence & Compensation Protections

In strict compliance with Texas Government Code § 30.00014(h) and the Texas Code of Judicial Conduct, the Presiding Judge's compensation is established by the City Council as a fixed rate and shall not be diminished during the term of office. Each City Council independently establishes and approves compensation for judicial services provided to its respective municipality. Furthermore, judicial compensation is strictly prohibited from being based, directly or indirectly, on fines, fees, or court costs collected by the tribunal. Each municipality enforces total separation between judicial decision-making and municipal revenue generation.

1.4 Questions and Inquiries Concerning this RFQ

All inquiries, requests for clarification, or questions regarding this Request for Qualifications must be submitted in writing via email to the City of North Richland Hills' Purchasing Manager. Questions will be accepted **until 12:00 PM CST on November 13, 2026**. Official responses and any written addenda will be posted publicly and distributed to all known respondents. Oral instructions or interpretations shall not be binding upon the City.

2. Scope of Judicial Services & Operational Duties

The Presiding Municipal Judge performs full contract judicial services for the Municipal Courts of Watauga, Richland Hills, and North Richland Hills. The scope of required services encompasses the following essential duties and operational responsibilities:

2.1 Court Dockets & Adjudication

- Preside over scheduled court dockets, including initial appearances, arraignments, pre-trial conferences, show-cause hearings, bench trials, jury trials, and juvenile dockets.
- Maintain dignified courtroom decorum, enforce constitutional due process, and adjudicate cases impartially in accordance with Texas criminal procedure and state law.
- Conduct indigency evaluations under Article 15.17 of the Texas Code of Criminal Procedure, determining ability to pay and authorizing statutory alternative sentences (community service, fine waivers, installment plans).

2.2 Jail Magistration, Arraignments & Emergency Warrants

- Conduct daily post-arrest prisoner arraignments and magistration in detention facilities (including weekends and holidays).
- Determine probable cause, inform prisoners of constitutional rights, set appropriate bail bonds, and conduct Juvenile Magistrate's Warnings.
- Review probable cause affidavits and execute arrest warrants, search warrants, capias, and Emergency Mental Health Commitment Orders.
- Review and rule on Applications for Emergency Protective Orders (EPOs) and Orders of Expunction.
- The average three year operational workload is as follows:

Municipality	Average Monthly Docket Hours	3-Year Average Cases Filed	3-Year Average Arraignments & Warrants
Watauga	10–16 Hours	4,961	1,598
Richland Hills	16 Hours	4,800	1,405
North Richland Hills	36 Hours	13,085	5,547
TOTAL COMBINED	62–68 Hours	22,846	8,550

2.3 Court Administration, OCA Reporting & Local Rules

- Formulate and promulgate local rules of practice and court procedure consistent with state statutes and Texas Supreme Court directives.
- Prepare and submit required monthly magistration logs and statistical activity reports to the Texas Office of Court Administration (OCA).
- Collaborate professionally with the City Manager's Office, City Prosecutor, Court Administrator, Court Clerk staff, Police Department, and Birdville Independent School District (BISD) officials.
- Preside over the Northeast Tarrant Teen Court and Youth Diversion Program, participate in BISD youth educational presentations, and preside over the Court Security Committee.

2.4 Availability & Technology Requirements

- Maintain regular judicial availability for courtroom dockets, magistration duties, and emergency warrant reviews.
- Demonstrate proficiency with court software technologies (InCode Municipal Justice Court Management system preferred) and virtual court platforms (Zoom, Microsoft Teams).

3. Minimum Qualifications & Working Conditions

Category	Mandatory Requirement Specification
Education & State Bar Licensing	Graduation from an accredited law school (Juris Doctor). Must be a U.S. citizen, Texas resident, and hold an active, unencumbered license to practice law in Texas with the State Bar of Texas in good standing for a minimum of five (5) years.
Required Experience	At least five (5) years of active legal practice in Texas, with extensive experience in criminal prosecution, defense, high-volume municipal court dockets, or judicial magistration.
Mandatory Continuing Judicial Education	Must satisfy all Mandatory Continuing Legal Education (MCLE) requirements for Municipal Court Judges established by the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals and the Texas Municipal Courts Education Center (TMCEC).
Regulatory Cleanliness & Background Vetting	Must have no history of State Bar disciplinary sanctions or license suspensions. Must pass comprehensive CJIS criminal background checks, driver's license verification, and pre-appointment drug screening.

Environmental & Working Conditions:
Services are conducted primarily in sedentary courtroom and office settings, as well as holding facility environments during magistration. Requires mobility between court chambers and detention areas, vision for legal documentation, keyboard dexterity, and effective verbal communication skills. Duties involve interactions with emotional or distressed individuals and exposure to secure detention environments.

4. Submittal Requirements

To ensure fair and standardized evaluation, respondents must assemble their response in the exact tabbed order specified below. Submittals that fail to provide required forms or disclosures may be disqualified.

Tab 1: Cover Letter & Executive Summary: Maximum one (1) page. Signed by the applicant or authorized law firm partner, outlining interest in the position, primary qualifications, and contact details.

Tab 2: Professional Resume & Bar Credentials: Comprehensive resume detailing legal education, State Bar of Texas license number, date of admission, specialty certifications, and active professional affiliations.

Tab 3: Judicial, Municipal & Trial Experience: Detailed summary of experience presiding as a judge, magistrate, prosecutor, or defense counsel in municipal or criminal courts. Highlight high-volume docket management and Texas criminal procedure expertise.

Tab 4: Court Administration Philosophy & Indigency Approach: Narrative outlining your approach to court administration, handling pro se litigants, maintaining courtroom decorum, and evaluating indigency under Article 15.17 CCP.

Tab 5: Workload, Availability & Response Time: Summary of current professional workload and explicit confirmation of availability to fulfill job responsibilities, including weekend/holiday jail magistration and emergency warrant calls.

Tab 6: Professional References: Provide contact information (name, title, entity, phone, email) for at least three (3) professional references familiar with your legal competence and judicial demeanor.

Tab 7: Litigation & Disciplinary History Disclosure: Full disclosure of any State Bar grievance history, disciplinary actions, litigation, or arbitration claims filed against the applicant or firm.

Tab 8: Mandatory Statutory Forms & Conflict Disclosures: Must include executed Conflict of Interest Questionnaire (Form CIQ per Ch. 176 Local Govt Code) and Texas Ethics Commission Certificate of Interested Parties (Form 1295).

5. Evaluation Criteria, Interview Framework & Selection Process

The City Councils of each city will evaluate RFQ submittals based on demonstrated competence and qualifications without regard to fee. Invited candidates will participate in final formal interviews with the City Councils. The application process will adhere to the following evaluation criteria and candidate vetting framework:

Evaluation Category	Specific Focus Area
Licensing & Regulatory Status	Active State Bar of Texas license in good standing for 5+ years; clean disciplinary record.
Judicial & Legal Experience	Demonstrated experience in municipal court operations, trial practice, magistration, and Texas criminal law.

Court Administration & Tech	Approach to high-volume dockets, indigency, InCode software, and virtual court platforms (Zoom/Teams).
Availability & Response Time	Proximity and commitment to meet availability and weekend/holiday magistration calls.
References & Submittal Quality	Professional references, completeness of tabbed submittal, clarity, and compliance with RFQ terms.

6. Terms, Conditions & Statutory Disclosures

6.1 Anti-Lobbying Provision

During the period between the RFQ release date and contract award, respondents (including agents and representatives) shall not directly contact or promote their submittal with any member of the City Council or City staff, except during City-sponsored inquiries, interviews, or presentations. Violation of this provision shall result in immediate disqualification.

6.2 Non-Discrimination Policy

The respondent agrees not to discriminate in employment, promotion, or treatment based on race, color, sex, national origin, age, disability, or religion, in strict compliance with Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and state law.

6.3 Conflict of Interest & Form CIQ

Chapter 176 of the Texas Local Government Code requires respondents to file a Conflict of Interest Questionnaire (Form CIQ) with the City Secretary within seven (7) business days of becoming aware of facts creating a conflict of interest. Forms are available on the Texas Ethics Commission website.

6.4 Certificate of Interested Parties (Form 1295)

Pursuant to Texas Government Code § 2252.908, the successful respondent must electronically submit a Certificate of Interested Parties (Form 1295) through the Texas Ethics Commission portal (https://www.ethics.state.tx.us/filinginfo/1295/) prior to contract execution.

6.5 Governing Law & Reservation of Rights

Contracts executed pursuant to this solicitation shall be governed by Texas law, with exclusive venue in Tarrant County, Texas. The City reserves the right to reject any or all RFQs, waive informalities, withdraw the RFQ, and select the candidate deemed in the best interest of the City.

7. Solicitation Schedule & Submission Instructions

Solicitation Event / Milestone	Target Date / Deadline
Formal Release of Request for Qualifications (RFQ)	**October 19, 2026**
Deadline for Written Inquiries & Questions (12:00 PM CST)	**November 6, 2026**
City Issuance of Final Addendum & Question Responses	**November 13, 2026**
RFQ Submittal Deadline (3:00 PM CST)	**November 30, 2026**
City Council Candidate Interviews & Appointment Award	**TBD**

Submission Instructions:
Respondents can submit either: A) one (1) hard copy and one (1) electronic copy (PDF on USB) of their sealed qualifications; OR B) an email no later than 3:00 PM CST on November 30, 2026. Submittals received after this deadline will not be accepted.

Sealed Envelopes Must Be Labeled:
RFQ # 2026-09-JUD: Presiding Municipal Court Judge
Attn: Purchasing
City of North Richland Hills
4301 City Point Drive,
North Richland Hills, TX 76180

Emails Must Be Labeled:
RFQ #2026-09-JUD: Presiding Municipal Court Judge
purchasing@nrhtx.com

The cities of Watauga, Richland Hills, and North Richland Hills, operating as Home-Rule municipalities under each City's Charter reserves the right to reject in part or in whole all RFQ's submitted, and to waive any technicalities for the best interest of the City of North Richland Hills, Watauga, and Richland Hills.