

COUNTY OF SAN MATEO, CALIFORNIA



RECREATION DIVISION
PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

Request for Information
CERAMICS STUDIO OPERATIONS

Proposals Due:
Friday, March 20, 2026, before 5:00 PM
650 Shell Boulevard, Foster City

Contact for this RFI

Tiffany Oren, Recreation Manager
650 Shell Boulevard
Foster City, CA 94404
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(650) 286-3395

City of Foster City

Request for Interest (RFI) – Ceramics Studio Operations

Foster City invites qualified individuals and organizations to express interest in operating the ceramics studio at the new Foster City Community Center. The City seeks engaging, inclusive, and financially sustainable programming that supports community creativity and participation. Respondents should provide qualifications, a proposed program approach, and a preliminary operational plan consistent with this RFI. Respondents should also outline their proposed program structure, class offerings, and operational details; final program elements will be developed in consultation with the City.

1. Purpose and Goals

The following outlines the primary objectives and expectations for operating the ceramics studio at the Foster City Community Center.

- Operate a safe, high-quality ceramics studio offering classes, workshops, camps, and open studio access for all ages and skill levels.
- Offer a robust ceramics program that maximizes the City's asset and community benefit of the facility.
- Provide inclusive participation, giving Foster City residents priority access and preferential pricing.
- Safeguard City assets and manage specialty equipment responsibly.
- Maintain financially sustainable operations with clear and transparent reporting.

2. Facility Overview

The Ceramics Program is located in the new Foster City Community Center at 650 Shell Boulevard, opening Fall 2026. The dedicated indoor studio includes one (1) primary workspace of approximately 1,120 square feet, a 115-square-foot storage room, and a 170-square-foot kiln room. The studio will be equipped with two (2) oval top-loading kilns, one (1) front-loading kiln, seventeen (17) pottery kick wheels with stools, six (6) adjustable-height worktables (for hand building, wedging, slab rolling, and more), and twelve (12) adjustable-height stools. The studio also includes dedicated shelves and lockers for participant and material storage, as well as display shelves that face the hallway to showcase participant work to community members using the facility.

The Ceramics Studio is located on the first floor of the Community Center and has direct access to a 1,296 square-foot utility/ceramics courtyard to support easy delivery and handling of materials. The space will be secured with a key card access system and includes a dedicated entrance for the selected operator, separate from the main Community Center entry. See Exhibits A-C for floor plans and renderings of the new Community Center.

3. Scope of Services

The selected operator will be responsible for all aspects of the ceramics program operations, including:

- **Program design and delivery** – Develop and deliver classes, workshops, camps, open studio sessions, and special events appropriate for the studio size and participant skill levels.
- **Enrollment management** – Handle registration, waitlists, resident priority, and participant orientation.
- **Staffing and supervision** – Recruit, train, and supervise staff, manage professional development, and provide coverage for absences.
- **Health and safety** – Ensure the safe use of equipment and materials; implement kiln operation protocols; and maintain and adhere to a written Emergency Operations Plan, including emergency response procedures and incident reporting.
- **Inclusion and accessibility** – Provide programming for participants of all abilities and backgrounds.
- **Facility care** – Maintain a safe, clean, and organized studio, including proper use and upkeep of City-provided equipment and materials.
- **Marketing and promotion** – Coordinate with the City on program promotion, including activity guide submissions, ensuring alignment with City schedules and guidelines.
- **Family and community engagement** – Develop strategies to involve families, host community events, showcase participant work, and encourage broad resident participation.
- **Seasonal or special ceramic sales** – Coordinate approved sales of participant-created work, with a portion of proceeds returning to the City, ensuring compliance with City policies and accounting procedures.
- **Data collection and reporting** – Track program participation and outcomes to support oversight, continuous improvement, and City reporting requirements.
- **Accessibility and affordability** – Describe how your programs make participation more accessible, including any discounts or fee reductions for seniors, low-income participants, or others who qualify. Responses that demonstrate thoughtful approaches to affordability will be viewed favorably.

4. Minimum Requirements

Operators should meet the following criteria:

- Demonstrated experience managing ceramics, arts, or creative programs for community or educational settings.
- Staff with appropriate training, certifications, and experience in arts instruction and studio safety.
- Health and safety plan, including emergency procedures, safe equipment use, and participant supervision.

- Commitment to inclusive access, including culturally responsive programming and accessible communication.
- Ability to implement resident priority enrollment and a modest resident discount.

5. Program Model and Calendar

Operators may propose full-day, part-day, evening, weekend, or blended schedules, and seasonal or year-round programming, provided hours remain within the Community Center's operating hours.

Proposals should include:

- Participant age groupings and skill levels
- Sample class schedules and session lengths
- Staffing ratios and instructor qualifications
- Special events, camps, or workshops
- Holiday and closure schedules

6. Pricing and Access

The City requires transparent pricing, clear enrollment policies, and priority access for Foster City residents with a defined resident discount.

- City approval of the initial fee schedule and any parameters for annual adjustments.
- Priority enrollment for Foster City residents and a proposed resident discount (subject to City approval).
- Clear and transparent policies for registration, withdrawal, refunds, and waitlist management.

7. Performance Standards and Indicators

The operator will maintain high standards for safety and compliance with studio best practices, program quality and participant experience, family and community engagement, prioritization of Foster City resident participation, and reliable staffing with appropriate coverage and timely reporting.

8. Risk and Responsibility Matrix

Area	City	Operator	Notes/Recommendations
Facility Structure & Repairs	✓	✓	City handles major building systems; operator reports issues promptly.
Daily Studio Care & Cleanliness	✓	✓	City janitorial handles nightly cleaning; operator manages studio surfaces, tools, and clay dust during program hours.
Studio Equipment & Kiln Safety	✓ City base fit-out (basic furnishings)	✓	City responsible for repair/replacement of equipment it purchased. Operator responsible for safe daily use, cleaning, maintenance, reporting malfunctions, and any operator-supplied equipment.
Participant Safety & Emergency Procedures	✓	✓	Operator implements safety rules, incident reporting, and emergency protocols; City provides building-wide procedures.
Staff Background & Qualifications		✓	Operator ensures staff have appropriate qualifications and background checks per City policy.
Marketing and enrollment		✓ City brand guidelines	Operator manages program promotion while following City standards; City will support promotion. Operators wishing to take advantage of marketing opportunities, such as inclusion in the City's activity guide, must coordinate with the City's class schedule and submission deadlines to ensure timely and accurate promotion of programs.
Insurance & indemnification	Sets minimums	✓ Carries	Operator must maintain required insurance coverage

9. Term and Compensation

The initial term is 3–5 years, with potential renewals based on performance. Compensation may include rent, a management fee, percentage of gross revenue, or a hybrid model. Operators may be asked for a financial guarantee equal to 2–3 months of program costs.

10. Submission Requirements

Responses should include:

- **Cover letter and organizational overview** – including years in operation, mission, leadership, and relevant experience in arts, ceramics, or community programs.

- **Program approach** – proposed curriculum framework, class and workshop schedule, skill-level groupings, inclusion strategies, community engagement approach, and calendar.
- **Staffing plan** – proposed staff roles, qualifications, ratios, and approach to substitutes and professional development.
- **Health and safety plan** – emergency procedures, equipment and kiln safety, studio rules, and participant supervision protocols.
- **Facility use plan** – studio setup, materials and equipment management, and approach to maintaining a safe, clean, and organized environment.
- **Basic financial overview** – anticipated revenue and expenses, proposed fee schedule, and resident discount approach. Detailed multi-year pro formas are not required, but operators should demonstrate financial sustainability.
- **References** – at least one or two examples of similar programs or facilities operated previously.
- **Exceptions or alternative approaches** (if any) with rationale.

11. Addenda and Acknowledgment

The City may issue written addenda during the RFI process to clarify information, respond to questions, or provide updates to the scope or requirements. All addenda will be posted on the City’s website and/or distributed to registered respondents to ensure that all potential operators have access to the same information. Respondents are responsible for reviewing all addenda prior to submitting their materials and must include acknowledgment of each addendum in their response. Submissions that do not acknowledge all addenda may be considered incomplete.

12. Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be scored based on program quality, staffing, finances, family engagement, and facility management.

Area	Weight	Description
Program Quality & Experience	30%	Demonstrated ability to provide high-quality ceramics and arts programming
Staffing Plan	20%	Depth of staff experience, qualifications, training, and coverage
Financial Sustainability	20%	Realistic budget and fee structure ensuring stable operations
Family & Community Engagement	20%	Plans for communication, inclusion, and resident participation
Studio & Facility Management	10%	Strategy for maintaining safe, clean, and engaging spaces

13. Anticipated Schedule

The City anticipates issuing the RFI on **February 19, 2026**, with an optional pre-submittal meeting or site walk. Questions must be submitted by **March 2, 2026**, any addenda will be issued by **March 4, 2026**, and proposals are due by **March 20, 2026 by 5:00pm**.

Submission Format: Responses should be limited to 20 pages (excluding exhibits) and use standard, legible fonts and margins. Submissions should be provided as a PDF, and any financial or pro forma documents should also be submitted in an editable format (e.g., Excel) to allow the City to review calculations and assumptions efficiently.

Proposals can be emailed to: toren@fostercity.org or mailed to: Tiffany Oren, Recreation Manager, 670 Shell Blvd, Foster City, CA 94404. If submitting by mail, please include a minimum of 3 copies.

14. Required Insurance

Respondents must provide proof of the following insurance coverages: Commercial General Liability, Professional Liability (Errors & Omissions), Abuse and Molestation Coverage, Workers' Compensation, Auto Liability, Additional Insured Endorsements, and Waivers of Subrogation.

Coverage shall be *at least as broad as*:

1. **Commercial General Liability (CGL):** Insurance Services Office Form CG 00 01 covering CGL on an "occurrence" basis, including property damage, bodily injury and personal & advertising injury with limits no less than **\$1,000,000** per occurrence. If a general aggregate limit applies, either the general aggregate limit shall apply separately to this project/location (ISO CG 25 03 or 25 04) or the general aggregate limit shall be twice the required occurrence limit.
2. **Automobile Liability:** Insurance Services Office Form Number CA 0001 covering Code 1 (any auto), or if Instructor has no owned autos, Code 8 (hired) and 9 (non-owned), with limits no less than **\$1,000,000** per **accident for** bodily injury and property damage. (**Note**— required only if auto is used in performance of work).
1. **Workers' Compensation** insurance as required by the State of California, with Statutory Limits, and Employer's Liability Insurance with limit of no less than **\$1,000,000** per accident for bodily injury or disease. (**Note** – required only if Vendors has employees).
2. **Sexual Abuse or Molestation (SAM) Liability:** If the work will include contact with minors, and the CGL policy referenced above is not endorsed to include affirmative coverage for sexual abuse or molestation, Contractor shall obtain and maintain a policy covering Sexual Abuse and Molestation with a limit no less than **\$1,000,000** per occurrence or claim.
3. The Insurance Company agrees to waive all rights of subrogation against the City of Foster City, its elected or appointed officers, officials, agents, volunteers, and employees for losses paid under the terms of any policy which arise from work performed by the Instructor for the Entity. This provision also applies to the Instructor's Workers' Compensation policy.

Certificate Holder must read: City of Foster City, Estero Municipal Improvement District, 650 Shell Blvd., Foster City, CA 94404.

Description box must read: The City of Foster City/EMID, its elected and appointed officials, employees, volunteers, and agents as Additional Insured on the General Liability policy on a primary and non-contributory basis. All Certificate Holder privileges apply only if required by written agreement between the Certificate Holder and the insured, and are subject to policy terms and conditions.

15. Exhibits

The City will provide the following reference materials to support proposal development:

- Floor Plan and Room Layout
- Site Map
- Community Center Exterior Renderings

16. Interview Topics (if shortlisted)

If a respondent is shortlisted following the RFI review, the City may invite them to a brief interview to discuss topics such as:

- Program philosophy and curriculum
- Staffing and supervision practices
- High-level financial or operational considerations
- Experience managing similar programs or partnerships
- Use of the facility, including studio and outdoor areas
- Family and community engagement strategies

Interviews are informational and will not constitute a commitment to award a contract.

Short RFI Notice Text

The City of Foster City invites qualified organizations and individuals to express interest in operating the ceramics studio at the new Foster City Community Center. The City seeks safe, inclusive, and financially sustainable programs that promote creativity, skill-building, and community engagement. Respondents should provide qualifications, proposed programming, and a preliminary financial plan. Depending on responses, this RFI may result in a future Request for Proposals (RFP).

EXHIBIT A
CERAMICS STUDIO FLOOR PLAN AND LAYOUT

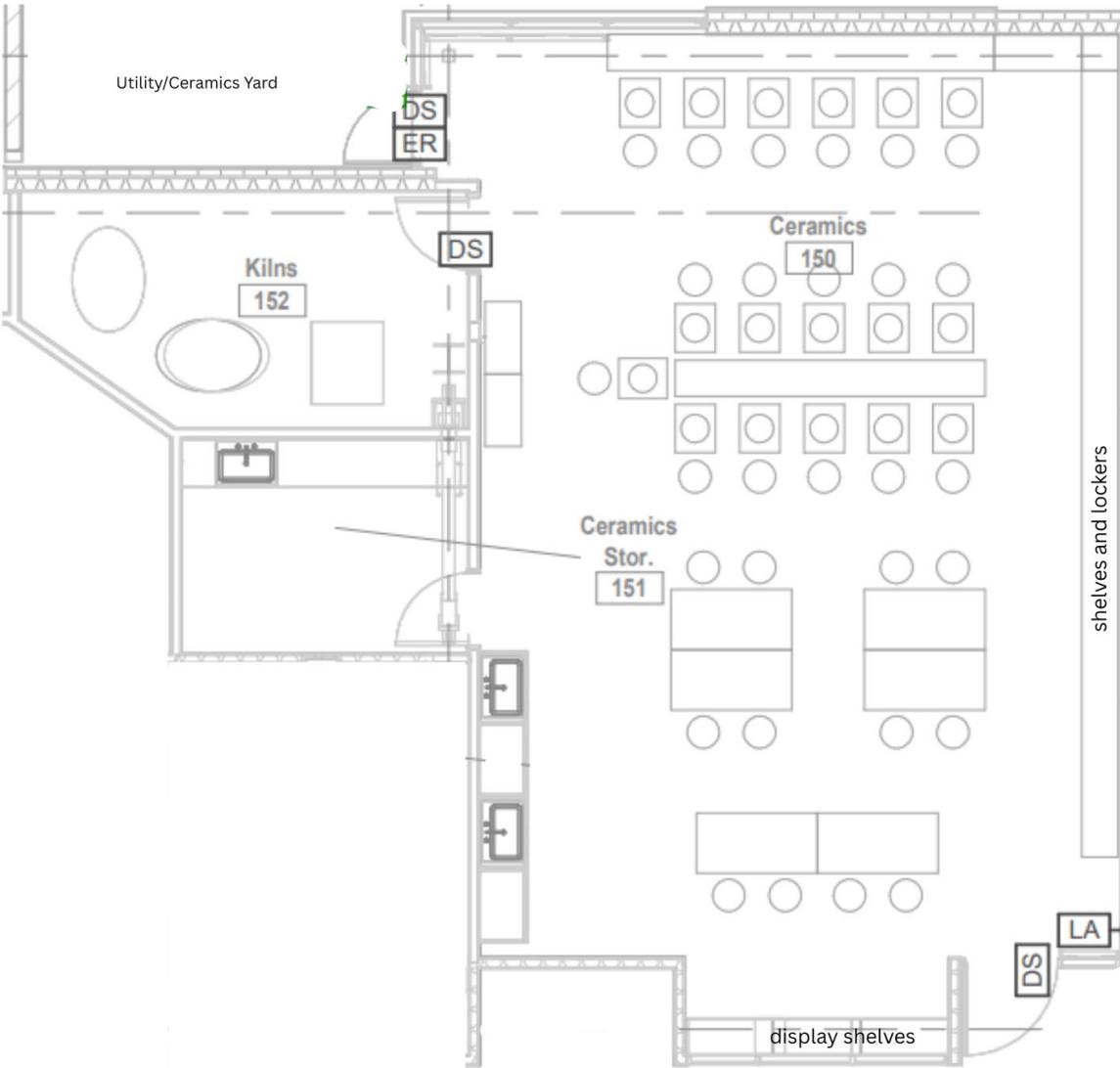


EXHIBIT B
FOSTER CITY COMMUNITY CENTER SITE PLAN

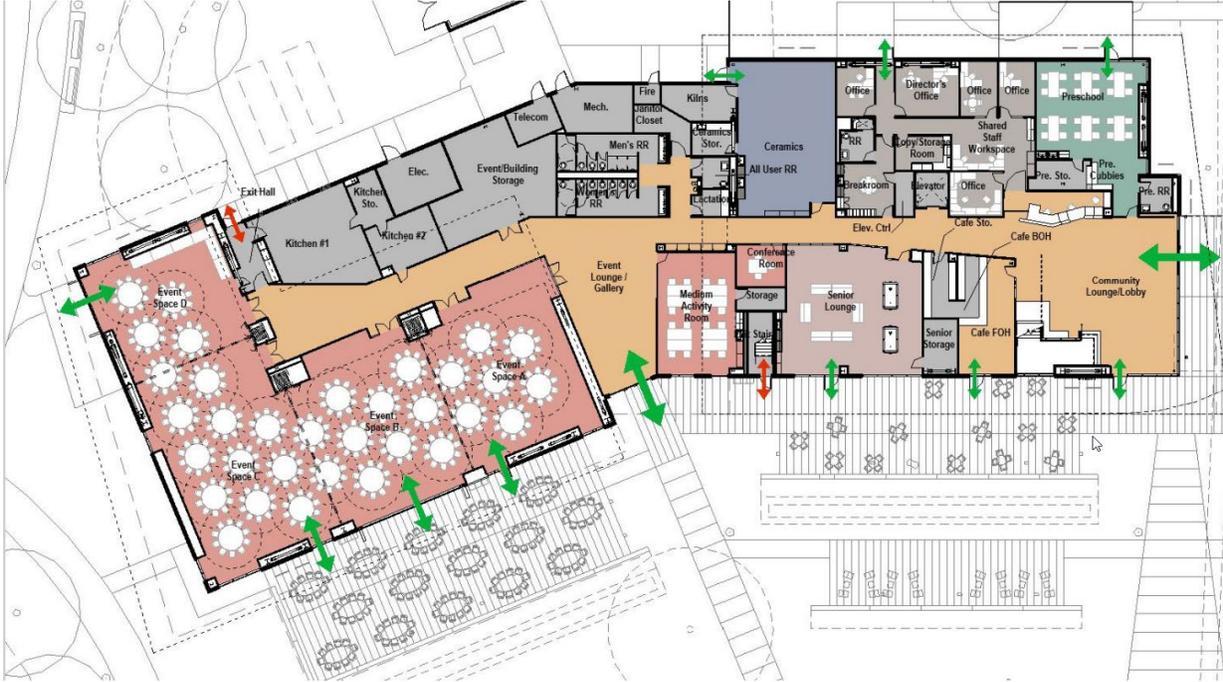


EXHIBIT C
FOSTER CITY COMMUNITY CENTER EXTERIOR RENDERINGS

