Northfield Historical Society
Request for Proposal (RFP)

Services: Museum – Interpretive Exhibit Planning

Project: 1876 Bank Robbery Interpretive Exhibit
Exhibit Planning & Space Use Project
Northfield, Minnesota

Closing Date: December 10, 2014

Primary Contact: Hayes Scriven
Executive Director
507-645-9268
scriven@northfieldhistory.org

A. General

1. Purpose
The Northfield Historical Society (NHS) seeks proposals from qualified contractors to provide professional exhibit planning services for the redesign of interpretive exhibits and space use at its museum in Northfield, MN.

This RFP describes the basic services required and the process for selecting the qualified consulting firm for this project.

2. Submission of Proposal
Prospective consultant firms shall submit one (1) electronic copy (sent via e-mail) of their proposal and fee schedule no later than 4:00 p.m. on December 10, 2014 to scriven@northfieldhistory.org

All proposals must be clearly marked "Exhibit Planning – Northfield Historical Society" in the subject heading.

All submissions must be received by the RFP closing date. Incomplete submissions and submissions received after the closing date will not be accepted.

B. Background Information
The Northfield Historical Society (NHS) was formed in 1975 for two main purposes. The first purpose was to create an historical society and museum for the city and citizens of Northfield. The second purpose was to save the historic First National Bank building on the site of the September 7, 1876 bank robbery by the James-Younger Gang.
Today, NHS serves as the primary steward of the history of the Northfield area. It strives to foster an awareness of its meaning and relevance through the discovery, documentation, preservation, and interpretation, of the collective stories that shape the area. NHS’s varied collection reflects the unique history of the area, but specifically, NHS collects and preserves those objects that best tell the story of the 1876 bank robbery.

NHS seeks to develop a conceptual space use plan for the historic buildings that comprise the museum, including the historic bank site, and realigning the stories currently on exhibit with outcome-based learning. This project will identify key messages, exhibit elements, and presentation techniques; determine possible participatory, hands-on, and interactive exhibit elements; and develop schematic design, which will include a floor plan and renderings or elevations of exhibit elements with the goal of better interpreting NHS’s most popular exhibit. Overall, the interpretive elements of the exhibit are in need of updating and reorganization to present a cohesive, chronological story while improving visitor wayfinding.

Exhibit design and space use must incorporate accessible design for all visitors, including those with physical and/or cognitive impairments. NHS provides visitors an opportunity to learn and explore together, and the proposed exhibit will utilize universal design to encourage participation by visitors of all ages and abilities. A well-designed exhibit will be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design.

C. Scope of Services

The Northfield Historical Society seeks a qualified consulting firm with professional museum services experience to:

- Review existing research;
- Develop exhibit outcomes for an object-based and audience-focused exhibit;
- Update and reorganize interpretive themes and narratives to impart a cohesive, chronological exhibit narrative;
- Draft a written exhibit walkthrough, space use plan, and overall design approach;
- Conceptualize and render sample elevations of major exhibit elements; and
- Prepare a preliminary budget.

The conceptual space use and exhibit redesign plan will be based on the existing exhibit content and space use, with the selected consultant/contractor working directly with the NHS’s exhibit team to redevelop the exhibits and space use.

In addition, this project is funded in part through a Minnesota Historical and Cultural Grant, administered by the Minnesota Historical Society. As such, the project must be carried out in accordance with the provisions outlined by the Minnesota Historical and Cultural Grants manual.
D. Qualifications

The selected consultant/contractor shall:

- Possess the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary for developing effective interpretive exhibit spaces that connect museum visitors with historic resources through both active and passive interpretive media;
- Provide a portfolio illustrating past experience in exhibit planning, accessible design, small museums, and local history;
- Possess experience installing artifacts and objects within the context of a historic site or museum, utilizing mounting and installation methods that minimize impact on the historic resource; and
- Consult with NHS staff in all phases of project development to ensure that the finished project meets organizational standards for excellence.

In preparing a response to this RFP, the Consultant shall propose and describe the detailed Scope of Services for this specific project based on the information above.

E. Consultant Submittal

Proposals from qualified consulting firms shall include, at a minimum, the following information:

1. Statement of Solution
   Describe how your firm proposes to address the challenges of completing this project, including any perceived opportunities that should be considered.

2. Project understanding, approach and coordination methods:
   (a) Consulting firm shall describe understanding of project and identify approach to fulfill the scope of services and deliverable requirements.
   (b) Consulting firm shall summarize the key elements of the proposal and outline reasons why your firm should be selected.

3. Similar Project Experience:
   Consulting firm shall identify similar project experience within the last 3-5 years and provide a reference for each. Submitted projects shall represent work of the proposed consulting team and not just that of the firm. By submitting a response to this RFP, the respondent hereby authorizes the Northfield Historical Society to contact references and make such further investigations as may be in the best interest of the organization.

4. Consultant Team and Project Manager Qualifications:
   Consulting firm shall identify project manager, work performed on similar projects, and manager qualifications. Additional team members, including sub-contractors if required, shall be identified, including previous experience and qualifications.

5. Schedule
   Consulting firm shall identify the key work tasks, milestones, and critical path based upon the Northfield Historical Society’s proposed project completion date of July 17, 2015. Any proposals that project work beyond NHS’s preferred project completion date
must provide clear justification for the scheduling overage.

6. Fee Proposal
Consulting firm shall identify total fee to complete described work with a breakdown of tasks, estimated hours, and hourly rates. Costs for each phase of service shall be individually delineated. The total fee shall reflect all costs, included but not limited to, sub-contractors/consultants, meeting allowance, specified deliverables, overhead, profit and reimbursable.

The fee shall be structured “hourly-not-to-exceed” unless an alternative fee structure is proposed as appropriate.

Estimated costs for materials are required to be included in fee proposal under reimbursable expenses. As appropriate, the consultant shall include cost for coordination of these services in fee proposal.

F. Evaluation and Selection Process

1. Shortly after the submission deadline a selection committee comprised of the NHS Exhibit Team will review all proposals and formulate a recommendation to the NHS member organizations. At its discretion, NHS may elect to conduct interviews with prospective consultants as part of the selection process.

2. NHS utilizes the following criteria in recommending a consultant that provides the best overall value to NHS member organizations in meeting project requirements:
   (a) Consultant’s Statement of Solution;
   (b) Project understanding, approach and coordination methods;
   (c) Previous experience with similar projects;
   (d) Consultant team member qualifications;
   (e) Schedule; and
   (f) Fee Proposal.

3. Upon approval by NHS member organizations, the successful candidate will be notified and a consultant agreement will be finalized. Unsuccessful candidates will be notified after the consultant agreement has been executed. Work on this project is projected to commence no later than December 17, 2014.

4. NHS reserves the right to cancel the RFP at any time, or for any reason that is in the best interests of the organization. NHS also reserves the right to reject proposals based on the evaluation of submitted materials, to accept other than the lowest cost proposal, and to negotiate the specified dollar amount or any portion thereof.
G. Contact
Questions regarding this RFP or the associated project should be directed to:

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