

Northfield Historical Society Request for Proposal (RFP)

Services: Museum – Interpretive Exhibit Scriptwriting

Project: Northfield Historical Society Interpretive Exhibit
Exhibition Script and Scholarly Review
of the 1876 Bank raid exhibit

Closing Date: December 1, 2016

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

A. General

1. Purpose

The Northfield Historical Society (NHS) seeks proposals from qualified contractors to provide professional exhibit writing services for the development of an interpretive exhibit 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 June 9th, 2016 to: scriven@northfieldhistory.org. The proposal must be sent in an Adobe PDF format

All proposals must be clearly marked "Scriptwriting – 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.

The purpose of this Minnesota Historical and Cultural Grants funded project is to draft a detailed exhibit script, conduct additional research, and undertake a scholarly review by impartial peers. This narrative will be guided by the concepts established through the initial exhibit planning initiative (funded by the Minnesota Historical and Cultural Grants program of the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund in 2015). The script will include exhibit text and thumbnail images of supporting photographs, archival materials, and objects that illustrate the main interpretive themes. The script will present an object-based, audience-focused interpretation of the failed raid of 1876.

Exhibit text will incorporate existing research; objects, images, and outcomes identified in the exhibit plan; and feedback from NHS staff and stakeholders. Although the exhibit plan will outline major content areas and specific stories that support the exhibit's interpretive themes, additional research may be required as the script is fully developed. Additionally, before implementation begins, the script will be peer reviewed for historical honesty, fairness, and accuracy. As required by the Minnesota Historical & Cultural Grants Manual, peer reviewers will be knowledgeable about the content of the exhibit and present no conflict of interest.

C. Scope of Services

NHS seeks a qualified consulting firm with professional museum services experience to:

- Undertake storytelling and detailed label writing according to best practices in exhibit label writing;
- Explore multiple viewpoints from a variety of sources, seeking to develop robust narratives that characterize the attitudes and politics of the past;
- Conduct additional research as needed to finalize exhibit narratives;
- Finalize objects, images, maps, graphics, diagrams, and participatory elements;
- Participate in a feedback cycle that will include three iterations (50%, 100%, and final);
- Issue a complete, draft script that includes exhibit text and thumbnail images of supporting photographs, archival materials, and objects; and
- Revise exhibit script according to feedback from peer reviewers.

NHS will submit the final draft script to peer reviewers for analysis of its historical quality. The selected consultant/contractor will work directly with the NHS's exhibit team to draft the exhibit script and carry out any additional research necessary.

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:

- Demonstrate familiarity with the City of Northfield and its history, including the content areas defined in the research and exhibit planning phases;
- Possess the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary for developing effective, concise, and high quality interpretive exhibit labels that connect museum visitors with historic resources and narratives;
- Possess knowledge and understanding of accessibility in museum writing, especially in terms of readability, length, concision, and complexity;
- Provide a portfolio illustrating past experience in exhibit planning, accessible design, small museums, and local history; 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 NHS 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 NHS's proposed project completion date of December 1, 2016. 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 board for approval. 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 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;
 - (f) Fee proposal; and
 - (g) Writing sample of a completed, peer reviewed exhibition script.
3. Upon approval by NHS, 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 June 30, 2016.

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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