



Request for Proposal
For Project Manager

New York City Fire Museum, a New York State registered charity, seeks proposals to provide Project Management services.

New York City Fire Museum
Museum of the FDNY

Judith Jamison, Director
John Bower, Board President
Dorothy Marks, Board Vice-President

February 6, 2008

Deadline for response: May 6, 2008

Questions must be submitted in writing no later than May 6, 2008 to Judith Jamison, Director, by e-mail, to jjamison@nycfiremuseum.org

Background and Mission of the NYC Fire Museum

The New York City Fire Museum (“Museum”) was established to collect, preserve and present the history and cultural heritage of the fire service of New York and to provide fire prevention and safety education to the public, especially children.

The Museum opened as the Fire College Museum in Long Island City in 1934. In 1959 the Museum moved to a firehouse at 100 Duane Street in Manhattan, where it remained until the Home Insurance Company presented a part of its vast collection of fire memorabilia to the City in 1981, necessitating a move to larger quarters. The Friends raised funds to renovate a 1904 Beaux-Arts firehouse at 278 Spring Street in New York’s Soho neighborhood, which is now the Museum’s home.

The Museum houses one of the world’s most comprehensive collections of fire-related art and artifacts from the 18th century to the present, including beautifully preserved hand- and horse-drawn apparatus, motorized apparatus, toys and models, fire engine lamps, presentation silver, oil paintings, prints, photographs, fire marks and folk art. There is also a permanent memorial to the 343 firefighters who made the Supreme Sacrifice on September 11, 2001.

The Museum, in cooperation with the FDNY Fire Safety Education Unit, has developed a citywide fire safety education program based on the premise that education can save lives. Tours for children, senior citizens and others in the community combine firefighting history with important fire safety information. Led by uniformed firefighters, organized groups visit a simulated apartment equipped with black lights, safe smoke and other devices that illustrate common fire hazards and promote safer living environments.

Project Description

A 1982 charter from the City of New York entrusted the Friends of the New York City Fire Department Collection, Inc., a not-for-profit organization, with the protection, preservation and presentation of a premier and priceless world-class collection of historic artifacts pertaining to the Fire Department of New York City, from its formative years in the seventeenth century to the present. Along with that came another mission, to promote and educate the public regarding fire safety and fire prevention. Due to limited resources and staff turnover, it became increasingly difficult to accomplish these two missions as the Museum matured. (Although the collection is owned by the City, the City provides no funding to support the Museum’s collections and programs.)

The collection consists of more than 10,000 artifacts - ranging from items as small as lapel pins to full size motorized apparatus. It needs rationalization and improvement of the current variety of cataloging systems (including triage and initial cataloging of numerous items received following 9/11, which currently have temporary registration numbers), elaboration of the current list of restoration needs, and physical triage and organization of the artifacts in storage.

At the same time that the evaluation/cataloging are conducted, a thorough photographic and written documentation of the collection should be undertaken. At present, the collection consists of the former FDNY Museum inventory, which was combined with the Home Insurance Company's collection in the early eighties, and is further enhanced by private donor contributions. Several cataloging systems appear to exist, and it is possible that as little as five percent of the collection may be properly documented. In preparation for the rationalization, documentation and completion of the cataloging, the Museum is utilizing knowledgeable volunteers to sort items currently in Museum storage but more appropriately housed by the Fire Department Mand Library or the New York City Archives. These items will not be included in the Museum inventory. An improved storage system should be implemented to safeguard items not on display.

In addition to the evaluation discussed above, the Museum wishes to proceed as soon as possible with the stabilization and restoration of those artifacts already identified by curators and outside experts as being in most immediate need. The Museum is aware of several valuable artifacts that need extensive restoration work and which, due to their condition, cannot be displayed. These articles need to be addressed on an item-by-item basis in the immediate future as will other those artifacts identified as the result of the project.

Project Schedule

A thorough review of its collections, improvement of the collection storage/work area, collection documentation, and restoration of several major works known to be in peril are the NYC Fire Museum's top priorities. Work would begin immediately upon designation of a Project Manager and would continue for eighteen months on a part time basis (about 20 hours per week) with the possibility for continuation pending funding.

Project Manager Job Description

The Project Manager will oversee a thorough review of the Museum's collection, supervise improvements in its documentation and storage methods - in order to begin the necessary steps for the long-term preservation of the collection - and oversee work on several major pieces previously identified as in need of immediate restoration. Along with the Director, the Project Manager will hire, train and supervise staff (paid and volunteer) to assist with and implement documentation and archiving of the collection. Whenever possible this process and its implementation should be informed by the standards required for accredited Museums by the American Association of Museums (AAM).

GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Create project budget and oversee payments and record keeping
- Develop and/or revise policies and best practices for the NYC Fire Museum's archives

- Plan and oversee collection-related activities, including purchase of necessary computer hardware, software and storage items
- Develop a comprehensive records management policy for programmatic and organizational materials
- Catalog artifacts, photographs, documents, books, and audio/visual recordings
- Recruit, train and supervise part-time staff, interns, and volunteers
- Manage project timeline and budget and ensure that funder-mandated compliance requirements are met
- Oversee restoration of museum works of art and artifacts

DESIRABLE QUALIFICATIONS:

- ALA-accredited master’s degree in library, information science, archival studies or equivalent experience;
- Advanced coursework in cataloging and/or two years experience as a library, archives or museum cataloger;
- Knowledge of AACR2, Library of Congress Thesaurus for Graphic Materials, and Library of Congress Subject Headings; familiarity with General International Standard Archival Description a plus
- Extremely organized and detail-oriented
- Documented success with similar projects.

PREFERRED EXPERIENCE AND SKILLS:

- Excellent writing skills
- Hands-on experience with digital image creation and manipulation;
- Knowledge of issues regarding preservation/conservation, and collection development;
- Experience with computer networking, Excel and PastPerfect museum software a plus.

The ideal respondent to the proposal (“the proposer”) is a flexible, outgoing and creative person with excellent organizational skills and an ability to work independently.

Project Manager will be responsible for:

- anticipating, identifying, and articulating issues to the Director
- strategizing with the Director to respond in a timely manner that efficiently advances the project.

The proposal should include the proposer’s experience with similar projects (please include references and contact information), proposer’s approach, methods, availability, anticipated timeline, and fee structure.

Proposers interested in submitting proposals to provide such services are required to follow the recommended guidelines and instructions contained in this Request for Proposal (“RFP”). In the

event it becomes necessary to revise any part of this RFP, revisions will be provided by addenda posted on the Museum's website: www.NYCFIREMUSEUM.org

Proposals should be submitted no later than 5:00 PM EST on March 15, 2008. Deliver all proposals to:

Judith Jamison
NYC Fire Museum
278 Spring Street
New York, NY 10013
Attn: CM RFP

The Museum reserves the right to reject any or all proposals submitted if such election is deemed to be in the best interest of the Museum assumes no obligation, no responsibility and no liability for costs incurred by those responding prior to issuance of a contract.

The selected proposer will be retained for the duration of the project subject to review and approval by the Board of Directors of the Museum.

III. Submission requirements

Those interested are invited to submit proposals that contain the following information

A. Experience

1. A history of experience providing collections management services for not-for-profit and civic organizations. Consideration will be given to experience with museum facilities.
2. Samples of up to three relevant projects completed in the area of service requested. Include the client, the name of the contact who is able to provide a reference, a description of the nature of the work, the complexity of the project.
3. Any other information that would make the proposer's work on behalf of the Museum superior to that of other proposers.

B. Fee

1. Total estimated fee and/or normal hourly rate for completion of the project

C. Contact information

On a single cover sheet please provide:

1. The firm or individual name of the proposer
2. The contact person
3. All contact information, including e-mail, address, telephone and fax
4. The signature of the lead individual, and the date of the signature.

D. Conflict of Interest

Submit a statement describing any potential conflict of interest or appearance of impropriety, relating to other clients of the proposer's, or officers, directors, and employees of the Museum, that could be created by providing services to the Museum.

IV. Criteria for Selection

In evaluating proposals submitted pursuant to this request, the Museum places high value on the following factors, not necessarily in order of importance:

- Approaches in methodology with respect to the anticipated scope of services that demonstrates maximum comprehension of and ability to provide such services to the Museum
- Quality of work product as demonstrated in submitted work samples
- Experience with similar projects
- Availability and anticipated timeline for project completion
- Projected cost of services

V. Contract Terms and Requirements

The contents of the proposal submitted, with any amendment approved by the Museum will become a part of the contract that is signed as a result of this RFP process.

The selected proposer will be required to:

- Work with the Museum staff and its consultants to provide collection management services to the Museum on matters that may arise in connection with the project
- Maintain accurate accounting records and other evidence pertaining to costs incurred in providing services, and on the Museum request, to make such records available to the Museum at all reasonable times during the contract period and for six (6) years after the date of the final payment to the firm under contract
- Assume sole responsibility for the complete effort, as required by this RFP, and be the sole point of contact with regard to contractual matters
- Refrain from assigning, transferring, conveying, subletting or otherwise disposing of the contract or its rights, titles or interest therein or its power to execute such agreement to any other person, firm, partnership, company or corporation without the prior consent and approval in writing of the Museum.
- Comply with applicable law governing projects initiated or supported by the Museum's potential funders, the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation, The city and State of New York, including all applicable HUD requirements and regulations.

The Museum reserves the right to terminate any contract entered into as a result of this RFP at any time, provided that written notice has been given to the firm at least thirty days prior to such proposed terminating date.

VI. Miscellaneous Conditions

The issuance of this RFP, submission of a response by any proposer, and the acceptance of such response by the Museum do not obligate the Museum in any manner. Legal obligations will only arise on the execution of a formal contract by the Museum and the proposer selected by the Museum.

Response to this RFP will be prepared at the sole cost and expense of the responding proposer. No materials submitted in response to this RFP will be returned.