



**Request for Proposals (“RFP”)
Consulting Services Relating to Diversity Equity and Inclusion Strategy**

In this complex world the Maine Humanities Council (the “Council”) uses old-school tools – books, poetry, history, big ideas – to foster meaningful connection and positive change in communities throughout Maine. It is work that takes the long view, that takes humanity seriously, that requires commitment and delight.

To do our work fully and well, the Council must examine and improve current practices and policies, and develop new strategies to foster and support diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI). We expect this will be an iterative and recursive process, taking place over the course of months and years, but we are committed to beginning that process now.

In its 2018-20 Strategic Plan, the Maine Humanities Council committed itself to developing “our ability to support Maine’s diversity and to live out our shared commitment to equity, accessibility, and inclusion in everything we do.” We seek to define ongoing goals and strategies which would help us put this commitment into practice and work toward the vision put forward in our strategic plan. We are convinced of the power of the humanities-based discussion to be a force for positive social change and to bring people together, and we want to emphasize this goal in everything we do. Looking at our work “through a DEI lens” also means actively seeking opportunities to create social change and to promote diversity, equity and inclusion through our programs.

The Council is a statewide, independent non-profit organization that serves as Maine’s affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Library of Congress Center for the Book. It has an annual budget of \$1.4 million and a staff of 10, and is governed by a 22-member Board of Directors with representatives from academic and cultural institutions, the Maine business and professional community and Maine residents who are passionate about the Council’s mission and activities.

For more information on the Council and its work, visit mainehumanities.org.

Purpose and Goals of the Request for Proposals

Although we expect our understanding of DEI issues to change and grow, we begin from the assumption that, in a culture with a history of structural racism and inequity, our ordinary practices and policies may be unintentionally exclusive, racist, or inequitable, privileging some groups over others or failing to take into account racial or social difference. Thus reviewing our practices and policies “through a DEI lens” means, at the very least, looking for such unintentional exclusions and inequities and correcting them and actively seeking opportunities to include and engage with diverse voices and perspectives.

We also want to commit ourselves, following the strategic plan, to using the humanities to create “positive transformation in Maine communities,” to “foster meaningful conversation and connection among all Mainers,” and “to bridge racial, ethnic, religious, and other cultural divides.” We acknowledge that traditional humanities texts may themselves incorporate and inscribe racist, misogynist, and classist assumptions and ideologies, which we have a responsibility to challenge in our programs, both by treating these issues in our discussions of the traditional texts and by intentionally including texts from diverse perspectives.

The purpose of this RFP is to solicit consulting proposals for assisting in the continuing development and execution of an organization-wide Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion strategy. The Board has developed and approved a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion plan (attached) and has determined that it would be desirable to get outside expert council.

The Council’s current Strategic Plan makes this a key goal over the next three-year period. The Strategic Plan is attached as an Addendum.

Assumptions:

All responses to this RFP should be based on the following set of assumptions:

1. Selected consultant will work with the Council over an extended period of time (at least one year) to provide guidance and support.
2. Respondents should assume that we will be focusing on areas including:
 - Organizational structure and governance
 - Program–models, content, audiences
 - Partner organizations
 - Recruiting and retention–Board, staff, facilitators
 - Statewide geography
 - Communications

Scope of Services

The Council seeks a written report to be shared with Staff and the Board of Directors that contains the following assessment and recommendations:

- Assist with review of policies, docs, and practices
- Ongoing revisions and improvements of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion plan
- Work with MHC to further our organizational goals for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
- Work with staff and Board separately and jointly as appropriate
- Provide or recommend opportunities for professional development and education

Proposed Schedule

The proposed schedule for the selection of a consultant is set forth below and is subject to change.

1. RFP issued June 15, 2020
2. Proposals are due no later than 4:00 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time, July 17, 2020
3. Conferences (Zoom) to discuss selected proposals, at agreed upon times on or around July 27, 2020.
4. Announcement of selection (target date only), August 14, 2020
5. Negotiation of definitive agreements to occur following selection announcement.

Proposal Guidelines

1. Amendment to the Request for Proposal: In the event it becomes necessary to amend the RFP, the amendment will be provided to all firms that receive the original RFP. Each firm's response must include an acknowledgement of all addenda.
2. Requests for Clarification or Inquiries and Submission of Final Proposals: Firms with questions concerning this RFP may submit their questions via email to Hayden Anderson at hayden@mainehumanities.org. Final proposals shall be electronically submitted to Hayden Anderson at hayden@mainehumanities.org
3. The title page of the proposal shall include the subject of the proposal, name of the firm, mailing address, name of contact person, telephone number, e-mail address, and date.

Proposals become the property of the Council: All proposals become the property of the Council and shall not be returned to the firm.

Proposal Required Responses

1. Provide the following information:
 - a. Name of firm;
 - b. Complete address;
 - c. Contact person;
 - d. Telephone number;
 - e. Internet address; and
 - f. E-mail address
2. Provide a General Statement of Qualifications that responds to the background information given above, including the firm's experience in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion strategy and implementation, with dates. Please provide the name and phone number of two clients with whom the firm has worked on a similar project.
3. Personnel
 - a. List the professional and support positions and number of personnel in each position.
 - b. Provide an organizational chart, including resumes of all personnel who would be committed to this project. Provide specific information as to their experience on projects similar to this one.
4. Consulting, design and construction management services
 - a. Provide information on your current workload and how you would accommodate this project.

- b. Describe in detail the process you would follow to complete the project.
 - c. Outline the schedule you would implement to complete the project.
 - d. Describe the types of problems you have encountered on similar projects, and explain what you did to resolve the problems and what you would do differently to avoid such problems on future projects.
5. Compensation
- a. Please provide information on your proposed compensation for all required services, including payment for out of pocket expenses.

Selection Criteria

- 1. The firm's ability to perform the scope of work described above.
- 2. Experience and qualifications, including overall experience in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion work with clients with missions similar to the Council and demonstrated ability to complete similar projects within required timeframes.
- 3. Compensation proposal
- 4. Organization, presentation and content of proposal.

DISCLAIMER:

The Council will select a firm based on the best overall proposal and value, and proceed to enter into discussions with such firm around a definitive agreement. The Council is not obligated to select the lowest bidder. This RFP does not commit the Council to any specific course of action, to the selection of any of the bidders or to the project, itself.

ADDENDUM– Maine Humanities Council Strategic Plan 2018-2020

GOAL 1 – Use the humanities to create opportunities for Mainers to learn, think, talk, listen, and share with each other.

(This goal represents the core work of the Council and a primary avenue for how we accomplish our mission. The MHC seeks out program partners and audiences, as well as program models, themes, and content that will advance our vision and mission. We use the humanities to enable and encourage thoughtful communication and meaningful connection across divides to advance the common good for all Mainers.)

- A. Develop and offer relevant and responsive humanities programs and grants.
 - 1. Assess and adjust programming based on evaluation data, available funding, conversations with partners, and alignment with mission and vision.
 - a. Consistently evaluate and improve MHC program offerings.
 - b. Balance the exploration of new opportunities with the ongoing demands of existing programs and the necessity of working within organizational capacity.
 - 2. Employ the grants program as an avenue for advancing the Council’s mission and vision.
 - a. Develop strategies for communicating the value and availability of MHC grants to a wider variety of audiences.
 - b. Focus on effective alignment of the grants program with the MHC’s strategic goals and priorities, and in particular with our strategic goal on diversity, equity, accessibility and inclusion.
 - c. Explore new and expanded sources for grant funding, including shifting internal resources and expanding external fundraising.

- B. Seek out new audiences, partners, and critical issues.
 - 1. Explore strategies to expand the reach and inclusiveness of MHC programs.
 - 2. Build on the Council’s experience and expertise to develop programs in conjunction with new and existing partners.
 - 3. Continue to explore possible new program topics and themes.
 - a. Focus on relevance and responsiveness of topic, especially where the Council can bring together diverse voices and perspectives in conversation.
 - b. Explore the development of programs connected to specific local themes or geographic locations within the State of Maine.

GOAL 2 - Promote the value of the humanities in Maine, and communicate with Mainers in a way that will inspire curiosity and connection, as well as increased participation and support for the MHC.

(More than just program marketing, our goal is to spread the word widely throughout the state about the distinct power of the humanities in general -- and the Council's mission and work in particular -- to improve the quality of life in Maine.)

- A. Build organizational capacity for communications and public relations.
 - 1. Explore the possibility of hiring an outside consultant to help the Council assess current communications efforts and set future direction.
 - 2. Enlist Board, staff, facilitators, grantees, and partner organizations to increase public recognition of the Council's mission and work.
 - 3. Increase effectiveness of Council communications through staff development and training.

- B. Work with other organizations throughout the state to help promote the humanities as effective tools for positive change.
 - 1. Expand and deepen program partnerships to boost the Council's presence and raise the profile of the humanities throughout Maine.
 - 2. Cultivate strong, ongoing relationships with reporters and media outlets to improve coverage of MHC activities and establish the MHC as a reliable go-to resource.

GOAL 3 - Develop the MHC's ability to support Maine's diversity and to live out our shared commitment to equity, accessibility, and inclusion in everything we do.

(We believe that the humanities can provide a powerful set of tools to help people connect and that effective use of these tools can lead to positive transformation in Maine communities. The MHC will make the ongoing commitment to develop the skills and understanding necessary to foster meaningful conversation and connection among all Mainers, and we will work to bridge racial, ethnic, religious, and other cultural divides.)

- A. Create a Board/Staff task force with the mandate to explore and recommend strategies and actions to emphasize and increase diversity, equity, accessibility, and inclusion, including but not limited to:
 - a. Organizational structure and governance
 - b. Program - models, content, audiences
 - c. Partner organizations
 - d. Recruiting and retention - Board, staff, facilitators
 - e. Statewide geography

- B. Conduct training and development efforts to build relevant skills and understanding organization-wide, including Board, staff, and facilitators.
- C. Expand diversity within the Board, staff, and facilitators, based on criteria that are most relevant and meaningful to carrying out the work of the MHC.
- D. Develop the skills and experience necessary to make MHC a trusted and reliable partner in offering programs and promoting communication and connection across divides.

GOAL 4 - Preserve and enhance the Maine Humanities Council’s health and effectiveness as a statewide humanities organization.

(Relationships are key to the Council’s success in advocacy, fundraising, and effectiveness in achieving the overall mission. We need to nurture our relationships with our friends and actively seek out new friends and allies. We will continue to advocate for the importance of our work and cultivate a network of organizations and individuals who can knowledgeably advocate on our behalf. We endeavor to create a funding structure that will build the MHC’s organizational resilience.)

- A. Sustain and expand our network of relationships.
 - 1. Government
 - a. Federal (NEH, other departments, Maine congressional delegation)
 - b. State (legislature, Governor’s office, legislative committees, individual legislators, cultural agencies and related departments)
 - 2. Nonprofit Organizations
 - a. Partners
 - b. Grantees
 - c. Educational Institutions
 - d. Foundations
 - 3. Businesses
 - a. Corporations
 - b. Local businesses
 - c. Trade associations
 - 4. Individuals
 - a. Facilitators
 - b. Donors
 - c. Potential donors, facilitators, Board members, program participants, etc.
- B. Examine the MHC’s fundraising model to assess the appropriateness of development goals, strategies, and activities.
 - 1. Evaluate the Council’s needs and capacity for expanded development efforts.
 - 2. Explore the possibility of a capital campaign for the MHC.

ADDENDUM– Maine Humanities Council Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan

GOALS AND STRATEGIES

A. Organization

GOAL #1: Refine commitment to DEI and define key terms.

Strategy #1: Define what we mean by key terms—diversity, equity, inclusion, justice, accessibility, DEI lens—in the context of the MHC. [Task Force]

Strategy #2: Evaluate existing core documents (mission statement, vision statement, bylaws, strategic plan, articles of incorporation) through a DEI lens and revise as appropriate. [Governance Committee/Task Force]

Strategy #3: Develop new core documents (e.g., diversity statement, accessibility statement) to further support DEI values. [Governance Committee/Task Force]

GOAL #2: Increase and maintain diversity of board, staff, facilitators, and contractors and encourage full participation from everyone.

Strategy #1: Create recruitment practices designed to increase diversity of staff, facilitators, and contractors. [Staff]

Strategy #2: Create recruitment practices designed to increase board diversity. [Governance Committee]

Strategy #3: Assess climate and culture using a DEI lens. [Task Force]

Strategy #4: Develop and foster organizational practices to create inclusive and welcoming climate and culture. [Staff/Task Force]

Strategy #5: Develop and foster leadership practices that encourage full participation by board and staff, including clarifying and communicating how decisions are made. [Staff/Task Force]

GOAL #3: Ensure that organizational policies and processes support DEI goals.

Strategy #1: Assess existing organizational policies and processes (e. g., staff handbook, board book, investment policy, grant criteria) through a DEI lens and revise as appropriate. [Staff/Governance Committee/Personnel Committee]

Strategy #2: Create new policies and processes as necessary to support DEI objectives. [Staff/Governance Committee/Personnel Committee]

GOAL #4: Build capacity for staff, board, and facilitators to productively engage with and follow through on the MHC's commitment to DEI.

Strategy #1: Support professional development opportunities for staff in the area of DEI. [Staff]

Strategy #2: Support board development opportunities in the area of DEI. [Task Force]

Strategy #3: Develop training and support activities for facilitators that increase their capacity for DEI. [Staff]

B. Programs

GOAL #1: Diversify program audiences.

Strategy #1: Assess current program audiences using a DEI lens, define underserved groups, and make efforts to be more inviting and welcoming to these groups with current programming. [Program Committee/Grants Committee/Staff]

Strategy #2: Identify additional underserved groups we want to reach and prioritize on the basis of equity. [Program Committee/Grants Committee/Staff]

Strategy #3: Build relationships with identified underserved groups and develop programs in collaboration with them. [Program Committee/Grants Committee/Staff]

GOAL #2: Ensure programs holistically reflect our organizational commitment to DEI.

Strategy #1: Assess and review program relevance and value holistically through DEI lens. [Program Committee/Grants Committee/Staff]

Strategy #2: Revise or discontinue existing programs and create new programs in response to the review. [Program Committee/Grants Committee/Staff]

Strategy #3: Implement and sustain changes with a commitment to regular institutional review. [Program Committee/Grants Committee/Staff]

C. Partners

GOAL #1: Develop a mutually beneficial dialogue with partners around organizational commitments to DEI.

Strategy #1: Make the MHC's commitment to DEI transparent in conversations with partners. [Staff]

Strategy #2: Seek opportunities for active learning about DEI in collaboration with partners. [Staff]

GOAL #2: Develop and maintain partnerships that are aligned with our DEI work.

Strategy #1: Assess and review efficacy of partner relationships through DEI lens. [Staff]

Strategy #2: Prioritize partnerships that support our DEI goals. [Staff]

Strategy #3: Create relationships with organizations that further our DEI goals. [Staff]

GOAL #3: Become a valuable resource to organizations that are interested in partnering with us on DEI work.

Strategy #1: Document DEI work and be willing to share with other organizations. [Task Force]

Strategy #2: Connect partner organizations to DEI resources. [Staff]

Strategy #3: Develop MHC's role as a competent partner organization on DEI issues. [Task Force]

D. Communications

GOAL #1: Ensure that MHC communications embody our commitment to DEI.

Strategy #1: Review and assess our communications practices using a DEI lens. [Staff]

Strategy #2: Develop revised, inclusively minded strategies as necessary. [Staff]

GOAL #2: Communicate publicly about our DEI commitment.

Strategy #1: Develop shared language for talking about our DEI commitment and communicate it to board, staff, and facilitators. [Task Force]

Strategy #2: Encourage board and staff to share our DEI commitment publicly and appropriately using that language. [Task Force]

GOAL #3: Use our communication capacity to recognize and amplify historically underrepresented voices

Strategy #1: Assess MHC's communications capacity and its potential to publicize the activities of underrepresented groups and make adjustments as necessary. [Staff]

Strategy #2: Establish structures which allow MHC to share underrepresented perspectives through its communication network. [Staff]