



Request for Proposals

Consulting Services Relating to Strategic Planning

Proposal Deadline: 5:00pm EST on January 25, 2022

The Maine Humanities Council is seeking the services of a strategic planning consultant or firm to work with the board and staff to develop a new 3- to 5-year plan for the organization. This plan will be a key tool for the Council to navigate into post-COVID time and to deepen and strengthen our commitments to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Background

In this complex world the Maine Humanities 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.

Our core programming brings small groups of people together to talk about books. The Council offers this programming to the general public primarily through partnerships with Maine’s public libraries and other community-based organizations. Through direct partnerships with people and organizations all over Maine, the Council builds book groups based in hospitals, schools, domestic violence resource centers, correctional institutions, and other settings.

The Council offers periodic large-scale events that bring diverse groups of people together around one big book (at the Readers Retreat each spring), or around one big idea (at the Big Question each fall). We offer grants to Maine nonprofits in support of public humanities programming in communities throughout the State. The MHC believes we are stronger the more fully we see and reflect the diversity of our communities. We work toward equity, accessibility, inclusion, and representation of diverse experiences and perspectives.

In all our activities, the Council seeks to use humanities texts to create connections, foster individual and community agency, and inspire increased civic engagement.

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 around \$1.5 million and a staff of 10, and is governed by a 20-member volunteer Board of Directors. For more information on the Council, visit mainehumanities.org.

Goals of the Project

We hope to work with a consultant who will guide development of a plan that is at once visionary and practical. The Council's [most recent strategic plan](#) was approved in 2017, to run through 2020. The Council adopted an additional [Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan](#) in 2019. Building upon this past work, we hope this strategic planning process will ...

1. Strengthen and sharpen our internal understanding of the Council's mission, vision, and values and how these support and direct organizational activities.
2. Frame strategic priorities for the organization for the next 3-5 years.
3. Lay the groundwork for detailed work planning and funding strategy, including measurable goals and criteria for measuring impact, as well as communication and development strategies.

Anticipated Deliverables

1. SWOT analysis (or comparable exercise) to identify key opportunities and challenges for the Council in the coming years.
2. Complete 3- to 5-year strategic plan, to include mission/vision/values statements, as well as strategic priorities and measurable goals.
3. Final report on the strategic planning process, suitable for sharing with current and prospective partners, funders, and stakeholders.

Proposed Timeline

We anticipate that this project will run through the fall of 2022 with much of the Strategic Planning Committee work occurring in Q1 and Q2. Early in the process, we expect most meetings will occur via Zoom. We may transition to more in-person work as circumstances permit. The proposed schedule for the selection of a consultant is set forth below and is subject to change.

1. RFP issued December 15, 2021
2. Proposals are due no later than 5:00 p.m. EST, January 25, 2022
3. Conferences (Zoom) to discuss selected proposals, at agreed upon times on or around February 22, 2022.
4. Announcement of selection (target date only), February 28, 2022
5. Negotiation of definitive agreements to occur following selection.

Proposal Required Responses

1. Summary of your interest and qualifications
2. Documentation of your experience and commitment to strategic planning with an emphasis on issues of equity and inclusion.

3. Detailed outline and schedule for the planning process, including Strategic Planning Committee meetings/assignments, as well as opportunities for engagement with the full board and staff.
4. Provide information on your current workload and how you would accommodate this project.
5. 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.
6. Names and contact information with at least 2 references who are familiar with your strategic planning work.
7. Please provide information on your proposed compensation for all required services, including payment for out-of-pocket expenses.

Selection Criteria

1. The consultant'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.

Requests for Clarification or Inquiries and Submission of Final Proposals

Questions concerning this RFP should be directed via email to Hayden Anderson at hayden@mainehumanities.org. Final proposals shall be electronically submitted to Hayden Anderson at hayden@mainehumanities.org

###