REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS – DIGITAL ACCESS RESEARCHER
STATEMENT OF WORK
The Smithsonian’s National Museum of Natural History (NMNH) seeks a vendor to assist the Office of Education and Outreach by conducting research to help determine possible digital platforms that are appropriate for use by minors ages 13 and under, and updating legal forms for Youth Programs at NMNH. The period of performance is anticipated to begin on or around June 16, 2014 and be completed no later than July 18, 2014. The total payment for services is not to exceed $5,000.

Context: Smithsonian’s National Museum of Natural History
The Smithsonian’s National Museum of Natural History, located at 10th Street and Constitution Avenue N.W. in Washington, D.C., is the most-visited natural history museum in the world. Opened in 1910, the green-domed museum on the National Mall is dedicated to maintaining and preserving the world’s most extensive collection of natural history specimens and cultural artifacts. It fosters significant scientific research and educational programs and exhibitions that present the work of its scientists to the public.

The museum is regarded as a global leader in natural history collections, collections-based research, scientific discovery, and natural history exhibition. A central part of the vision for education and outreach at NMNH is to improve onsite and online public access to collections, research, and researchers, increase opportunities to develop and use the skills and processes that scientists use to study NMNH collections, and foster an environment that encourages connections to science, collections, and scientists in personally and socially relevant contexts.

The Q?rius education space, a major component of the Museum’s strategic plan, opened in December 2013 for youth ages 10-18 and invites them to explore a 6,000-object collections space, participate in authentic science through interactive activities and programming, and use cutting-edge scientific investigation equipment. Through the opening of this interactive learning space, the Office of Education and Outreach aims to reinvigorate the offerings that the museum provides for youth, especially those from populations underrepresented in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) careers, by engaging them in our unique assets—our science and collections—with the hope to inspire the next generation of scientists.

Context: NMNH Youth Programs
The National Museum of Natural History (NMNH) offers a variety of youth programs to further the Museum’s mission to engage young people in the exploration of the natural world and their place in it. Each program uses different formats and methodologies for engaging pre-teen and teen audiences with STEM: mentorships, career immersion and community outreach, science communication training and peer-to-peer interaction, youth involvement in creating science learning experiences, science career exploration for middle school youth, a key age for hooking teens on science careers, interdisciplinary art-science-design-engineering-technology maker workshops and daily participatory programs and activities in Q?rius.
Early Youth Engagement through Science
The Early Youth Engagement through Science (EYES) program is an interactive 5-day program for middle-school students in grades 6-8 from the Washington, D.C. region. Participants are immersed in Smithsonian science through behind-the-scene tours, field trips, conversations with scientists, and fun activities. The experience culminates with a creative student project shared with family and friends. We offer two opportunities in August to participate in the program and accept 40 students through an application-based process. There is no cost to participate in the EYES program.

The Q? Crew Youth Volunteer Program
The Q? Crew Youth Volunteer Program is an exciting opportunity for local Washington, DC area youth to play an essential role in transitioning NMNH to a place where high school-aged youth want to spend their time – where they feel comfortable to explore science and experience what it’s like to engage in science in their own way. Youth volunteers facilitate a range of experiences with Q?rius visitors as their area of focus, including simulations of scientific excursions that recreate the work of NMNH scientists at field sites around the world; tactile exploration, hypothesis formation, observation, and analysis using a fully accessible 6,000 object collection, and facilitating conversations with scientists about the connections between our lives and scientific research in areas such as invasive species, climate change, biodiversity loss, and language revitalization.

Youth Engagement through Science
Youth Engagement through Science (YES!) is a 16-week science internship, communication, and leadership skills development program for high school youth ages 14-17 from the Washington DC region. This program immerses teens in the work of Smithsonian science units through working in labs and in the field with a science mentor, behind-the-scenes tours, and public engagement training. Students are assigned to different mentors throughout four Smithsonian sites, including: National Museum of Natural History, National Zoo, Smithsonian Gardens, and the National Air and Space Museum. In the fall, students receive college preparation courses on Saturdays, which include local college tours. As an integrated component to the program, a community outreach project is developed by each student to reach out to their peers about their experience in our program.

Scope of Work
The vendor will update all legal forms for Youth Programs at NMNH to reflect best practices and necessary content for parent/guardian consent, release forms and other forms. The vendor will conduct research to help determine possible digital platforms for the middle school participants to showcase projects to the general public.

Tasks
a. Digital Access Research
   - Research digital platforms that can be used by minors to display digital content to the general public
   - Consult with Early Youth Engagement through Science Coordinator to help identify appropriate digital platforms
b. Create and/or update legal forms for the Youth Programs
   - Update all release forms for all three programs
   - Create a pickup/dismissal form for the Early Youth Engagement through Science Program
   - Update application materials as needed
   - Obtain approval of forms by the Smithsonian Office of the General Council and make adjustments as needed

Deliverables
   a) Two sets of approved digital platforms, one that can be used for Youth Programs participants under the age of 13, and second by participants under the age of 18
   b) Legal forms for all three Youth Programs that have been approved by the Smithsonian Office of the General Council
   c) Pickup/dismissal form for the Early Youth Engagement through Science Program that have been approved by the Smithsonian Office of the General Council
   d) Updated application forms for Youth Programs
   e) Regular check-in meetings with Early Youth Engagement through Science Coordinator, Youth Programs Coordinator, Manager of School and Youth Programs and associated youth programs staff.

Period of Performance
The period of performance is anticipated to begin on or around June 16, 2014 and be completed no later than July 18, 2014.

Place of Performance
Contractor can perform tasks both off-site and at the National Museum of Natural History. The Contractor must be able to travel to the museum to meet with staff as needed. No travel costs will be reimbursed.

Contractor will work in a team environment with other NMNH staff, volunteers and interns.

Requirements
Qualifications include:
1. A Bachelor’s Degree is required, a completed or in progress JD is preferred;
2. Background in and/or passion for science or museums.
3. Knowledge of online digital platforms;
4. Experience with legal research;
5. Excellent written and oral communication skills;
6. Outstanding organizational skills;
7. Willingness to be flexible.
Contractor will report directly to the Manager of School and Youth Programs but will work closely with the Early Youth Engagement through Science Coordinator.
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
Digital Access Researcher

PROPOSAL PREPARATION INSTRUCTIONS:
General. On or before 11:59 PM in the vendor’s time zone on June 2, 2014, offerors will be expected to provide a proposal via email to NMNHeducation@si.edu. At the minimum, offerors need to demonstrate that they meet the acceptability standards for non-cost factors, including that they have the ability to perform the requirements in a timely manner.

Technical Proposal
a) Personal Statement
The offeror shall provide a personal statement not to exceed 2 pages that provides a narrative explanation of the method and/or approach he/she will bring to the tasks and deliverables; any specialized experience; and the most relevant experience the vendor has that is related to the deliverables.
b) Education and Experience
The offeror shall provide a current resume or CV.

Cost Proposal
Cost Proposals shall address pricing of the work as requested herein. The price proposals shall be all-inclusive.

Proposal Evaluation
Proposals shall be evaluated in accordance with the following criteria being applied to the information requested above:
“Plan of Accomplishment” and “Education and Experience” shall be granted equal weight and together shall be granted more weight than cost.
Award of a contract shall be made to the responsive, responsible offeror, whose combined cost and technical proposal is, in the opinion of the Contracting Officer, determined to be the most advantageous and in the best interest of the Smithsonian Institution.

Inquiries
Inquiries regarding this Request for Proposal should be directed via email to NMNHeducation@si.edu.

Interviews
It is the intention of the Smithsonian to interview a select group of responsive offerors; however, it is possible that interviews may not occur. Consequently, it is important that all responses to this request be complete and include all necessary information.

Submission of Proposals. The Smithsonian reserves the right to reject any or all proposals received in response to this request, and to negotiate separately with any Offeror when such action shall be considered to be in the best interest of the Smithsonian. After limited negotiations or based solely on initial offers received, notice will be provided indicating that an award may be
made. It is therefore emphasized that all proposals should be submitted initially on the most favorable terms that the Offeror can submit. Written proposals must be received 11:59 pm on June 2, 2014. **Non-compliance with the requirements of this Request for Proposal may result in disqualification of the non-conforming proposal.**

**Disposition of Proposals.** All information submitted in response to this Request For Proposal shall become the property of the Smithsonian and shall not be returned.

End.