REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
Administrative Assistant Contract
Statement of Work

1. Project Summary

The Smithsonian’s National Museum of Natural History (NMNH) seeks a part-time contractor to provide administrative support and design services for Youth and School Programs in the Experience Design and Evaluation branch of the Office of Education and Outreach. The work would begin on or around January 29, 2016 and continue through June 17, 2016.

2. 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. The current and ongoing restructuring of the Office of Education & Outreach is part of an institution-wide effort to promote the education and outreach activities of the museum to the rigor and renown of its science activities. A related intent is 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. Currently, our youth programs include:

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.

Design Challenge Workshops

The Design Challenge Workshops: Solutions For and From Nature, is a workshop series for teens, in which teens design and build creative solutions to real-world science problems using current Smithsonian research, expertise, and collections with the purpose of sharing these workshop models with other institutions that are looking for effective, high-quality art-science activities based on real science for their maker spaces, out-of-school time programs, and classroom projects. The design challenges will be based on real research conducted by scientists, anthropologists, and engineers. In the workshops, teens will participate in creative problem-solving and critical thinking experts need to do in the lab and out in the field. For example, our researchers are studying the dramatic shift in seawater chemistry and how acidic waters corrode shells. Teens can discuss design responses to this global change issue and, then, for example, create new long-lasting shells for crabs to live in using 3D printers, the vast Smithsonian shell collection, and knowledge of hermit crab behavior gained from conversations with Smithsonian invertebrate zoologists. The teens could test the shells they’ve made by putting them in a tank with hermit crabs in the Insect Zoo at the Natural History Museum and make observations and collect data to tweak and refine their designs.

Context: NMNH School Programs

NMNH offers structured, facilitated experiences for students in grades 6-12 in Q?rius, an innovative, 10,000 square foot interactive programming space developed and operated by the Office of Education & Outreach. The experiences have been designed to provide students with scaffolded learning about NMNH scientists and their researchers. Students will use scientific equipment, such as microscopes, along with objects and digital resources and tools (e.g., collections records, video) and build skills for natural history science. School programs are offered on most days during the school year (October through June).
Field Trip Days Sponsored by Google

Throughout Spring 2016 (January-June), the National Museum of Natural History (NMNH) will provide Washington, DC Metro area Title I schools with the opportunity to select a day of their choosing for an NMNH field trip and the support to implement this field trip. The target reach of this program is 1,000 students total, and the target grade levels are 6th - 8th, though students from outside this range can be accommodated. Transportation, meals and complimentary tickets to IMAX shows will be provided, in addition to special in-exhibit programming.

3. Scope of Work

The contractor shall provide the necessary labor as outlined here:

Tasks

Youth Programs Administrative Support

- Assist with the processing and organization of applications from potential youth program participants
- Assist in the scheduling of potential youth program participant interviews
- Assist with the on-boarding and registration of new participants for youth programs.
- Refine and maintain database of current applicants and accepted participants for all youth programs.
- Assist with the organization of the Youth Programs office and storage space
- Assist in the archiving of applications from potential and accepted youth program participants
- Maintain clear and organized Youth Programs Applications folder on shared drive for easy access by Youth Programs and Experience Design staff
- Assist in the organization and implementation of the art-science workshops in Q?rius, when needed or as directed by the Manager of School and Youth programs.
  - Serve as registrant for programs and maintains up-to-date registration information on shared platform.
  - Assist in the set-up and breakdown of workshops
  - Serve as additional support to staff during the workshop programming, especially with logistical details like supplies, food, and other participant and staff needs.
- Assist in the recruitment and marketing for art-science workshops to target audiences
School Programs Administrative Support for Field Trip Days Sponsored by Google

- Provide design services for the development and/or editing of participant materials, flyers, and advertising materials
- Arrange the printing and pick-up of printed materials
- Arrange for participant transportation and book buses
- Assist with the ordering of event merchandise and tickets as needed

Deliverables

- Customized participant materials for each Field Trip Day Sponsored by Google
- Plan for data processing and management of Youth Programs applications
- Written report on any refinements and changes to current Youth Program processes for addition into a master handbook.
- Bi-weekly update to manager on progress

4. Requirements

Contractor must be available to work onsite at the National Museum of Natural History at least one weekday afternoon to complete and oversee application processing. Other workdays can be flexible to accommodate contractor’s schedule. Offsite work for some tasks and deliverables can be accommodated.

Qualifications include:

1. Minimum of Bachelor’s Degree including coursework in the natural sciences, education, museum education or related field required.

2. Outstanding organizational skills and demonstrated ability to follow procedures and policies to maintain efficiency, safety, security at an institution.

3. Expertise in Adobe design software, including InDesign and Illustrator.

4. Exceptional customer service skills and skill in oral, written and digital communication sufficient to address varied audiences

5. Familiarity with Washington, DC Metro Area schools and school systems is desired

6. Bilingual in Spanish is a plus

5. Scope and Timeframe

Contractor must be available to work onsite at the National Museum of Natural History on specific days during specific seasons. Hours needed per week are variable depending on the project timelines and can fluctuate between 10 and 30 hours a week. Skills, availability and experience of contractor will also factor into the weekly schedule.
The contractor will report directly to the Q?rius Educator and Youth Programs Coordinator, Office of Education and Outreach, National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, who will act as delegates and representatives of the Chief of Experience Development and Evaluation. The contractor will work in a team environment with other School and Youth Programs staff, volunteers and interns.

All project activities and deliverables will begin on or around January 29, 2016 and be completed no later than June 17, 2016. Hours needed per week are variable depending on the project timelines and can fluctuate between 10 and 30 hours a week. Skills, availability and experience of contractor will also factor into the weekly schedule.

**PROPOSAL PREPARATION INSTRUCTIONS:**

**General.** On or before 5:00 PM in the vendor’s time zone on January 20, 2016, Offerors will be expected to provide a proposal in its entirety, via email to NMNHschoolprograms@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.

Proposal Checklist:

- **Full Name, Street Address, Telephone Number**
- **Plan of Accomplishment**
  
  You should describe your plan for completing all work requested in two to five paragraphs. This narrative explanation should include your approach to the tasks and deliverables, and how you will proceed with the project to ensure it is completed on time.
- **Schedule**
  
  A schedule of bi-monthly or monthly deadlines for deliverables.
- **Capability to Perform**
  
  1-2 paragraphs about your ability to perform the work required, in terms of current availability, skills and ability to complete this project on schedule.
- **Resume(s)**
  
  Include your resume. If the offerer is a group, provide resumes of key personnel.
- **Experience**
  
  Provide up to 5 examples of specialized experience and demonstrated technical competence in performing similar work as requested here, preferably completed within the last five years.
- **Cost Proposal**
  
  Cost Proposals should address pricing of all of the work outlined in this proposal for the amount of time specified. The price proposals should be all-inclusive (for example, you would not say that travel will be
billed as needed). Cost proposals should include costs broken down according to the schedule of deliverables.

**Proposal Evaluation**

Proposals shall be evaluated in accordance with the following criteria being applied to the information requested above:

“Plan of Accomplishment” and “Capability to Perform” shall be granted equal weight and shall together be granted more weight than “Staffing,” and “Experience.” “Staffing” and “Experience” shall be granted equal weight. All evaluation factors other than cost, when combined, are 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**

We strongly encourage you to contact us with any questions regarding the scope of work and weekly schedule requirements. Inquiries regarding this Request for Proposal should be directed via email to NMNHschoolprograms@si.edu with the subject line “Administrative Assistant Contract position”.

**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 by the Contracting Officer 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 5:00 PM in the offeror’s time zone, on January 20, 2016.

**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.