

**Office of Education, Outreach & Visitor Services
National Museum of Natural History
Smithsonian Institution**

**Scope of Work
Educator Inquiry Group**

June 11, 2024

The Office of Education, Outreach & Visitor Experience (EOVE) at the National Museum of Natural History (NMNH) seeks services to be completed by February 2025 to engage in an educator inquiry group to examine how transdisciplinary experiences, Smithsonian resources, and local history, culture, and community can be tools for cultivating a culturally responsive classroom and resources aligned with the theme of “The Natural History of DC.”

Introduction

The National Museum of Natural History is managing a grant funded project, “A Community Based Approach to Culturally Responsive Sustaining Science Education.” To improve student achievement, engagement, self-image, critical thinking, and graduation rates, the project will create a framework that co-produces culturally responsive-sustaining education materials for K-12 science instruction. Using a design-based research approach with communities in Alaska and Washington, DC, Smithsonian educators will convene community stakeholders as partners to co-create resources, with the shared goal of improving representation of cultural connections and histories in K-12 science education, while leveraging Smithsonian resources, spaces, and expertise. These new educational materials aim to better represent the cultures, lives, histories and historical and contemporary contributions of African American, American Indian and Alaskan Native communities and peoples, and the model for co-creation will be evaluated and shared with informal science, K-12, and community stakeholders and communities. The project is managed by the National Museum of Natural History in partnership with the Smithsonian’s Arctic Studies Center and the Smithsonian’s National Zoo and Conservation Biology Institute.

Background

As part of the project “A Community Based Approach to Culturally Responsive Science Education,” The DC-based team is creating an educator inquiry group and professional learning community (PLC) around the theme of “The Natural History of DC.” The PLC is characterized by the creation of a new immersion experience for DC public high school teachers that provides experiential and place-based learning opportunities around three core themes: 1) DC history and culture, 2) Smithsonian science and resources, and 3) culturally responsive teaching. The Smithsonian project managers are part of this community as co-learners and conveners, bringing community expertise and collaborators to the experience to build skills, knowledge, and practical application of culturally responsive pedagogies to science teaching. The cohort's main objective is to center equity in science teaching and learning by applying culturally responsive pedagogy, place-based and experiential learning, and professional development through social and reflective practice. An outcome of this PLC will be increased knowledge about what elements of the immersive training experience supported educators’ confidence and competence in implementing culturally responsive and equity-centered teaching and curriculum.

Purpose

The project team has a requirement for 10 DC Public School high school teachers to participate in “The Natural History of DC” inquiry group and professional learning community from approximately July 29 2024-February 28, 2025.

Scope of work

The contractor(s) will provide professional, technical, non-personal services working collaboratively with the project team, led by staff in the NMNH Office of Education, Outreach & Visitor Experiences. Together, they will engage in an professional learning community to examine how transdisciplinary experiences and resources from museums, archives, and the local community can be tools for cultivating culturally responsive lessons and instruction. The project team will coordinate, and the contractor(s) are expected to participate, in place-based transdisciplinary experiences and trainings to build knowledge and skills about culturally responsive teaching, natural history and conservation science and concepts, the history and cultures of Washington, DC, and methods to examine an environmental justice topic in a specific to Washington, DC.

Contractors will apply the training and experiences to their classroom instruction by designing and implementing a project-based learning project with students that is focused on environmental justice, aligned with culturally responsive pedagogy, and weaves together concepts from science, the cultures and history of Washington, DC, and environmental justice. Teachers are expected to engage in ongoing discussion and reflection of their implementation and instructional strategies with the cohort. They will prepare a final display of students’ creative works, projects, and accomplishments at the project’s end. There will be an opportunity to present this work at a final project symposium in Anchorage, Alaska in February 2025. A complete list of tasks and deliverables is outlined below.

The work will take place between July 29, 2024-February 28, 2025.

Location

The work will take place in and around Washington, DC with occasional work at the Smithsonian’s National Museum of Natural History, the National Zoo, other Smithsonian museums and units, and the DC History Center. The Smithsonian will not be furnishing a workspace or network access for the contractors.

In February 2025, the Smithsonian will sponsor travel to travel to Anchorage, Alaska for a cultural exchange with the Alaska-based project cohort to present their projects as a professional development offering for Alaska-based educators. Provisional travel dates: February 14-17, 2025.

Period of Performance

Work will be conducted from July 29, 2024-February 28, 2025

Tasks, Deliverables & Timelines

To accomplish this objective, the contractor will work collaboratively with the project team to complete the following tasks and deliverables.

Tasks

- **Participation in scheduled trainings and place-based learning:**
 - Participate in the project kick off, a 5-day convening in Washington, DC. This will include place-based experiences around Washington, DC, Smithsonian tours, and the cohort establishing norms and expectations for the project (July 29-August 2)

- Participate virtually in select session from the Sealaska Heritage Institute’s culturally responsive teaching conference (August 7-9)
 - Participate in place-based experiential learning activities in and around Washington, DC (1x/month; August-December 2024)
 - Participate in trainings to build skills and knowledge in the domains of culturally responsive teaching, project and object-based learning, integration of historical and museum archival materials and collections for classroom learning, and methods for engaging students and co-producing knowledge
 - Participate in curriculum jam sessions to produce teaching and learning lessons, activities, and interventions, and resources that apply trainings and result in curriculum that aligns with or supplements existing DCPS curricula
 - Actively participate in project discussions, learning experiences, reflections, and evaluations
- **Project Development and Implementation**
 - Develop and implement a culturally responsive, place-based learning unit centered on “The Natural History of DC” theme, aiming to examine and prepare students for youth-led action projects that address an environmental justice issue.
 - Assist students in identifying a project topic
 - Guide students through science investigations, research, and storytelling activities that integrate perspectives from students and community members.
 - Facilitate authentic ties to DCPS curricula
 - Ensure alignment with culturally responsive pedagogy’s three core tenants: academic achievement, cultural competence, and critical consciousness
 - Facilitate integration of community, archival, and museum-based resources and stories
 - **Iterative Feedback & Evaluation:**
 - Participate in evaluations to assess the impact of implemented interventions on student learning, achievement, and engagement.
 - Provide feedback intermittently to project team on cohort experience for evaluation and iterative improvement

Deliverables

- A final display of students’ creative works, projects, and accomplishments for a larger audience. (e.g. a class exhibition)
- Unit plans, lessons plans, and other documentation or evidence of project implementation
- Narrative description of unit or lesson(s) alignment or complementary nature to existing DCPS curricula, if not included in the unit or lesson plans

NMNH Responsibilities

The project team will be responsible for:

1. The recruitment, coordination, administration, and management of the professional learning community
2. Coordinating place-based, transdisciplinary experiential learning for the cohort
3. Coordinating training for the teachers to build skills and knowledge in the domains of culturally responsive teaching, project and object-based learning, integration of historical and museum

archival materials and collections for classroom learning, and methods for engaging students and co-producing knowledge

4. Documentation of the learning experiences and expeditions
5. Coordination of virtual meetings and consultations with experts outside the project team and relevant to the group inquiry
6. Providing access to Smithsonian natural history science and conservation science context, learning, resources
7. Materials and supplies for project implementation
8. A public portal or educational resource to share the project's documented components
9. Coordinating an end-of project symposium for displaying final projects
10. Coordinating travel for contractors to Anchorage, Alaska in February 2025

Payment

Each contractor will receive a \$2000 payment, which will be distributed to teachers when tasks and deliverables are fulfilled.

Funds will be distributed per the following payment schedule:

- Payment 1: September 1, 2024, \$500
- Payment 2: November 1, 2024- \$500
- Payment 3: January 1, 2025- \$500
- Payment 4: February 28, 2025- \$500

Smithsonian Institution Independent Contractor Clauses

It is understood that Contractor is undertaking the work hereunder as an independent contractor, not as an employee of the Smithsonian, and neither Contractor nor Contractor's employees are eligible for Smithsonian benefits, including coverage under FECA (workers compensation) and FTCA (Federal Tort Claims Act), or coverage under any Smithsonian workers compensation, medical, liability, or other insurance policy, or for legal protections afforded to employees under law applicable to employment relationships.

(1) Contractor is responsible for providing at Contractor's own expense and as necessary, disability, unemployment, workers compensation and other insurance, including adequate liability and property insurance, training, permits, and licenses for Contractor and for Contractor's employees.

(2) Contractor is responsible for paying all taxes and income taxes, including estimated taxes, incurred as a result of the payments by Smithsonian to Contractor for performance of this contract. The parties, by this contract, do not intend to create a partnership, principle/agent, or joint venture relationship, and nothing in this contract shall be construed as creating such a relationship between the parties. Neither party may incur any obligation on behalf of the other. Contractor agrees and acknowledges that Smithsonian assumes no responsibility whatsoever for the acts, errors and/or omissions of Contractor beyond those that the Smithsonian is responsible for at law.

Warranties and Representations

Contractor warrants the following: (1) He or she has full right and authority to enter into this Agreement; (2) he or she has full right and authority to grant all of the rights granted herein; (3) he or she is not under any obligation to any other party which may interfere with the performance of his or her obligations hereunder or conflict with or injure the work performed under this contract; and (4) he or she has not previously assigned, pledged or otherwise encumbered any rights herein granted to Smithsonian. Contractor represents that he or she has diligently taken prudent, responsible and customary measures to ensure that the materials provided by the contractor contain no matter that is

libelous or in violation of the copyright, patent right, or any property or personal right of any person or entity nor a violation of any statutory copyright, nor are otherwise contrary to law.

Responsibility for Smithsonian Property

Contractor assumes full responsibility for and shall reimburse and indemnify the Smithsonian for any and all loss or damage of whatsoever kind and nature to any and all Smithsonian property, including any equipment, supplies, accessories, or parts furnished, while in Contractor's custody and care, or resulting in whole or in part from the negligent acts or omissions of the Contractor, any subcontractor, or any employee, agent, or representative of the Contractor or subcontractor.

No Waiver of Rights

Neither the Smithsonian's review, approval, acceptance of, nor payment for, the services required under this contract shall be construed to operate as a waiver of any cause of action arising out of the Contractor's performance of this contract.

Indemnification

Contractor shall defend, hold harmless, and indemnify Smithsonian Institution, its Regents, directors, officers, employees, volunteers, licensees, representatives and agents, and the Government of the United States, against any and all claims, loss and expense (including attorney's fees and litigation expenses), from loss or liability or injury to any persons (including employees or agents of the Contractor or his subcontractors) and from loss of or damage to any property (including property owned by the Smithsonian) arising out of any act or omission of the Contractor, his employees, agents or subcontractors in the performance of this contract.

Inquiries, acknowledgements, and correspondence pertinent to this order should be directed to
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