

**Request for Proposals for Professional Services:
Research and Design of Outdoor Interpretive Signs for Historic Properties**

About the History Center of Olmsted County (HCOC)

HCOC is located on 54-acres in southwest Rochester, Minnesota. It is comprised of a museum, a field for vintage baseball, community gardens, cultivated agricultural fields, a c. 1940s farmstead, a cabin and one-room schoolhouse, and the George Stoppel Farmstead.

The George Stoppel Farmstead, located about 500 yards to the north of the museum, is comprised of a stone house, smokehouse, barn, and caves and is listed on the National Register of Historic Properties. The smokehouse was restored in 2023 and the structural and building envelop phase of the barn restoration will begin in August 2024. HCOC completed an interpretive plan for the farmstead in 2023.

Interpretive Panel Introduction

This project is funded in part with a small Legacy Grant (also known as Minnesota Historical and Cultural Heritage Grants). HCOC is seeking proposals from qualified consultants to research, write, and design interpretive signs or wayside exhibits for the George Stoppel Farmstead. Fabrication is a subsequent phase and should not be included in proposals. The panel themes will be in alignment to the George Stoppel Farmstead Interpretive Plan goals, messaging, and principles. To download the interpretive plan and read a brief history of the farmstead, please go to olmstedhistory.com/the-stoppel-farmstead. Also include the cost to design one interpretive sign for the Dee Cabin and one for the Hadley Schoolhouse, historic buildings not listed on the National Register or covered by the interpretive plan.

The project should be completed no later than December 15, 2024.

Project Outputs and Outcomes

The project output are:

- At least 10 digital versions of packaged production-ready files in an InDesign or equivalent file format: 8 for the George Stoppel Farmstead; and one for the Dee Cabin and one for the schoolhouse.
- An interpretive panel planning form or worksheet for each interpretive sign.
- A recommendation for the fabrication method for each sign.
- A cost estimate for the fabrication of the signs.

Outcomes include:

- Each George Stoppel Farmstead sign will align with the interpretive plan goals, messaging, and principles; and reflect an understanding of the farmstead setting and site considerations.
- Interpretive text and design and accessibility will reflect best practices as described by the National Association of Interpretation (NAI) or the National Park Service (NPS).
- Designs will adhere to the HCOC brand guidelines.
- Interpretive content will reflect input from HCOC stakeholders.

Scope of Work

- Project Kick-off: Specify whether the meeting is virtual or in-person. Determine access to archival material, historical research report, interpretive plan, etc.
- Clarify the interpretive goals, messaging, and principles based on the interpretive plan.
- Review and discuss interpretive concepts, content, and site considerations.
- Develop, with HCOC staff and stakeholders, the specific objectives of each sign (e.g., learning, behavioral, and emotional objectives).
- Team meets with representatives from the local Indigenous community for a tour of the site and a 2-hour workshop.
- Discuss and review preliminary ideas for interpretive media enhancements beyond 2-D interpretive wayside exhibits (e.g., tactile development, bilingual translation, interactives).
- Concept design:
 - Prepare a project background summary, highlighting all work completed to date regarding overall interpretive themes and messaging, primary audiences, and key goals and objectives to be met.
 - Worksheet for each wayside exhibit will summarize specific themes and content points, provide inspiration images and design direction, draft graphic layouts, and incorporate National Association for Interpretation best practices.
 - Summary of analysis of input from representatives of the local Indigenous community.
 - Explore opportunities for incorporating 3-D designs or other interpretive media.
- Develop draft label copy. Label text should be “interpretive” based on NAI or NPS best practices.
- Presentation and review: Vendor presents draft design during a virtual meeting and gather initial feedback. HCOC team and stakeholders have 3 weeks to review and provide consolidated comments.
- Final Design. The vendor completes revisions and prepares the final designs, incorporating feedback from the draft design work.
- HCOC Team and stakeholders have a final opportunity to review and provide feedback and changes to design and content. HCOC also provides the final design to two qualified reviewers for thoughtful analysis of the historical quality of the proposed content.

Bidders Should Meet the Following Qualifications

- At least 10 years of experience in interpretive planning, research, writing, and design.
- Documented track record in developing interpretive media for historic sites or buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Properties.
- At least a B.A. degree in public history, heritage interpretation OR National Association of Interpreters certification as a Certified Interpreter and Master Planner.

Competitive bidders will have experience with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act and universal design and be familiar with the best practices of the NAI and/or NPS and have recent and deep experience working with historic sites or other interpreted public sites. We anticipate the successful consultant will have the following team members or skill sets: project manager, graphic designer, and historian/interpretive writer.

Proposal Information

- Provide a cover letter with the following:
 - Indicate firm lead and sub-consultant firms, if any.
 - The name, office location, and project lead.
 - Indicate RFP contact person.
- List and describe 3 projects most relevant to this project completed by the lead firm.
- Proposed personnel:
 - Provide resumes for key personnel.
 - List 3 projects most relevant to this project completed by your selected project lead.
- Provide insight into your team’s interpretive and design approach and how it relates to this project.
- Provide a detailed schedule of work based on project milestones and deliverables.
- Cost proposal:
 - Include a specific breakdown of labor and costs based on project milestones and deliverables.
 - Include a breakdown of anticipated reimbursable expenses.
 - Note:
 - HCOC will pay designated honorariums to stakeholders and scholarly reviewers.
 - The project budget is \$20,000.

Proposals due by August 21, 2024, by 5:00 pm CST

Send proposals to Education@olmstedhistory.com, c/o Valerie Wassmer, Director of Education.

Send questions to execdirector@olmstedhistory.com, c/o Wayne Gannaway, Executive Director.