Rochester Museum & Science Center

Request for Qualification (RFQ) – Rochester in 1838: 1821 Virtual Reality Vignette

December 6, 2019

Seeking Content Specialist
To support exhibition planning and development

Release Date: December 6, 2019
Response Deadline: January 6, 2020
Help us improve! Please provide feedback about the RFQ process and referrals to the Project Manager contact below:

Michael Barone
Collections Manager
Rochester Museum & Science Center
657 East Avenue
Rochester, NY 14607
mbarone@rmsc.org
585.271.4552 x353
Section 1 - Invitation to Participate

1.1 Purpose and Objective

The Rochester Museum & Science Center (RMSC) is soliciting qualifications for a Content Specialist to assist with the planning and development of a “Rochester in 1821” Virtual Reality Vignette. RMSC is excited to assist in preserving and sharing the extraordinary heritage of the Erie Canal and commemorate its 200th anniversary through the design and implementation of this innovative virtual reality (VR) experience.

This VR experience will give modern visitors new insight into the Canal’s early history by inviting them to virtually witness the 1821 groundbreaking of the first Erie Canal aqueduct built over the Genesee River in Rochester, NY. The “Rochester in 1821” VR experience is part of an expanded reinterpretation of the Rochester in 1838: Young Lion of the West diorama that began with the diorama’s recent restoration. The Rochester in 1838 diorama, which depicts a winter scene on the Erie Canal in Rochester’s 1838 business center, is one of RMSC’s oldest, most popular, and most significant exhibits.

The RMSC’s objective is to partner with a qualified specialist to research and develop historically accurate and engaging content for the “Rochester in 1821” VR experience. Working collaboratively with RMSC staff, the Content Specialist will help to create a VR experience that allows modern visitors a chance to “step behind the glass” and offer a firsthand glimpse into the construction of the Erie Canal through Rochester. Prospective Respondents must offer a proposal that will meet the scope of services, qualifications, and description of work activities identified in this Request for Qualifications (RFQ).

The Content Specialist will:

1. work with museum staff to develop a historical narrative that brings to life Rochester in 1821 as ground is being broken on the first Erie Canal aqueduct over the Genesee River.
2. ensure that the virtual interpretation and related content is historically accurate and highlights the positive and negative impacts of the Erie Canal aqueduct to the economy and development of Rochester and the region.
3. help develop content that links the “Rochester in 1821” VR vignette to the existing modern day VR vignette that accompanies the Rochester in 1838 diorama creating a strong link between Rochester’s past, present, and future.
1.2. Project Manager

The Project Manager, identified below, is the sole point of contact regarding this RFQ from the date of issuance until the selection of the successful Respondents.

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1.3. Timeline

The schedule of events for this RFQ is anticipated to proceed as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Project Milestone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>December 6, 2019</td>
<td>RMSC Releases RFQ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 6, 2020</td>
<td>Respondent Proposals Due to RMSC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 10, 2019</td>
<td>RMSC selection committee reviews proposals and completes decision making process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 13, 2020</td>
<td>RMSC notifies selected Content Specialist and initiates work on agreements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 13, 2020</td>
<td>Project begins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 14, 2020</td>
<td>List of possible storylines to RMSC Project Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 3, 2020</td>
<td>Final script complete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 15, 2020</td>
<td>Project complete</td>
</tr>
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Section 2 – Scope of Work

2.1 Background

The RMSC will launch an innovative and exciting VR experience to expand upon the existing physical *Rochester in 1838* diorama experience and existing VR interactive, which digitally transitions the view of Rochester in 1838 to Rochester in 2017 (see Appendix 5.1). For this project, a second VR vignette, “Rochester in 1821,” will digitally transform the physical 1838 diorama to a dynamic view of life in the same area in 1821 when ground was broken on the first Erie Canal aqueduct built over the Genesee River. The “Rochester in 1821”
VR vignette will incorporate distinct elements of the diorama, including the stump puller that was a key component of the diorama's recent restoration, and features representations of people who directly or indirectly supported the building of the Erie Canal, as well as those who did not. The RMSC requires outside assistance and expertise to construct the narrative and experience presented in the exhibit.

2.2 Responsibilities and Scope of Work

Task 1: Participate in meetings with the “Rochester in 1821” project team either onsite or remotely. Review and provide input on exhibit planning and development documents and decision making in exhibit content.

Task 2: Research exhibit content focused on Rochester in 1821, with attention paid to historically accurate geographical representation as well as character development of subjects and associated material culture.

Task 3: Develop experience storyline, framed within the context of an interactive digital experience. The Content Specialist should expect to work collaboratively with Jacobs Illustration and the Rochester Institute of Technology’s School of Design to provide content expertise in the construction of digital materials such as graphics or animations.

Task 4: Draft a script for the vignette that presents a dynamic view of Rochester life in 1821 and features representations of people who directly or indirectly supported the building of the Erie Canal, as well as those who did not.

Task 5: Complete final report that evaluates the project experience and outcomes, makes suggestions for process improvement, and includes observations and recommendations for future historic exhibits tied to the Rochester in 1838 Diorama, in either a traditional exhibit format or a VR interactive.

The project rate to accomplish these deliverables within the project period is $7,000.

Section 3 – Specific Proposal Requirements

3.1 Submission of Respondent’s Proposal

- To be considered, Respondents must submit a complete written response to this RFQ and provide all the requested information outlined in 3.2 below.

- Proposals should be presented simply and provide a straightforward and concise description of the Respondent’s qualifications to complete the scope
of work. Bulleted responses are acceptable. Expensive bindings, color displays, promotional materials, etc. are not necessary or desired.

• Sealed proposals must be received by the Project Manager at the address listed in Section 1.2 on or before 5:00 PM on January 6, 2020. Alternatively, submissions may be transmitted electronically to mbarone@rmcs.org.

• A confirmation of receipt will be issued by RMSC. The decision will be made and communicated to successful Respondents by January 13, 2020 with public announcement to follow. Please no inquiries or follow up communication regarding status of the review process.

3.2 Organization and Content of Proposal

This section outlines the information that must be included in your response. Please respond with your information in the same order as the items in the section.

A. Transmittal Letter: Include a letter of transmittal not exceeding one (1) page that summarizes key points of the proposal to confirm your understanding and interest in the project. The letter should also include a phone number, email, and mailing address for the primary contact person.

B. Organization Information: If the Respondent is an incorporated organization, such as a 501(c)(3), provide key information including year the organization was founded, ownership, board of directors membership, staff listing, and annual operating budget.

C. Qualifications: Describe the Respondent’s background and expertise related to Rochester and Erie Canal history.

D. Experience: Describe the Respondent’s demonstrated achievement in research, writing, and exhibit development for diverse general public audiences. Highlight relevant experience in the creation of exhibit experiences, narratives, label copy, and historic interpretation. Note any experience working with historic VR interactives. Experience may include accomplishments in an academic, institutional, government, or community setting.

E. Collaborative Skills: Describe the Respondent’s experience and abilities to work and communicate collaboratively with institutions, subject matter experts, and project partners.

F. Cost Proposal: Affirm the Respondent’s commitment to provide the scope of services listed in Section 2.2 between January 13, 2020 – May 15, 2020 for a project rate of $7,000.

G. References: Respondents are required to provide contact information for three (3) references with whom they have worked on related projects. Please indicate project titles and dates.
Section 4 – General Information for the Respondent

4.1. Reservation of Rights

The Respondent selected will be chosen on the basis of greatest benefit to the RMSC according to the intent stated in this RFQ as determined by the evaluation committee. The RMSC reserves the right to negotiate contracts with the selected Respondent. The RMSC reserves the right to make selections based solely on the proposals, or negotiate further with one or more Respondents.

The RMSC is not committed, by virtue of this solicitation, to award a contract, or to procure or contract for services.

4.2. Acceptance of Proposal Content

The contents of the proposals of the successful Respondent may become contractual obligations, should a contract ensue. Failure of a respondent to accept these obligations may result in a cancellation of the award.

4.3. Property Rights

The Respondent shall have no rights in or ownership of the work or products created under a contract resulting from a response to this RFQ.

4.4. Contract Payment

Actual terms of payment will be the result of agreements reached between the RMSC and the Respondent selected. The RMSC is not liable for any costs incurred by the Respondent prior to the effective date of the contract.

Section 5 – Appendices

5.1 Images of Rochester in 1838 Diorama, and “Rochester in 2017” VR Vignette - see attached
Appendix 5.1: Images of Rochester in 1838 Diorama, and “Rochester in 2017” VR Vignette

Image showing existing VR overlay for Rochester in 1838 diorama. The tablet displays the digital representation of Rochester in 1838.
Image demonstrating VR technology through a scene of the same geographic area in Rochester in 2017, as depicted in the Rochester in 1838 diorama.