VISITOR EXPERIENCE DESIGN AND EXHIBITION DEVELOPMENT

Answers to Questions Submitted in Response to the RFQ

Thanks to all for your thoughtful reading of our RFQ and for taking the time to submit questions. In total, we received close to 200 questions, which is taking more time to process than we expected. We appreciate your patience as we carefully consider your questions and our answers.

Below is Batch 2 of our answers. Batch 3, with the remaining answers, will be posted tomorrow June 28 by the end of the day.

(Make sure to also check the Batch 1 of answers posted on June 23 here.)

Batch 2, posted 6/27/2023

73. The invitation document asks firms or individuals to submit their qualifications separately for listed expertise (page 6). Should firms applying to be considered for the lead firm position put together a team for the 1st round response? Or are you expecting them to submit individual firm experience for the 1st round and build the team for the 2nd round?

We are not expecting fully formed teams for this phase 1 RFQ. Please submit only your individual/firm's qualifications, highlighting your particular areas of expertise.

74. Do you intend to award the core gallery, rotating exhibition, partner exhibition sites, and traveling exhibitions to a single firm or will this get broken up to separate firms?

We will clarify this in the RFP as we are still considering the best approach. At this point we are leaning toward one firm for the full initial slate of exhibitions but expect that firm will work with different subcontractors for some of the exhibitions, especially curators, media partners, and designers.

75. Will you allow teams to submit (Prime/Sub)?

We will accept team submissions for those that have a proven history of collaboration. In the RFP stage, we will, however, reserve the right to reconfigure teams.

76. If we are selected to move on to Phase 2, we understand that ALM will provide a compiled list of smaller firms/independent professionals with whom we will be asked to team up; in advance of that,
is there any information regarding teams that would be required /or allowable as part of the Phase 1 submission?

At this stage we are collecting everyone's qualifications, so additional information is not available. We prefer you submit only your qualifications at this time.

77. Will cost estimation and A/V specification firms be included on the ALM compiled list of smaller firms/independent professionals? If not, should we include such sub-consultants as part of our Phase 1 submission (or should this information be held until Phase 2)?

We did not call specifically for cost estimators, so if you would like to include a collaborating firm as part of your qualifications package that's acceptable. However, they may also simply upload their own qualifications package. We see this as an important step that will be tackled in the RFP stage.

78. Could the same sub-consultant/smaller firm/independent professional participate on multiple teams for Phase 1 and Phase 2?

Yes. But we have tried to eliminate the need/urge to create fully formed teams with the amended Phase 2 RFP language. Now, in Phase 2 a lead firm will be selected and then work with ALM to select subconsultants. Please review amended RFQ version posted and dated in our site June 9, 2023.

79. We are a small firm with experience in most of the qualifying areas of expertise you are requesting. However, we will need to work with our external partners for the architectural and media specific requests. If we are applying for the lead firm on this project, can we hire outside help to fill the roles that we need?

Yes. Perhaps more importantly, we anticipate an open dialogue to ensure that the needed disciplines are covered - so teaming with another firm may be a helpful alternative to hiring.

80. What are the parameters for collaboration of this multidisciplinary team, specifically between multiple exhibition and experience design firms?

We're not entirely sure what you mean by "parameters for collaboration." However, we imagine a lead firm and subconsultants, each with a scope and the commitment to work collaboratively.

81. Can consultants that are part of our team for this project bid on future stages of work?

Yes.

82. Would you welcome submissions of firms that have already teamed up (so one joined submission from two or more firms), and if so, would they then be able to progress to the next stage together?

Yes, we will accept teamed firms; however, we reserve the right to reconfigure teams or only advance particular firms.

83. Can a group of individuals with previous collaboration submit as a small firm?

Yes, but please be clear in your cover letter and materials that you are submitting as a "collective" and not a formal business. It will help us understand any limitations re insurance and contracting, etc. It will not disqualify you. We hope you'll also share why you prefer to submit as a group rather than individuals.
84. Will the selected lead firm or the museum subcontract and be held liable for all necessary consultants and partners for the team?

We expect that the lead firm will hold the subcontracts that are relevant to the Visitor Experience design. There may be instances where it is more appropriate for the Museum to hold the contract, however, this should not be the prevailing assumption.

85. It is our understanding that the RFQ wants to identify both potential lead firms and a list of specialized firms; can you be considered for both and if so, how does ALM suggest indicating this in the proposal?

Yes, you can be considered for both. Please articulate that in your cover letter or introductory language.

86. Will the museum have a content developer / curator that our team would be working alongside?

Will the museum team provide experts for review of content? Should we include any subject matter experts (e.g. LGBTQ+ historians who are not generalist interpretive planners or exhibit developers) on our team? Or will ALM hire/provide those experts?

ALM will have a Director of Exhibitions in place before the start of development who will serve as point person with the lead firm and subs. The working team includes expert board members, and we are in the process of assembling an advisory council (from an extensive list we have already engaged during the museum’s development) to support content and exhibition development. See answer #89 for detail on how we anticipate proceeding.

You are welcome to list any experts that may already be part of your team, or with whom you have worked with in the past.

87. It looks like the museum has a small initial starting team at this point; how much should we plan to provide in terms of content development, such as research, copywriting, image and asset search, licensing, and acquisition, etc.?

Does the Museum seek support from the design firm for content responsibilities such as image and object research and acquisition, and script research, writing, and copyediting?

Is there an in-house person responsible for loans/borrowing, licensing, etc.?

For curatorial tasks of content development see answer #86.
For editorial tasks as related to didactics: Additional support may be needed, but this is to be defined later during development.
For registrar tasks: ALM’s team and/or additional project staff will be hired.
For image search and licensing: Additional support may be required but this is to be defined and details will be shared during the RFP phase.
Acquisitions: No support will be required in terms of object acquisitions.

88. Will there be in-house design/production capabilities to respond to the “evolving content” and “responsive curatorial practices”?

We expect the design and development work that is part of the scope will yield a comprehensive plan for implementation, including any necessary supporting mechanisms (temporary hires, and other resources) to meet the needs of curatorial approaches established by the Interpretive plan and Visitor Experience strategy. We do not anticipate having in-house design or producers on staff, though this need may emerge from our interpretive and/or programming work.
89. Is The American LGBTQ+ Museum staff already onboarded? In particular, will the Curatorial and Education staff be briefed and a part of the process?

We have a capable and enthusiastic staff of 4 and additional support from consultants. All staff is onboarded; however, we will not grow significantly in the coming year, and we do not have a curator on staff. To support this project, we expect to hire a full-time Director of Exhibitions to focus on the development of the visitor experience and be the main point of contact and coordinator between design team, staff, contracted curators, and others to be determined in conversation with the selected lead firm.

90. Given the Museum’s commitment to collaboration in content development, in addition to the scholarly and community input provided in the Concept and Strategy document, does the Museum seek support to organize scholarly and community advisors for the development of the project across design phases?

Yes, in close coordination the ALM team which is actively engaged and will identify said scholars and communities as well as the advisory council. Research and community engagement will be a need identified in the RFP.

91. Has significant research and content/object research and decisions already taken place? If so, is that information available? Or is this a component of the work that is being called for?

See answers #86 & #89. ALM has some content experts on the board and staff, but no objects and no research (other than our market research), this will be a major component of the work. We do not have any content or collection items at this time. We are starting at the beginning and have an intention to partner with multiple organizations where content exists, including ephemera and media. Our goal is to resource existing collections by borrowing or licensing their content. N-YHS collections are available to us, and they have begun collecting LGBTQ+ materials.

92. Are specific exhibitions and topics already planned or will that be part of the work as well?

See above answer #91. We have ideas for many topics and collected a huge number of suggestions during early research in 2018-19. But this will be a component of the work. Potential exhibition topics that emerged from our research will be shared with selected firms.

93. How far has planning progressed for the exhibitions and topics to be included in the new museum, or would the teams be starting with the research report and a clean slate to build from?

See above answers #91 & #92

94. Can you confirm your team will be fully responsible for the collective of content for the core exhibition or do you anticipate the Lead Designer to assist with this process?

See above answers #91 & #93. More information on this topic will be provided in the Phase 2 RFP. We anticipate support from the Lead Designer.

95. Have you identified and/or secured a site for the exhibition?

As described in the "Project Overview" section in our RFQ site, our core exhibition has been identified in ALM’s main dedicated floor at N-YHS. For the temporary rotating exhibitions—mostly at off-site venues—we expect to identify at a later stage once all partnerships are in place.
96. Are you envisioning that the traveling exhibits for the partner sites will be four copies of the same exhibit or four separately themed exhibits?
   All cited exhibitions will be separately themed.

97. Are you envisioning that the nationally touring traveling exhibits will be two copies of the exhibit or separately themed exhibits?
   All cited exhibitions will be separately themed.

98. To confirm, are the temporary/traveling/partner-site exhibitions intended to be part of the RFP’s design scope? We believe so but want to confirm to be sure.
   Yes, see answer #19 in Batch 1

99. Is the virtual museum part of this scope of work or will it be bid separately?
   See answers #19 and #20 in Batch 1

100. Please clarify as to whether the virtual museum would be created concurrently with the core exhibition/inaugural exhibitions.
    See answers #19 and #20 in Batch 1

101. Please clarify regarding the virtual museum, is ALM looking for the virtual space to house all the inaugural exhibitions or solely the core exhibition?
    The Virtual Museum needs to be defined during the Interpretive planning stage. We imagine it as a platform to extend and build upon physical exhibitions, complement/connect with programming, AND offer entirely new ways to engage with ALM content.

102. Please confirm if ALM has any technical requirements for the virtual museum, i.e. does the virtual museum need to live on a specific platform or is there an expectation that it would need to be updateable by non-SME’s in the future, etc.
    We do not yet have specific technical requirements and expect these to emerge from the design and development process for the Virtual environment/museum.

103. What content has been gathered specifically for the interactive media to date?
    See answer #91, it applies to content for interactive media as well.

104. Do you already have concepts for the digital activations that would provide outreach beyond the new museum’s walls, or will you be looking for firms to create concepts with your team?
    This is to be defined as part of the Interpretive Plan. We expect the lead firm to be a partner in developing concepts and defining the needs and scope of the Virtual Environment/Museum and other related digital activations as an integrated element of the broader Visitor Experience Strategy.

105. How much of the experience do you expect to be A/V and multimedia?
    We imagine that A/V and Multimedia will have a substantial role in exhibition displays, but the strategy should be guided by the most impactful approaches to telling stories we want to tell. We expect this will be tackled in the Interpretive Plan.
106. Does the museum as a whole have a preferred CMS / approach to websites and managing content?

Not yet. To be determined with partner and in alignment with N-YHS systems.

107. Would you welcome suggestions for subcontractors in this stage already?

Not at this stage. Please refer to amended Phase 2 RFP description in the "Phases" section of our RFQ site.

108. As the museum/selection committee reviews qualifications, might they be able to suggest specialized firms for teaming opportunities?

Please refer to amended Phase 2 RFP description in the "Phases" section of our RFQ site.

109. As part of this RFQ process, we understand you are looking to identify potential lead firms to submit formal proposals; and to assemble a list of specialized firms as potential future collaborators with the lead firm and/or the Museum. Can we submit our interest for both? We would prefer to be the former, but we can also serve as the latter.

You are not locked into selecting one or the other. We will identify the short list of lead firms to invite to submit proposals based on their qualifications. Our process will consider all the areas of expertise that are needed and work with the selected lead firm to build out a full team.

110. In addition to working with Sina and PAC, should we anticipate working with other museum evaluators? If so, would the museum retain them, or should we include them as potential project partners?

ALM may retain other planning consultants as needed and in coordination with the Lead Firm. You do not need to team at this point.

111. Can the primary firm suggest consultants we would prefer to work with in our RFQ response?

Yes, but ALM reserves the right to reconfigure teams in consultation with the Lead Firm.

112. It is our understanding that this RFP is specifically for the Visitor Experience Design and Exhibition Development for the space in the N-YHS new addition. Would the seven rotating exhibits planned for ALM’S first 2-3 years and the Virtual environment/museum be part of another RFQ/RFP process? If so, would the same team be allowed to apply for all three?

See answer #19 in Batch 1. We are leaning toward having the Lead Firm develop the suite of all exhibitions and experiences. However, if that changes, the same team will be allowed to apply for multiple exhibitions.

113. Would ALM engage the fabricator/installer for the exhibition directly? (Or will this be a design-build project?)

ALM will engage the fabricator in consultation with the lead firm. This is not design-build.

114. Are you looking for a touring partner to manage bookings and tour logistics or are you planning to dedicate a staff member to manage the tours?

We expect to manage the tours, possibly with N-YHS, but are open to learning more about what may be available by way of support.
115. Please describe the staffing structure of the ALM and if they are all full-time employees, dedicated to this project?

See answers #86 & #89. We anticipate hiring an experienced full time Director of Exhibitions position to support the project.

116. How will the selection process for the lead firm and additional specialized firms/professionals be conducted? What criteria will be used for evaluation?

The RFQ documents contain information about the experience, approach, and values we are looking for in a partner. Detailed selection criteria will be provided in the RFP.

117. Do you see digital strategy; i.e., website, ticketing, integrations, etc., a part of a ‘lead firm’ team’s responsibilities?

We do not, though future media and integration opportunities may arise.

118. Can you further define inclusive design firm Prime Access’ role in the RFQ, RFP and project itself? How does ALM expect project teams to work and collaborate with them?

We have not started this work. Details will be shared during the RFP launch.

119. Can you elaborate on the collaboration with Inclusive Design and Accessibility consultants, Prime Access? How will their services be integrated into the project?

We have not started this work. Details will be shared during the RFP launch.