



Request for Qualifications (RFQ)

for Master Planning Services

For

WAYFINDING & CAMPUS SIGNAGE

Denver Zoological Foundation, Inc.

2900 East 23rd Avenue

Denver, CO 80205

Date of Issuance:

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This Request for Qualifications (“RFQ”) is issued by the Denver Zoological Foundation, Inc., a private Colorado 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation (hereinafter referred to as the “Foundation”, “Zoo” or “Denver Zoo”).

A. INTRODUCTION

The Denver Zoological Foundation (“Zoo”) is a national leader in animal care and visitor experience. As a nonprofit corporation, 501(c)(3), the Foundation is passionate about its commitment to excellence in support of its mission: *Inspiring Communities to Save Wildlife for Future Generations*. The Denver Zoo provides extraordinary experiences every day for Zoo animals and visitors and our core values are evident in everything we do.

In pursuit of continuing to be a leader in the zoological industry, in the past two years the Zoo opened *Stingray Cove* and the new, state-of-the-art Helen and Arthur E. Johnson Animal Hospital, as well as remodeled the Little Barn Exhibit to be the home of the Zoo’s African Penguin collection. These projects begin the implementation in a series of capital project portfolios to reinvigorate the Zoo’s 125-year-old campus and align physical improvements with a new, long-term strategy.

As part of that strategy and commitment to continuous improvement of the guest experience, the Zoo’s on-site signage system(s) need to be assessed and improved, including campus wayfinding and operational signage, and the Zoo’s on-site donor and sponsor recognition program.

B. PROCESS APPROACH & PROJECT VISION

The Foundation is pleased to issue this Request for Qualifications in order to select a design consultant for assessment and master planning services for new signage systems for a variety of signage programs across our campus. The Foundation’s intent is to shortlist qualified firms from the RFQ process. The next step in the selection process will include an RFP from firms (as a result of the shortlists from the qualifications process), with the goal of the selection process to be selection of a single entity.

The overall vision for this project is that new systems will have a consistent look and feel, and integrate with new brand standards that are currently being implemented. Clear guidelines for what type of sign is needed when a need is identified, and where to place new signs to solve challenges, need to be developed. New standards for donor and sponsor signage that can clearly be communicated through examples when meeting with prospective funders would be an outcome of this process.

Recently, the Zoo has received feedback from internal guest surveys and social media tracking that the lack of wayfinding options, confusing campus configuration and difficulty using a map on the Zoo’s app decreases overall guest satisfaction. The Zoo would like to solve these wayfinding challenges by developing a cohesive, comprehensive and intentional system for guiding guests through the Zoo’s campus. New wayfinding and operational systems need to consider the multiple portfolios of projects that are slated over the next decade at the Zoo, including new exhibits and pathway hierarchy system.

Most importantly the Zoo is looking to develop a cohesive plan for these systems that can carry us into the future. A balance of flexibility to be able to respond to changing daily needs and permanency will need to be a key feature. Setting signage standards that can be applied to new builds and existing exhibits, but also to operational and temporary needs is important for the Zoo, and to meet the needs of a variety of users.

As a nonprofit the zoo has specific allocated funds for this project and budget will need to be observed. The consultant selected should consider that for the scope of this project the budget does not exceed \$315,000.00.

Under the direction of the Zoo, the creative firm chosen will collaborate with Zoo staff to lead development of a campus-wide signage master plan that takes into account the needs of multiple facilities and visitors. The system(s) recommended should meet Zoo brand standards, donor and sponsor expectations, and retain the unique characteristics and function of each sign typology.

The Zoo defines the sign typologies in the following way:

- Interpretive/Thematic Signage – Signage specific to a collection item, exhibit or thematic area that communicates education or conservation messages to our on-site guests, or signage that enhances the design unique to the exhibit as an immersive element.
- Wayfinding Signage – Signage intended to guide on-site visitors through their pre-entry experience and around campus. Information should be tiered, to guide visitors to primary, secondary and tertiary locations and includes directional signage, campus maps, parking garage and location identification. Signage should communicate and reflect the Denver Zoo brand. Master planning for interior and exterior, guest-facing wayfinding signage to be contracted for at this time.
- Operational Signage – Signage communicating operational information including guest procedures, hours, amenity rules and regulations, daily programmatic communication, marquee, code and safety signage, etc. Signage should communicate and reflect the Denver Zoo brand. Master planning for interior and exterior, guest-facing operational signage to be contracted for at this time.
- Room and Building Numbering – Room and building numbering system that is intuitive and consistently applied across campus. Exterior and interior locations.
- Donor and Sponsor Signage – Signage recognizing our philanthropic partners and their contribution to the Zoo. Master planning for exterior and interior donor and sponsor signage to be contracted for at this time.

The following assumptions of specific services needed for each typology are as follows.

Sign Typology	Exterior		Interior	
	Guest-Facing	Back-of-House	Guest-Facing	Back-of-House
Interpretive/Thematic Signage	X		X	
Wayfinding Signage	X		X	
Operational Signage	X		X	
Room and Building Numbering Framework	X	X	X	X
Donor and Sponsorship Signage	X		X	

The Zoo is anticipating a master plan, the design and implementation phase of work for each sign typology; however, this RFQ is only intended to hire for the master plan phase. Anticipated deliverables include, but are not limited to, the following:

Assessment

- On-site, full-day kick-off meeting, led by the design firm
- Inventory of existing signage
- Observation studies
- Development of user profiles with associated front-of-house circulation studies
- Evaluation of current interpretive, wayfinding, operational and donor/sponsor signage, and room/building numbering
- Definition of key destinations, decision points and pain points
- Online presentation of assessment data

Master Plan

- Preliminary recommendations for tiered messaging for each typology
- Preliminary recommendations for donor signage tiered system
- Preliminary sign location plans for each typology based on tiered system recommendations
- Recommendations for design/implementation phasing schedule based on criticality and long-term goals
- In-person presentation of recommendations for final system(s) framework
- One round of revisions based on client feedback

The Zoo will complete the following tasks, and/or provide the following deliverables:

- Audience evaluation data and analysis for development of user profiles.
- Donor/sponsor hierarchy for use in developing recommended sign hierarchy.
- Internal project management, including scheduling of meetings and information acquiring and collating.
- Floor plans for all facilities.

As with most projects, time is of the essence. The Zoo's goal is to have a first phase of new sign implementation and installation complete by Summer of 2023. This means a full design process will be required post-evaluation. Included with this RFQ is a list of expected project milestones for consideration.

C. EVALUATION PROCESS & SCHEDULE

Those interested in receiving the RFQ for review, please visit www.denverzoo.org/vendor-opportunities. Please be sure the appropriate person registers organizations via the form on the web page, to ensure any addenda or additional information is communicated to the appropriate person during the process.

Please do not contact any individuals from the Denver Zoo or potential consultants at this time.

The evaluation of the Design teams will be based on best value to the Zoo, and will include relevant experience, commitment, team, and respective qualifications.

All submittals shall become the property of the Zoo and will not be returned. Late submittals may not be evaluated. The Zoo reserves the right to reject any or all submittals on the basis of being nonresponsive to this RFQ, or for failure to disclose requested information.

The Zoo shall not be liable for any costs incurred by respondents in the preparation and submission of responses. The proposer is responsible for all costs of preparing, submitting RFQ response, a proposal, and any other prior or subsequent activity associated with the RFQ and/or RFP, presentations, meeting attendance, due diligence and/or contract negotiations, regardless of whether or not the Zoo enters into an agreement with the successful proposer.

The Zoo reserves the right, without invalidating submittal content, to request clarification(s) of respondent information. The Zoo reserves the right to withdraw this RFQ at any time, and make no commitments, implied or otherwise, that this process will result in a business transaction.

The issuance of this RFQ does not imply that the Foundation or the City, or any agency or department of the City, is making an offer to do business with any RFQ recipient or respondent. No agreement or other binding obligation on the Foundation is implied or will occur unless and until a definitive agreement is executed.

The City will have no binding obligations with respect to the Project except as specifically provided in a written agreement executed by the City and applicable to this Project. The issuance of this RFQ and the submission of any proposal does not create any obligation upon the Foundation or the City, or any agency or department of the City, to contract with the firm, or to enter into any binding legal relationship with any one or more of the firms, with respect to the potential project(s) or otherwise.

The Foundation reserves the right to (a) terminate this selection process at any time, (b) to reject any or all proposals, and/or (c) to waive formalities and minor irregularities in the proposals received and select firms in any manner they deem appropriate.

Screening Panel

Submittals will be evaluated by a panel of individuals selected in accordance with the Zoo's requirements. The panel will review and rank the qualifications submittals. The Owner will evaluate the qualifications responses and quickly create a shortlist of firms who will be invited to submit formal proposals.

The Owner's intent is to select a shortlist of qualified firms within the next several weeks, followed by RFP request.

Timeline

The following is a preliminary milestone schedule that is subject to modifications at the Owner's direction.

Issue Request for Qualifications (www.denverzoo.org/vendor-opportunities)	April 8, 2022
Request for Qualifications due	April 27, 2022-1PM MST
Owner RFQ Evaluation Period	April 28-May 5, 2022
Owner Shortlist announced	May 6, 2022
RFP Issued	May 6, 2022
Mandatory Bidder's Site Walk	May 12, 2022
RFP Questions Due from Interested Parties	May 18, 2022

Owner Response to Questions Sent	May 23, 2022
Proposal Responses Due	May 31, 2022
Invited Firm Interviews	June 2-3, 2022
Notification of Award	June 7, 2022
Master Planning Efforts Begin	June 27, 2022
Anticipated Master Planning Efforts Complete	December 9, 2022

D. REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS RESPONSE FORMAT

The Zoo will evaluate the qualifications and then create a shortlist of firms who will be invited to submit formal proposals. The Zoo requests that information be provided in a clear, precise, and organized manner.

For this Request for Qualifications, firms are required to provide the following information:

Cover Letter

Submit a formal letter signed by an officer/principal of your firm which states that if shortlisted your firm will aggressively pursue the project and the proposed staff will not change.

Section 1 – Qualifications Detail

Submit the following information:

- a. Company overview to include number of years in business, total staff.
- b. State compelling reasons why you feel your firm/team should be included on the shortlist.
- c. Provide the envisioned team structure, include which office or offices will lead in this assignment.
- d. Provide a list of relevant project experience for projects completed within the last five years. This should include relevant experience as it relates to:
 - Wayfinding Systems
 - Interpretive, Thematic, operational and sponsorship signage development
 - Previous experience in an active public facing environment; and
 - Zoo and/or park experience
- e. Include (no more than 7) relevant visual examples to further provide context for project experience.
- f. Detail unique experiences or issues encountered in the design of past relevant projects to demonstrate knowledge and experience that would be beneficial to the process outlined herein.
- g. Provide any concerns with the milestone schedule included within this RFQ.

Note: The Zoo is not looking for elaborate proposal responses. Be as concise and accurate as possible in developing your qualifications response.

E. QUALIFICATIONS DUE DATE, ZOO'S RIGHTS & APPLICABLE GOVERNING PROVISIONS

Qualifications are limited to a maximum of twenty (20), single-pages with a minimum of 10pt. font.

Qualifications submittals must be received by the Foundation no later than April 27, 2022, no later than 1:00 PM MST to facilitate review. Please submit one electronic copy delivered via email to cwilliams@denverzoo.org

Verification of Information

The Zoo will rely on the accuracy and completeness of all information provided in making its selection. As such, firms submitting qualifications are urged to carefully review the provided information to ensure the clarity, accuracy and completeness of such information.

The Zoo, at its sole discretion, reserves the right to make any inquiries or follow-up as required to verify the information provided.

Applicable Governing Provisions

Applicants shall note that the Project will be governed by the following governmental provision (*including but not limited to these*):

All phases of the Project must be designed in conformance with all federal, state, and local laws, including but not limited to: 1) the constitutions, laws, and rules and regulations of the United States of America and the State of Colorado; 2) the City Charter, the Denver Revised Municipal Code ("DRMC"), and building, fire, electrical, plumbing and other applicable codes, as they may be amended from time to time; 3) rules and regulations promulgated or amended by DPR governing City parks and recreational facilities; 4) applicable specifications adopted or amended by Denver Parks and Recreation; 5) any rules and regulations promulgated or amended by other City departments and agencies applicable to the Project; 5) Executive Orders issued by the Mayor; 6) any court order, judgment, or decree or any appellate decision applicable to the Project; 7) any federal, state, or local administrative decision or order applicable to the Project; 8) the terms and conditions of any grant or other funding agreements entered in order to obtain funding for the Project; and 9) the applicable requirements of the federal Americans with Disabilities Act and any other federal or state laws requiring access for the disabled to public accommodations. In addition to compliance with the above-mentioned laws, the Project shall be governed and controlled by the limitations and provisions that are imposed on the City Department of Public Works by the Charter or ordinances of the City, specifically, services shall be performed in compliance with the provisions for payment of prevailing wages set forth in Sections 20-76 through 20-79, DRMC; for public art in Sections 20-85 through 28-90, DRMC; and for small business enterprise, equal employment opportunity, and minority and women business enterprise participation that are contained, respectively, in Sections 28-31 through 28-91, DRMC; as any or all of the above may be amended or recodified from time to time.

The Design team shall comply with and not enter into a contract with a consultant that fails to certify to the Design team that it shall not knowingly employ or contract with an illegal alien to perform services for the Project.

In connection with the performance of services if selected, the consulting firm agrees not to refuse to hire, discharge, promote or demote, or to discriminate in matters of compensation against any person otherwise qualified, solely because of race, color, religion, national origin, gender, age, military status, sexual orientation, marital status, or physical or mental disability; and the firms further agree to insert the foregoing provision in all approved contracts and subcontracts in connection with providing services.

-End RFQ-