



Lake Ontario National Marine Sanctuary Facility Planning Services

Implementation Period

Approximately October 1, 2024 – September 30, 2025

Application Package Due

September 19, 2024
11:59 PM Eastern Standard Time

BACKGROUND

The National Atmospheric and Oceanic Administration (NOAA) initiated the designation of the Lake Ontario National Marine Sanctuary in 2019 and designated it in July 2024. The sanctuary is co-managed with New York State. The 1,722 square-mile area encompasses a portion of the waters and submerged lands of Lake Ontario adjacent to Wayne, Cayuga, Oswego, and Jefferson counties. The area includes a nationally significant collection of underwater cultural resources, including 41 known shipwrecks and about 19 suspected shipwrecks. Well-preserved by Lake Ontario's cold, fresh water, the shipwrecks and other underwater cultural resources possess exceptional historical, archaeological and recreational value. In addition, the history of the region is rich with Indigenous history, shipbuilding, military engagements, and the Underground Railroad. As such, the Office of Marine Sanctuaries (ONMS), through the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation, requires the development of a facility strategy for the new sanctuary.

OVERVIEW OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

Except as otherwise specified herein, the contractor shall furnish the personnel, materials, services, facilities, and otherwise complete all activities necessary for and incidental to completion of this Statement of Work. The budget shall not exceed \$150,000.

OBJECTIVE OF WORK PLAN

Guide ONMS, jointly with New York State, to develop a facility strategy for the Lake Ontario National Marine Sanctuary and a "NOAA presence" within sanctuary communities that supports



the sanctuary's mission and infrastructure needs, and that recognizes, leverages, and complements individual assets in sanctuary communities.

SCOPE OF WORK

a. Initial Activities

- The contractor will have an in-person meeting or video call with ONMS and representatives from New York State to review the planning process and the schedule for upcoming activities, discuss how to best involve area communities and partners in the process, and discuss a process to review existing Federal and State assets in the region to determine leveraging opportunities. During the meeting, the participants will discuss appropriate parameters for each of the topics described below in focus groups.
- The contractor will conduct in-person visits to the sanctuary to tour the communities and shoreline and get a sense of geography and existing infrastructure and meet with key partners.

b. Focus groups. Contractor will organize, schedule, and facilitate focus groups composed of, but not limited to, relevant community members and leadership, state agencies, non-profit organizations, educators, and academic and research partners. The focus groups may be a strategic mix of in-person gatherings and video calls. The contractor will ensure that the following guiding elements/prompts are included in focus group discussions:

- Goals and guiding principles for the sanctuary and its vision for facilities and creating a physical "NOAA presence" in coastal communities.
- Benchmarking discussion on how other sanctuaries have approached and implemented facility and infrastructure requirements.
- The broad programming and operational needs and impacts that the sanctuary should have- and the facilities to make these happen.
- The audiences and stakeholders we are trying to reach/support/impact through sanctuary facilities.
- What facilities and experiences would be most impactful/effective/attractive for visitors to the sanctuary?
 - What are existing infrastructure opportunities and how will this complement existing visit experiences in the region.
 - How can technology be used to enhance the visitor experience and broaden sanctuary reach/impact.
- From a tourism perspective, what are the "points of differentiation" that makes this region different from other destinations? How would sanctuary facilities create or enhance this differentiation?
- What facilities would be most impactful/effective/attractive to researchers and scientists, and help promote/accelerate Lake Ontario and Great Lakes conservation?
- What facilities would be most impactful/effective/attractive to educators and students, help support sanctuary and partner programming, and help promote/accelerate Lake Ontario and Great Lakes literacy and action?
- What are the recreational opportunities in the sanctuary (e.g., paddling, diving, boating) and how can new/enhanced infrastructure support enhance these activities?



- How can sanctuary infrastructure positively impact the quality of life of local residents, and enable residents to become a “tourist in their own backyard?”
 - What are the possible leveraging opportunities in the communities and with the state?
 - Considerations for sanctuary infrastructure (i.e., exhibits) beyond the sanctuary area that will promote interest in coastal communities, Great Lakes conservation)
- c. Submit Initial Findings Report
- Summarize and analyze the input from the visioning meetings and focus groups into an Initial Findings Report that will inform and guide the facility strategy.
- d. Prepare a Program of Requirements
- Identify and prepare a program of requirements (i.e., the Sanctuary Facility Strategy) for infrastructure that will support sanctuary activities, including administrative and marine operations, research, educational programming, and visitor experiences.
 - Use a regional approach to create a physical “NOAA presence” in key locations in the sanctuary region.
 - Ensure that feedback and ideas from focus groups are clearly represented in the program of requirements.
 - Place a special focus on opportunities to create visitor experiences.
 - Identify the space requirements for the recommended facilities, with special attention to adaptive reuse opportunities.
 - Estimate costs associated with recommended facilities and other identified infrastructure (i.e., a sanctuary-wide maritime trail; infrastructure to facilitate public access to sanctuary waters, etc).
 - Conduct meetings with NOAA staff at regular intervals to refine the program of requirements.
 - Include near-term recommendations and next steps required to move the project further toward implementation.
 - Submit the draft program of requirements (the Sanctuary Facility Strategy).
- e. Develop the Final Facility Strategy
- Assemble all the above information into a draft facility and “NOAA presence” strategy.
 - Review the draft facility strategy with key partners.
 - Prepare the final facility strategy and submit it to the NOAA team.

DELIVERABLES

- a. Meeting notes that identify decisions, discussions, requests, etc.
- b. Initial findings Report
- c. Program of Requirements
- d. Further Actions including Budget/Schedule



FINAL FACILITY STRATEGY

All Deliverables are provided for agency review (15 business day review-comments)

Portable documents for review/publication (i.e., Word or otherwise, as directed by the Government)

Government will distribute deliverables and collect and de-conflict comments

SCHEDULE

Schedule/Milestones	Required Date
Award	0
Initial meeting with NOAA team	15 calendar days after award
Visioning meeting with key partners	30 calendar days after award
Focus Groups	90 calendar days after award
Initial Findings Report	120 calendar days after award
NOAA Review	15 calendar days 135 calendar days after award
Program of Requirements Budget/Schedule	175 calendar days after award
NOAA team review	15 calendar days 190 calendar days after award
Draft - Final Facility Strategy	240 calendar days after award
NOAA review	15 calendar days 255 calendar days after award
Final Facility Strategy	310 calendar days after award

ELIGIBILITY

By submitting an offer in response to this RFP, the offeror certifies that it and its principal officers are not debarred, suspended, or otherwise considered ineligible for an award by the U.S. Government. The Foundation will not award a contract to any firm that is debarred, suspended, or considered to be ineligible by the U.S. Government.

HOW TO APPLY

Application packages should be submitted by 11:59 PM Eastern Standard Time on September 19, 2024. Please submit your application package to the Foundation through C-STAAR – the Foundation’s Collaborative System for Tracking Activities, Awards, and Reporting – using the

following link: https://marinesanctuary.smartsimple.com/s_Login.jsp?lang=1&prole=0. You will need to register your organization (or yourself if applying as an individual).

Please direct all questions to support@marinesanctuary.org with the email subject line: **RFP QUESTION Lake Ontario National Marine Sanctuary Facility Planning Services: [Organization Name]**.

Application packages should include:

- Completed Proposal;
- Budget;
- Proof of past performance.

REVIEW PROCESS

Evaluation Criteria	Sub-Questions	Score	Scoring for this criterion will be assessed on how well proposals:
TECHNICAL SKILLS AND PROJECT FEASIBILITY	<p>Does the proposal clearly identify reasonable goals and objectives?</p> <p>Is the proposal feasible in the period of performance timeframe?</p> <p>Is a descriptive timeline included?</p> <p>Do the applicant and any project partners have the ability and expertise (or the potential) to conduct the scope and scale of the proposed work?</p>	55	<p>Demonstrate a thorough level of planning that will allow the applicant to begin the project promptly and complete the project within the period of the performance timeline. Considerations include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Are milestones identified in the project timeline that align with project goals and objectives? ● Are project partners and roles clearly identified? ● Do activities take place during the implementation period?
PROJECT COSTS	<p>Is the budget realistic?</p> <p>Does the budget have a meaningful use of funding?</p> <p>Does the budget description sufficiently explain how each item in the budget table supports project activities?</p>	45	<p>Provide a detailed list of specific items, tools, materials, etc., and associated costs for each expense category. Considerations include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Are explanations provided for how each item in the budget table supports project activities? ● Are budgeted items prioritized that directly support projects and/or workforce development and capacity-building opportunities (program staff salary, fringe, and indirect budget requests are relatively small fractions of the total budget)
Total Points	100		



ABOUT US

The [National Marine Sanctuary Foundation](#) was founded in 2000 by America's most influential ocean conservation leaders and works with communities and NOAA to conserve and expand these special places for a healthy ocean, coasts, and Great Lakes. Sanctuaries and monuments are our essential network of protected waters, owned by every American and championed by us. Connected by currents, they sustain miraculous species, coastal communities, and our shared heritage. The Foundation is a leading voice for U.S.-protected waters, and our work extends from the ocean floor to the classroom to Capitol Hill. The Foundation supports a growing portfolio of Community Stewardship, Outreach, and Education programs aimed at providing students, educators, and lifelong learners with opportunities to explore and discover connections to the natural world, no matter where they live.

TERMS & CONDITIONS

This is a Request for Proposals (RFP) only. Issuance of this RFP does not in any way obligate the Foundation to make an award or pay for costs incurred by potential offerors in the preparation and submission of an offer. In addition:

- (a) The Foundation may cancel RFP and not award;
- (b) The Foundation may reject any or all responses received;
- (c) Issuance of RFP does not constitute award commitment by The Foundation;
- (d) The Foundation reserves the right to disqualify any offer based on offeror failure to follow RFP instructions;
- (e) The Foundation will not compensate offerors for a response to RFP;
- (f) The Foundation reserves the right to issue an award based on an initial evaluation of offers without further discussion;
- (g) The Foundation may negotiate with short-listed offerors for their best and final offer;
- (h) The Foundation reserves the right to order additional quantities or units with the selected offer or;
- (i) The Foundation may reissue the solicitation or issue formal amendments revising the original RFP specifications and evaluation criteria before or after receipt of proposals;
- (j) The Foundation may modify the specifications without issuing a formal notice to all offerors when the revisions are immaterial to the scope of the RFP;
- (k) The Foundation may choose to award only part of the activities in the RFP or issue multiple awards based on multiple RFP activities; and
- (l) The Foundation reserves the right to waive minor proposal deficiencies that can be corrected prior to award determination to promote competition.