Erie Canalway Heritage Fund, Inc.

Event Planner RFP

Written Questions and responses

July 11, 2023

1. **Is there a current incumbent contractor?** No.

2. **Will the Provider be required to prepay any contract they negotiate on behalf of the host?** No. Erie Canalway Heritage Fund will pay other providers directly (e.g., tour bus, event venue, catering). Final approval of all conference contracts will be at the discretion of the Erie Canalway Heritage Fund, Inc. on behalf of the Hosts and will be executed by Erie Canalway. However, if the Provider includes sub-contractors in their proposal, payment arrangements to the sub-contractor will be solely between the Provider and Sub-contractor(s).

3. **Does the Provider need to be local to the Buffalo, NY area or be headquartered in New York?** No. However, familiarity with the NYS Canal System, Buffalo, and Western New York are included as listed evaluation criteria.

4. **Can the Provider leverage a sub-contractor’s past performance?** Sub-contractors, if included, must be identified as part of the proposal and specific activities and budgets assigned to subcontractors must be itemized in the Provider’s proposal. Erie Canalway will not make materials from its prior contractors available for use.

5. **What is the expected number of attendees?** 500

6. **Is there a minimum and maximum range?** 400 – 500 people

7. **Is there an estimated conference budget?** A preliminary estimated budget of $850,000 is anticipated. The 2025 World Canals Conference will generate revenue from conference registrations, exhibitors, and sponsors. Two key partners are providing sponsorship funding - the Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation (contract in place) and the NYS Canal Corporation (contract pending).

8. **Is the budget flexible, or are there any strict financial constraints to consider?** The budget will be managed by ECHF. As noted in question seven, the main constraint is resource development. Erie Canalway has a strong development approach in place and has demonstrated success in raising significant resources for similar events.

9. **Can you provide fee structures from previous events, or what your ideal fee structure for this event would be?** The activities described in this RFP and answers to questions on this document are the only sources of information that a prospective bidder should rely upon. No information on fee structures will be made available.
10. **Are you looking for a fixed fee or a percentage-based commission structure?** Only fixed fee structures will be considered.

11. **Do you have any specific expectations or requirements regarding payment terms or milestones that you want reflected in the fee structure?** The payment schedule will be determined as part of the contracting process. Erie Canalway will not accept invoices more than once a month. ECHF reserves the right to retain 10% of the total contract amount until all tasks are completed.

12. **Is there a specific theme or focus beyond city canals for the event?** The WCC 2025 represents an opportunity to showcase canals as agents of economic, historical, and cultural transformation. The conference will bring together canal enthusiasts and experts from around the world to showcase innovative ideas and best practices. The conference location in Buffalo offers opportunities to visit canal related sites in Buffalo, as well as Erie Canal communities in Western New York and nearby canal sites in Canada. Presentations, tours, and events will address urban and rural waterfront revitalization, trails, heritage tourism, education, and economic development successes and trends. Pre-/post-conference tours will also be offered, along with Buffalo-centric public events.

13. **What are the key objectives or messages that the events themes should convey?**
Timing of the conference coincides with the 200th anniversary of the Erie Canal opening in 1825 and is a perfect way to draw attention to past, present, and potential future impacts of canal development. Conference events and projects will increase local resident’s sense of pride and ownership, and reinforce connections to Buffalo, WNY, and Canada’s flourishing canal communities.

14. **Are there any specific industry trends or topics that should be addressed within the theme?**
Program content will represent a broad perspective on how a variety of trends and topics lead to transformative change in both rural and urban environments. Themes include:
   a. Healthy Waterways/Healthy Communities
   b. Trends in Waterway Tourism & Recreation
   c. Waterway Management
   d. Canals and Historic Preservation
   e. Inclusion & Accessibility