



Exhibition Design and Development

Request for Qualifications

Monday, July 15, 2019

1 Project Introduction

The Saint Louis Science Center is in the process of designing a 7,500 square foot expansion on the south end of its 5050 Oakland building. This expansion is to serve as a new entrance for visitors, replacing the existing entrance and lobby, welcoming them from the Science Center's main parking lot. The project is envisioned to consist of three segments: an exterior (outdoor) segment, the new entrance construction segment, and an integration of building interior with the existing building segment.

The design of the new entry provides a foundation for four interpretive projects that have been identified to enhance this newly defined Science Center visitor experience. These moments are intended to provide Science Center visitors with a completely fresh first interaction with, and first impression of, the Science Center they have come to know and love over the last 35 years. The Science Center's new entrance is scheduled to open in fall of 2020 and it is the intent of the Science Center for the four interpretive moments identified to be included in this celebration of institutional growth.

The projects specific to this Request for Qualifications include the interpretive planning, content development, and exhibition design for these four interpretive experiences. Briefly described, these four experiences are as follows:

- **Robot Concierge and Accompanying Digital Displays**

As visitors walk in the Science Center's new front doors they will be greeted by the Science Center's newest employee. Standing on a pedestal in the middle of the 6,000 square foot lobby, is the Science Center's robot concierge who personally greets visitors, suggests activities for groups to attend and participate in, and directs visitors to the crucial amenities they may be looking for after their drive to the Science Center.

Our robot friend is surrounded by screens overhead that it uses as visual whiteboards, calling up content on demand to complement its conversation with visitors. Can't decide which of the Science Center's newest OMNIMAX® movies to see? With a flick of its hand our concierge can pull up previews for you to watch. Want to see what is happening in the Science Center's Makerspace? Our robot friend can bring up a list of classes and turn on the live web cam for you get excited about what's happening in the gallery. Curious about the latest science news from across the world? Ask our robot concierge to provide you with a synopsis to prep for your next dinner table conversation with the kids.

- **Portal Experience**

Once visitors feel prepared to embark on their Science Center journey, they are encouraged by their new robot friend to enter the building through the 'Science Portal'. This transition zone visually peaks visitor's curiosity and connects the new entrance with the existing building. It entices visitors to move forward to begin connecting with science in new and exciting ways!

- **Central Gallery Experience**

When visitors step out of the 'Science Portal' they encounter their first Science Center exhibition. Currently home to the Science Center's *GameXPloation* exhibition, the 7,500 square foot Central Gallery is home to innovative, highly interactive exhibitions that exemplify and communicate the Science Center's brand.

As part of the staff engagement strategy for the new entrance project, Science Center team members have been asked to ideate new big ideas for this space. Conversations in these concept sessions range in thought and variation, however it is agreed this space is meant for 'messaging around' and to shift visitors into a deeper learning mindset.

- **Interactive Donor Wall**

Finally, the Science Center would like to create an interactive donor wall as a way to thank the Science Center's funders who generously gave to make this project come to life. A space in the new lobby will be identified for this interactive.

As additional project context, the St. Louis Cannon Design office was hired to complete the design of the new building and Tarlton Corporation is providing construction services. Cannon's subcontracting team includes building engineer and landscape design services.

It has not yet been determined the process for contracting exhibition fabrication, implementation of media, interactive development and programming, and procurement of AV and digital hardware. However, design firms submitting responses should consider these services critical to the project and appropriately plan for integration of these services in the future.

The design team chosen will work closely with the Science Center Project Director and Project Manager, the Science Center's Front Entrance E-Team comprised of representatives from each Science Center division, and a core team of Science Center staff with visitor engagement and chosen content expertise.

Finally, the Science Center will work with the selected design team to outline an effective and efficient schedule and process for completing the project. The Science Center recognizes there are still unknowns in the project and it expects the design team chosen to participate in a true collaborative process to produce the most impressive results with the Science Center visitor at the heart of the decision making process.

2 Background

The Saint Louis Science Center traces its roots to the Academy of Science of St. Louis, founded in 1856 as the first scientific organization west of the Mississippi River. In 1959, the Academy created the Museum of Science and Natural History in Clayton's Oak Knoll Park. When the Metropolitan Zoological Park & Museum District (ZMD) was formed in 1971, the Museum of Science and Natural History became a member and in 1984 the Museum acquired the James S. McDonnell Planetarium from the City of St. Louis. After extensive renovations, the two reopened in 1985 as the Saint Louis Science Center.

Following a \$34 million expansion to construct the current main building on Oakland Avenue, the Science Center opened November 2, 1991 in its larger footprint and included the five story OMNIMAX® Theater and a highway-spanning connection bridge. The Science Center added a temporary structure known as the EXPLORADOME in 1997 to provide additional space for large traveling exhibitions. The new ability to host large, popular traveling exhibits prompted the Science Center to create a permanent exhibition space for traveling exhibitions. In October, 2011 Boeing Hall opened dedicating 13,000 square feet of exhibit space for traveling exhibitions.

The 50,000 square foot area previously used for the EXPLORADOME was renovated into GROW, a permanent indoor/outdoor gallery dedicated to the experience of the journey of the food supply from farm to fork. The agriculture exhibit opened to the public on June 18, 2016.

The Saint Louis Science Center was named a Smithsonian Institution Affiliate, the first in the St. Louis region, in 2016. This title provides access to Smithsonian artifacts, traveling exhibits, and educational collaborations locally and nationally.

The Saint Louis Science Center features more than 700 interactive exhibitions in nine galleries, including GROW, Mission: Mars, Life Science Lab, Makerspace, Discovery Room, Ecology and Environment, Structures, Liftoff and Experience Energy. In addition, guests can see science in action through Amazing Science Demonstrations at the Energy Stage, enjoy a film experience at the OMNIMAX® Theater, and gaze at the stars at the James S. McDonnell Planetarium.

Today the Science Center serves more than one million people each year, and is one of the nation's 25 largest museums. It provides hands-on, informal learning opportunities for visitors of all ages and backgrounds and has built a national reputation for programs and exhibits, community partnerships and visitor experience.

Additionally, in 2018, the Saint Louis Science Center finished a long-anticipated rebranding, consisting of a new logo mark, color palette, graphic elements for advertising, on-site signage and digital communications, including a new website. In addition to a new visual brand, the Science

Center created and incorporated a new brand narrative, aligned with the dynamism of technology and sharing of information and content.

The Science Center's mission, "to ignite and sustain life-long science and technology learning," provides the foundation and ability to pursue opportunities and partnerships that help present current scientific topics and issues to the community. Respondents to this RFQ are encouraged to review the Science Center's website at www.slsc.org to gain a better understanding of our setting, character, and mission.

3 Statement Submission Requirements

Please read the following section carefully and include all information requested in order to be considered for a short list of firms to be asked for proposals in response to the RFP to follow.

The Science Center's intent is to contract one design team to lead the exhibition development and design project outlined in the Project Introduction. The design team chosen will have demonstrated expertise and abilities in creating dynamic and immersive environments that leverage a visitor-centric design process. The team will also be equally skilled at collaborating with multiple client stakeholders.

While the Science Center welcomes single firm proposals, our expectation is the project will be led by an exhibition development and design firm skilled in interpretive projects, partnered with outside entities specializing in media and interactive design and implementation, who complement the lead firm's expertise.

The Science Center is requesting Statement of Qualifications in response to this RFQ be delivered via email no later than 5p CT on Friday, August 2. Statements should be no longer than 50-pages (25 spreads), delivered in pdf format (file size not to exceed 20MB) or website link to Kelly Floyd, Sr. Director of Program Operations at kelly.floyd@slsc.org.

The following information is requested to be included in submitted Statement of Qualifications:

- Letter of Interest
Outline why this project is of interest to your firm and how your proposed team can partner with the Science Center to meet its project goals.
- Summary of Firm Background and Competencies (6 pages maximum)
Share with the Science Center the expertise your design firm has in-house, and the expertise any additional partners bring to the project. Please address in narrative form the following bullets:
 - Describe the design team's exhibition development and design philosophy, and process.
 - Speak to the design team's understanding of the role of Science Centers in today's cultural institution and STEM education industries.
 - Describe your approach to designing for modularity? What solutions have you produced for other institutions whose projects required this as a design parameter?
- Current Workload
Provide a list of other projects the lead design firm currently has under contract. Include Client Name, Current Phase, Estimated Completion Date and Total Percent of Project Complete.
- Proposed Design Team Structure
Outline your design team's organizational structure through a team organization chart.
- Proposed Team Members (12 pages maximum)
Share the role of identified team members in key positions and their relevant experience to this project.

- Previous Work
Provide five (5) recent case studies with project descriptions that demonstrate lead design firm’s use of a creative approach to similar projects. Please include examples that demonstrate the use of technology in innovative and creative ways. The project descriptions should include the following information:
 - Services rendered
 - Total square footage of project
 - Total design fees for all partners involved in the design process
 - Total fabrication and implementation budget
 Teams can submit up to two (2) additional case studies for each partner team member, separate from lead designer’s case studies.

- Professional References
Provide three (3) professional references for lead design firm and one (1) professional reference for each design team partner.

4 RFQ Schedule

Please read the following schedule carefully and adhere to all dates listed in order to be considered for a short list.

DATE	ACTIVITY
Monday, July 15	RFQ released
Tuesday, July 23	Science Center notified by lead design firm contact of intent to submit qualifications by 5p CT
Monday, July 15 – Wednesday, July 24	RFQ inquiry period, please submit any questions in regards to the RFQ by 5p CT, Wednesday July 24
Friday, July 26	Answers to inquiries released
Friday, August 2	Emailed qualifications due to Science Center by 5p CT
Tuesday, August 6	If design team would like to submit a bound and printed copy of submitted qualification statement, please ensure delivery to the Science Center by 5p CT
Friday, August 23	Short list notification sent to all submitting firms by 2p CT

1. The Science Center must receive notice of lead design firm’s intent to submit qualifications by 5p CT on Tuesday, July 23. Please email intent to submit to Kelly Floyd, Sr. Director of Program Operations at kelly.floyd@slsc.org.
2. Questions addressing any sections of this RFQ should be addressed to Kelly Floyd, Sr. Director of Program Operations at kelly.floyd@slsc.org. Questions must be submitted by 5p CT on Wednesday, July 24.
3. The Science Center is requesting responses to the RFQ be delivered via email no later than 5p CT on Friday, August 2. Statements should be no longer than 50-pages (25 spreads), delivered in pdf format (file size not to exceed 20MB) or website link to Kelly Floyd, Sr. Director of Program Operations at kelly.floyd@slsc.org.
4. If a design team would like to submit a printed and bound copy of their response, the Science Center will accept hard copies through 5p CT on Tuesday, August 6. Please mail or

deliver in-person, submissions to the attention of Kelly Floyd, Sr. Director of Program Operations.

5 RFQ Evaluation Criteria

Each lead design firm responding to this RFQ will be evaluated based on qualifications and the experience of the particular individuals and partners identified as the proposed team for the project. After evaluating the responses to this RFQ, the Science Center will select a short list of approximately five (5) respondents it considers to be the most qualified to participate in a Request for Proposal (RFP) process. The short listed firms shall be sent an RFP that will invite them to submit proposals based on the scope of work identified in the RFP.

6 Contact

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