

National Underground Railroad Freedom Center Ohio Freedom Trails Driving App

Request for Proposal

I. PROJECT OVERVIEW

Mission and Background

The National Underground Railroad Freedom Center's mission is to pursue inclusive freedom by promoting social justice for all, building on the principles of the Underground Railroad.

The National Underground Railroad Freedom Center (Freedom Center) was established in December 1995 through an Act of Congress and opened to the public in August 2004. The Freedom Center is a museum of conscience, an education center, and a convener of dialogue. With the mission to pursue inclusive freedom by promoting social justice for all, building on the principles of the Underground Railroad (UGRR), the institution fills a substantial void in our nation's cultural heritage. It is the only museum of its kind in the tri-state region (Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana) providing a comprehensive history of the UGRR and connecting those stories and principles to contemporary issues including modern day slavery, social justice, implicit bias, and equity.

The Freedom Center is a Smithsonian Affiliate Museum and is accredited by the American Alliance of Museums – the highest national recognition afforded to museums for its commitment to excellence, accountability, high professional standards, and continued institutional improvement. It was voted the best history museum in the country according to USA Today's 10Best Readers' Choice Awards 2023.

In 2022, the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center established an Underground Railroad Committee comprised of representatives of Underground Railroad sites in the Greater Cincinnati Area. The purposes of the committee was to 1.) share information in order to 2.) connect Ohio's Underground Railroad journey that freedom seekers used to reach Canada, identifying all known abolitionists and conductors, and creating a map of the pathways to Canada.

Proposed Project

This proposal outlines our plan to expand this committee work to include Underground Railroad sites across the state of Ohio and to ultimately create an Ohio Freedom Trails Driving App. Currently, information about Underground Railroad sites in Ohio is available on many separate webpages. The Ohio Freedom Trail App will provide users with a cohesive, credible resource that is user friendly, educational, and endorsed by the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center, National Parks Service, Ohio History Connection, and Ohio's Department of Tourism (ohio.org).

The purpose of the Ohio Freedom Trails App is to link key Underground Railroad sites located across the state of Ohio and make the history, significance, and stories of each site accessible on a user-friendly platform. Through this online app, users will be able to plan their self-guided journey across the state of Ohio, making stops at locations to learn the history of the Underground Railroad. Deliverables would include a free app compatible with Apple and Android, complete with an audio guide. In addition to audio, the app will offer imbedded images and text providing supplemental stories and interesting facts. Using GPS, the app will provide users with routes and estimated driving times. The app will promote users to visit Underground Railroad sites and institutions in each community by providing links to

available webpages. The app will be available for free, content will be available in multiple languages, and recommended for ages 10 and up.

Freedom Trail Routes

As of May 2023, the National Parks Service Network to Freedom included 95 Underground Railroad locations in the state of Ohio. While extensive, this is not a comprehensive list of existing sites. Additionally, ongoing historical and preservation efforts are identifying Underground Railroad previously not recognized. Due to the large quantity of possible Freedom Trails locations, the Freedom Center proposes developing the driving app in three phases utilizing Interstates 75, 71, and 77.

The first phases will highlight locations near I-75, following freedom seeker's journey from the Cincinnati area north through Toledo and Sandusky. We have identified approximately 60 locations in 12 counties. Installations of additional phases will occur after evaluation of the initial I-75 phase.

II. PROPOSAL

References

Vendors must reference at least three clients (five preferred) of similar business type, who's app includes an equivalent or larger number of locations and content selections. Similar business types include museums and cultural attractions. The Freedom Center may request site visits to clients referenced.

References should include the name, phone, and email of the primary contact for each organization. References should also briefly describe the app created for each reference.

Demonstrate Functionality

Candidates should expect to provide a significant and relevant demonstration of their system's capabilities. Specifically, candidates will be expected to 1.) provide an interactive demo system that substantially replicates the functionality that the Freedom Center desires, and 2) provide proof of concept demonstration during meetings with Freedom Center staff.

The demo system must be active and accessible July 29, 2023, to August 4, 2023.

Format

Proposals shall be submitted in the format outlined. Respondents should describe in detail the services proposed; how those services will be accomplished for each component; and specifics regarding design and integration. Respondents should also identify the cost of providing each service category and if appropriate, include service level options. The respondent may include any relevant information, attachments, or exhibits to further elaborate on the proposal.

Proposal Format:

1. Vendor Contact – List the name, address, email address, and phone number of the vendor’s authorized representative. Vendor’s authorized representative shall be empowered to make binding commitments for the vendor’s firm.
2. Vendor Profile – Provide a description of the company including a brief company history and prospects. Include the location of your organization’s headquarters, the year the organization was formed, and ownership structure.
3. Executive Summary – a short summary of the key features of the Response demonstrating the Vendor’s understanding of the requirement
4. Response and references– the Vendor should address the following as a minimum:
 - a. Ability to meet the requirements of the Functional Specifications as outlined in Section III.
 - b. Description of the Solution proposed.
5. Project Schedule – Provide a full project schedule for the proposed solution which should include an estimated duration of each task. Identify all specific deliverables due to your firm to meet the milestone schedule. Our goal is to launch the app during the first quarter of 2024.
 - a. Estimate
 - i. Final 1 time costs
 - ii. Ongoing support cost (app only)
 - iii. Ongoing support cost (vendor creating and adding additional content determined by the Freedom Center)
 - iv. All potential additional costs
 - b. Vendor meetings – see section III
 - c. Vendor chosen – see section III
 - d. Content development (vendor consulting, creating, and uploading content as determined by the Freedom Center)
 - i. Meetings to identify and outline content
 - ii. First drafts of content
 - iii. Edits of content
 - iv. Final content
 - v. Install on CMS or deliver for NURFC staff to add to CMS
 - e. App
 - i. Wireframe (or white label standard wireframe)
 - ii. Beta test app (with limited set of users)
 - iii. Final proof
 - iv. Publish to public app store
 - f. Web App delivery
 - i. Wireframe (or white label standard wireframe)
 - ii. Beta test app (with limited set of users)
 - iii. Final proof
 - g. CMS training to support content if not provided in ongoing support contract.
 - h. Technical support
 - i. Describe support procedures
 - ii. How does tech support work? Online ticket, phone support, email etc?
 - iii. Support availability (hours of operation)

- iv. If CMS-style content management and content update downloads, what is server up time

6. Cost – The proposal should be broken down by phases and types of work.

7. Warranty

III. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Any questions related to this RFP should be sent to the RFP contact Jason Perkins, jperkins@cincymuseum.org, no later than July 11, 2023. If required, RFP clarifications can be provided in a scheduled meeting. This meeting will not serve as a product presentation. Responses will be returned to all no later than July 18, 2023.

All submissions must be received no later than 5:00 P.M. EST time on July 24, 2023. Please submit a digital copy of the submission to jperkins@cincymuseum.org and abottomley@nurfc.org . Only submissions meeting the stated criteria and instructions will be considered. Finalists will be notified via email on or before July 28, 2023 and be invited for additional interviews, demo testing and presentations through August 4, 2023. A final selection is anticipated on or before August 11, 2023.

KEY DATES AND DEADLINES

- 7-11-2023** – final day for submitting questions
- 7-24-2023 5 pm EST** – submissions due
- 7-28-2023** – finalists notified on or before
- 8-4-2023** – final day of demo and presentations (if required)
- 8-11-2023** – selection notification on or before

IV. BASE CRITERIA AND KEY COMPONENTS

Below are desired features of any app selected by the Freedom Center.

The App

1. Android and iOS compatible
2. AR content
 - a. Built in AR preferred.
 - b. AR style map preferred.
 - c. 2D and 3D AR pop up content with tracking to environment preferred
3. The ability to add additional, or edit existing content after app completion
4. The ability to add additional “tours/trails/Interstate route” later (as mentioned in section I).
5. The Freedom Center must retain ownership of the app and all content within the app.
 - a. If your app involves a SaaS model, what is the fall back contingency if this service stops or changes?
6. Native app – The app must be branded under the Freedom Center’s name

- a. The app must be published under our developer name. (The Freedom Center can make the vendor an authorized developer though open to guidance)
- 7. Must be compatible with audio, video, written, and AR content (2D and 3D preferred).
- 8. The ability for users to receive notifications when updates are made.
 - a. Using mobile OS notifications system preferred. Some notification that updated content is available in app is necessary.
- 9. A web option for desktop use.
- 10. The ability to access app content offline.
 - a. The ability to choose a tour to download is preferred.
- 11. The ability to add walking tours
 - a. If inside a building, the ability to operate on multiple floors.

Content Development

The Freedom Center requests vendor assistance in developing app content including, but not limited to, written descriptions, narrations, video, and AR renderings relevant to historical locations on the tour. The Freedom Center will provide raw content and guidance to the vendor. All final content, including content created by the vendor for inclusion in the app, will be the property of the Freedom Center. Additionally, the Freedom Center would like the ability to edit and add content on our own without vendor assistance.

Please add content development for 65 locations to your proposal, assuming each location includes written and narrated texts, 30 include video, and 15 provide AR.

- 1. High quality translation services (Spanish preferred).
- 2. High quality production of graphics, video, and narration.
- 3. High quality editing services

V. FUNCTIONAL SPECIFICATIONS

- 1. The ability to add walking tours
 - a. If inside a building, the ability to operate on multiple floors.
- 2. Ability to add compatibility with 'Blue dot' system options are desired but not necessary.