



Request for Qualifications 2/23/2024

Lead Firm for Louisiana Music Museum

This Request for Qualifications (RFQ) from the Acadiana Center for the Arts is the first in a two-phase selection process. Firms or groups of firms selected at the end of this phase will be invited to submit formal proposals. The goal of this RFQ phase is twofold:

1. To identify potential lead firms and team members to invite to submit formal proposals; and
2. To assemble a list of specialized firms and independent professionals as potential future collaborators with the lead firm and/or the Museum.

All linked files below are included in this Google Drive, linked again here to ensure accessibility:

[📁 Louisiana Music Museum RFP Documents Public Folder](#)

I. Overview

Acadiana Center for the Arts envisions redeveloping the historic Lafayette Hardware Store, which is a 10,000 ft² building listed on the National Historic Register ([NAID: 73973858](#)), located at 121 W. Vermilion St., Lafayette, Louisiana, for the purpose of opening a new museum dedicated to the music and musicians of Louisiana. See [drawings and photos](#) from the American Historic Building Survey, Library of Congress, reference number HABS LA-200. The building is currently vacant and in need of renovation to meet code requirements as well as renovation to the purpose of this project.

The Louisiana Music Museum (the “Museum”) will open at 121 W. Vermilion St, in Downtown Lafayette, LA, immediately adjacent to the Acadiana Center for the Arts (the “AcA”) and will serve as an extension of the organization's nonprofit mission of fostering art and culture in Acadiana. The museum will stand as a testament to the rhythms and harmonies that resonate within the history of our state, from Indigenous roots to the globally-connected present. This museum aims to stand unparalleled in presenting the unique stories of all Louisiana music with accuracy, inclusivity, and innovation.

Serving as a museum, trailhead, and functional dance hall, the Louisiana Music Museum will host visitors and locals for generations to come, celebrating the legacy of Louisiana's musical heritage as it deserves to be celebrated. The mission of the Louisiana Music Museum is to “Enrich the world by celebrating the stories of Louisiana's musical legacy through its people, places, and cultures.”

AcA will directly operate the new facility creating a number of permanent jobs related to curation, programming, and interpretation. [The Center for Louisiana Studies](#), a division of the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, is a partner institution for the creation of exhibitions and the preservation and management of historic artifacts.

The renovated facility is expected to include an admissions desk/cafe/gift shop, a “permanent” main exhibition of objects, photos, text, and multimedia and space dedicated to temporary exhibitions. The facility will also accommodate programming which may include tours, performances, traditional cajun and creole dances in a style similar to the former Café des Amis in Breaux Bridge, presentations, and community jam sessions, and events with food and beverage needs. The facility would include sufficient enough commercial kitchen, restrooms, back of house rooms, and accessible pathways to serve these needs over and above daily museum operations.

AcA seeks to engage with firms that understand and whose practices reflect the goals and values of this project. This project was conceived through the [Vision 2030 Strategic Plan](#) of the Acadiana Center for the Arts, which included 527 in-depth survey responses, 2 retreats in St. Landry and St. Mary parishes and a series of stakeholder meetings related to the Louisiana Music Museum specifically. The development of the Louisiana Music Museum falls within the AcA's [Let Culture Lead initiative](#), which includes other major expansions of services.

This research has led to the identification of six key goals for the project:

Goal 1: Embrace the Local Community: The museum aims to be a community institution that welcomes people from all over the world to Lafayette while remaining respectful, relevant, and impactful to the local community. By creating an enriching and lively experience of the people, places, and impact of music in Louisiana, the Museum will serve as a hub where the community can continually reengage with its living music culture.

Goal 2: Engage Music and Culture Bearers: The Museum aims to forge strong connections between the local music culture bearers and economic opportunities in order to make a meaningful contribution to the perpetuation of many distinct styles and forms of musical traditions.

Goal 3: Provide Inspiring Education: The museum will serve as a bridge between generations, passing down the key histories of Louisiana's music through lived experiences to students and young people in an engaging way in order to ensure that the legacy continues to thrive.

Goal 4: Deliver an Exceptional Visitor Experience: At the heart of this vision is a dedication to creating a world-class experience for all visitors, particularly English and French speakers. Through interactive exhibitions and engaging programming, such as listening stations and dance demonstrations, the Museum strives to transport its guests into the heart and soul of Louisiana's musical essence.

Goal 5: Operate with Sustainability: The museum will have the ability to grow, adapt, and continually evolve because its programs and offerings are well-valued and produce the financial resources needed to thrive.

Goal 6: Collaborate in Preservation: The museum will build a collection of artifacts and media **only** to support the core exhibition. The museum does not intend to serve as a significant permanent collection beyond its core exhibition. The museum will collaborate

with the existing network of museums, archives, and libraries to identify objects and media and to direct inquiries related to the preservation of artifacts and archives related to Louisiana's music heritage. The museum will borrow collections for rotating exhibitions and may, in some instances, serve as a repository for at-risk artifacts and archives before finding them a permanent home.

Founded in 1975, the Acadiana Center for the Arts ("AcA") is a community-supported regional arts council and 501(c)(3) nonprofit whose mission is "fostering art and culture in Acadiana." Rooted in a cultural community that has made its mark on the world through food, music, and art, AcA aims to ensure that this living culture flourishes for generations to come. AcA is a Regional Development Agency, as designated by the State of Louisiana, with an annual operating budget in excess of \$3 million. The organization operates a 50,000ft² state-of-the-art facility that includes a 20,000 ft² art museum, a 300 seat adaptable venue/concert hall, classrooms, and offices at 101 W. Vermilion St., Lafayette, Louisiana. The Louisiana Music Museum is a project of the Acadiana Center for the Arts.

Based on 2023 estimates, the total project costs are estimated between \$5 million and \$7 million, varying based on the costs of construction and the specific design elements of the exhibitions, but anticipated budgets will be confirmed during the RFP stage.

The project is currently pre-Development. Selection and contracting of design services will initiate the Development phase.

AcA has launched a capital campaign for the project and is on-track to achieve its goal of \$6 million by 2025.

AcA's working team includes staff and expert board members as well as an advisory committee to support content and exhibition development.

II. Project Details

In addition to the development of the building and site for the Louisiana Music Museum, we anticipate developing both long term installations of exhibitions as well as portable exhibitions that may travel to other physical venues, as well as virtual offerings/experiences to provide a visitor experience that precedes and follows a physical visit. This multi-venue/platform approach aims to allow us to tell a fuller story of Louisiana's music history and culture.

We expect to develop:

- A renovated historic facility which accommodates visitors and offers a flexible toolkit of spaces for various programs.
- A larger site plan with conceptual development of future phases of the project, as growth and funding allow.

Accordingly, for our inaugural exhibitions program we expect to develop:

- Up to 6,000 square-feet of core exhibition space at the Louisiana Music Museum (121 W. Vermilion St.)

Additionally, we expect to develop up to 3 rotating exhibitions in our first 2-3 years:

- A temporary exhibition in a rotating exhibition gallery at the Louisiana Music Museum
- One traveling exhibition that focused on nationally relevant narratives to be presented at sites in communities around the country (yet to be identified).

Finally, we expect to develop:

- Louisiana Music Museum's virtual environment/museum to serve people around the country and the world who will not be able to visit the physical exhibitions and to serve as a pre- and post-visit engagement opportunity.

In addition to the accessioned collection that AcA will build for the Louisiana Music Museum, we expect to rely on loans and interpretive elements for these exhibitions.

These inaugural exhibitions, along with public programs, will reflect the latest research from the field as well as our own research into the needs and interests of diverse Louisiana music histories and communities. In our interpretive practices, we will work to

provide consistent representation for communities of color, disabled people, and queer communities.

AcA is firmly committed to research and community engagement for the Louisiana Music Museum. Listening to our communities is not just a first step, but an ongoing integrated element of our process. We expect to work collaboratively on content development and programming—including with cultural organizations, families of significant musicians, cultural producers, and others. Our commitment is to do all our work in partnership.

III. Process

AcA seeks statements of qualifications from lead firms with any partners to develop the Louisiana Music Museum, which will span physical and digital venues and multiple inaugural exhibitions and the development of the physical plant and site of 121 W. Vermilion St

Lead firms should be capable of leading all aspects of development, design, contracting, construction, and implementation through to the final completion of the project, working with identified sub-contractors and team members to deliver specialized scopes of work.

Given the speciality of the work needed in this proposal, submitting team members are not expected to be exclusive relationships, and firms may be part of more than one application.

This Request for Qualifications is the first in a two-phase selection process—RFQ followed by an invited RFP to a short list.

Phase 1 RFQ

Submissions should include firm profile and approach, team members, and relevant experience. (Detailed instructions are described in Section III.) Candidates will be asked to identify the disciplines and/or subcontractor specialties that they anticipate they will need to complete the project scope. They will be required to name specific subconsultants or partnering firms.

The goals of this phase are:

1. Identify up to five lead firms as candidates for Phase 2. In collaboration with

AcA staff, board experts, and advisory content specialists, the selected firm will lead all aspects of design development, exhibition planning, site master planning, and construction administration of the project through its final completion. Three to five firms will be invited to participate in Phase 2.

- 2. Expand our network of potential partners, and help us think beyond our thinking. Identify/create a list of additional firms and independent professionals with specifically relevant skills and knowledge related to Louisiana’s music communities.

Phase 2 RFP

Firms that are invited from the RFQ will receive the RFP, which will include submission requirements, a detailed project brief, and additional reference materials. Proposals will be required to include costs. AcA staff, board experts, and advisory content specialists will review proposals, and may invite multiple firms for a final presentation. Once a final lead firm is identified, they will be given ample time to consider and engage subconsultants in conversation with AcA.

Lead Firm Selection Process Key Dates

<u>Phase 1 RFQ</u>	<u>Date (Central Time)</u>
RFQ Announced	February 23, 2024
Pre-Bid Site Tour	March 7 & 8, 2024, 9am-12pm
Deadline for questions	March 15, 2024, 5pm
Questions answered by AcA	March 22, 2024, 5pm
Qualifications due (amended)	April 9, 2024 at 5pm Central Time.

<u>Phase 2 RFP</u>	<u>Date (Central Time)</u>
RFP Candidates invited	April 19, 2024

Individual Q&A sessions (1-hour Zoom with each firm)	April 22-26, 2024
Optional Site Tours	April 29-May 3, 2024
Updates/final addenda resulting from Q&A sessions	May 3, 2024, 5pm
Proposals Due	May 17, 2024, 5pm
interviews with finalists	June 3-7, 2024
Selection	June 19, 2024
Contracting (and begin team building / sub selection	July-August 2024
Project Kick Off	September 2024

IV. Request for Qualifications: Submission Process

Applicants are invited to familiarize themselves with the Museum's origin and planning trajectory to-date.

Additionally, we invite you to review the following documents (available for download):

- Summary of our Concept document

Access at:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1lhCBt4PM06q5ebMkPOgKZRp6pX4C-EP3_fVPr2WthvY/edit

- Preliminary floor plan of the facility's uses

Access at:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1FF98HAmhf3YRdbOijUNejUD5oL7tu9HyGTB5swGrLN8/>

Q & A Period

- Clarifying questions may be submitted by the deadline through <lamusicmuseum@acadianacenterforthearts.org>
- Answers will be posted on the Louisiana Music Museum landing page at <https://acadianacenterforthearts.org/louisiana-music-museum/>
- During the open period of the RFQ no other inquiry methods will be accepted

Who Should Respond?

Firms and independent professionals with expertise in one or more of the following areas are encouraged to submit qualifications:

- Architecture
- Master Planning
- Interpretive Planning
- Experience Design
- Interior Architecture

- Exhibition Development (including content development)
- Exhibition Design
- Exhibition Fabrication/Installation Oversight
- Media Production and Digital experience(s)
- Sensory approaches in exhibition content and design
- Participative methods and knowledge generating practices in exhibitions.
- Archival Research and/or Curation of Music History and CultureContent
- Graphic Design
- Lighting Design
- Oral Histories
- Other design types with potential for innovative applications in exhibition storytelling [stage design, fashion, etc.

The Board of Directors and professional staff at AcA are committed to building a cultural institution that advances equity, through its public-facing activities, governance, and internal operations. Individuals and teams that include members who identify as LGBTQ+ / Queer, Trans / Non-Binary / genderqueer, Female, Disabled People, and Persons of Color are encouraged to apply.

Requested Materials

1. Cover letter with clear contact information
2. Firm profile and bio(s) of the team members that would be assigned to this project.
3. Project descriptions or case studies for 3 – 5 relevant projects. (Feel free to include links to the relevant project websites if informative and applicable).
For firms with over 25 staff: Please identify important collaborations with subcontractors, describing how they engaged in your process.
4. One-page narrative: Please share up to 500 words describing your firm's

experience (or, for individuals, your personal experience) with and/or commitment to museums or other cultural organizations dedicated to cultural storytelling, music, and interpretive history.

Submission instructions

- Qualification submissions should be prepared as a single pdf document containing all the “requested materials” listed above, the pdf document should be in an accessible format usable by screen readers.
- The final document should be no more than 12 pages.
- To submit, complete upload your accessible pdf file here:
<https://forms.gle/gWXpEv2aCR5gek4i9>
- Only one file will be accepted per submission. File size shouldn't exceed 10M.
- **Submit qualifications by the deadline**

V. Requirements and Selection Criteria

For this RFQ phase, firms and individual practitioners will be assessed on how their experience and skills align with the institutional goals expressed in these materials as well as our institutional strategy as expressed in the Vision 2030 strategic plan.

Submissions will also be evaluated based on experience working with cultural institutions, exhibitions, and other relevant experiences; knowledge of Louisiana music history and current issues; and a track record of successful collaboration.

These qualifications should emerge in your cover letter and/or narrative as well as the examples of your professional experience.