



**TABLERTOWN  
PEOPLE OF COLOR  
MUSEUM**

**Request for Proposals (RFP)**

**for**

**Consulting Services for the “Connecting Black Heritage, From  
Enslavement to Settlement in Southern Ohio” Project**

**Issued: January 16, 2025**

## I. General Information

### A. Project Overview

Request for Proposals (RFP) Release Date: **January 16, 2025**

RFP Questions Due: **January 31, 2025**

Consultant Proposal Due Date: **February 18, 2025**

Project Contact: Dr. Amanda M. Flowers - [dr.amanda.m.flowers@gmail.com](mailto:dr.amanda.m.flowers@gmail.com)

The Tablertown People of Color Museum (TPOCM) is issuing a Request for Proposals for a capable Consultant to deliver the twelve-month planning project "Connecting Black Heritage, From Enslavement to Settlement in Southern Ohio."

The project couples five non-profit agencies and one governmental agency whose members will work with the selected Consultant by building off existing groundwork to increase cultural tourism in southeastern Ohio. The visitors will have increased opportunities to experience places, artifacts, and activities that authentically represent our story of the Underground Railroad (UGRR) and related Black Heritage through the cultural/heritage tourism and outdoor recreation development cluster. Specifically, we plan to develop a Heritage Trail that connects our stories across the six counties by identifying and registering sites with the National Park Service's Network to Freedom Marker Program (NTF). In addition, we plan to develop a virtual tour of our story, displays, exhibits, and digital and print materials that will be used for teaching, training, and hosting events related to the intersections of Black, Appalachian, and Ohio history through our depiction of Black enslavement and southeast Ohio's route to freedom.

TPOCM is seeking a Consultant who has knowledge and experience in:

1. UGRR history, research methodologies, and site interpretation.
2. Developing recommendations for UGRR sites in the area that would likely get approval for the NTF.
3. Providing strategic planning support for non-profit organizations through capacity-building tools that created near- and long-term non-profits.
4. Proven ability to manage complex projects with tight deadlines, adhering to budget constraints.
5. Having excellent written and verbal communication skills to present findings and engage with diverse stakeholders effectively.

Disadvantaged Business Enterprises are strongly encouraged to submit an RFP response.

TPOCM and its partners have secured a total of \$50,000 in grant funding from the Appalachian Regional Commission and the Just Transition Fund to hire a Consultant to work with each partner in identifying potential UGRR sites and to assist the capacity building, capital needs, and sustainability ideas of each non-profit. The selected Consultant will prepare a final document that summarizes these efforts.

## B. The Partners

### **Tablertown People of Color Museum**

Formed in 2003, the Tablertown People of Color Museum is as a nonprofit social enterprise dedicated to preserving cultural artifacts and history to ensure that the history of People of Color is represented accurately to break down stereotypes and increase pride in family lineage. The Tablertown People of Color Museum exhibit is remarkable in its scale of artifacts that reflect the history of the Tabler family and its descendants, but also in its potential to reflect the larger story of survival of Southeast Ohio Appalachians of Color. They are currently working on building a new museum through the (federal and state) Abandoned Mine Lands Economic Revitalization program.

### **Multicultural Genealogical Center**

The Multicultural Genealogical Center began in 2000 and is dedicated to documenting the contributions of multicultural and multiracial families for the social, cultural, political, religious, educational, and economic development of the Ohio River Valley. Its purpose includes collecting records that document the genealogies of families in southeast Ohio whose ancestors cross racial and cultural boundaries, protecting these records for future generations, telling their stories in whatever ways they can, and promoting and improving public perception of the region's diverse, multicultural heritage.

### **Cutler Heritage & Legacy Society**

The Cutler Heritage & Legacy Society, founded in 2012, is devoted to advancing community health and wellness by providing support and outreach to underprivileged families, offering exercise classes and senior citizens programs, housing a food pantry, and delivering cultural, heritage, and legacy education and events. They printed a book and annual calendars that highlight important history, culture, facts, figures, and attractions in their community. They host an annual Heritage and Legacy Day that honors Cutler's cultural history, including their rich, Black Heritage and contributions to the Underground Railroad.

### **Rendville Historic Preservation Society**

The Rendville Historic Preservation Society, formed as a non-profit corporation in 2015, is dedicated to leaving a legacy for future generations. The purposes of the Rendville Historic Preservation Society are to revitalize and economically develop the Village of Rendville through civic tourism, and to collaborate with regional institutions of education and local history and cultural community organizations to create both formal and informal, educational opportunities for all stakeholders.

### **Vinton County Park District**

The Vinton County Park District, established in 2021, is an independent political subdivision authorized under Chapter 1545 of the Ohio Revised Code (ORC). The district is dedicated to conserving Vinton County's natural resources and preserving sites of local historic value. Although the Vinton County Park District is a relatively new agency, the people involved in its

operation, together, bring decades of experience in conservation, park management, and administering grant projects.

### **Jackson County Board of Tourism**

The Jackson County Board of Tourism was formed in December of 2023 to promote the natural beauty and rich historical assets of Jackson County. They share the county’s historical sites with tourists, such as the Welsh Heritage museum, an abundance of iron furnaces, and the Lake Katharine Nature Preserve which has some of the most beautiful rock formations of our nation. They honor their strong military presence such as Admiral Arthur John Wollam and other historical figures including John Wesley Powell, who discovered the Grand Canyon, and Frank Cavett, who wrote “The Greatest Showman.”

## **II. Scope of Work**

### **A. Introduction**

The “Connecting Black Heritage, From Enslavement to Settlement in Southern Ohio” planning project is in Ohio’s Appalachian designated counties and the Buckeye Hills Regional Council and Ohio Valley Regional Development Commission planning districts. The project is wholly located in (BHRC) Athens, Morgan, Washington, Perry, (ORVDC) Vinton, and Jackson Counties.

These counties are reasonably similar demographically and geographically. These similarities have helped to unite the six counties as a cohesive region in many ways. Strengths include the availability and affordability of land for industrial and residential uses; low cost of living; available, productive, and mobile workforce; and available natural resources for industry and tourism. Common weaknesses included aging and insufficient infrastructure, lack of access to private capital, and social and economic fallout due to the opiate crisis. The six-county region faces many perennial Appalachian problems relating to poverty, lower educational attainment, and outmigration of young professional adults.

These counties are similar because of their UGRR history and related Black Heritage. Some freedom seekers crossed the river in Lawrence and Galia counties, making their way north to Oak Hill, Jackson, or Berlin Crossroads (Jackson County) or Wilkesville (Vinton County) when headed towards Albany, Athens, or Amesville (Athens County). Others crossed the Ohio and Muskingum Rivers or their connecting terrains in Washington County, taking an array of trails through Little Hocking, Belpre, Constitution, Harmar, Marietta, Newport, or New Matamoris when in route to Cutler, Mayles Ridge, Bartlett, Barlow, Waterford, Rainbow, Stanleyville, or Lower Salem. Freedom seekers traveled north to Morgan County, seeking safety at Chesterhill, Pennsville, Stockport, Malta, McConnelville, Ringold, or Deavertown before heading to places like Paynes Crossing or Crooksville (Perry County). In the late 1840s, there were growing stretches of transportation railway lines, where trains connected with the north/south escape routes. After 1857, hopping a train in southeast Ohio at places like Athens, Stewart, Cutler, Vincent, or Marietta and riding to freedom was possible.

The Consultant will work with each county organization to develop cultural and heritage tourism events in their geographic areas of focus, which will afford interactive learning and tours that reflect the distance between UGRR safehouses. For instance, the Tablertown People of Color Museum (Athens County) is 8 miles from Amesville and 20-25 miles from Athens and Albany. The Multicultural Genealogical Center of Chesterhill (Morgan County) is about 7 miles from Pennsville and Stockport, 14 miles or less from Ringold, Malta, and McConnelsville, and 25 miles from Deavertown. The Cutler Heritage & Legacy Society (Washington County) covers a wide area of interest, ranging from 10 miles or less (Barlow, Little Hocking, Mayles Ridge, and Bartlett), 15-20 miles (Belpre, Constitution, Harmar, Marietta, and Waterford), and 30 miles or more (Rainbow, Stanleyville, Lower Salem, Newport, and New Matamoris). The Rendville Historic Preservation Society (Perry County) is about 12 miles from Paynes Crossing and Crooksville, while the Vinton County Parks District in McArthur is 17 miles from Wilkesville, and the Jackson County Board of Tourism is around 10 miles from Oak Hill and Berlin Crossroads.

The selected Consultant will be expected to meet with the project's Steering Committee. This loosely formed group, consisting of representatives from the six partners and other stakeholders, will provide information and broad reviews of over-organized comprehensive written materials.

**B. Final Planning Report Content by Consultant**

The selected Consultant (the "Consultant") shall draft a report that specifically presents and includes the following information:

1. Create the report's Executive Summary, which summarizes the information gleaned from the activities listed below and provides Consultant recommendations for near and long-term activities.
2. Six Partners' Capacity Building:
  - a. Conduct a SWOT analysis that addresses growth strategies and succession planning.
  - b. Identify recommendations to partner opportunities for marketing, providing education, hosting events, and curating exhibits.
3. Underground Railroad and Related Black Heritage Sites:
  - a. Obtain each County Committee's UGRR and enslavement to settlement site materials.
  - b. Review materials and coordinate with each County Committee.
  - c. Identify and describe each county's unique stories and develop the collective's UGRR brand to differentiate it from other regional efforts.
  - d. Make recommendations to the Steering Committee for UGRR site applications to NTF.
4. Six Partners' Capital Projects and Funding Sources:
  - a. Provide a Capital Projects planning tool for each County committee, delineating short- and long-term needs.
  - b. Assist the County Committees by providing cost estimates for their top three projects.

### **III. Responsibilities of the Tablertown People of Color Museum**

TPOCM will provide the following services as part of the total project:

1. TPOCM will provide access to all of its historic research and records.
2. TPOCM partners will provide access to all of their historic research and records.
3. TPOCM will assist in project management and administration. Staff will attend all meetings with the Consultant and assist the Consultant as a liaison between the five partners and the Consultant, upon Consultant's request.

### **IV. Submission of Proposal**

#### **A. Qualifications Content**

TPOCM requests a response which lays out a plan for the provision of the services identified above. The Consultant's response shall include the following elements:

1. A Cover Letter with the following information:  
Consultant's/Firm's name; address; contact information; and Unique Entity Identifier number and expiration date. Is this a Minority or Women-owned business? Provide brief examples of prior experience in UGRR Site Assessments and in guiding and executing a strategic planning process for nonprofits. Provide the names and telephone numbers of at least two (2) client references to whom the applicant has provided services like the project described in this RFP. Please include any other projects that the team is working on. (2 pages)
2. A clear description of how you/your firm would complete this project, including the scope and methodology. Also outline, in sufficient detail, the methods used for recommending sites for NTF designation, guiding the non-profit's SWOT/capacity building, and a proposed outline of the contents of the final "Connecting Black Heritage, From Enslavement to Settlement in Southern Ohio" report. The respondent should identify any suggested changes to the stated Planning Report in Section II B. (4 pages)
3. Specify a Work Plan (with costs) required to complete the Planning and Report delivery, including a total timeline for the entire project with each task clearly identified in the timeline. The work plan schedule should include completion times for each step and an overall timeframe for completion of the project. (2 pages)
4. Describe quality control procedures and cost control methods to be utilized to ensure delivery of the contracted services within the project budget. (1 page)
5. A brief summary, with resumes attached, of key staff on the project team who will be directly involved in the project, including designation of a single point of contact for

coordination of the project. Staff resumes should focus on individuals who will have primary responsibility for performance of the work. (2 pages)

6. Proposed services to be sub-contracted if any, anticipated subcontractors, and anticipated costs for these services. Any additional terms or conditions, which are deemed necessary for entering into a contract with TPOCM, should be attached or incorporated as part of the submission. (2 page)

All RFP responses become the property of TPOCM and will not be returned. Any clarification or questions regarding this RFP shall be submitted in writing via email to the project contact person no later than **4:00 PM (EST) on January 31, 2025**. TPOCM will provide written clarification within 3 business days. Phone calls or in-person visits will not be accepted.

B. Evaluation

Selection will be based upon the Qualifications submitted and will be ranked primarily based upon the following criteria:

1. Consultant’s understanding and technical approach for each of the project activities.
2. Consultant’s project schedule.
3. Pertinent experience and qualifications of the consulting team.
4. Reference reviews.
5. Budget.

C. Qualifications Time Schedule

The timeline for completion of this Request for Proposals is outlined below.

RFP Available	<b>January 16, 2025</b>
RFP Questions Due	<b>4:00 PM EST January 31, 2025</b>
Proposal Due Date	<b>4:00 PM EST February 18, 2025</b>
Contract Inception Date (Anticipated)	<b>March 12, 2025</b>
Draft Report to TPOCM	<b>September 20, 2025</b>
Final Report to TPOCM	<b>September 30, 2025</b>

D. Number of Qualifications to Submit, Deadline, Mail, and Hand Delivery Addresses

One (1) digital (PDF format) of the applicant’s RFP submission materials must be submitted **by 4:00 p.m. EST on February 18, 2025**. Please submit the digital PDF copy of the RFP Response to the project contact person listed above.

## V. RFP Terms and Additional Information

### A. Terms and Conditions

This RFP does not commit TPOCM to issue an award or to pay any costs incurred in preparing a proposal in response to this RFP.

Submissions received after the deadline will not be considered. TPOCM reserves the right to accept or reject any submissions, or portions thereof, without stated cause. TPOCM reserves the right to re-issue any RFP or cancel the RFP if none of the responses are deemed satisfactory to TPOCM.

The RFP and related responses of the selected Respondent may, by reference, become part of any formal agreement between the selected Respondent and TPOCM. TPOCM and the selected Respondent may negotiate a contract or contracts based on acceptable templates by Uniform Guidance, 2 CFR 200.317-327, and the ARC grant. Should an agreement not be reached with the selected Respondent, in that case, TPOCM reserves the right to choose an alternative Respondent and negotiate with the alternative Respondent(s) the exact terms and conditions of the contract, or TPOCM may also elect to reject all responses and re-issue a new RFP.

Clarification of RFP Submission: TPOCM reserves the right to clarify any point in an applicant's response or obtain additional information. Any request for clarification or other correspondence related to the RFP shall be in writing or email, and a response shall be provided within two business days.

TPOCM reserves the right to waive any formalities, defects, or irregularities in any qualifications, response, and/or submittal where the acceptance, rejection, or waiving of such is in the best interests of TPOCM. TPOCM reserves the right to disqualify any statement, before or after opening, upon evidence of collusion, with intent to defraud, or any other illegal practice on the part of the applicant.

### B. Public Information

Information supplied by the applicant to TPOCM may be subject to the Freedom of Information Act and/or the Ohio Public Records Law. Such information shall become public unless it falls within one of the exceptions in the statute, such as security information, trade secret information, or labor relations information. If the applicant believes any information which is not public will be supplied in response to this RFP, the vendor shall take reasonable steps to identify for TPOCM what data, if any, it believes falls within the exceptions. If the submitted data is not marked in such a way as to identify non-public data, TPOCM will treat the information as public and release it upon request. In addition, TPOCM reserves the right to make the final determination of whether data identified by the applicant as not public falls within the exceptions within the statute.



C. Notification of Award

TPOCM and its partners plan to select a Consultant by approximately **March 12, 2025**. Should either party fail to execute a contract within 30 days of the notification of award, TPOCM reserves the right to rescind the award and select services from another interested applicant.

D. Additional Information

Contracting With Disadvantaged Business Enterprises:

It is Federal policy to award a fair share of contracts to disadvantaged business firms. Accordingly, affirmative steps must be taken to ensure that disadvantaged businesses are utilized when possible as sources of supplies, equipment, and services. TPOCM will ensure, to the fullest extent possible, that at least the federal objectives for prime contracts and subcontracts are made available to organizations owned or controlled by socially and economically disadvantaged individuals, women, and historically Black colleges and universities. The Consultant shall agree to support the Federal disadvantaged business enterprise contract procurement program ensuring those businesses' participation in subcontracts. Affirmative steps include the following as a minimum:

1. Including qualified disadvantaged businesses on solicitation lists;
2. Ensuring that disadvantaged businesses are solicited whenever they are potential sources;
3. When economically feasible, dividing total requirements into smaller tasks or quantities so as to permit disadvantaged business participation;
4. Where the requirement permits, establishing delivery schedules which will encourage participation by disadvantaged businesses;
5. Using the services and assistance of the Small Business Administration, the Office of Minority Business Enterprise of the Department of Commerce, and the Community Services Administration as required; and
6. Consultants are encouraged to procure goods and services from disadvantaged businesses.

E. Proof of Licensure and General Liability Insurance

The Consultant must provide a copy of the valid Driver's License for each person that would be associated with this project. The Consultant will secure and maintain Commercial General Liability Insurance, including bodily injury, property damage, products, personal & advertising injury, and completed operations. This insurance must provide coverage for all claims that may arise from the services and/or operations completed under Contract, whether such services or operations are by the Consultant or anyone directly or indirectly employed by them. Such insurance must include the Tablertown People of Color Museum as an additional named insured for the entire length of the resulting contract. The Consultant is responsible for determining the minimum limits of liability necessary to provide reasonable

financial protections to the Consultant and the Tablertown People of Color Museum under the resulting contract. All insurance policies must be with insurers licensed or eligible to transact business in the State of Ohio. The Contractor must submit via email, to the Executive Director such insurance coverage prior to execution of a contract with TPOCM and provide TPOCM notice of any cancellation or nonrenewal at least ten (10) calendar days prior to cancellation or nonrenewal.

F. Equal Employment Opportunity

The Consultant agrees to comply with all federal, state, and local laws, resolutions, ordinances, rules, regulations, and executive orders pertaining to unlawful discrimination on account of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, sexual preference, disability, or age. When required by law or requested by TPOCM, the Consultant shall furnish a written affirmative action plan.