

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

Highlander Research and Education Center Facilities Conditions Assessment

Deadline Extended – Submissions due: October 9, 11:59 pm

1. INTRODUCTION

The Highlander Research and Education Center (HREC) has served as a catalyst for grassroots organizing and movement building in the South since 1932.

Originally founded as the Highlander Folk School, our first campus, based in Monteagle, TN, served as a critical multiracial organizing and strategy center for Labor, Civil Rights, and Black Freedom movements across the South amid widespread racist and anti-worker violence. As a result of the organization's role in these movements, the State of TN seized the property from the organization in 1961 and revoked the legal use of our name. We reopened the following day under a new name and moved our base of operations to East Tennessee, where we steward a 186-acre campus in New Market.

In 2024 HREC purchased nine acres of the original campus in Monteagle, TN including the Historic Highlander Folk School Library, King Cabin and other structures with intent to restore the structures and campus to public use. In October of 2026, HREC will complete the purchase of an additional five acres of its original campus in Monteagle, TN.

2. GENERAL BACKGROUND

Originally constructed in 1949, the Folk School Library was significantly altered between 1961-2014. The Library was restored to its original design in 2021. It is

currently listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is subject to a Historic Preservation Easement held by Preserve Chattanooga.

The King Cabin, original to the site and significantly altered, is a three bedroom, two bath home in disrepair and in need of significant renovations to be operable. It is not listed on the National Register, nor subject to easement.

Several additional building structures exist which may have been original to the campus. Highlander's parcels presently also include direct frontage to the Highlander Lake.

3. SCOPE OF WORK

The Highlander Research and Education Center, with support from the African American Cultural Heritage Action fund of the National Trust, is soliciting competitive fixed price proposals from qualified firms/providers to conduct facilities conditions assessments on the Highlander Folk School and King Cabin. The firm/provider will also assess the grounds and landscapes to make preservation recommendations. The scope will include the following deliverables:

- Site survey (topographic survey/utility survey) including property boundaries of 14 acres, all structures, utility locations and alignments, walkways, landscape vegetation and trees, and other man-made features.
- Conditions assessments of: site drainage and landscape treatments; Exterior envelope including roof, gutters and downspouts, windows, and doors; Mechanical, Electrical, Plumbing, Fire Protection, and Security systems; ADA compliance; Character-defining historic finishes and features; other finishes and features with photo documentation of existing condition.
- Preservation Priorities for each location & preservation informed concepts for proposed repair, replacement, or modifications to support future programming and an implementation schedule for those items.
- Rough Order of Magnitude (ROM) cost estimates to achieve scheduled improvements identified in priority phases.

4. MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

- The firm/provider must demonstrate familiarity with the [Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties: Preservation as a Treatment and Standards for Preservation](#).
- The firm/provider must demonstrate familiarity with the [Secretary of the Interior's Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes](#).
- The firm/provider must be able to demonstrate experience in historic preservation and the implementation of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards.
- The firm/provider must have knowledge of Tennessee's zoning and preservation laws to ensure recommendations provided to the property owner(s) adhere to local laws and ordinances.
- The firm/provider must have the ability to visit the site in Monteagle, TN as needed to complete the scope of work.

5. TIMELINE AND BUDGET

The maximum contract amount for this project is \$65,000.

Formal Release of the RFP	August 31
Proposals Due	Oct 9
Interviews (As Needed)	Oct 12 - 23
Final contract award decision and announcement	By Nov. 1

6. EVALUATION CRITERIA

Proposals will be evaluated in accordance with the following criteria:

- Whether the Consultant meets or exceeds the minimum qualifications;
- The ability of the Consultant to perform the work or provide the services promptly or within the time specified, without delay or interference;

- The character, integrity, reputation, judgement, experience, and efficiency of the Consultant, and;
- The quality of performance of previous contracts or services via reference checks.

Note: The Offeror is cautioned that it is the Offeror's sole responsibility to submit information related to the evaluation categories. HREC is under no obligation to solicit such information, if it is not included in the Offeror's original proposal. Failure to provide such information may have an adverse impact on the evaluation of the Offeror's proposal.

7. EVALUATION PROCESS

HREC will consider a proposal nonresponsive when critical information is lacking, or the submission represents a major deviation from the requirements of this RFP. Minor omissions or informalities may be waived at the sole option and discretion of HREC. HREC also reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, make no award or multiple awards as result of this solicitation.

Responsive proposals will be evaluated in the following manner:

1. An Evaluation Committee will review and rank all proposals individually on their technical merits and according to the criteria established in Section 4 of this RFP. HREC may contact Offerors if any clarification is needed on the proposal.
2. Offerors whose proposals are ranked the highest by the HREC Committee may be asked to participate in an interview process to ensure a mutual understanding of both the HREC's requirements and the Offeror's proposal. Interviews may be conducted either in person or by telephone. However, HREC may decide that interviews are not necessary and make recommendations for award based on the information provided in the proposal.

3. The firm that provides the HREC Committee with the most reliable and cost-effective goods and/or services based on the established evaluation criteria will be recommended.

8. DEADLINE FOR RECEIVING PROPOSALS

Bids on this scope of work will be accepted **until October 9, 11:59 pm**. Submissions will not be accepted after this deadline. Send the Proposal via email to maria@highlander.center.