



**ECHDC CANALSIDE BICENTENNIAL VISITOR EXPERIENCE ASSISTED PROGRAM
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

Release Date: June 30, 2023

The following is a list of responses to questions submitted by prospective respondents to ECHDC Bicentennial Commemoration RFP. A copy of the RFP is available at:

<https://esd.ny.gov/doing-business-ny/requests-proposals/rfp-erie-canal-bicentennial-commemoration-visitor-experience-assisted-programming>

No.	Question	Answer
1	Is there a location in mind where visiting school groups would congregate for programming?	Not necessarily. TBD; could be on a stage provided by ECHDC, on the Lawns, or in the Ruins. The Longshed will not be available. Please propose your desired location.
2	Would ECHDC be organizing the outreach to schools and scheduling of those programs? How many programs/school groups would there be?	ECHDC will provide marketing & outreach. TBD.
3	Is the “signature multi-media experience” that’s being created for the Longshed gathering hall open to input or contributions from vendors?	No. The visitor experiences for the Longshed, Ruins, and Main Canal areas are in development and part of a separate ECHDC contract. The experiences focus on Buffalo’s Erie Canal history. Programming that dovetails with this theme will integrate well with the visitor experiences in development.
4	Will there be a space in the Longshed or elsewhere for indoor seated “captive audience” programming for adults/families?	No.
5	Would there be room for a pre-recorded interactive concert of canal songs/Buffalo history that would play on repeat for people to take in a few minutes (or all) of as they choose?	Yes. Please propose your programming idea.



No.	Question	Answer
6	<p>Our hope is to create a broad coalition consisting of a variety of Buffalo’s cultural groups around the commemoration of the Canal Bicentennial. The members of our “coalition” will be drawn from the broadest possible spectrum of our city’s ethnic and cultural communities. We would like to bring together under our “umbrella” no fewer than one dozen different groups each of whom would be asked to develop work that would cover the entire summer of 2025. Thus, Question #1: What would you think is a desirable number of groups for us to work with? While we are convinced that we have the organizational strength to develop and coordinate a broad “menu” of events, do you think that we would be wise to think on a smaller scale?</p>	<p>Feel free to propose multiple approaches. There is no limit to how many groups/organizations you can work with, but please provide one point of contact for your team.</p>
7	<p>The primary focus of the work that we are planning on creating, deals with the movement of people to Buffalo that began with the opening of the Canal in 1825. While we would pay homage to the great movement of people who came here on the Canal throughout the 19th and early 20th century, our concern is the phenomenon of immigration and the movement of peoples. For example, the large number of African-Americans who all during the period of The Great Migration made their way here independent of the canal. Thus, question two: While the movement of blacks here in the 20th century was independent of the Erie Canal would it still be possible to develop programming around it, conceptually, at least, linking it to the movement of people that did occur on the Canal itself?</p>	<p>Immigration, the movement of people, and African American history are important themes of the Erie Canal Bicentennial Commemoration. Yes, using the Erie Canal as a lens to compare and contrast the movement of diverse ethnicities to Buffalo is a viable programming concept since it correlates with Buffalo’s Erie Canal history.</p>



No.	Question	Answer
8	<p>The same question applies to our hopes to include Hispanic Americans under this broader category of “movement.” The Hispanics, mostly Puerto Ricans, who began to come to Buffalo in large numbers following World War II, came largely by plane, seeking out new lives as rural farm hands. By the early 1950s they had begun to move to Buffalo, finding work in our industrial economy. In our minds, this movement of peoples, this “migration” to Buffalo, though occurring a vastly different times and under vastly different circumstances, relates in our way of thinking at least metaphorically, to the historical phenomenon of the Erie Canal. The third question is: Is this type of thinking about the topic of movement and migration consistent with how you imagine the RFP to work.</p>	<p>Yes. Please review subsection b., Connecting the Past with the Present, on Page 10 of the RFP.</p> <p>Creating programming for the 2025 Bicentennial Commemoration that links Buffalo’s Erie Canal immigration history with the more recent movement of people to the city is a viable way to connect Buffalo’s Erie Canal past to the present.</p> <p>Consequently, programming must connect with Buffalo’s Erie Canal history for selection consideration.</p>
9	<p>The Haundenosounee are a critical part of the canal story and their “story” must clearly be told. Several years ago we worked with a powerful actor from the Cattaraugus reservation who assumed the character of Red Jacket in a drama that was created around the opening of the Canal. Drawing on speeches and even diaries made and kept by Red Jacket, we were able to develop a dramatically credible character portrait of Red Jacket. His point of view about the Canal, so starkly different from the point of view of the white frontiersmen and entrepreneurs who supported the Canal, had a powerful impact on our audience. We would like to bring Red Jacket alive again. The fourth question is: Having drawn on the Red Jacket character once before, would it meet with the reviewers approval to revisit him?</p>	<p>The Haudenosaunee are critical to the Erie Canal story, having been dispossessed of their traditional ancestral lands before Buffalo and the Erie Canal developed.</p> <p>Please propose your programming idea as it will be reviewed and evaluated on its merit and previously “demonstrated experience in completing programming of a similar nature.” (Page 14, Section F, subsection B., Selection Process).</p>

No.	Question	Answer
10	<p>While the history of the Erie Canal is the primary focus of our work, we are very eager to tell that story from a contemporary point of view. We plan to create a considerable outreach effort to the newest members of our community, none of whom came to Buffalo by Canal but all of whom came with hopes and aspirations of those prior generation of those who did. Working with the extensive outreach network carefully developed and maintained by organizations like Buffalo String Works, it is our hope to coordinate over the period of several weeks, a wide range of performance-based activities, all mounted by members of the newest members of our community in ways that will bring to light not only their stories but those of early immigrant groups as well. Thus, Questions 5: Is this kind of cross-chronological approach something that would be looked on favorably by those who will evaluate these proposals?</p>	<p>Page 10 of the RFP, under subsection b, Connecting the Past to the Present, states, “Buffalo remains an ethnically diverse city with new immigrants and refugees arriving almost daily, who, like their predecessors, are creating new lives and neighborhoods for themselves in their new city.”</p> <p>Please ensure the idea meets the criteria outlined in the RFP by connecting the programming to Buffalo’s Erie Canal. Please propose your programming idea.</p> <p>See Section III, C. Buffalo’s Erie Canal, specifically subsections b, d, and f for more information.</p>
11	<p>We are excited about the possibility of using the entire landscape of Canalside as possible performance venues for the work that we would like to create. Each of them—The Long Shed, The Ruins, the faux canals—lend themselves to the kind of site-specific work that we are imagining. The question is, however: Will there be any kind of permanent, or at least seasonal, performance space built that would allow us to mount more technically sophisticated presentations that would not work on the site as it is now? Will there be some kind of space and/or stage with the kind of sound and lightening capabilities that would allow us to do more than the most basic, day-light performances?</p>	<p>Yes, ECHDC will provide a performance space. Please provide your necessary programming needs/requirements.</p> <p>See III, C, h.</p>

No.	Question	Answer
12	Understanding the depth and intentionality of the visitor experience plan, what requirements of local partners are there as it relates to reporting success of each event? Are partners expected to collect their own audience data or will that be covered by the ECHDC or CHAG. There is a capacity concern for some intended partners on being able to both deliver and report on their programs	No reporting is necessarily.
13	We are considering working with a variety of different organizations and presenting partners who may wish to focus on one interpretive theme over another. In planning for a full and robust program schedule and considering the four interpretive themes outlined, will you be looking for programs that touch upon all four themes in RFP submissions?	No, not necessarily. Focusing on one interpretive theme is a viable direction since other individual's and organization's proposals may center on the other themes outlined in the RFP.
14	We are concerned about the marketing of these programs. Will it be the presenters' responsibility or that of the ECHDC to promote and market these programs and events?	ECHDC will provide marketing.
15	We understand that the primary goal RFP responses must consider is activating the listed key areas at Canalside. Will proposals that include programming at locations along other canal locations be considered? I.e. community spaces in Lockport or Medina etc. These smaller programs would be used as a marketing technique to draw more visitors to Canalside for additional programming by all selected firms and planned festivals.	No; however, programming that originates in other locales and connects to Erie Canal history can be brought to Canalside and used to draw visitors to other cultural institutions, heritage organizations, theaters, canal destinations (ex. Black Rock, Tonawanda, Lockport, Medina) ethnic neighborhoods, festivals, etc.
16	Is this programming intended to be free to visitors to Canalside?	Yes.
17	If it is a limited amount tour, ex: a bike tour, would ECHDC take care of that booking component?	Yes.



No.	Question	Answer
18	Will an app be available to promote the programming for EC2025?	<p>Although not currently planned at this time, it could become part of the 2025 Bicentennial Commemoration Marketing efforts. .</p> <p>However, the ECHDC will continue utilizing the existing Canalside/Outer Harbor website and social media to market and promote Canalside activities and events, including the 2025 Erie Canal Bicentennial Commemoration programming. .</p>
19	We have never responded to a New York State Empire State Development proposal before. We are finding section B. Administrative Proposal difficult. We would love to submit a proposal, but we are a very small organization and think the RFP is geared to larger organizations. I.	<p>ECHDC is equally interested in awarding contracts to a diverse and wide-ranging number of organizations of any size-small, medium, and large.</p> <p>Please fill out all of the administrative forms to be considered, whether or not they pertain to you or your organization. Some forms can be printed, signed, dated, scanned, and included in your proposal response. The staffing questionnaire should be filled-in as well, even if you are a single individual responding to the RFP, or cannot meet the MWBE or SDVOB requirements. These forms must be filled out to be selected and receive state funds.</p>