



RFP – *We Are Water MN* Evaluation Consultant

Organization Overview

Focused on the future of our state, the Minnesota Humanities Center brings the unique resources of the humanities to the challenges and opportunities of our times. The Center collaborates with organizations and individuals to develop programs that facilitate and frame community conversations, deepen connections, and bring into public life the authentic voices of all people, especially those that have often been left out or marginalized.

Project Overview

We Are Water MN is a partnership formed to tell Minnesota’s water stories collaboratively, bringing together personal narratives, historical materials, and scientific information. Combining these ways of knowing water strengthens Minnesotans’ relationships with and responsibilities to water. This partnership is led by the Minnesota Humanities Center with support from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, the Minnesota Historical Society, the Minnesota Department of Health, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, and the Minnesota Department of Agriculture.

The Humanities Center and partners will collaborate with eight Minnesota communities to host a traveling exhibit and community engagement activities that explore water and identity, history, and culture. These communities will tell their local water stories and envision the future of water through a year-long engagement process. Community leaders will collaborate across sectors to create local companion exhibitions, community events, and educational programming that will engage thousands of Minnesotans from across the state.

The Humanities Center and its partners hope to accomplish seven goals through the *We Are Water MN* partnership:

1. Deepen relationships among state level partners.
2. Build host site capacity to practice the Humanities Center’s relationship-based approach.
3. Support the expansion of local networks within host communities.
4. Share state and local histories and narratives about water.
5. Reinforce Minnesotans’ individual relationships with water by sharing multiple perspectives.
6. Reinforce Minnesotans’ individual responsibilities to water.
7. Build relationships between Minnesotans through community engagement events and activities preceding, during, and after the exhibit.



Partnership activities will be broken up into the following phases: relationship building, visioning, and capacity building at the host community level (October 2017-September 2018), tour and public events (October 2018-November 2019), and reflection (December 2019-January 2020).

Purpose of RFP/Evaluation requirements

This evaluation must design tools and processes that answer the following (or similar) questions:

1. How have the **relationships between the state partner agencies** changed as a result of this project?
2. What have host communities learned about the **Minnesota Humanities Center's approach**? How did they apply that knowledge during this project? How might they apply that knowledge in the future?
3. How have **local networks changed** as a result of this project, especially as those changes relate to the "Social Measures Monitoring System?"*
4. **What do visitors to the exhibit learn**, especially about their relationships or responsibilities to water? **How** do they learn?
5. **How are relationships to water and to other people changed** at community engagement events?

*See the "Social Measures Monitoring System" report also uploaded onto the Humanities Center website, or contact Jennifer Tonko at jennifer@mnhum.org for a copy.

Reporting: The Humanities Center and its partners desire to use evaluation information to inform our work during the project period and to be able to give informed and compelling status updates to various stakeholders during the project period.

Key Collaborators: The key partners on this project are the Minnesota Humanities Center, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, the Minnesota Historical Society, the Minnesota Department of Health, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, and staff and/or partners of the eight host sites. Evaluator will report to the Humanities Center.

Evaluation Budget: The evaluation budget for the relationship building, visioning, and capacity building at the host community level (October 2017-September 2018) should not exceed \$18,000. The evaluation budget for the tour and public events (October 2018-November 2019) and reflection (December 2019-January 2020) is still being determined, dependent on funding.

Proposal Process

Interested parties are invited to indicate their interest in this evaluation contract by responding to seven brief questions online:

1. Why are you interested in the *We Are Water MN* project?
2. How do you integrate opportunities to reinforce learning into evaluation methods and processes?
3. What experience do you have evaluating cross-cultural projects that involve multiple stakeholders?
4. What experience do you have evaluating social measures, relationships, and/or communities of practice?
5. What experience do you have with developmental evaluation and/or other evaluation methods where evaluation information is shared to primary intended users frequently? How might you accomplish that for this project?
6. As a sneak-peek at what your evaluation plan may include, what idea are you most excited about?
7. As you think about evaluating this project, what are your most important questions for project staff and partners?

Responses will be reviewed by project partners, and applicants whose experience, process, and style best align with the needs of the project will be invited to submit a proposal.

It is the Humanities Center’s goal that all evaluations align with our core values and principles and that evaluation processes and findings support decision-making and improve programming. As such, semifinalists will have an opportunity to ask questions of Humanities Center staff before submitting a full proposal.

The Humanities Center will interview final candidates Thursday, October 12, and Friday, October 13 – applicants are asked to reserve these dates, should you be selected as a finalist. We will be bringing together the eight communities who are hosting *We Are Water MN* for a retreat on October 23 and October 24 and applicants are asked to reserve these dates as well, in order to introduce you to the Humanities Center approach and the key collaborators.

Timeline:

September 15, 2017	Indication of Interest Deadline
September 22, 2017	Semifinalists Selected
October 6, 2017	Full Proposals Due
October 12, 13	Finalist Interviews—PLEASE HOLD
October 16	Finalists Notified
October 23, 24	Host Site Retreat—PLEASE HOLD

How to Submit Indication of Interest

Indication of Interest materials must be submitted online at <https://form.jotform.us/72345019369157>. Besides answering the questions above, please be prepared to upload a current resume or CV.

The Minnesota Humanities Center is committed to a culturally diverse work environment. Veterans encouraged to apply.

Contact Information

Evaluation questions: Jennifer Tonko, jennifer@mnhum.org, 651-772-4264

Process questions: Laura Benson, laura@mnhum.org, 651-772-4244