



Request for Proposal

Coolidge Museum Exhibit Design

OCTOBER 2, 2024

Forbes Library seeks to hire a design firm to reimagine the Coolidge Museum exhibit space.

ISSUED BY

Calvin Coolidge Presidential Library and Museum at Forbes Library

REPRESENTATIVE

Julie Bartlett Nelson, Head of Calvin Coolidge Presidential Library & Museum

Forbes Library

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Introduction & Background

The Calvin Coolidge Presidential Library and Museum (CCPLM) was established in 1956, following the state appropriation and room allocation by an act of commonwealth legislation in 1955. Housed within the Forbes Library, the then Coolidge Memorial Room, experienced several partial renovations, case additions, including several significant infrastructure updates between 2000 and 2020. With the exception of minor content updates, the core permanent exhibition, however, has been static. The lackluster, dated presentation of historical content - with uncomplicated narrative structure concerning class, race, gender, indigenous peoples, economic and foreign policy - overshadows the significant educational potential of the museum. Therefore, the Coolidge Presidential Museum Advisory Committee is embarking on a project to renovate and revive the content of the museum space.

The Coolidge Presidential Library and Museum is seeking to update the content of the permanent exhibit that will offer a balanced portrayal of Calvin Coolidge, his record of public service, personal life, early 20th century history, and the life of Grace Coolidge. The Standing Committee of the CCPLM is accepting proposals in response to this Request for Proposal (this “RFP,” or this “Request for Proposal”) in order to find a qualified source to provide a museum exhibit redesign. Our goal with the redesign is to:

1. To significantly remodel and modernize the current museum room while maintaining some of the historic “feel” of the current museum
2. To increase attendance and engagement with the museum
3. To create spaces that encourage immersive passive and active education about Calvin Coolidge, life, legacy, and connection to local history
4. To provide flexible implementation options for the redesign including the ability to phase the work

The objective of this Request for Proposal is to locate a source that will provide the best overall value to the Calvin Coolidge Presidential Library and Museum. While price is a

significant factor, other criteria will form the basis of our award decision, as more fully described in the Evaluation Factors section of this Request for Proposal below.

Several steps have already been taken, such as:

- The production of a short introductory film on Calvin Coolidge.
- An ongoing video memory project focusing on the Coolidge family in Northampton. It includes several living direct sources plus community members with vivid second-hand tales they heard growing up.
- In cooperation with the programming committee, public lectures have been closely focused on the Coolidge legacy, including how it has changed.
- Lively events have taken place such as period music and foodways. These have drawn attention to the Coolidge years.
- An exhibits subcommittee has formed to discuss ways to tighten the museum's narrative, explore technology that can improve how it is delivered, discuss ways to link narrative and objects, and identify professional designers who can give guidance on how to retrofit the museum.

The exhibits will tell a cradle-to-grave story of the nation's 30th president, his wife Grace, and their children. A detailed list of display panel content is attached but to reiterate, the museum sees its role as educational not hagiographic. A final display is aimed at encouraging the public to evaluate the Coolidge legacy in local, state, and national matters.



Submission Guidelines & Requirements

The following submission guidelines & requirements apply to this Request for Proposal:

1. First and foremost, only qualified individuals or firms with prior experience on projects such as this should submit proposals in response to this Request for

Proposal.

2. A walk through will be provided to interested bidders upon request.
3. Bidders intent on submitting a proposal should notify the representative identified on the cover page in a timely manner.
4. Bidders should describe projects that are substantially similar to this project as part of their response, including references for each. Include examples of work either submitted electronically or in print.
5. A proposal must be provided that includes an overview of the proposed design concept as well as resumes of all key personnel performing the work. In addition, the proposal should provide a proposed schedule and milestones, as applicable.
6. A price proposal must be provided that should indicate the overall fixed price for the project as well as hourly rates and an estimated total number of hours, should Coolidge Presidential Library and Museum decide to award a contract on an hourly rate basis.
7. Proposals must be signed by a representative that is authorized to commit the bidder's company.
8. If you have a standard set of terms and conditions, please submit them with your proposal. All terms and conditions will be subject to negotiation.
9. Proposals must be received by November 15, 2024 to be considered.
10. Proposals must remain valid for a period of 60 days.
11. CCPLM anticipates selecting at least two individuals or firms to have more in-depth discussions with.



Project Purpose

The Calvin Coolidge President Museum and Library is uniquely lodged within the Forbes Library of Northampton, Massachusetts. Coolidge is, to date, the nation's only chief executive to have left his papers and effects to a public library.

The Coolidge Museum and Library's mission is to aid those doing scholarly research; educate the broader public concerning Calvin Coolidge's political career and family life; and provide a welcoming, attractive, and flexible space that accommodates community events. Significantly updating the exhibition space will enable the CCPLM to better meet this mission.

The purpose of this project is as follows:

- Integrating technology to create engaging displays.
- Building displays that are flexible and adaptive.
- Redesigning museum displays for greater coherence.
- Placing greater emphasis on the Coolidge family within a historical context.
- Fashioning more robust displays on ethnicity, gender, race, immigration, and social class.
- Establishing linkage between museum displays and further information for those wishing to delve deeper into topics of interest.
- Situating the Coolidge family within the community of Northampton in ways consonant with the Forbes Library's overall mission of public engagement.
- Inviting the public to critically assess the Coolidge legacy.



Project Scope

The scope of the project entails designing the museum exhibition including the layout and content within the existing physical parameters of the museum room.

Museum Room:

- 1,525 sq ft.
- 75 person capacity
- 2,500 general visitors, plus 40 group tours, annually

Additional space within scope:

- Wall outside of office/old entrance door and wall between/above entrance doors for signage or panels. Signage and wayfinding could be considered a separately funded phase.

Additional space outside scope:

- Archivist's Office: renovation of office/storage room adjacent to Museum room is a separate project/phase

The successful bidder will be responsible for:

- Developing design plans that will be used for bidding construction.
- Suggestions for vendors and materials being mindful of local and sustainable options.
- Estimating the cost within our budgetary constraints (up to \$300,000).
- Planning for the least disruption of public space during construction.
- Suggestions for phasing and general timeline; keeping the project on schedule.
- Be responsible for sourcing and selecting new exhibition cases and technology as necessary.
- Function as liaison between the CCPLM point person and vendors as necessary including review of contractor and subcontractor contacts.
- Advise on product substitutions should they be required.
- Seek cost effective solutions throughout the design and construction process.

The criteria set forth below must be met to achieve successful completion of the project:

1. Utilize existing space constraints and existing cases and lighting where feasible.

2. Maintain flexibility to allow the middle space to remain open to accommodate up to 75 chairs lecture style.
3. Ensure accessible exhibition space for those in wheelchairs and with limited mobility.
4. Secure cases and self guided layout because the museum is often unstaffed.
5. Improve acoustics of the space both for museum visitors and those attending events in the space to support comfort and ease of visitors including those with hearing loss.
6. Consider that storage and research space may need to be accommodated within the existing museum room and adjacent office, especially in the short term.

Additional considerations and possible approaches:

1. The possibility of installing interactive flat screen display panels.
2. Placing a rack of iPads and headphones in which visitors can explore videos from the Coolidge memory project.
3. Screening the Coolidge introductory film on demand.
4. Looking into displays that can be rolled away when the museum space is needed for community events.
5. Seeking ways to improve storage of archival materials used by researchers.
6. Project to be completed within the available budget (up to \$300,000).
7. Prioritize local vendors and sustainable materials whenever possible.
8. Exhibit design that will have at least 10 years of longevity .
9. Technology maintenance and ease of use must be considered in the design.
10. Delivery by date.



RFP & Project Timelines

The Request for Proposal timeline is as follows:

Request for Proposal Issuance	10/1/2024
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Proposals Due	11/15/2024
Selection of Top Bidder/ Notification to Unsuccessful Bidders	12/20/2024
Contract Award / Notification to Unsuccessful Bidders	1/10/2025

The need-date for project completion is May 1, 2025. Bidders may propose a date earlier or later, and will be evaluated accordingly.



Budget

CCPLM’s anticipated budget for the museum remodel project is \$300,000, excluding the design fee. Signage, wayfinding, technology may be considered separately funded phases out of that budget.



Evaluation Factors

Calvin Coolidge Presidential Library and Museum will rate proposals based on the following factors, with cost being the most important factor:

1. Responsiveness to the requirements set forth in this Request for Proposal
2. Relevant past performance/experience
3. Samples of work
4. Cost, including an assessment of total cost of ownership and maintenance
5. Technical expertise/experience of bidder and bidder’s staff

CCPLM reserves the right to award to the bidder that presents the best value as determined solely by CCPLM in its absolute discretion.

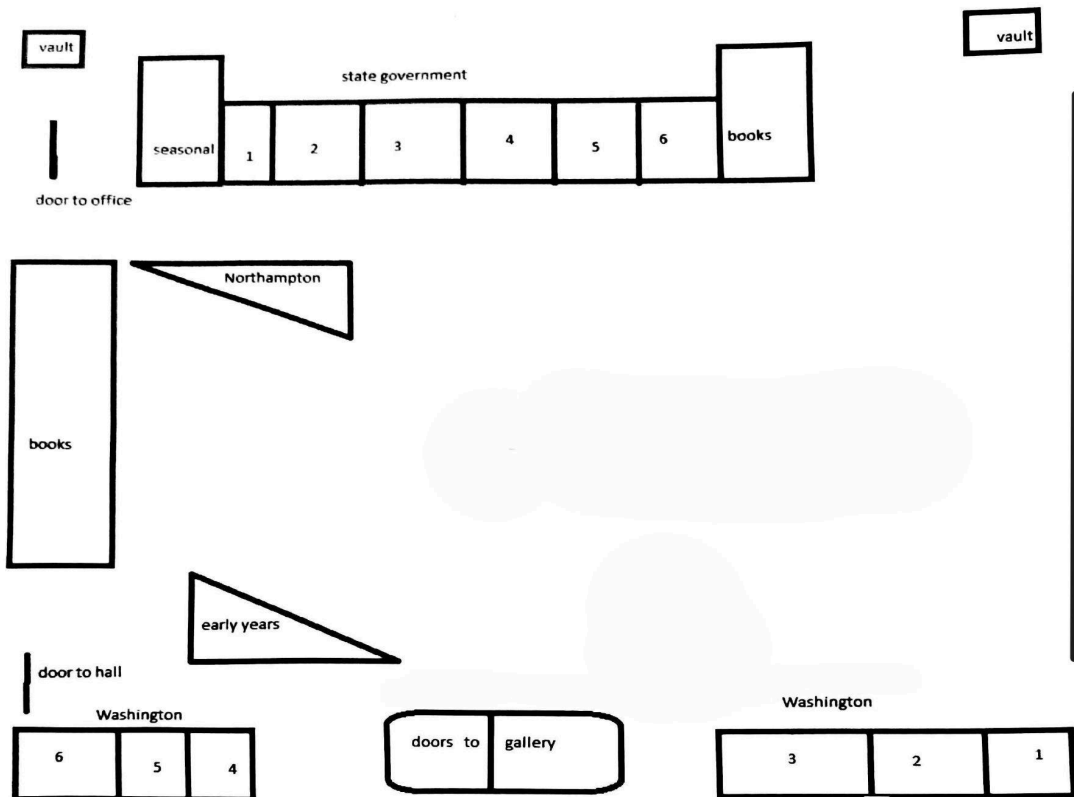
Appendix

1. Museum Floor Plans
2. Photographs of Current Museum
3. Exhibit Themes

Appendix 1.

Current layout of exhibit cases

Cases have remained primarily on the perimeter to allow the center for flexibility for programming- lectures, musical performances, book groups, meetings, etc.



Map of 2nd floor of Forbes Library

2 Second Floor

Arts and Music —
 information and arts and music research help
 e-reader loans
 musical instrument loans
 study areas

non-fiction V — X
 graphic novels

audio books
 DVDs
 games
 music CDs

Arts and Music magazines

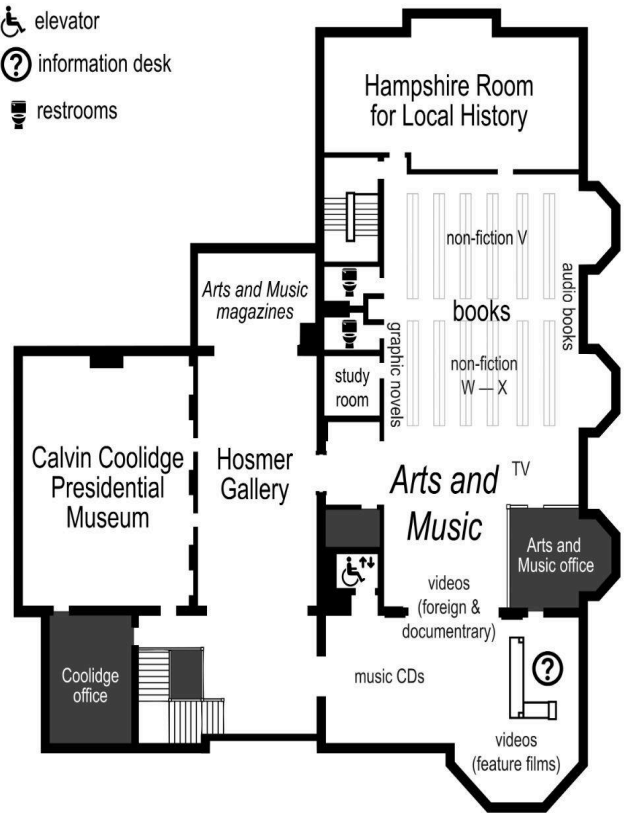
Calvin Coolidge Presidential Museum

Hampshire Room for Local History

Hosmer Gallery

Bak Study Room

-  elevator
-  information desk
-  restrooms



Appendix 2.

Social story [Video Tour of Coolidge Museum](#) from 2017

Photos of Current Museum

1. Standing in center of Museum room facing doors to art gallery and showing high, curved ceiling



2. Glass and brass display cases installed in 1956. The background fabric was installed in 2001. They are difficult to open/close and change and are outdated.



3. Wooden cases on side wall were installed in 1930s. Books on right end would be relocated to office.



4. View from the front of the room. The wood cases on back wall were installed in 1930s. These books owned or gifted to the President would be relocated to the office and not on display. The door on right is to the office/storage and will remain in use. The door on the left is the original entrance to the room and is not used and could be blocked/removed. The display case currently covered up is a headdress gifted to President Coolidge by the Sioux in 1927. We are currently engaging with tribes per 2024 NAGPRA revision. It is unknown yet if this will remain in the collection and on display or be repatriated.



5. View from back corner of the room. The Presidential portraits have been the main focal point of the space since 1929 and are the only objects that need to be considered in a redesign to remain on permanent view anywhere in the room. The artist designed them to be hung sitting facing each other.



Appendix 3.

[Exhibit themes](#)

A subcommittee of the Coolidge Museum board has been working on themes and content for new exhibit panels and outlined 7 key areas to be presented chronologically or thematically.