

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS: A DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR THE GERALDINE R. DODGE POETRY PROGRAM

1. PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation (“DODGE”) is seeking a qualified and experienced individual or company (“VENDOR”) to work part-time as an independent consultant to design, launch and manage the implementation of a fundraising strategy to diversify support for the ongoing growth of the Geraldine R. Dodge Poetry Program (“POETRY”). This is a new role, and this individual or company will explore funding opportunities to increase and sustain ongoing growth of POETRY and expansion of its inclusiveness.

2. ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW

Launched as a major initiative of the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation in 1986, the twenty biennial Dodge Poetry Festivals (DPF) combined have drawn approximately 190,000 people from 50 states, including 23,000 teachers and 60,000 high school students who attended without charge and traveled from as far away as Florida, Maine, Minnesota and California. It is widely acknowledged as the largest poetry event in North America.

DPF, international in scope, has given rise to several NPR radio programs and six PBS television series between 1989 and 2011, including *The Power of the Word*, *The Language of Life* and *Fooling with Words*, all hosted by Bill Moyers. The PBS special, *Love’s Confusing Joy*, filmed at DPF, propelled the 13th century Islamic poet Rumi into the bestselling poet in America.

After two decades in rural settings, DPF moved to Newark, New Jersey in 2010. This move is part of the Foundation’s historical commitment to Newark, but also the result of DPF’s ongoing efforts to expand its outreach and educational impact into an ever more diverse audience. We are actively searching for a VENDOR who will understand, support and reflect our commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion.

The Foundation's Poetry-in-the-Schools Program has sent poets into every county in New Jersey to work with teachers and students. Some 60,000 students have participated in either a poet visit to their schools or one of a dozen mini-festivals that happen around the state each spring. The Poetry-in-the-Schools Program has also involved more than 3,000 New Jersey teachers in various tuition-free professional development activities, most notably in its annual series of poetry seminars/discussions held at sites throughout the state and first offered in 1992.

Historically, what may prove to be the Festival’s most significant accomplishment is the creation of the Geraldine R. Dodge Poetry Festival Audio and Video Archive. Consisting of over 2,500 hours of audio and video recordings, the Dodge Poetry Archive is one of the most

extraordinary records of contemporary poetry and poets in the world. Nobel and Pulitzer Prize winners, U. S. Poets Laureate, and many other poets of international stature are captured in readings, interviews, conversations and discussions, often in groupings that occurred in no other time or place.

At this juncture in the Poetry Program's evolution, we are exploring the full ramifications, opportunities and challenges as POETRY considers its long-term structure. Some options POETRY is exploring include:

1. Poetry remains a DCA within the Dodge Foundation, with development plans to find other sponsors or partners for specific projects.
2. The Poetry Program incorporates as a 501(c)(3) operating under the auspices of the Dodge Foundation as its home and primary sponsor, with development plans to find other sponsors or partners for specific projects.
3. Poetry is spun-off into a separate operating 501(c)(3) with a long-term plan to make it ultimately independent of Dodge funding.
4. Poetry merges with another presenting, producing or poetry organization.

3. OBJECTIVE

To design and launch a fundraising strategy to diversify support for the ongoing growth of the Geraldine R. Dodge Poetry Program and enable expansion of its inclusiveness.

4. SCOPE OF WORK

The selected VENDOR will design, launch and manage a development program for these short-term and long-term goals.

1. Short-term Goals: Design and implement several short-term campaigns and find sponsors and/or partners for the October 2022 Geraldine R. Dodge Poetry Festival for the following:
 - A Green/Zero Waste Festival. The Dodge Poetry Festival typically partners with the Clean Water Fund in order to design and implement a zero-waste initiative at each Festival. Goal: \$35,000.
 - Beyond ADA Compliance. A fully accessible Festival, including Festival CART captioning, interpreters, and physically accessible Festival venues for all attendees. Goal: \$70,000.
 - Streaming elements of the Festival. Our goal is to make our Festival accessible to screens in every Newark household at no cost to residents and to make those

streaming elements available nationally and internationally for those who may not be able to attend the in-person event. Goal: \$100,000.

2. Long-term Goals: Explore the viability of long-term campaigns for the growth of POETRY:
 - Using our video and audio archives to create an online hub in order to change how poetry is encountered and taught in New Jersey and across the country.
 - Sustaining the evolution and growth of poetry throughout New Jersey and across the country.
 - Continuing to build partnerships that will support these long-term efforts.

This Scope of Work will be executed in two phases; the launch of the second will depend on the success of the first.

In Phase One VENDOR will explore viability of funding sources for the short-term and long-term goals listed in Scope of Work and present an actionable fundraising plan for achieving Short-term Goals.

In Phase Two VENDOR will launch and manage the implementation of a strategy to meet the Short-Term Goals listed above in time for the October, 2022 Dodge Poetry Festival and lay the foundations for a strategy to achieve the Long-Term Goals above.

Implementation of a strategy for achieving Long-Term Goals will depend on the success of Phases One and Two, and is not included in this current Scope of Work.

5. TIMELINE

November 15, 2021: Request for Proposals is posted.

December 15, 2021: Deadline for proposal submissions.

December 15, 2021 to January 15, 2022: Proposals are reviewed, candidates interviewed, and VENDOR selected to launch Phase 1.

January 15 to February 15, 2022: Phase One.

February 15-October 15, 2022: Phase Two.

6. SUBMISSIONS

This RFP does not constitute a contract. DODGE will negotiate a Services Agreement with the selected VENDOR.

A. FORMAT

Proposals must be received no later than 11:59 p.m. ET on December 15, 2021 via email with the subject heading POETRY DEVELOPMENT RFP to poetryprogram@grdodge.org in a single PDF attachment, with a maximum of 15 pages using a standard 12-point font with 1" margins. PowerPoints are acceptable within the format restrictions.

B. NEXT STEPS.

DODGE will arrange Zoom meetings with all candidates that we are interested in speaking with further about this opportunity.

C. GUIDELINES.

Each proposal should include:

1. Executive Summary.

One-page summary of the VENDOR's background, past experiences similar to the Scope of Work expected for DODGE, and basic understanding of the Scope of Work required, and reasons why the VENDOR should be selected.

2. Company Overview.

Overview of the VENDOR's organizational structure, including:

- Total full-time and part-time employees;
- Whether the VENDOR has been involved in any disputes (including lawsuits) with former or current employees and/or vendors, especially involving sexual harassment and racial or sexual discrimination (if the matter is settled and is confidential, please provide a general description of the basis of the dispute);
- Whether the VENDOR has been involved in a dispute with one of its clients regarding event planning services (if the matter is settled and is confidential, please provide a general description of the basis of the dispute);
- Total number of substantially similar projects to the Scope of Work requested during the past three years.

3. Planning Team.

Name and short biography of each individual who will be involved with DPF and their role before, during and after VF. We are actively searching for a VENDOR who will understand, support and reflect our commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion.

4. Fees.

Provide:

- Proposed project-based fee, including description of all costs and fees the VENDOR proposes to charge DODGE.

5. References.

List of at least three (3) events substantially similar to DPF, including:

- Description of the event (including size, format, type of guests hosted, number of remote sites, audience interactivity, etc.).
- References for whom the VENDOR has performed a similar Scope of Work (Names, Address, Email, and Contact Number).

6. Samples.
Sample of previous work related to the Scope of Work (final report, event production timeline with pre/during/post deliverables, promotional material, event budgets which include all anticipated costs and fees, project plans, photos, assessments, reports, etc.).
7. Other Information.
Any additional information that the VENDOR believes is relevant to the RFP and the VENDOR's capability to provide the Scope of Work.
8. Signature.
The proposal must be signed by an authorized representative of the VENDOR.

7. PROPOSAL EVALUATION

DODGE reserves the right to accept or reject any and all proposals, without prior discussions, and grant final acceptance to the proposal that best meets the needs and interests of DODGE, in its sole discretion. DODGE will be the sole judge of whether a proposal meets the required RFP criteria.

8. CONFIDENTIALITY CLAUSE

Any information disclosed by DODGE herein (and any related correspondence and/or attachments) is considered confidential and constitutes the proprietary information of DODGE. All submission will become the property of DODGE and will be treated as confidential between DODGE and the VENDOR. DODGE will use its commercially reasonable efforts not to disclose the contents of the VENDOR's proposal to other participants or the public. DODGE reserves the rights to discuss the submissions with its consultants, Board of Directors members, the references provided by the VENDOR, and other related parties during the evaluation process.

9. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

By submitting a proposal, the VENDOR acknowledges that it has read this RFP, understands it, and agrees to be bound by its requirements. VENDOR understands and agrees that they are solely responsible for its own business expenses, except for pre-approved, reasonable business expenses related to DPF.

VENDOR agrees to keep their fixed fee and other terms of their engagement open for at least sixty (60) days past the submission deadline.

Once the VENDOR is selected, DODGE and the selected VENDOR must execute an SA prior to the selected VENDOR commencing services. The VENDOR agrees that the SA will be a complete and exclusive agreement and will supersede all prior communications between the parties.

Should DODGE and the selected VENDOR be unable to agree on the terms of an SA within a reasonable time (at DODGE's sole discretion), DODGE reserves the right to suspend or terminate negotiations without notice, and to pursue negotiations with another VENDOR.

Any suspension or termination of negotiations shall be without liability to DODGE or the selected VENDOR(s). DODGE may terminate this process (in its sole discretion) and issue a new RFP for the requested services. Each VENDOR shall assume all fees and costs (including but not limited to legal fees) incurred in responding to this RFP and negotiating the SA with DODGE. DODGE shall bear no liability for any costs, fees, or liability incurred in connection with this RFP or any responses thereto. VENDOR agrees that it shall not directly contact any DODGE Board of Trustees members or those who may otherwise have an affiliation with DODGE, in connection with responding to this RFP. VENDORS who do not abide by this requirement may be disqualified from the RFP process.

10. QUESTIONS

Questions about this RFP should be directed to Martin Farawell, Festival Director, by email: mfarawell@grdodge.org. Phone calls will not be accepted.

11. DEADLINE

Proposals must be received no later than midnight, December 15, by email at poetryprogram@grdodge.org.