

Request for External Evaluation Contract Proposals

May 5, 2020 – Preservation Alliance of West Virginia

The Preservation Alliance of West Virginia (PAWV) invites proposals from qualified researchers and consultants to work closely with staff to conduct a program evaluation of the Preserve WV AmeriCorps program, in line with AmeriCorps expectations and requirements.

Scope of Work Goals

PAWV anticipates the consultant will ***conduct a retrospective outcome evaluation on the Preserve WV AmeriCorps program for the years 2015-2019***. The goal of this evaluation is to understand the level of impact Preserve WV AmeriCorps members have in building the capacity of site sponsors' community engagement. Data for the 2015-2019 period has already been collected and is currently being organized into one spreadsheet for these evaluation purposes.

Research Could Include Questions:

1. Have Preserve WV AmeriCorps members increased the level of services/programming at site sponsor organizations (i.e. heritage education, research requests, tours)? Additionally, how successful are members in developing financial resources for their sites?
2. Have Preserve WV AmeriCorps members helped to increase visitors, tourists, and or program participants at Preserve WV AmeriCorps sites?
3. How effective have Preserve WV AmeriCorps members been in preserving historical resources (i.e. buildings, museum collections, archives)?
4. Have Preserve WV AmeriCorps members increased volunteer participation at site sponsor organizations?
5. Do AmeriCorps members benefit from their AmeriCorps service by gaining useful workforce training, learning new skills, and experiencing an increase in civic engagement?

Organizational Overview

Formed in 1982, the Preservation Alliance of West Virginia (PAWV) is the only statewide, grassroots, nonprofit organization dedicated to the preservation of the Mountain State's cultural heritage. It administers the Preserve WV AmeriCorps program.

PAWV's formal mission is, "With a commitment to preserve our unique cultural heritage, PAWV and its members work to save our past for the present and future, supporting and promoting historic preservation through education & outreach, advocacy, preservation tools, and heritage tourism."

The website is www.pawv.org.

Preserve WV AmeriCorps Overview

The Preserve WV AmeriCorps program is funded through a State Formula Grant from Volunteer WV and the Corporation for National and Community Service. Created in 2013, the Preserve WV AmeriCorps program is the Preservation Alliance of West Virginia's statewide national service initiative where

members help main streets thrive, help communities capture their local history, and preserve beloved West Virginia landmarks. The Preserve WV AmeriCorps program brings members to sites to implement techniques and theories related to historic preservation, capacity building, and cultural heritage tourism site development to revitalize our local communities and improve our economy.

The Preservation Alliance of West Virginia is the leader of a consortium of nonprofit organizations and government agencies that are cultural heritage tourism sites and/or utilize historic preservation to revitalize their communities. AmeriCorps members are placed for a year at consortium sites, which are nonprofit organizations and government agencies across the state that range from museums and archives to Historic Landmarks Commissions and Main Street organizations. The primary objective of the Preserve WV AmeriCorps program is to inject new life into the state's declining economy by having members complete projects that will attract more private spending to West Virginia's cultural heritage sites and those sites' communities.

The **GOALS** of Preserve WV are for members to

- bring local history to life and enhance cultural heritage tourism opportunities,
- increase visitation at cultural heritage sites,
- preserve historical resources helping transform blighted and underused places into community resources, and
- build sites' capacity to increase their efficiency, effectiveness, and/or program reach.

For the 2019-2020 program year, the Preserve WV AmeriCorps program was awarded 20 MSY with 13 full-time and 14 half-time slots allocated to 24 service sites (1.5 MSYs remain unfilled at this time.) The members' projects are site-specific, based on the local community needs identified by each site.

Preserve WV AmeriCorps Logic Model Overview

Problem 1: NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION & LOCAL GOVERNMENT CAPACITY BUILDING – Preserve WV AmeriCorps consortium sites are existing historical and community development nonprofit organizations and local government agencies that service the state of West Virginia. Their service activities involve developing economic opportunities for cultural heritage tourism and revitalization. However, the majority of these places are under-resourced with staff of 2 or less and shrinking budgets, and they lack the capacity to maximize volunteers, financial opportunities, and/or community engagement tools. This limits the organizations' ability to provide important services to their communities, and in turn, deters economic development in the areas of cultural heritage tourism and historic preservation.

- A. Project Resources – Preserve WV AmeriCorps members are catalysts at their sites for making their sites more efficient, extending the outreach of their sites programming, and engaging community volunteer participation. Their capacity building service involves laying the foundation for long-term incorporation of program efficiency and volunteer management at their sites.

For PY 2020-2021, 29 Preserve WV AmeriCorps members (11 full-time and 18 half-time) will be deployed to 30 sites. Members will spend 50% of their time on capacity building interventions. 10% of their time can be spent on approved fundraising activities.

- B. Core Project Components – The target audience for capacity building interventions are the sites themselves.

Interventions:

- Resource Development including fundraising and acquiring new historical items,
- Systems Development for coordinating and executing events, programming, outreach, and volunteer engagement/management,
- Organizing data related to historical resources including buildings, museum collections, archives,
- Volunteer management and training.

C. Evidence of Project Implementation and Participation (Outputs) – 30 historical organizations will receive capacity building services

D. Outcomes / Evidence of Change:

Short-term Outcome: 10 organizations will increase their efficiency, effectiveness, and/or program reach as a result of AmeriCorps members' intervention

Current assessment tool: Pre- and post- assessment tool completed by supervisor (or another person within the service site organization). This assessment tool is mainly focused on volunteer management and does not currently encompass the total scope of the members' community engagement capacity building.

Medium-term Outcome: 10 organizations will report increased volunteer participation

Current assessment tool: Members keep track of volunteer participation on a monthly basis using a spreadsheet developed and issued by the program.

Long-term Outcome: More historic resources will be improved. Sites will offer more cultural heritage tourism opportunities, and sites will provide more direct services and engage more visitors and tourists.

Current assessment tool: Members keep track of historic resource improvement activities, cultural heritage tourism event and site participation/visitation numbers, as well as other information related to their service activities in a quarterly report (previously monthly) and a bi-monthly timesheet.

Problem 2: West Virginia's economy has not recovered from a severe economic downturn over the last decade, having been beset by a major decline in various energy/extractive industries, the subsequent loss of thousands of jobs, and an accompanying outmigration of residents. All of this has led, as of 2017-2018, to West Virginia having the United States' second-worst level of population loss, fourth-worst poverty rate, and third-worst employment rate. The Preserve WV AmeriCorps program seeks to address this economic problem by focusing on community investment and local economic development through enhancing and increasing cultural heritage tourism opportunities, which is a proven economic engine in many other states.

A. Project Resources: For PY 2020-2021, 29 Preserve WV AmeriCorps members (11 full-time and 18 part-time) will serve at 30 sites in which they will focus on improving cultural heritage tourism sites and opportunities. This will involve preserving more historic resources for their site sponsors. Members will spend 40% of their time on such interventions.

B. Core Project Components - The target audience includes site visitors, host sites, and the communities in which host sites serve.

Interventions:

- Improve, clean, preserve, and rehabilitate historic resources,
- Create and implement educational materials, activities, and events,
- Publicize and promote what their sites are doing for the public,
- Act as a liaison between the site and the public by providing education and information to site visitors,
- Plan and executive civic service projects to improve their communities and make them more livable.

C. Evidence of Project Implementation and Participation (Outputs): Preserve WV AmeriCorps members will preserve and improve 30 historic resources. A historic resource can be a building eligible or listed on the National Register of Historic Places – the official list of historic places in the United States, or a museum/library collection.

D. Outcomes / Evidence of Change:

Short-term Outcome: 15 host sites will report increased cultural heritage tourism offerings for visitors and tourists

Current assessment tool: AmeriCorps members keep track of the cultural heritage tourism offerings they help to plan and execute in a quarterly report (previously a monthly report) and timesheets.

Medium-term Outcome: 5 host sites will report increased visitation at their site

Current assessment tool: Members keep track of visitation at their sites and report on this on a monthly basis in an excel spreadsheet submitted to the program.

Long-term Outcome: The Preserve WV cultural heritage tourism consortium will ensure sustainable economic, social, and cultural development combined with active enhancement of historic resources through increased supply, diversity and quality.

Current assessment tool: Members keep track of the supply of cultural heritage tourism offerings, but currently no assessment tool exists to measure (1) if these offerings are sustainable, (2) involve active enhancement of historic resources, (3) are more diverse, or (4) their quality.

Scope of Work & Required Deliverables - *The scope of work will be completed closely with Danielle Parker, Preserve WV AmeriCorps program director.*

SCOPE OF WORK PART 1 – Work with the program director to confirm research questions and scope of the evaluation. Expected details of evaluation process may be modified by mutual consent, based on the final evaluation plan.

Deliverable 1) Written evaluation plan and research questions.

SCOPE OF WORK PART 2 -Develop Assessment Tools: Three total survey tools will be created to assess the site sponsors community engagement capacity. These tools should focus on volunteer engagement and

management, site marketing, site outreach, and other community engagement things the evaluator may suggest.

Deliverable 2) A pre-service assessment tool to measure how effectively and efficiently the site sponsor engaged the community prior to the member's service. This tool will be used by the program on an annual basis.

Deliverable 3) A post-service assessment tool to assess what the member did to increase the site sponsor's community engagement capacity and at what level did the member increase the effectiveness, efficiency, and reach of the site sponsor's services and educational programming. This tool will be used by the program on an annual basis.

Deliverable 4) A retrospective assessment tool to be utilized during this evaluation to help to answer some of the research questions about members' community engagement capacity building for the period 2015-2019.

SCOPE OF WORK PART 3 - Statistical Analysis:

Deliverable 5) Provide a statistical analysis of the data to evaluate the impact AmeriCorps members are having at their sites. For some sites, PAWV has pre-service information related to these six statistics and can be used for comparison purposes. The analysis should involve a pre- and post-service analysis based on these statistics. Quantifiable information will be provided for 2015-2019 regarding:

- 1) # of events and # of individuals attending each event
- 2) # of visitors/tourists and type of visitor/tourist (i.e. school group, bus tour, individual)
- 3) # of patron requests for research or other purposes
- 4) # of dollars and in-kind contributions fundraised
- 5) # of historical resources preserved
- 6) # of volunteers managed

Deliverable 6) Provide a statistical analysis of the retrospective assessment.

SCOPE OF WORK PART 4 – Outcome Evaluation Report

Deliverable 7) Provide a full-color report with photographs and graphs that answers the research questions identified in part 1. The report should be provided electronically to be in print and web-based media. The report will be provided to Volunteer WV and the Corporation for National and Community Service and should meet the requirements of an outcome evaluation with at least a pre-preliminary tier of evidence.

Assumptions and Agreements

- Materials loaned to the vendor and produced by the vendor will be in standard American English.
- PAWV will appoint one person, with decision-making authority, to serve as a project coordinator/manager.
- The vendor shall warrant that on delivery, all media containing the instructional content of the program evaluation plan are free of material faults and processing errors.

- Please note that any and all forms, statements, spreadsheets, guides, data, reports, etc. created for these projects will become the property of PAWV, with one purpose being for PAWV to provide examples to other organizations.
- Travel and other associated expenses will be included in the vendor's proposed bid.
- The submission of a proposal assumes general acceptance on the part of the bidder that the bidder and PAWV will enter into a form of contract establishing PAWV's rights to intellectual property.

Required Proposal Format

The proposal should be submitted by email to info@pawv.org and must contain the following sections: Technical, Costs, Qualifications, and References.

PAWV is willing to answer questions regarding the RFP prior to submission of proposal.

- **Technical Proposal:** In the technical section, bidders should include their proposed work plan outlining how they will accomplish the stated goal *to conduct a retrospective outcome evaluation on the Preserve WV AmeriCorps program for the years 2015-2019 and develop assessment tools.*
- **Costs:** Proposals must include an all-inclusive rate for services identified in the proposal, including travel, handouts, and other associated expenses.
- **Qualifications:** All eligible bidders must submit at least one example of a similarly compiled evaluation plan and two examples of survey tools. They must also meet the following minimum eligibility requirements:
 - Demonstrate experience providing services similar to this request;
 - Demonstrate knowledge of the theory behind having a logic model and evidence-based approach to address specific community problems;
 - Have a successful track record of providing accurate and efficient deliverables;
 - Have the ability to meet project timeline and budget.
 - Highly desired, but not required qualification: Demonstrate a familiarity with either historic preservation, public history, cultural heritage tourism, or the Main Street Four Point Approach.
 - Highly desired, but not required qualification: Demonstrate a familiarity with CNCS evaluation requirements, use of terms, and evidence tiers. If no previous experience in this environment, must be willing to learn in order to complete product to meet CNCS expectations.
- **References:** Bidders must list at least three references for whom they have previously provided this service or similar services. References should include full contact information (phone, email, mailing address, etc.)
- **Additional Documentation** (optional): Bidders may include a short demo or direct us to a website that demonstrates their capabilities.

Deadline – Proposals are due to Danielle Parker by Friday, June 5 by 5:00pm EST.

Project coordinator and point-of-contact

Danielle Parker, Executive Director: dlapresta@pawv.org, 304-345-6005
 Preservation Alliance of West Virginia, 421 Davis Avenue, Elkins, WV 26241

Basis for Award of Contract

- Demonstrate commitment and ability to finish the project on time and on budget
- Demonstrate understanding of the project
- Demonstrate experience providing services similar to this request
- Quality of materials
- Professionalism

Award Date: Friday, June 26, 2020

Limitation

This RFP does not commit PAWV to award a contract or to pay costs incurred by bidder in the preparation of a proposal to this RFP. PAWV may accept other than the lowest bid, waive minor informalities, and award a contract based only on the written proposal without any discussions with bidder. Issuance of a contract will be subject to the approval of the PAWV Board of Directors. PAWV reserves the right to reject any or all proposals because of non-responsiveness to RFP requirements, insufficient PAWV funds, evidence of unfair bidding procedures, financial insolvency of bidder, or if, in the opinion of PAWV's Executive Director, the best interests of the program will be served.