

## Southern MD Regional Library Association (SMRLA)

### Questions and Answers Regarding RFP for Strategic Planning Project

Updated 11.05.18

1. We understand that Charlotte Hall Library is both the regional center and a library of St. Mary's County. Does the planning process anticipate a plan for the Charlotte Hall Library as a regional center in addition to a plan for it as a branch of the St. Mary's County library system?

Answer – The Southern MD Regional Library is a separate library system that provides services to three county library systems. Project deliverables include a strategic plan for SMRLA and a strategic plan for each county system. The Charlotte Hall Library will be included in the St. Mary's County plan.

2. In addition, because we see that the last SMRLA strategic plan expired in 2018, we wondered if creating a plan for the overall association, especially in respect/response to the plans of individual member libraries, would be within the scope of this project.

Answer – Please refer to the RFP document and answer to question. The plan for SMRLA will reflect its work with its member libraries. No other plan for all the libraries together needs to be made—only a plan for each separate library.

3. Is it feasible/reasonable to conduct the initial pre-visit conference calls and first on-site planning sessions with the leadership of all libraries at the same time? (This does not preclude coordination and conversation with individual libraries and site visits to all branches.)

Answer – Respondents should propose methods that they think would best suit this project.

4. Does SMRLA ever hold association-wide training sessions? Or are these conducted at the county level?

Answer – SMRLA holds training sessions for staff and boards of all three county library systems in its facility regularly throughout the year.

5. The RFP anticipates a February 2019 start date. Putting aside the issue of payment, would SMRLA consider an earlier start date? In other words, even if we deferred the initial project invoice until February, could we begin work in late 2018?

Answer – The libraries may have flexibility as to start date. Consideration of processes and coordination of schedules will be integral to determining project start date.

6. Would it be possible for you to consider answering questions before November 8th so that we have more than a week to finalize our proposal?

Answer –Yes. Answers to questions received as of October 17 will be published on October 22. The list will be updated weekly as necessary. Answers to questions received October 29-November 1 will be posted no later than November 8.

7. Are you currently working with an agency? Do you have an incumbent agency or someone in mind for this project?

Answer – No.

8. Did you distribute this RFP to any pre-existing contacts? If so, would these contacts receive first consideration for this opportunity?

Answer – All submissions will be given consideration during the evaluation process. We do not give “first consideration” to any respondent to our RFPs.

9. We always travel for our clients and have a footprint in the DC area—do you have a preference to work with someone local or are you open to considering national agencies?

Answer – We have no preference.

10. In your decision-making process, would experience working with libraries outweigh overall experience and approach?

Answer – Please refer to the RFP document for selection criteria. No one factor will outweigh overall qualifications.

11. Do any of these libraries currently have a strategic plan in place, or have they successfully executed previous strategic plans?

Answer – All four organizations currently have strategic plans and have successfully executed those plans.

12. Why have these libraries decided to submit a single RFP for all four strategic plans?

Answer – For greater coordination of services and leveraging our resources. Also, Maryland has other regional library associations, and we hope to pilot work that can be reproduced effectively.

13. Do your libraries imagine that there will be similarities between the four strategic plans?

Answer – We realize that there will likely be similarities; particularly in the processes.

14. What “Evidence of successful experience in planning” do you expect to review? We can provide case studies and previous planning briefs, as well as references from our previous clients.

Answer – We are interested in the respondent’s experience in strategic planning and in discussing strategic planning projects with previous clients of the respondent.

15. How many respondents do you anticipate having for this opportunity?

Answer – We have no way of knowing this.

16. Depending on the final scope of work we identify, is your budget flexible?

Answer – Please refer to the RFP document.

17. Do you require our team to provide proof of meeting your insurance requirements with this proposal or upon selection?

Answer – Upon selection.

18. As an environmentally conscious company, would it be acceptable for us to submit this proposal only by email?

Answer – Submission of proposals via email cannot be accepted at this time.

19. Do you plan on hosting an interview round with finalists?

Answer – No.

20. What is your process in terms of contacting our references? Do you plan on calling them if we are finalists, or upon submission? We respect their time and prefer to give them ample notice if they will be contacted.

Answer – We plan on contacting references of finalists. Vendors may want to notify appropriate previous clients of the potential for contact when they submit their proposals.

21. Are you able to share the answers to questions asked by other bidders?

Answer – It is our policy to share this information when seeking formal bids.

New Question(s) as of 10.29.18

22. Is there a distinction between the Southern Maryland Regional Library and the Southern Maryland Regional Library *Association*? The RFP references both terms, but it's unclear to my read whether the terms are interchangeable. Put another way, does the SMRLA simply comprise the Southern Maryland Regional Library and the public libraries of Calvert, Charles and St. Mary's counties?

Answer – Southern Maryland Regional Library is the same organization as the Southern Maryland Regional Library Association. It provides library services to the libraries of Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary's counties. Please refer to our website for additional information about the structure and services.

New Questions as of 11.1.18

23. Do you have Market segmentation information from Gale Analytics that you could share?

Answer – Charles County Library and SMRLA do not use Google Analytics. Calvert and St. Mary’s libraries use is not known.

24. Do you use Counting Opinion Statistics, or other software to benchmark library Performance against Peer Libraries?

Answer – All four organizations use Tableau. Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary’s all have Orange Boy accounts.

25. Would it be possible to get the Registered Card Holder number for Charles County?

Answer - 75,529

26. Would it be possible to get the Staff FTE numbers for Calvert and Charles Counties?

Answer – Charles County is 68. Calvert not reported.

27. Do you have 5-year budget projections for counties?

Answer – None of the four library systems has a 5-year budget projection.

28. What ILS System are the counties using?

Answer – All are on Polaris. The Polaris ILS is owned, housed, and maintained by SMRLA.