

Southern Maryland Regional Library Association
Request for Proposals for SMRLA and Calvert Library Facility Master Plans
2025

Responses to Bidder Inquiries

No.	Question	Response
1	I have been curious about the interrelationship of the two plans to each other, both process and end product. It reads to me a little bit in the RFP like these are going to be sort of separate products and they're just being produced together. But can you talk a little bit about how you see those things working together?	You have that exactly right. SMRLA provides support services to three distinct public library systems. Calvert Library is one of our partner libraries that coincidentally needed to update their study at the same time that we wanted to pursue one. Our goal is to have two separate plans. There is going to be some crossover, especially if you are looking to do interviews with our stakeholders, just because of our relationship with them.
2	Do they need to proceed in parallel, though? Do they need to be finished at the same time? Are they being presented together?	They do have to be done at the same time because we obtained a grant. We want to make sure we're able to honor that timeline to close out the grant paperwork. We are aiming for the end of our fiscal year which is June 30, 2026. We are doing them at the same time, but the result will be two standalone products. With two separate plans, we also have two different governing boards. When we get to the final product it will involve two distinct presentations, one for the regional board and one for the public libraries. Each plan needs to be completed and presented to the appropriate governing board before the end of the grant period which is June 30, 2026. They do not need to be done in parallel or finished at the same time and they will not be presented together,
3	Is there overlap between the boards?	SMRLA has one board member who also sits on the Board of Calvert Library.
4	You talk about two groups of stakeholders, the staff and the patrons or the users of the library. What about engaging the board or the kind of governing body as we go through this process?	Both SMRLA and Calvert Library have governing boards. For the SMRLA, the funding agency is the state of Maryland; engaging them is not necessary. For Calvert Library, the primary funder is county government; depending on the process you propose, it could be useful to engage the county commissioners or county staff. The boards should be kept up to date as the owners of the respective final documents, but they

		do not need to be a focus group per se in terms of being asked what facilities they want to see in Calvert County or what they want for SMRLA.
5	The way the RFP reads it is as if it's only for the plan for the offices and the services of the central association, SMRLA. How do you see that interacting with Charles County and St. Mary's counties?	SMRLA delivers support services to the three county systems; no services are provided directly to the public. Calvert's plan, separate from the plan for SMRLA, will be a plan for a traditional county library system. As detailed on page five of the RFP document, St. Mary's County Library does have a commitment from its county government to do a renovation of the building currently shared with SMRLA. That's why the timing of this study is important for the regional library. State law requires SMRLA to be centrally located to the counties it serves (Calvert, Charles and St. Mary's).
6	Do you have a budget for the study or a cost range that you're trying to hit or are you flexible on that?	We would like to stay within the parameters of our grant which is \$49,000
7	Is the \$49,000 for both plans or just one of them?	Both
8	I'm wondering if you could share a little bit about what the improvements at the Charlotte Hall Library are intended to be, if they're set yet or if that will be happening at the same time as the plan for the SMRLA offices?	The selected vendor is going to have to do homework with St. Mary's County Library on that. Our understanding is that they're still very early in the process. With that in mind, the timing may work out well for both libraries.
9	What do you think motivated the putting together of the two master plans under the same budget. Why don't we also have a master plan component for Charles County and St. Mary's County in this effort?	SMRLA does not currently have a plan and Calvert Library needed to update its plan. One of the ways that SMRLA is supporting Calvert Library this year is to administer the state grant and this RFP process. To the second question, St. Mary's and Charles counties independently did studies that are still current for them.
10	Can we hear more from Calvert Library about the motivation for having this study done now for Calvert County and about your expectations?	Our current facility master plan says that the Southern branch does not need any attention and that is no longer accurate. We had very good community engagement in the last facility master plan, but there was less attention on the actual facilities. In order to secure state and local funding for future projects, Calvert Library needs a Facility Master Plan that supports the need both in terms of whether a space should be renovated or replaced and also what size is needed to

		provide the resources and services that the community expects from their library system.
11	Have you done much community engagement work on previous studies, either of you?	It is SMRLA's first study, but Calvert Library has done extensive community engagement for previous studies and plans.
12	Do you know if the other regional systems have done facility studies in Maryland for themselves?	To our knowledge they have not. Each regional provides slightly different services and therefore have different space needs. WMRL is co-located with Washington County Free Library's central library which is relatively new. ESRL leases office space and moves when it no longer serves their needs.
13	Will you be posting the attendance list?	Yes, we will post the attendance list along with these questions and answers.
14	On page 10 of the RFP it says that respondents should submit one copy in digital format, which could be emailed to you. On attachment A, it says submit 2 copies of your proposal in a sealed package.	Attachment A is correct. We will amend the RFP to change the page 10 reference to two hard copies.
15	You'd mentioned that your board typically meets online virtually. Are you envisioning in-person staff and community work sessions, online surveys or a combination? And I understand it might be different for the SMRLA plan versus Calvert?	For SMRLA, we defer to the selected vendor for their preference. SMRLA can make its staff and board members available either way. Calvert Library is open to a variety as well. Calvert Library is closed to the public on Friday mornings which creates an opportunity for in-person or virtual meetings. In Calvert's experience, you will get slightly better feedback from staff in person; they are also used to working together online. With community groups, either method is effective but attendance is more robust at virtual meetings.
16	Can you please share a copy or link to the Calvert Facilities Master Plan that was completed in May of 2017?	The plan is available here: https://calvertlibrary.info/about-us/board-of-trustees/plan-surveys/
17	If you can also list from your perspective the groups of stakeholders we need to reach out to for the SMRLA and Calvert studies that would be useful as we conceptualize additional elements to include in our methodology here.	Calvert Library thinks of everyone in the community as our stakeholder and has put together as many or as few focus groups and key informant interviews as consultants have allowed on previous planning projects. Without any constraints, we would want to engage parents of young children, teens, emerging adults, adults, seniors, the business community, homeschool

		groups, community members with accessibility needs and any other underserved communities that are identified. We welcome consultant's recommendations for the process. While SMRLA provides products that are available to all residents of Southern Maryland we do not directly provide library services to the public. For SMRLA, our stakeholders are really our staff and our library partners. We would defer to our selected vendor's expertise to determine if there are additional stakeholders beyond what is identified in the RFP.
11	What are the estimated start and end dates of the contract?	The contract would be awarded Jan. 6, 2026 and would conclude June 30, 2026.
12	Based on the existing facilities master plan for Calvert County established in 2017, what have the libraries implemented in terms of facilities projects since that plan was adopted?	Since 2017, Calvert Library has built a new Twin Beaches Branch.
13	Can we arrange a brief site visit to the existing facilities?	No; we decline a site visit prior to the contract being awarded.
14	To understand a bit more about the expectations around the SMRLA master plan, is there an example master plan of a library association or other non-profit cooperative that you have seen that resonates with you?	No; we would defer to our selected vendor's expertise to develop a plan that takes into consideration SMRLA's unique role as a regional library.