



Strategic Planning 2025 Request for Proposal (RFP)

A. INTRODUCTION

Hartford Public Library (“HPL”) is a vital civic anchor for the City of Hartford. HPL’s history spans more than 250 years, tracing its origin to the Library Company, which was organized in 1774. Since 1893, the Library has offered free and open access to educational programs and materials for the people of Hartford. The Library offers collections and programs in nine locations across the city and with a mobile Library on Wheels. Programs include educational, skill based and cultural programs; social services; engaging and enriching after-school destinations for youth and teens; workforce readiness and development support for jobseekers; passports and municipal ID’s, and a myriad of other programs and services. HPL is also the home signature programs including The American Place; the Hartford History Center; the Digital Library Lab and HPL Studios. HPL has forged long-term and strategic partnerships with leading greater-Hartford institutions including the City of Hartford, Hartford Public Schools, Capital Workforce Partners, Hartford Stage, UCONN, CT State Department of Social Services, The Bushnell, CT Department of Corrections, and many more.

Hartford Public Library is seeking proposals from qualified firms or consultants (“Consultant”) to conduct and facilitate a comprehensive strategic planning process for the Hartford Public Library. This process will include working with the HPL Strategic Planning Committee, Senior Leadership, Library staff, Library supporters and community stakeholders to create a strategic plan for the next 3 years that will inform and offer an evaluation component of our program offerings. The new strategic plan will address the current and future library service needs of the Hartford community and will enable the Library to make thoughtful service and resource allocation decisions.

The Library envisions a sustainable strategic plan focused on programs and services with clear actionable recommendations that include programmatic prioritized goals, measurable objectives, strategies for community involvement and broader collaboration that meet community needs. This collective process should include formal and informal surveying instruments, community meetings, focus groups, stakeholder interviews and other standard needs assessment methodologies involving all the various community stakeholders, both current users and non-users, to develop a sense of community vision and shared purpose for the Library’s future.

The purpose of the strategic plan is to position the Library to continue as a nationally recognized institution which provides programs and services that meet the changing service needs of the community, address information and resource access challenges, and create opportunities for learning, engagement, creative expression and joy.

B. LIBRARY BACKGROUND

Hartford Public Library is a nonprofit corporation that receives approximately 70% of its operating funding from the City of Hartford. The population of the city of Hartford is 122,587. Home of the Mohegan and Quirpi tribes, Hartford is predominantly Hispanic or Latino (44.7 percent), with a large Black or African American (37.2 percent) population. At 21.1 percent, its foreign-born population far exceeds that of the total United States (13.5 percent). According to the 2020 U.S. Census, the median household income in Hartford is \$36,154. HPL operates seven locations throughout the city and has a mobile library. In addition, HPL operates two service locations in collaboration with Hartford Public Schools as a component of the HPL and HPS Boundless partnership: **Boundless Library @ Rawson** and **Boundless Library @ West Middle School**.

In 2024, HPL had a total of 13,635 systemwide public service hours for 52 weeks of the year. HPL is open on Sundays from September to May. Three locations are open on Saturdays year-round.

Annual library statistics for the period ending June 2024:

| Description | Amount |
|--------------------------|--------------|
| No. of Library Visits | 303,349 |
| Registered Library Users | 37,768 |
| No. Program Offerings | 4369 |
| No. of Employees | 120 |
| FY 2024 Operating Budget | \$12,751,752 |

C. SCOPE OF WORK

The selected consultant will work cooperatively with the President and Chief Executive Officer, Chief Administrative Officer, Strategic Planning Task Force, and Internal Work group to develop an actionable strategic planning document outlining service and program priorities, as well as scalable, feasible and sustainable evaluation systems, strategies and recommendations designed with the following components:

Strategic Planning Process Components:

Community Engagement

- Ensure access to and engagement in the planning process for individuals from diverse cultural, social, economic, and educational backgrounds—particularly those historically underserved or less engaged with library services.

Program/Service Review

- Conduct a thorough review and evaluation of existing programs and services to assess performance, alignment with organizational goals, and community need and prioritization of core programs and services based on the identified needs and interests of the city and the communities served by HPL.

Partnership Mapping

- Review current collaborations and community engagement efforts to assess opportunities that enhance, expand, or refine partnerships with local, regional, and statewide organizations, aligning them with HPL's programmatic vision and strategic priorities.

Assessment Focused Components:

- Assess existing methods of data collection, analysis, and presentation to support transparency, accessibility, and informed decision-making and offer recommendations for enhancement/improvement of tools to develop/enhance feedback process and enable consistent outcome reporting and assessment across all programs and services.

The work shall leverage the existing Library data, and any additional data required for analysis to provide statistically relevant information for prioritization and identification of programming and service needs.

All deliverables for this project are to be provided in electronic format. Consultant will work with the President and Chief Executive Officer or her designee to agree upon the exact timeline and format of the deliverables of the project. Delivery is complete upon recommendation of President and Chief Executive Officer, recommendation by Strategic Planning Committee to Board of Directors, and adoption of Board of Directors.

Strategic Planning Document

The plan should be easily adaptable and nimble enough to be reviewed often; where progress on goals and objectives is tracked and measured.

The Strategic Planning Task Force will work closely with the Consultant on the development of the plan. The plan should include:

- Clear, concise, and attainable library service and program goals, objectives and activities.
- A 3-year plan clearly identified strategic initiatives including prioritized implementation and key identified milestones for each initiative.
- Prioritization of current services and potential enhanced or new services that address the service priorities for the next 3 years.
- Assessment and evaluation tools to ensure ongoing alignment of goals and objectives

Consultant services will include but not be limited to the following:

- Facilitate Strategic Task Force meetings.
- Review, collect, and analyze data related to planning efforts and recommendations.
- Conduct stakeholder interviews, focus groups (internal and external), surveys and other community needs assessment meetings as required.
- Work closely with designated staff on tasks related to the strategic planning project.
- Create strategic planning documents.
- Presentations to the Library Board of Directors, staff, and the public.

Hartford Public Library will provide the following resources for this project:

- Coordination and logistics for meetings of the Strategic Task Force
- Coordination and logistics for community meetings related to planning
- Access to library data

- Dissemination of consultant materials to Strategic Task Force and others, as needed
- Public communications relating to planning process

D. PROPOSAL FORMAT AND SELECTION CRITERIA

Proposers should provide an electronic version of their proposal to:

Leticia Cotto, Chief Administrative Officer
HPLStrategicPlan@HPLCT.org

Each proposal must be submitted in PDF form, **12-point font** single space and is limited to a maximum of 15 pages for all materials and contain, in the following order:

1. Letter of transmittal, addressed to Leticia Cotto, Chief Administrative Officer, as above. The letter should identify the submitting firm or consultant as well as the name, title, telephone, fax number and email address of the person authorized to contractually obligate the firm or consultant. The letter should be signed by the named person.
2. Executive summary of proposal.
3. A document outlining the qualifications of the firm or consultant including the firm or consultant's history, its capabilities and relevant experience. Included should be demonstrated experience with large urban library systems and any qualifications such as professional licenses or certifications.
4. A description of the project team along with resumes for each person. Please describe in appropriate detail the role each person will perform on this project. Project team members should be available for the duration of the project, or alternates should be named in the proposal, along with their qualifications.
5. A list of three business/library references for which you have recently provided similar services. Include contact names, phone numbers, and email addresses for each reference.
6. A Project Work Plan/Approach which describes your understanding of the project, methodology, tasks, an outline for meeting the timeline and an estimated amount of time for each task. Include your deliverables, project schedule and milestones, assumptions and any variables that could delay the project. List any resources you expect the Hartford Public Library to provide that have not been previously described.
7. A Cost Proposal including total fee, cost by proposed task and individual expenses for each project team member. These should include costs for providing planning services, including supplies, an estimate of hours, rate schedule for project staff, estimated reimbursable expenses, number of onsite visits and cost per trip, and other costs associated with the planning process.

Each proposal may contain:

- Sample material such as a strategic plan document.
- Any additional documentation or information that the firm or consultant deems necessary to assist Hartford Public Library in the selection process.

All proposals meeting the RFP requirements will be evaluated using the following criteria:

- Relevant experience and success in strategic planning facilitation, including the level of satisfaction of current and past clients.
- Experience of firm or consultant in understanding the urban library landscape and intersection of community and library services.
- Proven ability, cultural competence and experience in facilitating large and small staff and public discussions.
- Proven ability in incorporating creative language access participatory strategies in community engagement with diverse communities and stakeholders.
- Flexibility, creativity and responsiveness outlined in the Project Work Plan/Approach to the project.
- Cost and demonstrated ability to meet deadlines and operate within budget.
- Three references by former clients on similar projects, preferably in diverse communities similar to the City of Hartford.

E. LIBRARY CONTACT

The Library has designated Leticia Cotto, Chief Administrative Officer, as its contact for this RFP. Contact information is listed below:

Leticia Cotto, Chief Administrative Officer
Hartford Public Library
500 Main Street
Hartford, CT 06103
Electronic copy to: HPLStrategicPlan@HPLCT.org

F. COMMUNICATION PROTOCOLS

Upon release of this RFP, any inquiries or requests regarding this project should be directed to Leticia Cotto at HPLStrategicPlan@hplct.org. Contact with other authorized personnel may result in disqualification. Written questions about this RFP should be submitted by email. Responses to questions will be posted on the HPL website at www.hplct.org by **July 18, 2025**

G. SUBMISSION DEADLINES/TENTATIVE PROJECT SCHEDULE

- Library issues RFP: June 30, 2025
- Deadline for Written Questions: July 11, 2025
- Library issues Responses to Questions (Q& A will be posted on HPL website RFP section consultants responsible to check website for responses.) July 18, 2025
- Deadline for Proposal Submission: August 1, 2025.
- Consultant Interviews: August 11-15, 2025
- Consultant Selection: Week of August 18, 2025
- Anticipated Contract Start Date: September 1, 2025
- Anticipated Contract End Date: January 31, 2026

H. PROJECT EVALUATION/NOTICE TO PROPOSERS

All proposals received by the deadline for submission will be evaluated for adherence to the requirements and criteria outlined in the RFP. Additionally, the Library reserves the right to select a proposal without conducting interviews. When selecting the Consultant, the skill and ability of the entity or person/s performing the services is a key component of the selection criteria. The Library will select a consultant based on demonstrated competence and on the professional qualifications necessary for the satisfactory performance of the services required. Cost will be only one factor in determining the selection.

Upon selection of a successful firm or consultant, the Hartford Public Library Agreement shall be used. The firm or consultant shall meet the requirements of this agreement and shall submit any required documents with the agreement.

This RFP does not commit the Library to award a contract, to pay any costs incurred in the preparation of a proposal for this RFP, or to procure or contract for any services. The Library reserves the right to waive any irregularities or informalities contained within this RFP, accept and/or reject any or all proposals received as a result of this request; negotiate with any qualified source or to cancel the RFP in part or whole. The Library and Consultant may agree to add additional areas to the contract by mutual agreement at a later date. The Library may elect to stop work at any time in the contract and will pay for work completed to that point on a time and material basis. The Library also reserves the right to amend this RFP as necessary. All proposals and materials submitted will become the property of the Hartford Public Library.