

Appendix : Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Organizational Background

1. What is MotorCities National Heritage Area?

MotorCities National Heritage Area is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and federally designated National Heritage Area that preserves, interprets, and promotes the automotive and labor heritage of southeastern Michigan through education, partnerships, heritage tourism, and grant making activities.

2. Why is MotorCities issuing this RFP?

MotorCities recently received a National Park Foundation Capacity Building Grant to strengthen its long-term organizational sustainability. The organization seeks a qualified fundraising and development consultant to build fundraising systems, diversify revenue, train board members, and develop a sustainable fundraising roadmap.

3. What challenge is MotorCities trying to solve?

Historically, approximately 99% of MotorCities' revenue has been derived from federal National Heritage Area appropriations and required matching funds. This funding structure limits the organization's ability to invest in fundraising capacity and increases long-term financial vulnerability. This grant is intended to help MotorCities diversify revenue and reduce dependence on a single funding source.

4. Has MotorCities previously worked with a fundraising consultant?

MotorCities has worked with grant writers and fundraising professionals on limited engagements but has not previously undertaken a comprehensive fundraising capacity-building initiative of this scope.

Scope and Expectations

5. Is MotorCities seeking an individual consultant or a consulting firm?

Either is acceptable. MotorCities welcomes proposals from qualified independent consultants, consulting teams, or firms with relevant nonprofit fundraising expertise.

6. Is the consultant expected to raise funds directly?

No.

The primary purpose of this engagement is capacity building. The consultant will develop systems, strategies, training, tools, and fundraising infrastructure. While fundraising results are important, selection will not be based solely on a consultant's ability to solicit gifts directly.

7. Is MotorCities expecting the consultant to write grant proposals?

Strong Potential.

MotorCities anticipates that the consultant may provide guidance, develop grant funding strategies, identify prospects, and assist with proposal development and submission of 1-3 grant. However, the primary objective is creation of a comprehensive development system rather than serving solely as a grant writer.

8. Is implementation support expected in addition to planning?

Yes.

MotorCities seeks both strategic planning and implementation assistance. The consultant should anticipate helping staff and board members apply the recommendations developed during the planning process.

9. Is the consultant expected to facilitate board training?

Yes.

Board development is a core component of this project. The consultant will be expected to provide fundraising education, donor cultivation training, and major gift solicitation coaching for board members.

10. Will the consultant be expected to facilitate a board retreat?

Yes.

MotorCities anticipates at least one facilitated board development or planning session. Consultants should outline their recommended approach within their proposal.

Organizational Capacity

11. What fundraising activities currently exist?

Current fundraising activities include:

- Membership program
- Individual donations
- Sponsorships
- Special events
- Grant funding
- Corporate partnerships

Consultants will be expected to evaluate existing activities and recommend improvements.

12. Does MotorCities currently have a donor database or CRM?

Yes.

MotorCities maintains donor and membership records in Bonterra/Network for good but anticipates that upgrades, optimization, and improved utilization of donor management systems may be necessary as part of this project.

13. What level of board involvement should be expected?

High.

The Board of Directors will be actively involved in planning sessions, training activities, and adoption of the final fundraising plan.

14. Who will serve as the primary project contact?

The Executive Director will serve as project lead and primary liaison for the consultant.

15. How many staff members should consultants expect to engage?

MotorCities has a small staff structure. Consultants should expect direct engagement with executive leadership and one or two staff members throughout the project.

Deliverables**16. What is the most important final deliverable?**

MotorCities seeks a diverse, practical, actionable, board-approved Fundraising and Development Plan that can be implemented immediately and sustained after the grant period ends.

17. What should the fundraising plan include?

The plan should address:

- Individual giving
 - Annual fundraising
 - Membership
 - Corporate sponsorships
 - Foundation funding
 - Major gifts
 - Planned giving opportunities
 - Digital fundraising
 - Donor stewardship
 - Fundraising metrics and performance tracking
 - Board engagement
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18. Is prospect research expected?

Yes.

Prospect research and development of a major donor cultivation strategy are specifically identified as project objectives.

19. Is the consultant expected to recommend fundraising software?

Yes.

MotorCities welcomes recommendations regarding Bonterra/Network for Good donor management systems, in addition to other fundraising platforms, prospect research tools, and related technology solutions.

20. How detailed should implementation recommendations be?

Very detailed.

MotorCities prefers practical tools, timelines, templates, workflows, and procedures that staff and board members can implement immediately.

Budget and Contracting

21. What is the available budget?

The budget for consulting services is up to \$64,000.

This amount is funded by a National Park Foundation Capacity Building Grant.

22. Can proposals exceed \$64,000?

No, however, additional budgeted line items exist for technology and retreat facilitation assistance.

Proposals exceeding the available budget of \$64,000 may be deemed non-responsive.

23. Should travel expenses be included?

Yes.

Consultants should include all anticipated travel, lodging, facilitation, and related expenses in their proposal.

24. Is a fixed-fee proposal preferred?

Yes.

MotorCities prefers fixed-fee proposals with clear deliverables and milestones. Alternative pricing structures may be considered if clearly justified.

25. Will progress payments be permitted?

Yes.

Respondents should propose a payment schedule tied to milestones and deliverables.

A sample structure might include:

- 20% at contract execution
 - 30% following assessment completion
 - 30% following delivery of draft plan
 - 20% upon final acceptance
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Project Management**26. Will work be conducted remotely or in person?**

MotorCities anticipates a hybrid approach.

Certain activities, such as board workshops and strategic planning sessions, and occasional work with staff will be in-person facilitation, while other work may be completed virtually.

27. Are consultants expected to attend board meetings?

Yes.

Respondents should budget for participation in key board meetings when presenting findings, facilitating discussions, or conducting training.

28. What level of access will be provided to organizational records?

The selected consultant will be provided reasonable access to relevant organizational records, including fundraising data, strategic planning documents, membership information, and financial materials necessary to complete the engagement.

29. Are there required progress reports?

Yes.

MotorCities expects regular progress updates and milestone reporting throughout the engagement.

Evaluation and Selection**30. What experience is most important?**

Particular consideration will be given to consultants with experience involving:

- Nonprofit fundraising
 - Capacity-building initiatives
 - Board development
 - Major gifts fundraising
 - Museums and cultural organizations
 - Heritage organizations
 - National Park Service partners
 - National Heritage Areas
 - Friends Groups and foundations
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31. Will interviews be conducted?

MotorCities reserves the right to interview finalists before making a selection.

32. When will a consultant be selected?

MotorCities anticipates selecting a consultant in mid-late September 2026 with work beginning on Oct. 1st.

33. Can MotorCities reject all proposals?

Yes.

MotorCities reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, negotiate scope modifications, or cancel the solicitation if it determines doing so is in the organization's best interest.

Success and Outcomes

34. How will success be measured?

Success will be evaluated based on the consultant's ability to help MotorCities achieve:

- A comprehensive, diverse, board-approved fundraising plan
 - A board trained and participating in donor prospecting and solicitation
 - Improved donor management systems
 - Expanded major donor pipeline
 - Increased individual and organizational membership
 - Staff submission of 1- 3 grant proposals with consultant assistance
 - Launch of at least one new fundraising initiative that secures funding
 - Sustainable fundraising practices beyond the grant period
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35. What would an ideal outcome look like one year after the project?

MotorCities would have:

- Multiple active funding streams
- Increased individual and organizational giving
- Stronger foundation and corporate relationships
- A fundraising-engaged board
- A sustainable donor pipeline

- Clear fundraising metrics
- Reduced dependency on federal appropriations

This is the ultimate goal of the National Park Foundation Capacity Building investment